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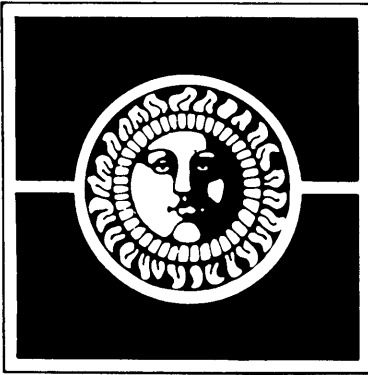
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READERS FORUM

MUCH ADO ABOUT NOTHING

I AM CONCERNED with Janet Tarjan's comments in "Reflections on 'An Address to Mothers in Zion'" (SUNSTONE 13:4).

There are, in fact, far too many sisters working out in this world that should be home—women whose only reason for being away from home and family is to put that extra car in the garage, or remodel a swimming pool in the backyard, etc. There are those of us who would love to stay home, but due to inadequate income to house, feed, and clothe, must work.

The point Tarjan seems to miss, which has always been emphasized, is: Go to the Lord with your decision and if it be right you will know. That is the bottom line. Why bring up stories of women who have made the same mistake a lot of us have made as examples of excuses for the bottom line of President Benson's message. Yes, women should be home, just as the prophet of the Lord says, but we each live individual lives and must, as part of this life's probation, make decisions about what we do. Only then are we accountable to the Lord. Tarjan seems to make much ado about nothing just to make herself heard. After being a single parent for nine-and-a-half years, I've also heard many "war" stories that would make your hair curl.

Sisters, pray, make your decisions, pray again, and listen for the answers. Follow the Spirit's whisperings, then even when things go awry as they sometimes do, you will know your decision was right, and it will give you strength.

CAROLYN JAYNE
Roseville, CA

THE COLD GRIP OF BUREAUCRACY

I WAS ASTONDED by J. Frederick Voros's article "Do You Still Believe in Magic?" (SUNSTONE 13:4). As a part of the "Woodstock Generation," I have felt the same frustrations.

With a strong testimony, I went as a missionary to proclaim the message that God's church would provide peace on earth and look after the welfare of all God's children.

Since my motivation was primarily my love for humanity rather than a response to social or parental pressure, I was able to be, I think, an exemplary missionary. There were at the time many untruths existing within the framework of the Church, but I saw these as peripheral issues, and I viewed the First Presidency pronouncements relating to all worthy males receiving the priesthood and the Church's stand regarding the MX missile as vindications of my viewpoint.

In the ensuing fifteen years, however, what I have seen is not an increased acceptance within the Church of divergent lifestyles and opinions but rather an increased regimentation and expectation of confirmation to the corporate norm. We were told that we didn't need innovation, but rather diligence. Voros's parroting of this idea, encouraging us to plod along in faith, is a conclusion with which I cannot agree. Faith without works is dead! If innovation will not be accepted within the Church, then solutions to the world's problems (both temporal and spiritual) will come from outside the Church as intelligent, caring people leave the Church and focus their energies elsewhere. We should have the strength to live our convictions and expect our leaders to do likewise. Love and fellowship are fading beneath the cold grip of bureaucracy and statistics.

There's so much time to make up everywhere you turn.

Time we have wasted on the way.
Yes, I do believe in magic.

KEVIN Z. DAWSON
Willow Springs, Mo.

A LAMANITE VOICE

DESPITE A FEAR of being typed "ethnocentric," it seems important that Lamanite voices respond to George P. Lee's letters and excommunication (SUNSTONE 13:4).

Though Lee and I don't agree on all points, I do not read the letters as "undiplomatic" as did SUNSTONE editor Elbert Peck. Given the repetition, errors, and holographic nature of the letters, we may presume that Lee wrote each in one sitting and without editing; it is easy for me to credit Lee with focusing more on the Spirit's aid in expressing a critical concern and a sense of timeliness rather than producing a perfect document. This may be

a real point of cultural conflict. In non-ecclesiastical areas I have learned that typed letters are more likely to receive greater deference and attention. Like Lee, I do not always bend to this Anglo convention. Perhaps Peck should have chosen the term "unsophisticated" to describe the letters.

The introductory paragraphs of each letter are indicative of how rooted Lee is in the Book of Mormon. I cannot view his phrasing as accidental. His precedent is found in Samuel the Lamanite's mission to the Nephites (which was omitted from the golden plates until the Savior commanded its addition) and Captain Moroni's epistle to Pahoran (a fortunate example in which areas of responsibility, levels of authority, and unwarranted chastisement were overlooked in order to work a solution). Further, the construction is extremely reminiscent of techniques taught missionaries: Lee declares his credentials and asks his audience to be receptive to the Spirit. In any event, the readers/listeners are advised that tough issues and questions will follow.

Lee's questions and statements deal with the following general categories: Church policy toward American Indians; Lamanites in the Book of Mormon; Lee and the Brethren;

policies toward the Islanders; racism versus Christianity; Lamanite alienation; policy and procedure in administration and Church courts; and a warning voice. I will not trace each point from his letters but instead will attempt to stay within general categories.

The policy concerns brought forth concerning American Indians and Islanders are extremely disturbing. As an American of Mexican descent, I am immediately concerned for the welfare of Lamanites in South and Central America, as well as other Lamanites in the States. However, having worked in the past with a ward responsible for convert Laotian refugees, I find my concerns not limited to my race. Back then I wondered why geography should assign the stake's poorest ward with the fewest active members this responsibility. My questions, like Lee's, point to a fear of institutional racism in the kingdom of God on earth and in the distribution of tithes and offerings.

Quite honestly, I find Lee's distinction of true and adopted Israel accurate. I do not, however, insist on the point of tribal responsibility so strongly, though I would like to hear a more detailed explanation of his doctrinal belief. The main stem of Lee's grievance, it

seems, is that many patriarchs are by tradition or racism failing to assign members of color to the tribe of Ephraim. (Incidentally, my blessing states that I am a descendent of Ephraim. During my mission, though, a patriarch was surprised at this and said he thought I would be from Manasseh. Ironically, my Anglo companion was assigned to the tribe of Manasseh. Needless to say, the patriarch was doubly provoked.) Again, we see institutional racism moving into spiritual realms. It should not be so difficult for Anglo readers to see why this is so disturbing to Lee or me.

Lee's relationship with the Brethren is beyond our present comprehension because so much information is withheld. Even Lee's letters do not discuss specific problems involved in "execut[ing] all [his] assignments." I must, however, contend with Peck's assertion that Lee "was an outsider and didn't know how to play the game." By virtue of his call as a General Authority, Lee was an insider, but he didn't know or wasn't trained properly for the game. The difference I am noting is much deeper than semantics. If it is simply a matter of training, then the General Authorities missed the opportunity to be "nursing fathers." But perhaps the rules to the game



changed and that is why Lee is no longer a Lamanite success story. Peck and I suggest that cronyism does exist in Church leadership. What Lee learned in seminary, at BYU, during his mission, and years of Church service no longer was as important as whom he knew.

In general, I find that Lee's complaints and questions point to his warning which does have scriptural reference. Peck and I suspect the problem is more encompassing than race; Peck has a more optimistic nature than I. Very bluntly: is the kingdom of God on earth still ruled by the Spirit of God or are we increasingly resembling other man-made institutions? This question is more distressing to me than any historic, theological, or intellectual disturbances that periodically confront my faith. Rightly so. As a convert and returned missionary, I know the leap of faith into the baptismal font is an act of exuberant optimism. The leap becomes an unending fall if we lose Daniel's wonderful vision of the Church in latter days or if our own ability to discern the Spirit is called into question. As yet I still hope but, like Lee, find the struggle and wait extremely difficult.

Having written this much I realize the difficulty Lee had in restraining his letters. I would like to deviate slightly here. In too many Sunday School classes I have heard members question how well the Lord chose his original twelve apostles. The response of the apostles when Christ reveals that one of them will betray him, however, vindicates his choice. Each apostle is introspective and asks, "Is it I?" I think, ultimately, Lee's excommunication and letters show that the current Church as a whole is dangerously lacking in self-examination and communication. I still hope for a continual exercise of this specific change in myself and the Church.

RUTH A. RODRIGUEZ
Turlock, CA

FREE AT LAST

THE EDITORIAL IN the August issue (SUNSTONE 13:4) was an interesting balance between finding fault with the Church and blaming George P. Lee.

Once you understand that the Church is not what it claims to be, you can relax and enjoy the spectacle. The Church is not some titanic struggle with eternal consequences. It is just one more man-made religious organization reflecting the stress of change. It is not just the culture of the Church which changes.

Everything changes that can change—the doctrines, the scriptures, the theology, the organization, etc., etc., etc.

It is not just that we "glimpse God at best through contorted reflections in a dim mirror and must interpret him with our limited humanity," but it is that we can live our whole life as a temple Mormon and never even glimpse God either in this life or the one to come. We simply become too sure of what we know to be open to even perfectly clear reflections if they are inconsistent with that "sure" knowledge. This is not a unique criticism of Mormonism; it is equally true of most religions and cultures.

Truth becomes what feels good to us without any real evaluation of why it feels good. And armed with our truth, we set ourselves apart from those who are different, secure in our superiority and uniqueness.

Poor Brother Lee. The Church corrupted him with its vision of the truth and then abandoned him when he tried to use it to save/help his people. It will be difficult for him not to be bitter and to not waste his time trying to vindicate himself.

Free at last, free at last.

WALTER L. WILLIAMSON
Atlanta, Ga.

THE DEVIL AND DANIEL VOGEL

DAN VOGEL does not appreciate a compliment. In his recent letter (SUNSTONE 13:4) he attacks what I considered a generous review of his work on seekers. It appears I need to be more blunt to defend myself. Vogel's book is completely ignorant of a vast body of standard scholarship and of primary sources on certain subjects he addresses. I mentioned a few of these in my book review (SUNSTONE 13:3).

I propose a challenge to Vogel here in which every SUNSTONE reader may judge the validity of Vogel's arguments and historical claims. For the sake of space, I limit my comments to one issue: Vogel's claims that the Book of Mormon doctrine of innate depravity clearly reflects Calvinist views of innate depravity—that human beings are naturally evil due to the fall. In my review, I contended that the Book of Mormon was completely Arminian and that innate depravity was also a doctrine espoused by conservative Arminians. He responded that the Arminians must have borrowed their belief of innate depravity from Calvinists. As usual, when Vogel makes

any statement on this subject (either in his book or letter) he invariably demonstrates an inaccurate and shallow understanding:

1. Arminianism is not the opposite of Calvinism (as Vogel seems to think). Arminianism was a reaction against Calvinism. It could contain either negative or positive views of human nature. The persistent difference between the two was in the notion of freedom versus determinism.

2. The view of innate depravity was widely held as a central part of many early nineteenth century Arminian views among Free Will Baptists, Episcopalians, and Methodists. Certainly, there were also more liberal Arminians who held a positive view of human nature. But let me focus on the more conservative Arminianism of early American Methodist theology. Prior to the coming of New Lights in the 1830s, nearly every Methodist Arminian statement on human nature included a statement advocating complete human depravity: Because of the fall, human beings have become incapable of doing good. Humans cannot even choose or desire good. We are God's enemy and rebels to righteousness. In 1817 William Phoebus summarized the conservative Arminian position held by early American Methodists—"total depravity; no good in man by nature . . . no good desire at all." He then confidently states that this form of Arminianism was "approved by all our ministers." In 1813, Jonathan Crowther also summarized many other Methodist Arminian statements, "man in his natural state is altogether corrupt, through all the faculties of his soul."

But if humans were so corrupt how could conservative Arminians like Methodists believe in freedom? At birth they claimed that the "light of Christ" (prevenient grace from God) is infused into every natural man so as to place him in a position of choice. All good comes from God—even freedom. This grace is given to every person because of the Atonement. Yet even with the light of Christ, the natural man was typically described as carnal, sensual, and inclined continually to wickedness. In these notions of freedom, conservative Arminians disagreed with old school Calvinists who denied freedom, with liberal Arminians and Scottish philosophers who believed in innate freedom, and with Hopkinsonian Calvinists who believed "freedom" was a mere selection process in a strictly deterministic world. The notions that humans are totally corrupt and yet receive freedom to choose good through the Atonement is a hallmark of conservative Arminianism in the early nineteenth century. In II Nephi 2 and

elsewhere in the Book of Mormon we find the conservative Arminian position stated in terms of depravity and freedom through the Atonement: "all men . . . were lost, because of the transgression of their parents. . . . And because that they are redeemed from the fall they have become free forever" (vv. 21, 26).

3. The doctrine of election in the Book of Mormon also matches conservative Arminianism. Old school Calvinists taught that God arbitrarily or mysteriously chose certain persons to be saved and certain other persons to be damned. It had nothing to do with earned righteousness. Conservative Arminians taught that salvation was based on righteousness; but God foresaw before the foundations of the world who would be righteous and hence knew from the foundation of the world who would be saved. For most Calvinists, God caused the elect to be elect. For Conservative Arminians, God knew who the elect would be. For the latter, election consists in this: conformity to the faith and righteousness of God. In Alma 31, the Calvinist notion of election as arbitrary selection is denounced in the story of the Zoramites. In the Words of Mormon, we read how "the Lord knoweth all things which are to come" (v. 7). In Alma 13, we find that God knew before the foundation of the world who would choose righteousness and therefore who would receive and be worthy of the priesthood. A sample of a conservative Arminian notion of elections that the Book of Mormon follows can be found in the 1817 book by Nathan Bangs, an early Methodist thinker. There are many other areas where I could compare Arminianism and Calvinism. In each case, whether on justification, sanctification, or those who die without law, the Book of Mormon always takes the conservative Arminian position.

4. Dan Vogel describes the above conservative Arminianism in the Book of Mormon as a mixture of Arminianism and Calvinism. He states that depravity is an exclusive doctrine to Calvinism and any Arminian who held to a notion of depravity borrowed it from Calvinism. His only evidence is from two statements—a vague one-liner from Sidney Gilbert and a late, out-of-context, apologetic one-liner from Joseph Smith. Neither statement demonstrates anything on this subject. In this assertion Vogel displays complete ignorance of a large and well documented body of research which unanimously states that Vogel is wrong. I do not know a single expert in the area who would not find Vogel's statements shallow. The great Sydney Ahlstrom in his acclaimed two volume work, *The Religions of the Ameri-*

can People, describes the theology of early Methodism (including complete depravity) and calls it "forcefully Arminian." Scott in his groundbreaking thesis and articles on early American Methodist theology, also describes its notions of depravity as "Arminian." Both John Wesley and Nathan Bangs state that conservative Arminianism (including depravity) were derived from the original writing of Arminius. A host of scholarly works agree that conservative Arminian notions derive from Arminius, himself.

Vogel's unfounded assertion that depravity proves the presence of Calvinism is contradicted by dozens of scholarly works on the subject and by literally hundreds of primary documents including sermons of bishops, circuit riders, diaries, magazines, and many books in the early nineteenth century. As far as I can tell, the verdict in both primary and serious secondary works outside Mormonism stands 100 percent against Vogel. Against this mountain of evidence, Vogel has produced not a single piece of primary evidence to support his notion that depravity proves the presence of Calvinism. Yet he dogmatically and repeatedly asserts it.

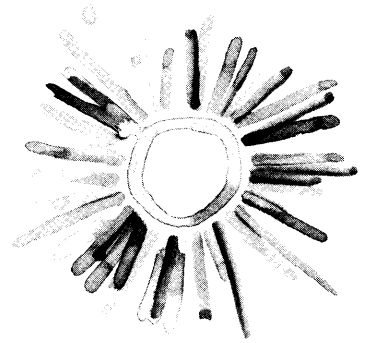
In this letter I have been forced to summarize one small area in one small subject. I have done this in order to demonstrate clearly that Vogel on this (and other topics) steps beyond his level of competence in his book on seekers. In fact, in the numerous places where he discusses this particular issue of Arminianism versus Calvinism, he always gives us either a half-truth or an outright falsehood.

Based on this discussion, Marvin Hill's assertion that early Mormonism was a mediation between Arminianism and Calvinism must be modified as follows: Calvinism and Arminianism in the first half of the early nineteenth century were both being modified to include increasingly optimistic views of human nature. These were not static but evolutionary views in Mormonism and other major religions. The Book of Mormon reflects a popular conservative Arminian position prior to 1830. This position claimed to be true to original Arminianism. This conservative Arminianism (whether in Mormonism or any other religion) was a mediation between liberal Arminianism (with its optimistic view of human nature) and Calvinism (with its pessimistic view of human nature).

MARK THOMAS
Bothell, WA

FROM THE EDITOR

EQUALITY AND THE DIVERSITY OF GIFTS



By Elbert Eugene Peck

AFTER THE ANNOUNCEMENT was made that in the United States and Canada ward and stake expenses would be paid out of the general tithing funds, one friend said, "I think the Millennium is near"; another said, "the Church must be rich." I hope and suspect that the truth lies more with the Brethren's concern that the Church's equal demands on wards and individuals put a harder, and perhaps unfair, financial burden on the poor than the rich. (In taxation a flat-rate tax is "regressive" because its incidence diminishes the poor's living income but the rich's surplus, a graduated income tax is "progressive" because the percentage paid rises with the ability to pay or level of income.) A couple of years ago when my bishop presented the ward budget in priesthood meeting, Apostle David Haight, a member of the ward, stood up and expressed his surprise at the budget's large sum—especially the stake assessment—and spoke for some time on how the Church leaders are very concerned that we don't get to the situation where a person has to be wealthy to be a good Mormon. Considering this recent announcement and the similar several-year-old one on building funds (keyed to a percentage of full tithe-payers), it appears the Brethren are taking Moroni's warning seriously:

I know your doing. . . . For behold, ye do love money, and your substance, and your fine apparel, and the adorning of your churches, more than ye love the poor (Mormon 8:35, 37).

Clearly, these combined actions increase the redistribution of tithes from the rich to the poor. Not only to Third World countries as before but now also to the U.S. poor, as God outlined: "I will consecrate the riches of those who embrace my gospel . . . unto the poor of my people" (D&C 42:39). As much as political conservatives dislike redistributive social and income programs, the motivating principle behind them is core to God's economy of blessings: equality means that all have "equal claims on the properties" (D&C 82:17).

Implicit in this discussion of poor and rich full tithe-payers is the acknowledgment that God does *not* directly bless all individual full tithe-payers with equal material blessings, in spite of missionary discussion promises and manuals to the contrary. Not only is this a fact but it is also desirable. The Lord's own decreed way "to provide for my saints,"—"that the poor shall be exalted"—requires that "the rich are made low" (D&C 104:16). We forget that much of God's covenant (and blessing) is with us as a *people* and not just as individuals, a point we collectively affirm in the temple ceremony and each Sunday as fifty-joined members of the body of Christ at the sacrament altar. He gives to each member different gifts—including the gifts of wealth and financial acumen—and each in turn blesses the community by multiplying and sharing their particular talents and gifts. Hence, at least in part, the law of tithing's irrevocable promise to open the windows of heaven is accomplished collectively. Additionally, this must be so since God's blessings are usually bestowed indirectly through other people.¹ When the Book of Mormon authors celebrate the bountiful material blessings God bestowed on his righteous people, it is a wealth that is *shared* by everyone and void of vanity possessions. Similarly, the same authors condemn unshared individual wealth, which does not come to all equally, which divides society into classes and "isms," and which grinds riches in the faces of the poor.

In this communal respect, our contemporary obsession for "self reliance" in the six welfare areas² has the danger of becoming a selfish reliance if it is not put in the larger perspective of interdependent service—"every man seeking the interest of his neighbor" (D&C 82:19). True self reliance is but the acquiring and use of the skills necessary to properly manage our stewardship—all our time, talents, and money—so that we not only provide for our just wants and needs *but also* husband our resources to create a generous surplus to bless others and to establish the

poor in self-sustaining vocations. I hope that someday ample financial surpluses from our rich will be channeled through the fast offering system (which potentially affords a progressive tax aspect to Church donations) to allow bishops and Welfare Services to do what is really essential to set up our poor in self-sustaining occupations—educational subsidies. After all, it is the Church which is supposed to be self-reliant—to "stand independent" (D&C 78:14)—not each member in it.

Only collectively are we the body of Christ, jointly possessing all the Christian spiritual gifts held by various members (1 Corinthians 12). And although individuals should seek to multiply their inventory of good gifts and grow spiritually, it is dangerous and wrong for Saints to naively assume that they should possess all the gifts themselves; if they try, eventually they'll obtain only disappointment, feelings of inadequacy, and spiritual depression. Christ-like perfection for us cannot realistically mean that every member is expected to acquire each of His gifts and abilities, that is humanly impossible. Harm, too, is done to the community by the single quest for individual autonomy. By spreading the gifts diversely, God forces us to humbly turn to others, and them to us, to be complete, binding us together, making us both giver and receiver, and, as noted in the First Presidency's ward financing announcement, "both the needy and those who give" are blessed.³ We need to learn how to better value and cultivate the gifts of others without devaluing our own worth and contributions. No wonder charity is the most excellent gift we all should seek, where we celebrate the gifts in others and patiently endure and lovingly compensate for their deficits.

Since we all need to give and receive, we must craft our Church culture to make both acts legitimate; to remove the judgment and humiliation which causes us to hide our social and emotional inadequacies, alienating us from gifted others. For those who must always receive much, such as the physically and mentally challenged, we must particularly take care to identify their gifts and create opportunities for them to bless the community their gifts, helping them in fact to be contributing members of the body.

Considering the dynamics of diverse gifts, it is sad when our correlated curriculum tells each of us to be and do the same things. Of course many things taught are basic gospel principles which sustain diverse Christian living, but there is also an undeniable implication (with occasional social coercion) that there is one way everyone should live as Mor-

mons. And when that sameness becomes the standard we get dysfunctional results. (Interestingly, in the temple creation narrative God places high value on variety.) God's equality and fairness comes as the result of very different saints freely sharing in common the blessed gifts of all, not from a uniform bureaucratic rule which stifles individuality, demands unrealistic achievements, and frustrates the soul.

Historically, in this dispensation, after previous open-ended experiments created virtually no surplus to redistribute to the poor, tithing was introduced as the *minimum* level of material consecration from stewardships.⁴ With the recent changes where the Church avoids adorning the chapels and transfers more tithing funds to poorer wards, perhaps the Church is one step in front of the Saints who are still struggling with the fit of their costly apparel in the slow march to Zion where there will be no poor among us—in spirit or income. ☐

NOTES

1. Spencer W. Kimball's famous quote: "God does notice us, and he watches over us. But it is usually through another person that he meets our needs." "Small Acts of Service," *Ensign*, December 1974, 5.

2. The Personal and Family Preparedness Standards are: literacy and education; career development; financial and resource management; home production and storage; physical health; social-emotional and spiritual strength.

3. *Church News*, "Policy for Financing Local Units to Change," 25 November 1989, 3.

4. See Lyndon Cook's *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book Company, 1985).

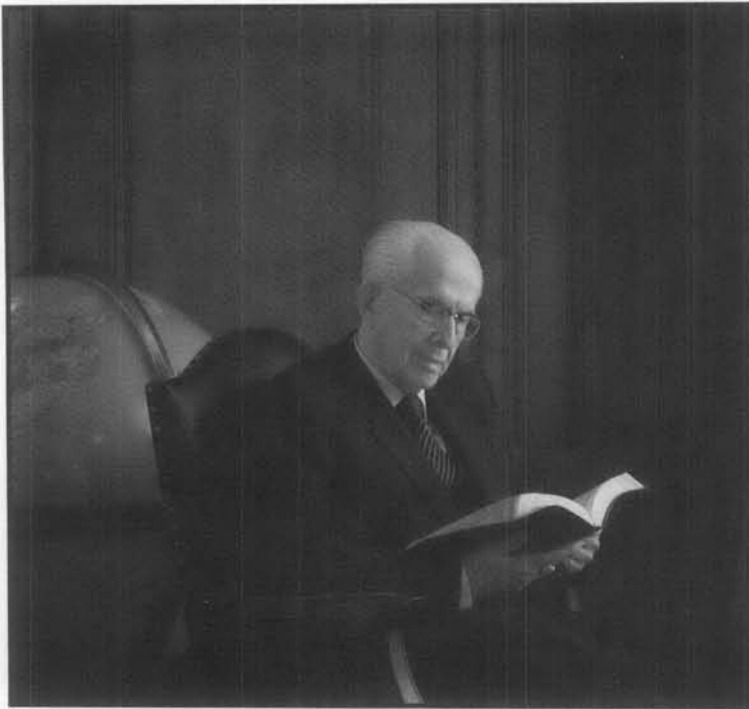
PSALM

OCTOBER PRAYER*

Whatever you may send me
In the years to come
Bring back the memory
You also gave to me
This shining autumn day.

—MARGARET RAMPTON MUNK

* Printed in *So Far*, 53.



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Unique perspectives on Church leadership and organization

PRIESTHOOD CONCEPTS IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

By Paul James Toscano

THE BOOK OF MORMON IS PROBABLY THE EARLIEST Mormon scriptural text containing concepts relating to both the structure and the nature of priesthood. This book, printed between August 1829 and March 1830, is the first *published* scripture of Mormonism but was preceded by seventeen other then *unpublished* revelations, many of which eventually appeared in the 1833 Book of Commandments and later in the 1835 edition of the Doctrine and Covenants. Prior to their publication, most or all of these revelations existed in handwritten form and undoubtedly had limited circulation.

While the content of many of these revelations (now sections 2-18) indicate that priesthood concepts were being discussed in the early Church, from 1830 until 1833 the Book of Mormon was the only uniquely Mormon scripture containing an explication of priesthood concepts that was accessible to the new church.

This article explores what the Book of Mormon has to say about priesthood. It is divided into three segments: Part I contains an analysis of the significant verses in the Book of Mormon dealing with priesthood structure; Part II treats the Book of Mormon doctrine of priesthood set forth in Alma 13; and Part III contains a discussion of some implications which these Book of Mormon priesthood teachings have for the modern Church.

I

PRIESTHOOD STRUCTURE IN THE BOOK OF MORMON

THERE are approximately sixty passages in the Book of Mormon that shed light upon the priesthood structure that existed among the Book of Mormon people. The first of these occurs in 2 Nephi 5:26 where Nephi consecrated his brothers Jacob and Joseph as "priests and teachers over the land of my

people." The phrasing and context of this verse suggests that the words "priest" and "teacher" were not used in our modern sense to designate offices within a priestly order or structure, such as deacon, priest, bishop, elder, high priest, or apostle. Nor were they used to designate ecclesiastical offices, such as counselor, stake president, quorum president, or Church president. They appear to refer only to religious functions. Possibly, the teacher was one who expounded and admonished the people; the priest was possibly one who mediated between God and his people, perhaps to administer the ordinances of the gospel and the rituals of the law of Moses, for we are told by Nephi that "notwithstanding we believe in Christ, we keep the law of Moses" (2 Nephi 25:24). Moreover, Nephi's consecration of his brothers is presented in general terms: Jacob and Joseph are consecrated to minister over the "land of my people," suggesting that they received broad but perhaps not unlimited authority. It is unclear whether the "land of my people" included the land of the Lamanites.

The text does make clear, however, that the Book of Mormon people had "prophets" as well as priests and teachers; together, according to the chronicler of the Book of Jarom, these individuals labored diligently to teach their listeners that the intent of the law of Moses was to persuade "them to look forward unto the Messiah, and believe in him to come as though he already was" (Jarom 1:11).

These few verses are all the information provided respecting the priesthood and its uses during the first 440 years of the history of the Book of Mormon peoples. Even as late as 124 B.C. it appears that the word "teacher" was still being used generically to refer to anyone with the responsibility to teach religious, particularly Christian, principles (see Mosiah 2:4).

In the Book of Mosiah, however, increased mention is made of the role of both kings and priests. This suggests that there was no absolute separation between the secular and non-secular authorities, that is, between the political and the ecclesiastical structures in the Book of Mormon culture. For example, in 124 B.C. King Benjamin "consecrated his son Mosiah to be a ruler and king over his people, and had given him all the charges concerning the kingdom" (Mosiah 6:3). But Benjamin does not

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restrict himself to secular or temporal matters; rather, he “also appointed priests to teach the people, that thereby they might hear and know the commandments of God” (Mosiah 6:3). Nor is Benjamin the only king empowered to consecrate priests. In the story of the wicked King Noah, which takes place earlier, Noah “put down all the priests that had been consecrated by his father, and consecrated new ones in their stead, such as were lifted up in the pride of their hearts” (Mosiah 11:5). Nor was the authority to ordain others limited to kings. Alma the Elder, “*having authority from God, ordained priests. . .*” (Mosiah 18:18, emphasis added).

By this time the ordination of priests and teachers appears to have been widespread. This is evidenced by the repeated hortatory refrain that “priests were not to depend upon the people for their support; but for their labor they were to receive the grace of God”—spiritual blessings, not material ones, were to be their compensation—“that they might wax strong in the Spirit, having the knowledge of God, that they might teach with power and authority from God” (Mosiah 18:26; see also 27:5). Alma the Elder “also commanded them that the priests whom he had ordained should labor with their own hands for their support” (Mosiah 18:24), not like the priests of Noah who had not supported themselves (Mosiah 11:4). There was no mandatory financial obligation imposed upon believers. But, of course, the people were encouraged to “impart of their substance of their own free will and good desires towards God and to those priests that stood in need, yea, and to every needy, naked soul” (Mosiah 18:28). Apparently, priests were not to be considered more worthy of support than any other poor person.

Thus, as a result of the prevalent practice of ordaining priests and teachers, an egalitarian policy was evoked which forbade these priests and teachers from being considered or considering themselves a privileged class. This, however, did not mean that the people of the Book of Mormon were without a hierarchy of priesthood authority. Alma the Elder *ordained* priests, and they undoubtedly considered their authority to act within the Church to derive from his. Later, Mosiah the King gives Alma authority to “establish churches throughout the land of Zarahemla; and gave him power to ordain priests and teachers over every church” (Mosiah 25:19).

Up to this point no mention is made of an organized church or a distinct priesthood structure. But after Alma established the Church, there are repeated references to a definite ecclesiastical framework. The congregations of believers were called churches, and each church had its own priests and teachers, “even one priest to every fifty of their number . . . to preach unto them, and teach them concerning the things pertaining to the kingdom of God” (Mosiah 18:18). In 122 B.C., every priest preached “the word according as it was delivered to him by the mouth of Alma” (Mosiah 25:21). For Alma is the head of the organized church, their “high priest, he being the founder of their church” (Mosiah 23:16). “None received authority to preach or to teach except it were by him [Alma] from God” (Mosiah 23:17).

As further evidence of the priesthood hierarchy in the Church, we are told that as the church founded by Alma grew there arose dissensions and, in about 120-118 B.C., certain dissidents “were brought before the priests . . . by the teachers; and the priests brought them before Alma, who was the high priest” to whom Mosiah had given “authority over the church” (Mosiah 26:7-8). By this time, the words “teachers” and “priests” seem to refer to distinct offices of either the ecclesiastical or priesthood structure. This is evident in the story because the dissidents who were ferreted out by the teachers and brought to the priests who in turn delivered them over to Alma, the high priest over the whole Church.

Later, when the persecutions of believers by dissidents and by non-believers became too severe, Alma—who apparently did not have the supreme authority to correct the situation—laid the case before their king, Mosiah. Mosiah “then consulted with *his* priests” (Mosiah 27:1 emphasis added). This suggests that the king’s priests constituted a body separate and apart from the priests of the church over which Alma presided. This implies that Mosiah was not merely a king in the secular sense, but a king—perhaps in the nature of the pharaohs of Egypt—with inherent priestly rights and powers and with his own entourage of priests. This implication is fortified by what happened next. Mosiah “sent a proclamation throughout the land round about that there should not any unbeliever persecute any of those who belonged to the church of God. And there was a strict command throughout all the churches that there should be no persecutions among them, that there should be an equality among all men . . .” (Mosiah 27:2-3). Although the high priest clearly had spiritual authority over the Church (Mosiah 27:22), the king was supreme and could issue proclamations which became not only law to be observed within his kingdom but which seem to have been received as commandments to the Church as well (Mosiah 27:2).

IN 91 B.C. Alma the Younger, son of Alma the founder of the Church, became the first chief judge after the dissolution of the monarchy. He was also the “high priest, his father having conferred the office upon him, and having given him the charge concerning all the affairs of the church” (Mosiah 29:42). Thus, the kingship having been retired, the supreme secular and spiritual offices converged in the person of Alma the Younger.

Alma, like his predecessors, stressed the importance of equality among all people and especially that there should not arise a privileged priestly class (Alma 1:26). He also sought to increase conversions to Christianity “and many were baptized . . . and were joined to the church of God” (Alma 4:4). In about 84 B.C. the Church experienced a surge of growth and, as a result, further problems arose which were “the cause of much affliction to Alma . . . and to many of the people whom Alma had consecrated to be teachers, and priests, and elders over the church” (Alma 4:7). This is the first mention of “elders,” although from this single reference the meaning of the word elder is unclear.

Later, however, the text clarifies that the word refers to a priesthood office, for Alma "ordained priests and elders, by the laying on of his hands according to the order of God, to preside and watch over the church" (Alma 6:1). However, it is not possible to determine if this office was one created by Alma the Elder, Alma the Younger, or whether it was an ancient priesthood or ecclesiastical office that happens to be first mentioned at this point in the book.

As a result of difficulties in the Church, Alma the Younger resigned as chief judge in favor of Nephiah, but kept "the office of high priest over the church" in order to confine "himself wholly to the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to the testimony of the word, according to the spirit of revelation and prophecy" (Alma 4:18, 20). This is the first mention of the priesthood of the holy order of God in the Book of Mormon, and perhaps in Mormon literature generally. The nature of this priesthood is explicated in Alma 13, a text which is addressed later.

The Book of Mormon refers to other religious traditions which had their own priests and teachers. In addition to the priests of King Noah, there were the priests of Nehor, for example (Alma 14:18, 27). The function of these priests is not discussed, but the Book of Mormon specifically describes the function of the priests and teachers consecrated by Alma: they had the authority "to baptize unto the Lord whosoever were desirous to be baptized" (Alma 15:13) and to "preach against all lyings, and deceivings, and envyings, and strifes, and malice, and revilings, and stealing, and robbing, plundering, murdering, committing adultery, and all manner of lasciviousness" (Alma 16:18). Furthermore, the authority to establish churches or congregations of believers was not held by Alma the high priest alone: Ammon, Aaron, Omner, Himni (the sons of King Mosiah) and their brethren "went forth from city to city, and from one house of worship to another, establishing churches, and consecrating priests and teachers throughout the land among the Lamanites, to preach and to teach the word of God among them" (Alma 23:4).

It also appears that the same discipline that governed the Church of Alma the Elder at Zarahemla was observed in the congregations founded by others. For instance, when Korihor, the anti-Christ, was apprehended he was brought before a local high priest and a regional chief judge. This is the same procedure that was followed earlier when certain dissenters had been brought before Alma the Elder (Alma 30:20-23). And when the regional chief judge was unable to deal with Korihor, he sent him to Alma the high priest over the whole Church and to "the chief judge, who was the governor over all the land" (Alma 30:29).

By 73 B.C. when Helaman was the high priest, the Church was "in every city . . . possessed by the people of Nephi" (Alma 45:22). At this point the Church again experienced dissension (Alma 46:6) which was attributed to the corrupting effects of prosperity (Helaman 3:25) on the chief judges, the high priests, and the lawyers (3 Nephi 6:21). This corruption was dangerous because of the great power which these officials held over others. However, no high priest or chief judge or lawyer had

the power to condemn any individual to death "save their condemnation was signed by the governor of the land" (3 Nephi 6:22). It was because they were denied this power of capital punishment that certain high priests and lawyers entered into vigilante groups that took secret covenants of murder (3 Nephi 6:27-28). The Book of Mormon also puts the blame for the disintegration of the Nephite culture on these "secret combinations" and upon the "many priests and false prophets" who built up "many churches" and encouraged the people "to do all manner of iniquity" (4 Nephi 1:34). Mormon, the abridger, stresses the significance of the corrupting influences of false prophets, false preachers, and false teachers among the people (Words of Mormon 1:16). The corruption of the Nephite church is partly attributed to the rise of a privileged priestly class.

Following the advent of Christ, there is a change in the church structure among the Nephites. The twelve disciples are chosen by Christ and invested by him with "power to give the Holy Ghost" (3 Nephi 18:37). These disciples, who Mormon tradition accepts as apostles (Moroni 2:2), apparently supplant the role of the high priest over the Church (3 Nephi 27:7). The twelve continue to minister to the people after Christ's ascension into heaven (4 Nephi 1:5). Though three of these disciples were granted the power to live on indefinitely, the remainder eventually died and were replaced by others "ordained in their stead" (4 Nephi 1:14). According to the book of Moroni, these disciples, who "were called the elders of the Church" (Moroni 3:1), ordained priests and teachers by the laying on of hands, "according to the gifts and callings of God" (Moroni 3:3-4). This phrase suggests that one's calling in the priestly structure was determined not so much by the needs of the Church as by the personal gifts of those ordained.

After several centuries, the Church again became corrupt and its members were eventually destroyed in the wars between the Nephites and Lamanites. Moroni, the last of the priestly order, finished the abridgment of the record of his people on gold plates and buried them in the earth.

II

THE BOOK OF MORMON DOCTRINE OF PRIESTHOOD

THE Book of Mormon not only contains information about priesthood structure and Church organization among the Nephites and Lamanites, it contains an extraordinary doctrinal treatise on the nature of priesthood, its source and its scope. This treatise appears as verses 1 through 20 of Alma 13 in the present edition of the Book of Mormon and varies in no significant way from the version contained in the 1830 edition.

The Alma 13 priesthood treatise states that receiving the high priesthood involves, first, an unmediated calling extended by the foreknowledge of God and predicated upon the recipient's faith, repentance, and sanctification through the atonement of Christ; and, second, a mediated ordinance or ordination within the divinely acknowledged church or priestly order, which ordination is "given after this manner, that thereby the people might

ALMA 13

AND AGAIN, my brethren, I would cite your minds forward to the time when the Lord God gave these commandments unto his children; and I would that ye should remember that the Lord God ordained priests, after his holy order, which was after the order of his Son, to teach these things unto the people.

2. And those priests were ordained after the order of his Son, in a manner that thereby the people might know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption.

3. And this is the manner after which they were ordained—being called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God, on account of their exceeding faith and good works; in the first place being left to choose good or evil; therefore, they having chosen good, and exercising exceedingly great faith, are called with a holy calling, yea, with that holy calling which was prepared with, and according to, a preparatory redemption for such.

4. And thus they have been called to this holy calling on account of their faith, while others would reject the Spirit of God on account of the hardness of their hearts and blindness of their minds, while, if it had not been for this they might have had as great privilege as their brethren.

5. Or in fine, in the first place they were on the same standing with their brethren; thus this holy calling being prepared from the foundation of the world for such as would not harden their hearts, being in and through the atonement of the Only Begotten Son, who was prepared—

6. And thus being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God, to teach his commandments unto the children of

men, that they also might enter into his rest—

7. This high priesthood being after the order of his Son, which order was from the foundation of the world; or in other words, being without beginning of days or end of years, being prepared from eternity to all eternity, according to his foreknowledge of all things—

8. Now they were ordained after this manner—being called with a holy calling, and ordained with a holy ordinance, and taking upon them the high priesthood of the holy order, which calling, and ordinance, and high priesthood, is without beginning or end—

9. Thus they become high priests forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father, who is without beginning of days or end of years, who is full of grace, equity and truth. And thus it is. Amen.

10. Now, as I said concerning the holy order, or this high priesthood, there were many who were ordained and became high priests of God; and it was on account of their exceeding faith and repentance, and their righteousness before God, they choosing to repent and work righteousness rather than to perish;

11. Therefore they were called after this holy order, and were sanctified, and their garments were washed white through the blood of the Lamb.

12. Now they, after being sanctified by the Holy Ghost, having their garments made white, being pure and spotless before God, could not look upon sin save it were with abhorrence; and there were many, exceedingly great many, who were made pure and entered into the rest of the Lord their God.

13. And now, my brethren, I would

that ye should humble yourselves before God, and bring forth fruit meet for repentance, that ye may also enter into that rest.

14. Yea, humble yourselves even as the people in the days of Melchizedek, who was also a high priest after this same order which I have spoken, who also took upon him the high priesthood forever.

15. And it was this same Melchizedek to whom Abraham paid tithes; yea, even our father Abraham paid tithes of one-tenth part of all he possessed.

16. Now these ordinances were given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the son of God, it being a type of his order, or it being his order, and this that they might look forward to him for a remission of their sins, that they might enter into the rest of the Lord.

17. Now this Melchizedek was a king over the land of Salem; and his people had waxed strong in iniquity and abomination; yea, they had all gone astray; they were full of all manner of wickedness;

18. But Melchizedek having exercised mighty faith, and received the office of the high priesthood according to the holy order of God, did preach repentance unto his people. And behold, they did repent; and Melchizedek did establish peace in the land in his days; therefore he was called the prince of peace, for he did reign under his father.

19. Now, there were many before him, and also there were many afterwards, but none were greater; therefore, of him they have more particularly made mention.

20. Now I need not rehearse the matter; what I have said may suffice. Behold, the scriptures are before you; if ye will wrest them it shall be to your own destruction.

look forward on the Son of God” (Alma 13:16).

The major focus of the treatise is that priesthood authority is transmitted or conferred by means of, first, a “holy calling” (Alma 13:3) and, then, by an ordination “with a holy ordinance” (v. 8), “given after this manner, that thereby the people might look forward on the Son of God . . .” (v. 16). The five verses of Alma 13 which deal with this point are 1, 2, 8, 14, and 16.

According to these verses, it is the Lord God who constitutes priests, not merely other human beings (v. 1). The creation of a priest begins with a “holy calling” (v. 3). We are told that those receiving the high priesthood of the order of

the Son are first “called and prepared from the foundation of the world according to the foreknowledge of God on account of their exceeding faith and good works” (v. 3). This calling is not bestowed capriciously. God’s call is not based on God’s whim, but upon his knowledge of the faithfulness of the candidates receiving it. These candidates were, “in the first place, left to choose good or evil; therefore, they having chosen good, and exercising exceeding great faith are called with a holy calling. . .” (v. 3). It is possible to interpret the phrase “in the first place,” appearing in the last cited quotation, to refer to a time prior to mortality. But this is not essential, for the point of the verse is that God’s holy calling is predicated on faith-

fulness, not predestination.

Moreover, this “holy calling” appears to be an *unmediated* calling—that is, the calling comes directly from the divine source without the mediation or intercession of any human agency. This concept is strongly urged in several places in the treatise. I’ve already mentioned one: “the Lord God ordained priests after his holy order” (v. 1). No human agency is suggested by these words. In addition, verse 4 states that it is the “Spirit of God,” not any human being, that extends the “holy calling,” and that it is in rejecting this Spirit that one rejects the calling itself, again suggesting that the “holy calling” comes directly through the holy spirit.

This idea finds support in the stories that show how some of the most important Book of Mormon priesthood figures were called to preach repentance and the gospel directly by God, without mediation: Lehi (1 Nephi 1:18-20), Nephi (1 Nephi 17:48-54), Alma the Elder (Mosiah 18:13), Abinadi (Mosiah 11:20; 12:1-2), and Samuel the Lamanite (Helaman 13:5,7). And in the cases of Nephi and Alma the Elder, we have examples of individuals who not only received unmediated callings, but who, on the basis thereof, performed gospel ordinances, including the ordaining of others to be priests and teachers (e.g., 2 Nephi 5:26; Alma 18:18). These examples are reminiscent of others in the Bible. In the Old Testament, Moses and Aaron (Exodus 3, 4) and the prophet Samuel (1 Samuel 3) were all the recipients of unmediated callings which were the source of priestly and even kingly authority for others (1 Samuel 10:1; 16:1,13). In the New Testament, Paul was called as an apostle and commissioned to preach the gospel to the gentiles by the appearance of Jesus Christ to him on the road to Damascus (Galatians 1:1; Acts 26:14-18).

The story of the conversion of Alma the Younger is the most detailed Book of Mormon example of an individual who receives an unmediated calling to preach the gospel. Alma, a former persecutor of Christians, is rebuked by an angel, falls into a trance, awakens, announces to his astonished listeners that he has been born of the Spirit, declares that his soul was snatched from out of eternal torment, and confesses Christ as his redeemer. Then:

Alma began from this time forward to teach the people, and those who were with Alma at the time the angel appeared unto them, traveling round about through all the land, publishing to all the people the things which they had heard and seen, and preaching the word of God in much tribulation, being greatly persecuted by those who were unbelievers, being smitten by many of them (Mosiah 27:32).

Alma does not wait for an ordination by any human authority: “from this time forward [Alma began] to teach the people.” “This time forward” refers to the time of Alma’s supernatural experience, his trance in which he beheld a vision of Christ, who called him to publish the good news of redemption. That Alma rests his authority to preach and teach upon this unmediated calling is clear:

For I am called to speak after this manner according to the holy order of God, which is in Christ Jesus; yea, I am commanded to stand and testify unto this people the things which have been spoken by our fathers concerning the things which are to come (Alma 5:44).

Notice that Alma’s authority to preach the gospel rests upon his calling. It does not say that he was *ordained* to speak after this manner. This formula is repeated in Alma 5:49:

And now I say unto you that this is the order after which I am called, yea, to preach unto my beloved brethren, yea, and every one that dwelleth in the land; yea, to preach unto all, both old and young, both bond and free; yea, I say unto you the aged, and also the middle aged, and the rising generation; yea, to cry unto them that they must repent and be born again.

And in Alma 5:51, we find this unequivocal statement:

And also the Spirit saith unto me, yea, crieth unto me with a mighty voice, saying: Go forth and say unto this people—Repent, for except ye repent ye can in nowise inherit the kingdom of heaven.

It is by the unmediated act of God through the Holy Spirit that Alma the Younger is called to preach, not by a human being or an acknowledged priesthood figure. It is not clear whether this holy calling alone was sufficient to empower Alma with the authority to baptize and ordain others.

BUT the “holy calling” is only one component of priesthood transmittal. The second component, according to Alma 13, consists of an ordination “with a holy ordinance.” By this calling and ordinance, an individual becomes a high priest “forever, after the order of the Son, the Only Begotten of the Father . . .” (v. 8). The holy ordinance involves at least a designation or appointment through the mediation of a human intercessory, perhaps by the laying on of hands, as in the example of Alma the Younger, who after being called by God was also ordained by his father:

I, Alma, having been consecrated by my father, Alma, to be a high priest over the church of God, he having power and authority from God to do these things, . . . (Alma 5:3).

The text presents the holy calling as coming before the ordination: “thus, being called by this holy calling, and ordained unto the high priesthood of the holy order of God” (v. 6). Alma the Younger relies upon his holy calling to preach and upon his father’s act of consecration to preside over the Church. Alma’s ancestor Jacob, Nephi’s brother and successor, also rests his authority to preach and teach upon an unmediated calling:

Wherefore I, Jacob, gave unto them these words as I taught them in the temple, having first obtained mine errand from the Lord (Jacob 1:17).

Later there appears a clarification of the phrase “having first obtained mine errand from the Lord”:

. . . thus came the word unto me saying: Jacob, get thou up into the temple on the morrow, and declare

the word which I shall give thee unto this people (Jacob 2:11).

Although this verse refers to a specific calling to preach a specific sermon on a given occasion, it is significant that Jacob does not rest his authority to speak on his ordination or consecration as a “priest” or “teacher.” More important to him, apparently, was the unmediated calling of God. In any case, my point here is that Jacob, like Alma the Younger, is presented as the recipient both of a holy calling and an ordination or “consecration.”

The text of Mosiah 18 presents us with Alma the Elder, who, without any mention of an ordination, but apparently on the basis of an unmediated calling alone, proceeds not only to preach the gospel, but to baptize others:

O Lord pour out thy Spirit upon thy servant, that he may do this work with holiness of heart.

And when he had said these words, the Spirit of the Lord was upon him, and he said: Helam, I baptize thee, having authority from the Almighty God. . . .

And after Alma had said these words, both Alma and Helam were buried in the water; and they arose and came forth out of the water rejoicing, being filled with the Spirit. (Mosiah 18:12-14.)

On the basis of this calling, Alma the Elder later organized a church. But when his followers joined the people of King Mosiah in Zarahemla, Alma sought an appointment of the king to settle the Church within the king’s domains and obtained from the king the permission to ordain priests and teachers within the Church structure (Mosiah 25:19).

Of course, it is possible to argue that Alma the Elder had been a priest of Noah and that he was relying upon his ordination to that priesthood to baptize, ordain, and organize the Church. For this argument to succeed, we must assume the priests of King Noah were true priests, which contradicts the text (Mosiah 11:5), or we must assume that the unmediated calling of God is sufficient to transform a false priesthood into a true one, which is virtually the same as saying that a person with no ordination can be authorized to baptize and ordain by an unmediated calling from God.

Thus, the Book of Mormon posits two components of priesthood transmittal: the “holy calling” and the “holy ordinance.” The calling, coming as it does directly from God without mediation, appears to establish the relationship between the called individual and God, and for this reason I think is the most important feature of priesthood conferral. If this calling comes to those who live within an already existing, divinely authorized church structure, the calling empowers individuals only to preach repentance and teach the gospel. If the calling comes to one living outside such a church structure, it seems also to carry with it the authority to baptize, to ordain, and even to organize a church. On the other hand, in the event there exists an acknowledged church structure, the “holy ordinance” appears to be the medium that establishes the relationship of

the “called” individual to other “called” individuals within the Church. Taken together the “holy calling” and the “holy ordinance” establish the recipients’ obligations to God and to both the community of believers and to the order of priests. Thus, through the “holy calling” one is committed to the love and service of God, and through the “holy ordinance” one is committed to the love and service of humanity. These concepts emphasize that the central purpose of priesthood is to promote the love of God and humanity, upon which, according to Christ, hang all the law and the prophets.

THE Alma 13 priesthood treatise also suggests another point: The “holy ordinance” does not appear to be accomplished simply by means of the laying on of hands. This is suggested by a verbal formula invoked twice, in verses 2 and 16—“looking forward to his Son” and “look forward on the Son of God.” It is possible to interpret these passages simply to mean that, prior to Jesus’ birth, high priests were ordained by the laying on of hands to teach the people to look forward to the Messiah for redemption. But I think the verses say more. They suggest that when these high priests were ordained, the manner of ordination itself somehow communicated information which would cause “the people to know in what manner to look forward to his Son for redemption” (v. 2). This suggests that the mechanism of ordination itself was symbolic of the redemption of Christ. It was done in a way “that the people might look forward on the Son of God, it being a type of his order” (v. 16). The reference to “type” is significant, suggesting the use of typology that foreshadowed the manner in which Christ would work out the redemption. The idea of types, appearing as it does in early 1830, has important historical and theological ramifications: for, by 1842, Joseph Smith was teaching that the fullness of the priesthood, which he often called the “holy order,” was communicated by the endowment rituals, which are replete with crucifixion and other Christian typology. Whether these are the types to which these verses of Alma 13 refer is impossible to say with certainty.

IN sum, it appears that the Book of Mormon view 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 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 (Mosiah 11-17; Alma 31-35; Helaman 13-15).

III IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MODERN CHURCH

IN this final section I explore certain implications which these Book of Mormon teachings on priesthood have for the modern Church and point out some ways in which our traditions about priesthood may be in conflict with the teachings of the Book of Mormon.

First, it seems to me that the Book of Mormon advances the notion that there are really two types of authority that comprise the priesthood. The one we are most familiar with is ecclesiastical authority—the authority to preside in a Church office. The other type of priesthood authority I call charismatic or spiritual authority. “Charismatic” comes from the Greek word *kharis*, or favor, and means spiritual gift. Christ relied heavily upon this authority when he preached on earth. He spoke from outside any of the contemporary structures or organizations. He took his stand on his “holy calling,” not upon any ordination to a priesthood or an ecclesiastical office.

The purposes of these two authorities are different. The charismatic authority, which comes by a holy calling from God, is the heart of the priesthood and exists in order to connect the sacred and the profane, to reconcile the fallen world with God, to make people aware of the numinous and, finally, to bring them into the presence of the Most High. It is this authority that is attended by prophecy, healings, tongues, and the other spiritual, or charismatic, gifts. On the other hand, ecclesiastical authority, which comes by a holy ordinance, exists to develop, maintain, and protect the Church, to promote the teachings of Christ in the Church and in the world, and to provide a refuge for those seeking to flee from the world into the community of Saints. The Book of Mormon teaches that these two authorities comprise the priesthood of God and that they should operate together: the ecclesiastical authority to care for the structure of the Church, the charismatic authority to keep the Spirit burning brightly there.

Ideally, these authorities should exist in each priest as they existed in Nephi, Jacob, Alma the Elder, and Alma the Younger. But, of course, often they do not. This is because they descend to us by different means. The ecclesiastical authority is conferred by humans by means of an ordinance or ordination. The charismatic or spiritual authority comes only from God and is received only if the recipient has “exceeding great faith” (Alma 13:3). People without either authority are not a puzzle, neither are those who obviously have both. The problem arises in the Church with individuals who have only one of the two types of authority. The charismatic is endowed with spiritual gifts: insight, knowledge, truth, the power to teach and convince. The ecclesiastic is endowed with the resources and corporate power of the Church and the responsibility to watch over the community.

Unless there is a theology that harmonizes the functions of each authority, the balance will usually swing in favor of one and then the other. Historically, Mormonism began with a short

charismatic period—marked by institutional chaos and doctrinal ferment. What followed was a long period in which the ecclesiastical authority has predominated, with its concern for institutional order, fiscal stability, doctrinal simplicity and consistency, categorical morality, and public image. How are we to avoid the stagnant rigidity of the ecclesiastic or the wild uncertainty of the charismatic? The Book of Mormon concept of a “holy calling” and a “holy ordinance” seems to be an expression of the need for both the charismatic and ecclesiastical departments of the priesthood (i.e., the “inner” and “outer” priesthoods, or the “prophetic” and “priestly” aspects of the ministry). Alma 13, with its insistence on both the “holy calling” and the “holy ordinance” suggests a balance between these two dimensions of the priesthood, where the merits and weaknesses of each are recognized and acknowledged in one system of authority, referred to as the high priesthood of the holy order.

The existence of a charismatic priesthood authority which may be transmitted directly to an individual by supernatural means without mediation has important implications for women who have traditionally been excluded from ordination into the priestly orders. It may be argued that their exclusion is merely traditional or cultural, and that a woman is just as entitled to a “holy calling” from God as is a man. In fact, God’s dealings with such women as Eve, Esther, Ruth, Mary the mother of Christ, Mary Magdalene, and Emma Smith may, in light of the Book of Mormon concept, be interpreted as just such a non-ecclesiastical “holy calling,” with all of its priesthood ramifications.

But it is not women alone who may suffer ecclesiastical disenfranchisement. Men, too, if they do not submit to ecclesiastical traditions, conventions, and expectations may, in spite of their good will and even their “holy callings” (charismatic gifts) become non-persons within the priesthood hierarchy and the ecclesiastical structure. This is particularly true in the modern Church, where priesthood is viewed almost entirely in ecclesiastical terms. In spite of the teachings of the Book of Mormon and scriptures such as D&C 77:11—which speaks of the ordination of high priests of “the holy order of God” as being brought about in “every nation, kindred, tongue, and people, by the angels to whom is given power over the nations of the earth, to bring as many as will come to the church of the First-born . . .”—the Church rejects the concept that priesthood authority may now be conferred without mediation. Such a notion would, in the view of the prevailing authorities, undermine priesthood control of the Church and the spiritual security of its members. For in the wake of such a doctrine, anyone could make a false claim to priesthood authority at any time and for any reason. How would the good people of the Church know the true charismatic authorities from the false?

This question, of course, assumes that tight control of the ordination process coupled with the power to excommunicate or disfellowship rebels and apostates is sufficient to protect the Church from false claims to priesthood authority. But how is the Church protected from lack of spirituality at the top? Spiritual deficits have occurred before in the Church. The apostles at

Jerusalem were, for whatever reason, unable to spread the gospel among the Gentiles. This was not apostasy on their part, but it was intransigence. And it would have permanently crippled the Church had it not been for the unmediated calling of Saint Paul. In the Book of Mormon, we are presented with corruption at the court of King Noah. The old priests had died off or had been replaced with such that were hardened in their hearts. With corruption at the highest levels, what hope was there for the people of King Noah had it not been for the unmediated calling of Abinadi? And even among the Nephites, just prior to the coming of Christ, it appears that the Church of the Nephites would have remained spiritually comatose had it not been for the unmediated calling of Samuel the Lamanite.

In each of these situations it could be asked: How did the people realize that their own religious institutions had degenerated and that the time to repent had come? How, for that matter, did the people of the Old Testament know if the prophets that came among them, prophets such as Lehi, were true or false? How did the people know that John had authority to baptize or that Jesus was who he said he was? In fact this very question was put to Christ:

By what authority doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority to do these things?

And Jesus answered and said unto them, I will also ask of you one question, and answer me, and I will tell you by what authority I do these things.

The baptism of John, was it from heaven, or of men? answer me.

And they reasoned with themselves, saying, If we shall say, From heaven; he will say, Why then did you not believe him?

But if we shall say, Of men, they feared the people: for all men counted John, that he was a prophet indeed.

And they answered and said unto Jesus, we cannot tell. And Jesus answering saith unto them, Neither do I tell you by what authority I do these things. (Mark 11:28-33.)

Though no answer appears to be given, the answer is there: "We cannot tell," said the Jewish leaders; and Jesus replied, "Neither do I tell you." One possible interpretation of this dialogue is to conclude that there is no way to validate the authority of those called directly by God. It is by their fruits that they are known. This was so in the case of Paul, who was called on the road to Damascus and who, with Barnabas, was set apart for the ministry to the Gentiles by the Holy Spirit without mediation (Acts 13:2). The missionary efforts of Paul and his companions up to the time of the council at Jerusalem were carried out on the basis of this unmediated calling from Christ. It was only at the Council of Jerusalem that Paul's work was acknowledged and ratified by the leaders of the Christian movement. In a similar way, an unmediated calling served as the authorization for Abinadi, Alma the Elder, and Samuel the Lamanite. The same may be said of Joseph Smith. The validity and truth of his ministry is still very much a matter of debate and may be validated only by the fruits of his work: the Book

of Mormon, the revelations, the teachings, the Holy Spirit, and the community of believers.

Because we know that we cannot be certain of the validity or reality of any individual's holy calling from God, we attempt to solve the dilemma by insisting that the individual in question be duly ordained. But the Book of Mormon teaches us that to be ordained is not the same as being called. This may be unsettling to many members of the modern Church, who, because we demand certainty in matters of authority, are very quick to reject any charismatic without ecclesiastical authority (which is quite understandable in light of the abuses of individuals like the LeBarons, the Laffertys, and the Swapps), but we are strangely willing to accept any ecclesiastic under the assumption that proper ordination always includes or presupposes a divine calling. We assume this in spite of the teaching of the Doctrine and Covenants that the rights of priesthood and the power of priesthood are very different, although in practice they ought not to be divided (D&C 121:36). The Book of Mormon teaches that one is not a full priest unless one has obtained the powers of heaven by a holy calling and the rights of the priesthood by a holy ordinance. Both components of transmittal are necessary.

Another way to see the difference between the Book of Mormon notion of the priesthood and our own is in the distinction between priesthood offices and ecclesiastical offices. Most Mormons are aware that the priesthood offices of deacon, teacher, priest, bishop, elder, high priest, patriarch, seventy, and apostle are somehow different from ecclesiastical offices such as quorum president, counselor, ward bishop, high counselor, and stake president. The difference between these two categories is that the priesthood offices vest in the individual, while the ecclesiastical offices vest in the Church structure. In the Book of Mormon, the priesthood offices are the most important: God's power is presented as operating through individuals. The Church is not depicted as the source of God's power, but as its beneficiary. No reference is made to Church offices, with the exception of the high priest over the Church. In the modern Church, however, the ecclesiastical offices are all-important. No individual is empowered to act by virtue of his priesthood conferral and ordination alone. He must hold a recognized Church office before he can legitimately act in God's name. A man may be ordained to the priestly office of bishop, but he may not function in the Church, even to pass the sacrament, unless he is assigned to do so by a presiding Church officer or unless he has been set apart to preside as ward bishop. A father, though a high priest, may not baptize, confirm, endow, or perform a marriage even for his own children without express permission from someone in the chain of command.

Thus, in the modern Church, both the "holy calling" and "holy ordinance" have been subordinated to an additional condition: one's setting apart in the Church structure. To receive the priesthood, then, is not to be empowered in any real sense. It signifies perhaps only that one has been deemed qualified to serve if and when he has been set apart to a Church office. What this means is that the authority to act for God, in the

modern Church, is never allowed to vest in individuals. It is always retained by the institutional structure. Thus, it is not mainly personal spiritual gifts that drive the Church, but institutional necessities. The countervailing argument that this system has developed by inspiration to assure the worthiness of priesthood bearers to perform ordinances and to meet the record keeping requirements of the Church fails to recognize that worthiness is not essential for the priesthood to function. If, for example, one were baptized by an unworthy priesthood bearer, the baptism would still be effectual and need not be done over again. Moreover, the records of the Church could be kept just as easily if the authority to act for God were vested in individuals who were then simply required as part of their ministries to report all the ordinance work they performed. The Church, however, has chosen instead to add the requirement of a setting apart to a Church office as a prerequisite to full participation in Church governance. As a result, it has arguably deviated from the teachings and example of the Book of Mormon, by retaining the form and name of a lay priesthood while effectively denying the power thereof.

This view of unmediated priesthood conferral, though complex and undoubtedly disturbing to those who regard Church ordination as insurance against false priesthood claims, does, however, provide a theological basis for correcting the ecclesiastical structure or acknowledged priestly order if and when it becomes intolerably self-righteous, smug, complacent, intransigent, or corrupt—that is, in circumstances when it is doubtful that the problems will be resolved from within the hierarchy. The Book of Mormon clearly leaves open the possibility that there may arise individuals, called of God but not necessarily ordained or acknowledged by the institution, who could serve to reprove the wayward Church.

THE second implication I would like to discuss grows out of the fact that the Book of Mormon does not distinguish among Levitical, Aaronic, Patriarchal, or Melchizedek Priesthoods. This is important because, during the early history of Mormonism, converts to the new religion appear also to have held the view, at least at first, that priesthood was undifferentiated. Although later, they asserted the existence of varying degrees of priesthood.

The development of the doctrine of priesthood in the modern Church appears to have followed the Book of Mormon pattern. The earliest converts to Mormonism seem to have viewed priesthood authority as having been conferred upon Joseph Smith as a result of his contact with the divine source by a series of angelic visitants. It was only later, after the Church was established and individuals were ordained to various Church or priesthood offices, that the concept of grades or degrees of priesthood became clear. In other words, the first Mormon converts probably thought of priesthood as undifferentiated in nature and unmediated in origin. But with the establishment and development of the Church, emphasis shifted to mediation, ordination, and gradations of priestly authority.

This concept also finds support in the fact that, initially,

priesthood was almost exclusively connected with the right to preach and teach the restored gospel, as opposed to the right to manage and oversee the Church. This is evidenced by the earliest revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants which connect priesthood with crying repentance, or going forth to preach, or being called to the work, or having authority to proclaim the restoration (see generally D&C 1, 4, 11, 15, 16) and also by the fact that apostles were originally seen as missionaries rather than as a board of directors. In short, the charismatic rather than the ecclesiastical authority of the priesthood seemed more important to the early converts of Mormonism, who had no reason, then, to be impressed yet with the corporate dimensions of Mormonism.

MY third observation relates to the concept of equality presented in the Book of Mormon. The kind of equality referred to there is not an equality of personal gifts or temperament. The Book of Mormon does not condemn differences in spiritual or psychological make-up or attitude. It does not seek to eliminate variety in the human personality. Nor is there any suggestion in the Book of Mormon that excellence is to be shunned or leveled, or that equality is to be imposed by force of law. This is true even in the economic sphere. No matter how often the rich are castigated for not giving freely to the poor, it is never suggested that wealth be redistributed by coercive means of any kind. The equality of the Book of Mormon is personal and voluntary. People are admonished to esteem others as themselves, to freely give as they would freely receive, to relate to others as loved ones. This type of equality—equality of status and of treatment—does not mean there is no hierarchy of responsibility or no differences or degrees in intellectual or physical capacity. One individual will be a judge, another a dancer, another a grocer, and another a priest. Some will excel, others will not. These are differences of function, intellect, or talent. They are part of reality. But what the Book of Mormon stresses is that such distinctions should not serve as a basis upon which anyone may claim greater entitlements to love, life, liberty, happiness, privacy, respect, or to equal protection and treatment under the law. In fact, because each person is equally God's child, there should be no classes nor status distinctions in the Church at all. Any form of elitism is anathema, for the teachings of Christ require each person to esteem every other person exactly as if that person were as valuable as Christ himself.

We are told, particularly and emphatically, that those who are called with a “holy calling” and “ordained with a holy ordinance” may not assert these gifts as a basis for privileged treatment. The gift itself is gift enough. The receiver of the gift is admonished to remember the giver and to hold his or her gift in trust for others and exercise it on their behalf. It is in the sense of status that the Book of Mormon admonishes us to be equal. And this necessarily involves economic equality. This equality of status lies at the heart of the admonition to esteem others as oneself. This call to symmetry and reciprocity

is the central component of Christ's unconditional love, which is a love that is not limited because of the worthiness of the loved one, that never fades, that is not pretended, that is not merely self-love disguised, that sees all others as equal in dignity and value, and that attempts as a matter of personal obligation to equalize the inequalities of status and treatment by means of individual sacrifice.

When the Book of Mormon inveighs against inequality it is condemning the refusal of individuals to love in this unconditional way, and to indulge, instead, their selfishness and fear. It is admonishing us, but especially the priests and teachers and prophets and elders, that no person can claim to be the child of Christ unless that person is filled with the love of Christ. And we cannot be full of Christ's love if we love ourselves, our riches, our comfort, our invulnerability, our superior status, our power, or our prestige more than we do others who, like us, were made in the image of God. By repeating this teaching again and again the Book of Mormon leads us inexorably to the climactic verses that begin with Moroni 10:21: "And except ye have charity [that is, charismatic love] ye can in nowise be saved in the kingdom of God. . . ."

It is this equality of status and this unconditional love which God's people are called to emulate—particularly those who are called with a "holy calling." Practically, this means that every member of the Church should esteem every non-member as a member. Every bishop and stake president and apostle should esteem every other person as if he or she were called to a like calling. I believe it means that no priesthood leader should ever hear a confession of sins unless he first confesses his sins to the person whose confession he is about to hear, so that there is a reciprocity and symmetry of power and vulnerability between the confessor and the penitent. I believe, too, that true unconditional love and spiritual equality means that no priesthood leader should teach, or admonish, or counsel, or criticize anyone unless he is open and available to be taught, admonished, counseled, and criticized by anyone else.

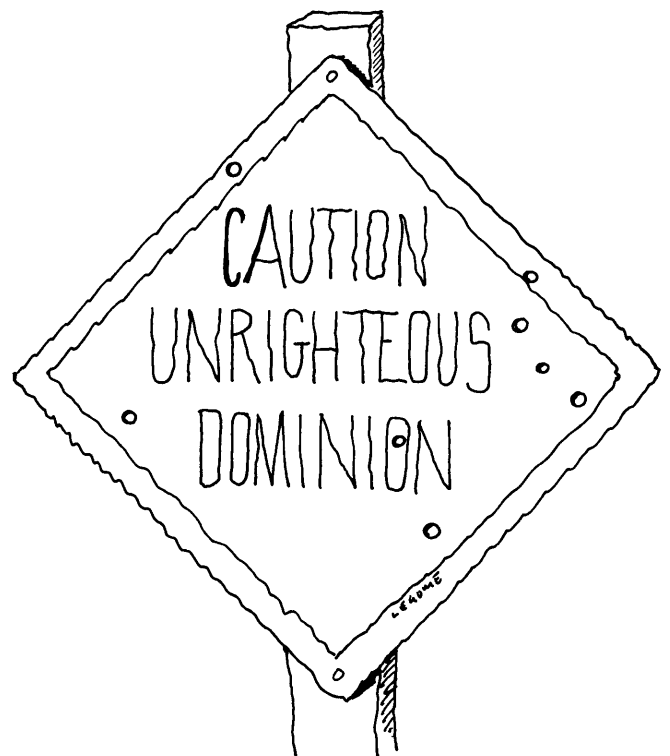
The idea that priesthood leaders are above this admonition or that they are answerable only to their leaders and not to their followers is repugnant to the spiritual egalitarianism of the Book of Mormon; it is contradicted by such sayings as:

Think of your brethren like unto yourselves, and be familiar with all and free with your substance, that they may be rich like unto you (Jacob 2:17).

In the Church today, we must replace our notion of a priesthood chain of command with the concept of a priesthood circle of prayer. Instead of a priesthood pipeline operating within the Church machine, we must think in terms of the body of Christ, wherein his blood touches every living member, and the head will not say to the foot, "I have no need of thee." The ecclesiastical priesthood is no substitute for the gift of the Holy Ghost. The presence of the priesthood correlation program cannot compensate for the absence of the integrated community of Saints, where each member contributes according to his or her spiritual gifts and callings.

At the heart of divine love is sacrifice—the willingness to

be diminished so that another may be increased. This is the meaning of Christ on the cross. God, who could have insulated himself from pain, descended to earth, assumed the aspect of his children, and bore the greatest pain in his own person. Rather than hoard the heavenly feast for himself, he invites beggars to his table. He breaks bread with us and drinks from the cup our lips have touched. When he speaks to us, it is no longer from a great white throne, centered in a vortex of light, surrounded by celestial griffins, warding off the unwashed. He speaks to us eye to eye, from a traitor's gibbet, with his blood and sweat and shame upon him for all to see, and with his wounds forever open. He comes not as king, but as slave. He comes not as judge, but as accused. He comes not as patriarch, but as bastard. He comes not to punish us, but to let us punish him. He does not ask us to love him until we are first certain that he loves us. He is the great failure who saves us from our success. He is the great fool who spares us from our wisdom. He is the rejected lover who will not, in turn, reject his love. He is a prophet without honor, a citizen of a despised nation, a poor relation, an unwanted guest. He is the voice of one crying in the wilderness of every human heart. He is the God of grief and sorrow who is the joy of our desiring. He is utterly good because he loves us in our sins and imperfections, because he freely made himself equal to us, and because he freely opened the way whereby we may be made equal to him. This is the equality of which the Book of Mormon speaks—the equality that lies at the heart of Christ's unconditional, undiminishing, unfeigned, perfectly symmetrical, and completely reciprocal, divine love. ☪



 A brief look at print religious ads

DIRECTING THE SHINE OF THE LIGHT

By Hand Carré

I SUPPOSE RELIGIONS HAVE ALWAYS SOUGHT FOR EFFECTIVE ways to interest and impress people with God's message: architecture, clerical clothing, staffs and scepters, scripture. So it is no surprise that after Gutenberg's press made possible modern mass communication and then capitalism perfected advertising that churches, too, would use the genre. This article simply shares some religious ads of U.S. Christian churches which have appeared in the printed media; it is not a definitive treatment of religious advertising, merely a fun, curious, and selective glance.

Of course, when religious advertising is mentioned most Mormons proudly think of the Church's award-winning, soft-sell Homefront television and radio spots, which link Mormons with American middle-class, family, and Christian values. Usually with a Spielberg-like touching scene, the often humorous spots conclude with "A thought from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—The Mormons." One of the most popular Homefront theme campaigns featured the thought: "Give your children everything, give them your time." Critically praised and also effective in making Mormonism appear mainstream, the expensively-produced spots are given free to broadcast stations which cheerfully air the non-sectarian spots to fill their FCC public service quota, along with news reports and other public service messages like preventing forest fires and donating blood. (In the 1980s Reagan deregulation eliminated the FCC requirement but stations continue to run public service announcements—PSAs—usually late at night.) Although obviously intended to promote the sponsor's name, PSAs must be carefully constructed to have a generic, nonsectarian message (preaching basic family values or neighborly love).

In contrast to regulated broadcast stations who must theoretically account for their use of the public's airwaves, because of First Amendment protection newspapers and magazines have never been required to provide public service space in their pages, although most do. Since the early 1950s the organization Religion in American Life (RIAL), in partnership with the

Ad Council (which coordinates non-religious PSAs like those for Scouting, United Way, and "Keep America Clean"), has distributed PSAs with variations on the theme "Attend the church of your choice." During the social-consciousness movements of the 1960s and early 1970s, RIAL stressed religion as a way to combat such problems as poverty, crime, war, racism, and alienation. RIAL's latest campaign targets youth-related issues. The spots report a statistic about teenage drunk driving, drug abuse, pregnancy, or suicide, and then urge parents to "Give them something to believe in." The effectiveness of such a general campaign, however, is difficult to measure.

Stronger in the electronic media, the LDS church does not have a Homefront print campaign but has done a few other PSAs including those for National Bible Week and National Family Week.

BY far, church print advertising has primarily been paid advertising partly because newspaper advertising costs much less than television, and churches must advertise in newspapers since people turn to a newspaper's Saturday religious section to find out where church services are held. (To find a Mormon church, however, you usually have to go to the telephone book.) Some ads have considerable success. A number of Catholic dioceses attribute the increase in holiday attendance to their "Come home for Christmas" campaign. In Miami, the Beth David synagogue found its ranks increased by half after running a number of ads. Neighboring synagogue Beth Shira ran an advertisement that said "If you think your child doesn't belong in our Jewish day school, don't worry, you're not alone" and was accompanied with pictures of Yasser Arafat and the Ayatollah Khomeini.

Although the traditional boxed format listing this week's sermons are still the predominant religious newspaper ad, some of today's ads are slick with glossy photographs and slogans more reminiscent of polished Madison Avenue than the simple Mount of Olives. Probably the most widely-respected religious advertisements are created by the Episcopal Ad Project, which has grown in recent years from a single unpaid staff assignment to a \$140 million enterprise involving over 5,000

HAND CARRÉ, an iconoclast religious observer, is a news writer for SUNSTONE.

NATIONAL FAMILY WEEK

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS



"The biggest hit since Creation"

"A must for those who are tired of drugs, violence, worry, and despair and need the Joy of the Lord"



GLOOMBUSTERS

G GOODY FOR ALL AGES

WRITTEN BY THE HOLY SPIRIT

IN EVERLASTING COLOR

FAITH OASIS CHRISTIAN CENTER

2838 Street Rd. Bensalem, PA
Showcase Plaza (215) 639-7600

ALSO AT THESE SELECTED SERVICE TIMES

SUNDAY 10:00 a.m. 6:30 p.m. WEDNESDAY 7:30 p.m.

YOU WON'T LEAVE THE SAME AS YOU CAME.



the forgiving place.

The Lutheran Church in your neighborhood.

Love thy family. Worship together.



A Public Service of This Newspaper & The Advertising Council

Looking for Success?

So is everybody else. And most of us don't know what it is, let alone where to find it. Maybe that's because we're not looking in the right places. As United Methodists we've discovered that we learn what success really means when we look for it together, with God's help.



Catch the Spirit
THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Living is more rewarding when you do it by The Book.



A public service of this publication and The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

1983

Year of the Bible

TRANSFORM YOUR KIDS' SATURDAY MORNINGS



Tired of your kids watching all that Saturday morning cartoon fare? Gung-ho G.I. Joe. Outragious, unrealistic Thundercats. Even Smurfy Saturday mornings get old, don't they?

Bring your kids to the Seventh-day Adventist church for a better Saturday morning this week. That's right, Saturday. We're the Seventh-day Adventists—a fast-growing group of Bible Christians. And yes, we go to church on Saturday, the same day Jesus and all the great Bible characters went to church. The same day the Ten Commandments say is holy. Children's programs start at 9:30. See you then.

Seventh-day Adventists
Enjoy Church Again!

Protestant congregations. The Project produces black-and-white camera-ready ads which local congregations and other religious organizations purchase, add their name and other information (such as meeting times and address), and run in a city newspaper, magazine, or church publication.

Aiming at a wide range of interests, the Ad Project appeals to parents with captions like "Are your kids learning about the power of the cross on the late, late show?" (with a picture of a movie vampire) or to unmarried women with a painting of Jesus and the caption "You can't meet God's gift to women in a singles' bar." Some of the ads have come under fire from laity and clergy for flippancy or a lack of dignity. Nevertheless, their popularity seems to be increasing and several other denominations, notably the Lutherans, have paid for the right to run the ads using their church's name.

Another campaign developed separately by the Lutheran Church is more cautious, respecting the Ad Project's critics. Attempting to appeal to a variety of human needs, the ads bill "the Lutheran Church in your neighborhood" as "the caring place," "the forgiving place," and "the loving place." Significantly, "the thinking place" is also used, reflecting a hope to combat the perception of religion as intellectually stifling. A similar concern informs such Episcopal advertisements as the one captioned "He died to take away your sins, not your mind."

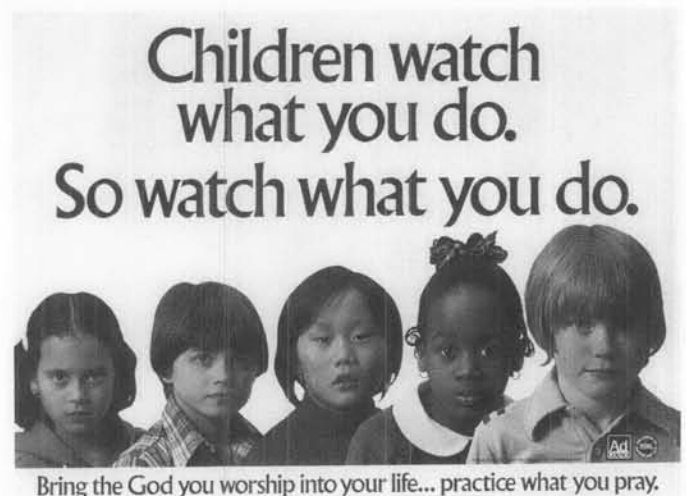
One regular watchdog of religious advertisements is *The Door*, a Protestant magazine which lampoons the ridiculous in American Christianity. Its regular "Truth is Stranger Than Fiction" column reproduces what it considers to be tasteless religious ads, such as one titled "Where's the Beef?—The Church of the Holy Spirit has the Beef!"

In contrast to Protestant churches, the LDS church only uses its own internally produced publications to communicate to its membership and the mass media for missionary purposes. Beginning in the 1970s with the multi-million dollar *Readers' Digest* insert, the Church's missionary department has increasingly experimented using print mass media to preach its message to non-Mormons. Starting in 1990, more paid-print ad campaigns are planned as missionary complements to Homefront PSAs and paid television programs which directly promote the Church's message.

Mormon and Christian critics question the wisdom of spending money on advertising instead of simply spreading the good news by good works. The justifying responses cite the scriptural imperative to preach, the belief that God revealed media technology to help spread the gospel, and the unavoidable, albeit uncomfortable, truce with the marketplace.

Understandably all churches are obliged to advertise in some way or have their message lost, and it is true that most Protestant churches seem to advertise to regain their own lost sheep. Nevertheless, the implicit competition in what ideally should be Christ's single fold should warn us that these appeals to people's religious instincts are not as simple as advertising kitchen appliances. They are dealing with worldviews which have implications that are profound, diverse, and far-reaching. The line between "being in" and "being of" the world becomes

dangerously blurred when God's ministers deal with secular entanglements and marketplace strategies—the "real world" which their beatific vision should transcend. Ultimately, the success or failure of religious advertising should be gauged as much by its fidelity to that transcendence as by its effectiveness in reaching the unchurched. ☒



There's a difference
between being baptized
and brainwashed.

The Episcopal Church believes baptism is a single sacrament designed to mark one from darkness that the way to freedom is through a sacrifice of Earthly things. We never give to give with us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Episcopal Church



Now that your
kids can name the
nine reindeer
shouldn't they be
able to name
the twelve apostles?

Is there any other religion that can name the nine reindeer? Or even name the twelve apostles? Only the Episcopal Church can name the nine reindeer and name the twelve apostles.
The Episcopal Church



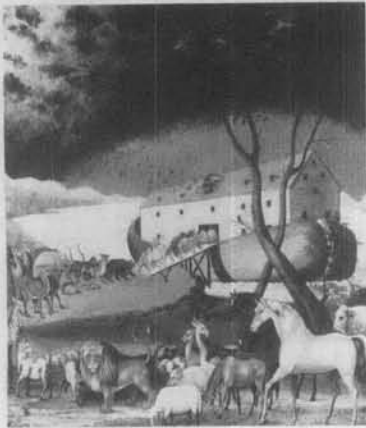
In a religion that
was born in a barn,
an open door
goes without saying.

The Lutheran Church believes that the door to the Kingdom of God is through the teaching and fellowship of Jesus Christ. The door is always open.
The Lutheran Church



Contrary to popular belief,
God welcomes singles, too.

What else can be in the Lutheran Church, you'd think, come alone or in pairs. After that, we consider you single. Come join us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Lutheran Church



What other meal
can sustain you
for a week?

Remember what we used to eat in the old days? (Thank you, God, for the spiritual nourishment.) Come join us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Episcopal Church



There's only one problem with
religions that have all the answers.
They don't allow questions.

If you've ever been to a religion that has all the answers, you know that you can't ask questions. The Episcopal Church is the only religion that allows questions.
The Episcopal Church



Will it take
six strong men to
bring you back
into the church?

The Episcopal Church welcomes you as you are. When you're in it, we'll make sure you stay. Come join us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Episcopal Church



The Lutheran Church
welcomes you.
Regardless of race, creed,
color or the number
of times you've been born.

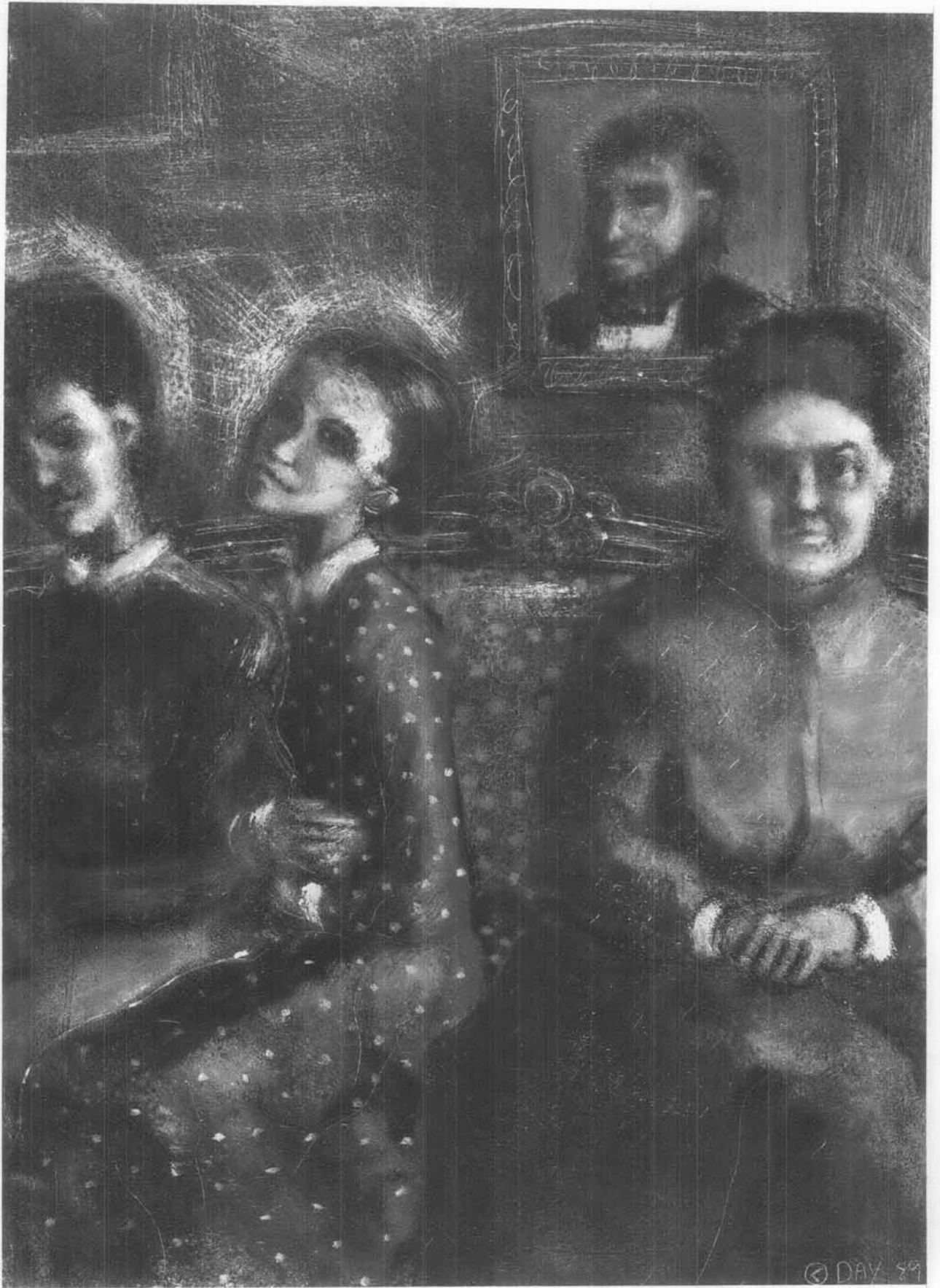
Whether you've been born once or twice, the Lutheran Church welcomes you to come and join us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Lutheran Church



If you think
being a Christian is
inconvenient today,
just look back 1500 years.

If you're ready to make the same old commitment that being a Christian means, the Episcopal Church is here to help you. Come join us in the faith and fellowship of Jesus Christ.
The Episcopal Church





BEAUCY DOW

© DAY 89

A domestic drama about the Great Accommodation

THE BEEHIVE STATE

A NEW PLAY

By Robert Frederick Lauer

INTRODUCTION

“TRUTH IS A KNOWLEDGE OF THINGS as they are, and as they were and as they are to come.” It is ironic that among the very people espousing the teachings of Joseph Smith, his definition of “the truth” is ignored, not in words but actions. Whenever religious communities embrace common creeds, values, or roles (determined by one’s sex, age, or race), Truth, to some degree, is sacrificed. History, doubts, anger, frustrations, personal aspirations are ignored and pushed down into dark little compartments. We know they are there, but if they are kept in the dark we don’t have to see them; if we keep them in separate little compartments we don’t have to deal with them for what they really are—integrated parts of our personal makeup. Honest self-appraisal is avoided and we sustain the idealized, romanticized, and sanitized vision of our situation (perhaps “predicament” is a more appropriate word).

If we are blessed (as are the characters in this play), a single event, be it great or minute, will occur, forcing light into the dark places and shattering our compartments. Because of the discomfort it inflicts, when the event occurs it is not considered a blessing; yet it finally demands that we make the most important moral decision of our lives: either to continue in our previous life as “people of the lie” or to accept the truth about ourselves. Doing the latter is frightening because the values, roles, and creeds of our community may be destroyed by the light, but in the end new values, roles, and affirmations based on things as they *really* are, have been, and will be take their place.

The Beehive State is about such an event in the lives of one family. The particulars of this family’s history, their various roles, and their theology are Mormon to the very root. Nevertheless, the situation—the encounter of the individual with the Truth and

the realization that one must surrender to Grace—is universal.

Dedicated to:
“The Cleavers”

(John, Kevin, Mark, Mitch, Blaine, Matt, Mike)

Tom Rogers

Robbin Olson

Pat Ryan

Tish Moger

Kristin Hill

Patty Tiffany

M’Lisa Bailey

Marilyn Fowler

Ernest and his three wives . . .

. . . all of whom inspired this little opus in prose, and all of whom made my last year and half in “Zion” the most exciting of my life; supporting me, in many ways unknown to them, through the commitments, the trials, the discoveries, and the little apostasies. If, as the prophets say, time is one eternal round, then somewhere on that orb we’re sealed forever together, living and reliving those beautiful (and sometimes bitter) days in the neighborhood.

— ROBERT FREDERICK LAUER

THE BEEHIVE STATE was first presented by The Olde Theatre Company (a division of Portsmouth Parks and Recreation Department; Portsmouth, VA) on 12 August 1989. It was produced and directed by Mr. Lauer. Lights were designed by Raymond Rodrigus and operated by Vickie Carrou. Norma Lauer and Joan Stone served as seamstresses. The cast was as follows:

TALMADGE CANNON

Russ Stine

EVANGELINE CANNON

Shirley Becker

BEULAH CANNON

Susan Stillman

REBA CANNON

Ann Hicks

MORONI TALMADGE CANNON

Mark Stephen Lauer

MAHONRI MORIANCUMER CANNON

Jim Cadenhead

ETHER CANNON

Tommy Gay

JASHER CANNON

Jason Askew

JOSEPH SMITH FLY

Bob Hill

HELEN FLY

Linda Marley Smith

The play takes place in the backyard of Beulah and Reba Cannon’s house in Provo, Utah, on 23 and 24 July 1903.

ROBERT FREDERICK LAUER is a freelance writer, illustrator, actor, and currently the producing director of The Olde Theatre Company of Portsmouth, Virginia. His earlier play, *Digger*, won the BYU Mayhew Award for Drama in 1982 and was published in the November 1988 *SUNSTONE*. Copyright © 1988, 1989 by Robert F. Lauer. All rights strictly reserved, including reproduction of the script and reading, recitation, and performance rights. Amateur and professional performance rights available by writing Olde Theatre Plays, 5408 Bingham Drive, Portsmouth, Virginia 23703.



ACT I

SCENE: *The back yard or one of the Cannon houses in Provo, Utah. The small two story house has a large back porch with two doors leading into two separate kitchens. A clothes line stands in the back yard.*

TIME: *The afternoon of 23 July 1903.*

PROLOGUE: As the audience is seated, a female voice can be heard singing the old Mormon children's hymn, "In Our Lovely Deseret."

AT RISE: MAHONRI, age 14, ETHER, age 13, and JASHER, a small boy who is also 13, are seated on the porch steps examining a collection of stones and one empty whiskey bottle.

MAHONRI: This whiskey bottle oughta bust the devil out of Aunt Evangeline's window and stink up her parlor good!

ETHER (*sniffing the bottle*): It smells like when the horses pee!

JASHER: Have you ever tasted whiskey?

MAHONRI: Nobody I know has ever tasted whiskey—least ways, nobody in Provo. It's forbidden. Gosh, Jasher, you're so puny for thirteen.

ETHER: I bet the Gentiles next door drink whiskey.

MAHONRI: Not the Steinbergs, Dummy!

ETHER: Daddy says all Gentile men get drunk and beat their wives.

MAHONRI: But Mama says the Steinbergs are so nice you'd swear they belonged to the Church, and Mama knows 'em better than Daddy. Now, who's gonna run up in Aunt Evangeline's yard and throw this bottle through her window?

(MAHONRI and ETHER look at JASHER.)

JASHER: I don't think my Mama would want me to do that.

ETHER: Of course she does, but she can't admit it or there'd be trouble in the family. You know Aunt Evangeline's proud and stiff-necked.

MAHONRI: Why else would she make our daddy build her that big house on Main Street while Ether, me, and my mama have to live here with you and your mama?

ETHER: We have to get her to move out of that big house.

JASHER: By throwing whiskey bottles through her windows?

MAHONRI: And by smashing her beehives and even tearing down her white picket fence if we have to!

ETHER: Jasher, you're not thinking of going back on our secret sacred oath and covenant are you?

MAHONRI: Aw, Jasher, you're so puny! Now come on—raise your

arm to the square and take it again! (ETHER forces JASHER's arm to the square.) Now repeat again after me!

(JASHER repeats each of the following lines after MAHONRI.)

I dedicate my life to driving Aunt Evangeline out of her fancy three story house . . . for her own good . . . so she'll repent and not be so stuck up . . . and if I ever, ever tell anyone about our mission . . . may my innards be torn out and stomped on by everybody!

Now cross your heart! There! You've taken this oath twice, so don't go breaking it unless you want to suffer the penalty twice!

BEULAH (*from inside the house*): Ether! Mahonri!

ETHER: Do you think she suspects anything?

BEULAH (*from inside*): Mahonri Moriancumer Cannon!

MAHONRI: She's calling me by my full name: she knows!

(BEULAH, an attractive woman in her early 40s, comes out on the porch.)

BEULAH: Ether! Mahonri! (*The boys start to run off.*) One more step, young men, and I'm picking a switch! (*The boys freeze.*) Where have you been?

MAHONRI: On Main Street watching them set up for the Pioneer Day Parade.

BEULAH: And then what did you do? Mahonri Moriancumer Cannon, look me in the eye. I'm giving you a chance to redeem yourself. And don't lie because I already know the truth.

(REBA, a pretty young woman in her early 30s, enters from the other back door.)

MAHONRI: It doesn't mater if I lie or not: you'll still whop me!

REBA: Mahonri, don't be fresh to your mother. What's happened, Beulah?

BEULAH: Evangeline just telephoned. They've been at it with rocks again. They set the bees swarming and she can't hang out her laundry. What if your brothers and sisters have no dry clothes for the Pioneer Day parade tomorrow?

ETHER: They're not my brothers and sisters!

BEULAH: That does it! I'm picking a switch!

ETHER: No! I didn't mean it!

BEULAH: Well, I should hope not! You may call them your "half-brothers and sisters" if you like, but you will claim them as family and you will not be ashamed!

MAHONRI: We're not ashamed exactly. We just don't like it—the Principle. Nobody else is doing it anymore—just old people.

BEULAH: Why are you complaining? If not for the Principle you'd have stayed three little spirits up in heaven waiting to be born—maybe in some awful place like New York to a Gentile father who'd drink and beat your mother. Would you like that? And you wouldn't have Moroni for a big brother.

MAHONRI: Moroni's different. We like him.

BEULAH: How do you think he'd feel about you being so hateful to his mother?

REBA: Jasher, tell me what you did.

JASHER: I can't. I took an oath.

REBA: Never mind that.

JASHER: Well, we got rocks—little ones—and threw them at Aunt Evangeline's house, and when she ran out, Mahonri threw a rock—a big one—at the hives to make the bees swarm.

REBA: You boys tried to make those bees sting Evangeline?

BEULAH (*trying to hide a smile*): Why, Mahonri, that is wicked!

That is just about the most sinful thing I've ever heard! Sinful, sinful, sinful . . .

REBA (*stiffling a laugh*): It's an abomination! That's what it is!

Jasher, are you sure you didn't throw that rock?

JASHER: Yes, ma'am. Mahonri wouldn't let me because he said I was too puny.

BEULAH: Well, you boys are certainly confined to that house until your daddy gets home. (*The boys moan.*) And there will be no weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth! I promised Sister Zanita that you'd have signs for the parade tomorrow, and paints and paper have been on the daybed since Sunday, so get to work.

REBA: You go with them, Jasher—and behave yourself.

MAHONRI (*to JASHER as they exit.*) Oath breaker!

JASHER: I took that oath twice, so I have to break it twice before you can stomp my innards!

(*The boys enter the house and the women break into laughter.*)

BEULAH: This is all your fault.

REBA: Mine?

BEULAH: All you have to do is say Evangeline's name in that tone of voice.

REBA: What tone of voice?

BEULAH: You know. You do that and my tongue starts wagging.

The boys overhear us and it gives them ideas.

REBA: Will you tell Talmadge about this?

BEULAH: No. Boys will be boys . . . (*Pause. Then laughing . . .*)

And Evangeline will be Evangeline!

REBA: She's not a bad woman.

BEULAH: But she does take advantage of being first . . . demanding things . . .

REBA: She'd do anything for you.

BEULAH: I suppose.

REBA (*in "that" tone*): Evangeline . . .

BEULAH: And never let you forget it! (*They both laugh.*) Stop! The boys will hear us and run over there to stone her.

(*BEULAH starts to the house.*)

REBA: Beulah . . . I have some things I need to discuss with Talmadge. Would you mind if he stayed with us tonight?

BEULAH: Well, he did stay with you his last night in town—

REBA: I know, and I wouldn't ask if it weren't important.

BEULAH: And Mahonri and Ether were looking forward to an evening with their Daddy. (*Pause.*) Why don't we let Talmadge decide.

REBA: Of course . . . yes . . . that's fine.

(*BEULAH exits. REBA, who has brought out a basket of wet laundry, begins hanging clothes on the line. Suddenly she drops the clothing, staggers and begins to faint. MORONI, age 23, enters the yard carrying school books under his arm. When he sees REBA staggering, he drops his books, runs and catches her in his arms. He leads her to the porch and seats her on the steps.*)

MORONI: Aunt Reba, are you all right?

REBA: Moroni . . . yes, I'm fine.

MORONI: Let me get Aunt Beulah.

REBA: No, don't! It's just this July heat.

MORONI: You look so pale.

REBA: I just need to catch my breath.

MORONI (*picking up laundry*): Let me hang these up for you. (*He takes off his jacket, neatly folds it and lays it on porch, then begins to hang up the laundry—most expertly. REBA chuckles at his fastidiousness.*) What?

REBA: It's odd seeing a man hanging out laundry.

MORONI: Do scriptures forbid it? I've always helped Mama around the house.

REBA: You're a good son.

MORONI: I don't know about that.

REBA: I hope Jasher follows your example.

MORONI: Jasher's a great kid; not the kind to ever get into trouble or be led astray by the other boys.

REBA: Have you spoken to your mother this afternoon?

MORONI: No. I just left the Academy.

REBA: I wouldn't be surprised if she stopped by here today.

MORONI: She probably has things to discuss with Papa.

REBA: Two or three little ones come to my mind. (*Smiling slyly.*)

So . . . who are you taking to the picnic tomorrow?

MORONI (*smiling, bashfully*): You know.

REBA: Yes, I suppose I do.

MORONI: Actually, we'll be picnicking with Zanita's folks. You think Papa will mind?

REBA: Well, you know he likes having the family together on holidays. If you're serious about Zanita, he'd say she should join your family . . . Patriarchal Order, you know.

MORONI: Yes, Yes! Patriarchal Order, Patriarchal Marriage, the Principle!

REBA: Is there a problem with that?

MORONI: Not with Zanita, but with her father. Brother Fly's mother was his father's fourth wife . . . and, well, you've heard about her . . .

REBA: Suicide? Well, it is hard sometimes.

MORONI: I knew you'd understand. Brother Fly wants Zanita to have it easier. He's afraid if we marry, later on I'll take after Papa and want to take other wives.

REBA: But the Church stopped performing plural marriages thirteen years ago.

MORONI: But it's said that certain Church authorities will still perform the ceremony secretly—

REBA: Those are rumors! I wish people would stop spreading them! It really bothers me!

MORONI: It bothers me, too! (*Pause.*) Honestly, Aunt Reba, don't you ever wish that things had worked out differently.

REBA: What things?

MORONI: You know . . . the Principle.

REBA (*quickly*): Moroni, it was a commandment.

MORONI: Well, if I was God, I wouldn't have commanded it.

REBA: One day when you are a God you can organize your worlds differently.

MORONI: If I ever make it that far.

REBA: What else is bothering you?

MORONI: Oh, I might as well tell you now. I invited Brother Fly to come here this afternoon to discuss the situation. Do you think Papa will be able to talk some sense into him?

REBA: It seems I remember Talmadge saying that Brother Fly's being named after the Prophet Joseph Smith had gone to his head, and that was a dangerous thing because there's nothing else up there.

MORONI: Oh, men are so frustrating! Why can't they be reasonable and easy to talk to like you and Mama?

(*MAHONRI, ETHER and JASHER run out of the kitchen with paper and pencil.*)

MAHONRI: Moroni, help us with our signs! You're an artist!

BEULAH (*off stage, from inside the kitchen*): I told you boys to stay inside till your daddy gets home!

REBA: It's all right, Beulah! I'll keep an eye on them! Moroni's here!

BEULAH (*dashing out of the house*): Moroni?! . . . Moroni, how's your Mama?

MORONI: I haven't been home this afternoon.

BEULAH (*relieved*): Oh . . .

ETHER: If you don't help us, Moroni, we'll tell Sister Zanita and then she won't kiss you!

MAHONRI (*giggling*): It's a sin to kiss before you're married!

ETHER: Mama, did you let Daddy kiss you before you were married?

BEULAH: He never tried. He's a gentleman who honors his priesthood—as is Moroni. So hush this nasty talk.

REBA: Your father never kissed me before we married.

BEULAH: For goodness sakes, Reba, don't encourage them!

REBA: There's nothing wrong in talking about it. He just held my hand. But young people are different these days. Maybe Moroni has . . .

MORONI (*embarrassed*): Aunt Reba!

REBA: Well, things are changing, even in the Church.

BEULAH: That may well be, but we don't have to talk about it in front of the children. Now, you boys hush or I'll pick a switch. Finish your signs.

ETHER: Only if Moroni will help us.

MAHONRI: Moroni's silly for Zanita! Moroni's silly for Zanita! . . .

MORONI (*taking pencil and paper from him*): All right, all right! Anything to shut you up. Let's see. How about something simple . . . like a beehive?
(*All fall silent.*)

ETHER: Why draw that?

MORONI (*as he draws*): Because the beehive's a symbol for the Kingdom of God. In the Kingdom we all have jobs like bees in a hive. If even one person fails to do his job, the Kingdom won't function properly—just as a hive won't function if every bee isn't kept busy. (*Finishing the drawing.*) There! Does that look like the hives in my mama's backyard?

REBA: They looked like that the last time I saw them. Beulah?

MORONI: I have an idea! Jasher, why don't you dress up like a bee when you carry this sign in the parade tomorrow?
(*MAHONRI and ETHER burst out laughing.*)

JASHER: No! Everyone will laugh at me!

MORONI (*to the laughing boys*): You two hush! No one will laugh.

JASHER: Then you do it!

MORONI: I'm too big. People *would* laugh at me.

MAHONRI: Do it, Jasher! That'll be your penalty for breaking your oath!

JASHER: I'd rather have my innards stomped!

MORONI: What?

BEULAH: They're just being silly!

MORONI: We could make him some paper wings to wear.

REBA: That would be precious!

MAHONRI & ETHER (*teasing*): Precious!

MORONI: You two hush or we'll dress you up like angels!

MAHONRI: We're no angels!

BEULAH: You're certainly not!

JASHER (*crying*): Mama, don't make me do it!

REBA: I won't. Don't cry.

MAHONRI (*teasing*): Don't cry, Little Jasher!

ETHER: He cries at everything!

REBA: You two leave him alone or I'll pick a switch!

BEULAH: Excuse me, Sister, but if any switches are needed for these two, I'll pick them.

REBA: They're always tormenting Jasher.

BEULAH: Maybe if Little Jasher weren't so sensitive, they'd leave him alone.

REBA: That's fine! Blame the child being picked on!

BEULAH: I'm not blaming *him*. You're too protective. He'll grow up weak and spineless—

REBA: Well, you let your two run wild like little vandals!

BEULAH: Maybe if you let Little Jasher run wild like other boys, he wouldn't be such a . . .

MORONI: All right! That's enough, both of you! Goodness! What brought that on? We were having such a nice visit.

BEULAH: Moroni, you couldn't understand. Your mama has always had it easier—

MORONI: She has not!

BEULAH: She's the first!

MORONI: And therefore has probably had a harder time of it than you!

BEULAH: Is that what she's told you?

MORONI: My mama's never said anything about it one way or the other.

BEULAH: All I know is that she has the luxury of her own house.

MORONI: I'm sure Mama hardly considers it a luxury living away from her husband two thirds of the time—

REBA: We all share *that* burden equally, Moroni.

BEULAH: It's difficult for two women to raise their children under one roof. We sometimes lose our tempers over nothing and say things we don't mean. (*Pause.*) Reba, forgive me for what I said. Little Jasher, I owe you an apology, too. Boys, apologize for making your little brother cry *again*.
(*MAHONRI and ETHER start to grumble, but BEULAH stops them with a smack on the heads.*)

ETHER & MAHONRI: We're sorry.

BEULAH: Let that be an end to the teasing.

REBA: I'm sorry, Beulah. I just have a lot on my mind today. Boys, I'm sorry for calling you vandals.

ETHER (*proudly*): We don't mind being called vandals, Aunt Reba.

MORONI: I'm sorry for starting the whole thing. I just thought Jasher would look cute dressed as the King Bee.

BEULAH (*after a pause*): Now we're all one big sorry lot. Just the type of family I'm sure Talmadge wants to come home to.

MORONI: Can't we all be patient with one another—if only for today? I need papa to be in a good mood.

TALMADGE (*voice off stage*): Lovely rose garden, Mrs. Steinberg!

MORONI: That's him now! Can we forget all this?

REBA: It's forgotten.

MORONI: Thank you, Aunt Reba. Everyone smile . . . Aunt Beulah, please? (*BEULAH smiles.*) Thank you, Aunt Beulah! Boys, run and greet him! He loves it when you do that!
(*TALMADGE enters carrying a suitcase and a banner that reads, "DESERET: This is STILL the place." He is late middle aged, handsome in a rugged way, with well groomed gray hair and beard. He is dressed like a typical American business man of the period.*)

TALMADGE (*grumbling*): Those Gentiles are bringing down the entire neighborhood! Their yard's a regular jungle! (*The boys ambush him with cries of "Daddy!" and "Father!" He lights up.*) Well, well! who have we here?

ETHER: What did you bring us, Daddy?

TALMADGE: Let me see. I have a bag of hoarhound candy for Mahonri, one for Ether, and one for Jasher!

(*He hands each of them a small brown paper bag. BEULAH kisses him on the cheek.*)

BEULAH (*indicating his banner*): What in the world is this?

TALMADGE: My banner for the parade tomorrow.

BEULAH: You're marching again?

TALMADGE: I'll march as long as I'm able. We have to remind the younger ones, like this fellow here—(*He grabs MORONI by the neck, playfully wrestling with him.*)—why the Saints settled here in the first place. Otherwise they'll embrace a lot of new fangled doctrines and notions, and write us clean out of the history books. (*Approaching REBA.*) You look pale, Reba. Does she look pale to you, Beulah?

REBA: I'm fine, it's just the heat. (*She quickly kisses his cheek.*)

TALMADGE: I'm sorry I didn't bring you any candy, Moroni, but I didn't expect to see you today.

MORONI: Papa, you know I hate hoarhound candy.

TALMADGE: That's right. You like that sweet sugar stuff they sell now days.

MORONI: I suppose I do.

TALMADGE: That's the problem with young folks these days: their tastes are too rich and sweet. How's your mother and brothers and sisters?

MORONI: They're getting ready for the parade tomorrow.

TALMADGE: Good! (*TALMADGE stands back and looks everyone over.*) What a picture! They say obeying the Word of Wisdom guarantees a long life, but I think a man can be a coffee fiend and live to be as old as Methuselah so long as he can gather his wives and children around him on holidays—Oh, Moroni, don't mention to your brothers and sisters that I brought these boys the hoarhound candy. I don't think the older ones would care, but the little one is still a cry baby.

MORONI: Papa, I've invited some folks in the ward over this afternoon to discuss something important with you.

TALMADGE: Oh?

REBA: Moroni's been seeing a young lady.

TALMADGE: Wonderful! It's about time! Twenty-three and still single; I was afraid you were going to stay an old bachelor forever.

MORONI: Maybe not even until the end of the summer.

TALMADGE: What a blessing! Who is she?

MORONI: Zanita.

TALMADGE: Zanita who?

MORONI: Fly.

TALMADGE: Zanita Fly . . . (*Pause. Then he realizes . . .*) Not that Fly girl?

BEULAH: She's very sweet, Talmadge. She's the boys' Sabbath School teacher and they just love her to death.

TALMADGE: Isn't her father that bastard who never shuts up in priesthood meeting?

BEULAH: Talmadge!

TALMADGE: He is one, and by his own admission. He thinks the principle was all some kind of mistake. Well, his mother was his father's fourth wife, and if the Principle was a mistake, that must mean he considers himself a bastard. Who am I to call the man a liar?

MORONI: This is exactly why you need to talk—to work out your differences.

TALMADGE: His differences are with God, not me.

REBA: Be that as it may, he has a precious daughter—

MORONI: And remember, Papa, the sins of the fathers are not passed on to their children. There's no need to assume that Zanita thinks like her father . . . unless you believe in Original Sin, and that's as apostate as believing the Principle was a mistake.

TALMADGE: Well, I'm not apostate. Oh, let the man come over. I'm sure I can set him straight.

MORONI: Thank you, Papa!

TALMADGE: "Thank you, Papa! Thank you, Papa!" Where am I sleeping tonight?

REBA: Talmadge, I have some things to discuss with you—(*Suddenly aware of BEULAH.*)—but I suppose they can wait.

TALMADGE: No, if we have things to discuss, I'll stay with you tonight.

BEULAH: Actually, Talmadge, you did stay there your last night in town.

MAHONRI: Come on and stay with us tonight, Daddy!

TALMADGE: Is that right, Reba?

REBA: Ah . . . yes. I wasn't thinking. Tonight is their turn.

TALMADGE: Then that's settled. Are you sure you're feeling all right, Reba?

REBA (*unconvincingly*): Yes, I'm fine.

BEULAH (*to TALMADGE*): Come inside. I'll fix you something to eat. (*BEULAH throws REBA a look as she leads TALMADGE and her boys into her kitchen. The banner is left propped up on the porch. REBA becomes aware that MORONI is watching for her reaction to the situation.*)

REBA: Come on, Jasher.

JASHER: I want to go with Father.

REBA: You can see him after he's eaten.

JASHER: Aw, Mama . . .

(*JASHER exits into REBA's kitchen. REBA notices that MORONI is still watching her.*)

REBA (*unconvincingly*): I'm fine, Moroni. Really I am.

(*REBA exits. Now alone, MORONI paces nervously about, then he sits on the steps and begins to pray silently, fervently. EVANGELINE enters the yard carrying a basket of wet laundry. She is TALMADGE's age, well groomed, but the years haven't been as kind to her. MORONI quickly jumps up as EVANGELINE, obviously upset, goes directly to the clothes line and begins removing REBA's clothes.*)

EVANGELINE (*without looking up*): Is your father back yet?

MORONI: He just arrived.

EVANGELINE: He really needs to discipline his sons—not *ours*—his!

MORONI: Mama, don't wrinkle those up, Aunt Reba just hung them out.

(*He helps her with clothes.*)

EVANGELINE: He would never have let you and your brothers behave like this.

MORONI: Have Mahonri and Ether been throwing rocks at the house again?

EVANGELINE: They set the bees swarming so I can't get to my clothes line.

MORONI: Well, don't say anything to Papa today.

EVANGELINE: He shouldn't know that his children are making my life a living hell? They don't get these ideas by themselves.

They hear Reba and Beulah gossiping about me—

MORONI: Oh, Mama . . .

EVANGELINE: "Oh, Mama!" They're jealous because I have my own

- house. I know what I'm talking about! My father had six wives. I grew up around that sort of thing.
- MORONI: Mama, please! I don't want Papa upset today. Brother Fly is coming over to talk to him.
- EVANGELINE: Well, let me get out of here before the bullets start flying.
- MORONI: Don't say that!
- EVANGELINE (*smiling for the first time*): I'm only joking. If it's God's will that you marry Zanita, the bishop will sanction the wedding regardless of what your father says.
- MORONI: You think?
- EVANGELINE: I *know!* (*Pause, then teasingly.*) I must say, I never thought your friendship with Zanita would ever evolve into anything so serious. She's never impressed me as the serious type.
- MORONI: You sound as though you don't approve.
- EVANGELINE: Why, she's just as sweet as she can be! A *precious* little child. Lord knows she needs someone to take care of her. She's so petite and helpless.
- MORONI: I like feeling needed. It's important to a man.
- EVANGELINE: To all of us.
- MORONI: But it's more important to a man. That's what I think.
- EVANGELINE (*handing him a dress to hang up*): Of course you do, dear. I don't know how your father and I would have survived had we been so needful of each other's constant care and attention.
- MORONI: I think you're jealous of Zanita—of girls today because they have it so much easier than you did, and because they won't have to deal with the Principle.
- EVANGELINE: Nonsense! If anything, I feel sorry for them! The Principle built characters, fostered independence and self-sufficiency—something these little girls today could use. Sister Christiansen says that her grandson's little wife sobs and sighs and throws a terrible to-do about missing him so whenever he has to travel. My heart bleeds for any woman who can't go at least a year without a man.
- MORONI: What about those years Papa was away on Church missions?
- EVANGELINE: I was happy he was serving the Lord.
- MORONI: When he married Aunt Beulah you didn't speak for a week.
- EVANGELINE: I don't remember that!
- MORONI: How about when Papa spent that year in jail for unlawful cohabitation?
- EVANGELINE: There were hard times, but the daughters of Zion were strengthened by them. We worked *with* the men back then to make the desert blossom as the rose. We were the first women to be granted suffrage. The Brethren told us to shake off the chains of male domination and *we obeyed them*. We voted, ran businesses, households—even kept the Church going when the Feds drove the men underground because of the Principle—
- MORONI: Mama, you should do lecture tours again.
- EVANGELINE: The Church doesn't need the sisters to defend themselves now that statehood's been granted. Why, not one suffragette will be marching in the parade tomorrow. Imagine! (*Pause.*) If you do marry this Zanita, treat her as if she has a mind—even if you have to act on blind faith for a time. Don't protect and pamper her. Let her be your helpmate. *Force* her to be if she puts up a fuss . . . and for goodness sakes, don't wear her out!
- MORONI (*embarrassed*): Mama!
- EVANGELINE: I know what I'm talking about! One woman is no equal for one man's passions. That's why the Gentiles keep their wives on pedestals—easy access! And the poor creatures are so worn out and confused by it all, they're in a stupor most of the time.
- MORONI: You will leave this world defending the Principle.
- EVANGELINE: I'm merely imparting some motherly advice.
- MORONI: Well, I don't think Reba's very happy . . . with the Principle.
- EVANGELINE: Oh, she's fine.
- MORONI: It's hard for her . . .
- EVANGELINE: For all of us.
- MORONI: But you do have your own house.
- EVANGELINE: They could to if they'd demand it. I know one man and all his wives can't live under one roof. The summer my Papa married wife number four, he decided to move the family to this farm by Little Cottonwood Canyon. We were going to raise silkworms by the house—this was back when the Church was promoting *that* industry. It was going to be paradise—so Papa thought. That little experiment lasted three miserable months. Mind you, not a harsh word was ever spoken, but you could cut the air with a knife at any given moment, and if we had stayed there a day longer, only the silkworms would have survived the holocaust.
- MORONI: I'm going to say something to Papa about Reba.
- EVANGELINE: No! That's between the two of them! Reba can speak for herself.
- MORONI: You know she won't.
- EVANGELINE: Then she'll have to learn. She's young and I think she still has romantic notions about your Papa—if you can imagine that! She'll have to learn that this silly Gentile romanticism is incompatible with the Principle.
- (TALMADGE, *finishing a sandwich, comes out of BEULAH'S kitchen.*)
- TALMADGE: I heard some swarming out here and thought it might be those Flies.
- EVANGELINE: No. Just the Queen Bee come to stir up the hive.
- TALMADGE: What mischief are you up to?
- EVANGELINE: My turn to house you doesn't come until day after tomorrow, I couldn't wait that long to find out how our great patriarch has been spending his summer.
- TALMADGE: Would you believe I've been feeling lonely?
- EVANGELINE: Well, you've certainly come to the right place to cure that. I haven't had time to feel lonely since 1878.
- TALMADGE (*putting arm around MORONI*): I've missed my family.
- EVANGELINE: Three days here should see you through the dog days of August.
- TALMADGE: Complain if you like, but I envy your being able to stay with the children.
- EVANGELINE: Then let's trade places. You mind the children and I'll run the "plantation" in St. George.
- TALMADGE: You'd like that, wouldn't you?
- EVANGELINE: I've done it before.
- TALMADGE: And you could do it still?
- EVANGELINE: Better than the three strongest men you know.
- TALMADGE: Believe me, if it were acceptable, I'd keep house and you could earn the bread.

EVANGELINE: In a world where Gods appear to adolescents and angels bury gold bibles, who's to say what's acceptable?

TALMADGE (*looking proudly at MORONI*): The children keep me feeling young.

EVANGELINE: Really? They're aging me prematurely—not that I'm complaining. Women accept aging more graciously than do men. Thus we have the Principle.

TALMADGE: God himself commanded that we practice the Principle.

EVANGELINE: Only because he discovered what we women have always known: keep a man feeling virile and he's your servant for life.

TALMADGE (*to MORONI*): Son, let that be a lesson to you: never discuss theology with women. They're incapable of the kind of thinking required.

EVANGELINE: On behalf of my sex, I thank you for the compliment.

REBA (*appearing at her door*): Evangeline!

EVANGELINE: Sister, you don't mind if I borrow your lines?

REBA: Of course not—

BEULAH (*voice from inside*): Evangeline?

(BEULAH *appears at her door.*)

EVANGELINE: Why, hello, Sister. Lovely day for doing laundry.

TALMADGE: Are your lines down?

EVANGELINE: No. For goodness sakes, Beulah, put your eyes back in your head. We share one husband; why not one clothes line?

TALMADGE: What are you hiding from me?

MORONI: Nothing, Papa. Isn't that so, Mama?

TALMADGE: No. There's something. She's smiling.

EVANGELINE: I'm delighted to see you.

BEULAH: Stop your games, Evangeline! Just tell him! I hate your games!

EVANGELINE: Nothing has happened so let's forget about it. That sweet little Zanita Fly and her parents will be here any time now.

JASHER (*coming out of REBA's kitchen*): Aunt Evangeline, I'm sorry we threw those rocks at your beehives today—

BEULAH, MORONI, ETHER & MAHONRI: Jasher!

REBA: Oh, Jasher, for goodness sakes!

TALMADGE: What's this?

EVANGELINE: Jasher, I wasn't going to mention it.

TALMADGE: Why not?

EVANGELINE: I promised Moroni I wouldn't.

MORONI: Mama!

TALMADGE: Moroni—

EVANGELINE: With the Flys coming over, we didn't want you falling to pieces.

TALMADGE: I don't fall to pieces!

EVANGELINE: Lower your voice, Talmadge.

MAHONRI: Jasher, you're puny!

ETHER: Covenant breaker!

TALMADGE: I've told you boys a hundred times not to throw rocks at your Aunt Evangeline's house!

EVANGELINE: Just forget it, Talmadge.

TALMADGE: I will not! You boys apologize at once!

ETHER: Only if you promise not to whop us!

EVANGELINE: Don't talk back to your father.

BEULAH: Excuse me, Sister! (*Slapping ETHER's head.*) Don't talk back to your father!

TALMADGE: I've never whopped any of you! I don't believe in spanking children.

EVANGELINE: Only because you're not around them twenty-four hours a day.

TALMADGE: I've never laid a hand on any of my children!

EVANGELINE: You've never laid a hand on any of *their* children.

TALMADGE: Or *your's!*

EVANGELINE: What about the time Moroni laughed at old Sister Kimball's mustache in Testimony Meeting?

TALMADGE: Moroni, have I ever spanked you?

MORONI: Papa, that was over fifteen years ago.

TALMADGE: Well, I don't remember having ever hit you!

MORONI: All right! You never hit me!

TALMADGE: You're just saying that to shut me up! My own family thinks I'm a tyrant!

REBA: No, we don't, Talmadge.

EVANGELINE: Far from it. If anything, you're too soft on these boys.

BEULAH: You can keep your opinions to yourself, Sister!

MORONI: Mama, please—!

BEULAH: Well, maybe if I had some property of my own!

EVANGELINE: If you want it, Sister, demand it!

BEULAH: Ladies do not go about *demanding* things!

EVANGELINE: Well, don't resent *me* because *you* insist on being a "lady"!

TALMADGE: What are you talking about?

BEULAH: Just forget it, Talmadge!

EVANGELINE: Reba, I must commend you on the fine job you're doing raising Little Jasher.

REBA (*overlapping*): That's enough, Evangeline, *please . . .*

EVANGELINE: It's a pity others in this house don't follow your example.

TALMADGE: *Evangeline*, I have had enough of this!

EVANGELINE: So it's all my fault again? I'm in the wrong for being honest?

(JOSEPH SMITH FLY, *a clean-shaven gentleman in his late 40s, and his wife, HELEN, have entered the yard unseen.*)

JOSEPH (*clearing his throat*): I hope we haven't arrived at an inopportune time.

MORONI (*running to shake his hand*): No, of course not, Brother Fly!

TALMADGE (*half-heartedly shaking his hand*): We were just having a little family council.

JOSEPH: I remember my father and his wives having many such "councils."

EVANGELINE: Hello, Helen. . . . Isn't Patriarchy a wonderful system? We women and children can express ourselves freely knowing that in the end our husbands will do whatever *they* think is best.

HELEN: Indeed it is, Sister Cannon. Why, I suppose I have just about the most kind, thoughtful husband a girl could want. He always has my best interest in mind. I'm blessed, very, very blessed.

EVANGELINE: My, but that does make you a lucky . . . "girl."

HELEN: Oh, I don't mean to flaunt my good fortune.

EVANGELINE: Flaunt? You're merely *informing* us, dear.

MORONI: Sister Fly, where is Zanita?

HELEN: She is . . . ah . . . Joseph?

JOSEPH: Zanita was too busy to come.

HELEN: She's about to work herself to death on the parade tomorrow. I tell her not to take so many Church callings, but she's so dedicated, you know.

EVANGELINE: Let's hope the little dear doesn't over-do it. We want her to have her strength for the actual proceedings tomorrow.

HELEN: Don't you worry. Joseph told her she's to stay home and get a good night's sleep tonight.

JOSEPH (*looking at MORONI*): She's been out every night for the past two weeks, you know.
(*Uncomfortable pause.*)

MORONI: Well, shall we go inside or have a seat here on the porch?

EVANGELINE (*leaving the yard*): Do whatever you like. Moroni, would you fold those clothes when they're dry and bring them home with you?

MORONI: Mama, don't you want to stay and discuss things with the Flys?

EVANGELINE: I'm sure Brother Fly wants to speak to your papa alone.

HELEN: But Sister Cannon—Evangeline, we girls could enjoy a nice little visit inside while the brethren are meeting . . . maybe inside, Sister Cannon—Beulah?

BEULAH: Of course. I've some homemade root beer inside.

HELEN: How lovely! Joseph?

JOSEPH (*helping HELEN up the porch steps*): Yes, go on, Helen. Get out of this heat and enjoy a cool glass.

EVANGELINE: Goodness, Talmadge, didn't your mother teach you any manners? Follow Joseph's example and help Beulah up the steps like the gentleman I know you are.
(*He does and EVANGELINE starts off.*)

HELEN: Oh, Sister, won't you stay?

EVANGELINE: That would be such a blessing, Helen, but my children are waiting—three boys and three girls—and the boys can't manage without their mother there. You know how dependent men are on us when it comes to doing things.

HELEN: Indeed! Why, Joseph could never put up laundry, much less take it down and fold it like Moroni here.

EVANGELINE: What a catch my son will make for some lucky young girl. Who knows? Perhaps it will be Zanita if our husbands decide in her favor.

HELEN: I suppose we'll have to leave that to the brethren, won't we?

EVANGELINE: Won't we?
(*She turns to leave.*)

REBA: Evangeline, don't leave.

BEULAH (*finally relenting*): Please join us, Evangeline. It's been a long, hot day and there's enough root beer for all of us.

MORONI: Mama? . . . please?
(*EVANGELINE looks at MORONI, then silently goes into the house with the women and children.*)

HELEN (*exiting*): Oh, how special! I've been meaning to stop by for a visit ever since you moved into this house. How long has it been?

BEULAH: Five years.
(*They are gone.*)

TALMADGE: Well, Brother Fly, I'm told we need to talk.

JOSEPH: Yes, Brother Cannon. We have a situation on our hands.

TALMADGE: Your daughter wants to marry my son. Yes, I suppose that qualifies as a "situation."

JOSEPH: Your son wants to marry my daughter. That makes it *quite* a "situation."

TALMADGE: I don't think it's as serious as all that.

JOSEPH: To be totally honest, I think my phraseology is quite appropriate.

TALMADGE: Oh, we're being *totally* honest. Then perhaps we'd best begin with a prayer.

JOSEPH: I prayed before I came over.

TALMADGE: But I did not.
(*They kneel, facing one another and clasping each other's hands.*)

JOSEPH: Shall I offer it. I don't mind.

TALMADGE: Neither do I, Brother Fly.

JOSEPH: All right . . . I just thought since I was the guest . . .

TALMADGE: But since this is *my* home . . .

JOSEPH: Whatever. (*Pause.*) At my home I let the guest offer the prayer.

TALMADGE: But you've already prayed today.

JOSEPH: That's right, and you have not.

TALMADGE: I prayed this morning upon rising, again at breakfast, again before starting my trip here, just a while ago before lunch, and I assure you, had I known you were coming here, I would have prayed again. I'm a praying man.

JOSEPH: Did I imply that you weren't? I prayed upon rising, before breakfast, before and *after* closing a business transaction, at lunch, and *twice* regarding this situation.

TALMADGE: I would have done the same, but until a moment ago I didn't know we had a situation.

JOSEPH: Indeed we do. *Quite* a situation.

TALMADGE: Shall we pray.

JOSEPH: It's your home

TALMADGE: Heavenly Father, we thank you that we can meet together as loving brothers in your priesthood. We ask that you would soften any hard heart, loosen any stiff neck, open any closed narrow mind; and show that person that it is only by obeying *all* your commandments—even the unpopular ones—that he will ever be worthy to be called your son . . . and help us straighten out this situation in the name of Jesus Christ. Amen

JOSEPH (*glaring at TALMADGE*): Amen. (*Under his breath.*) I'd say the score is one to zero, your favor.

TALMADGE: Did you say something, Brother Fly?

JOSEPH (*rising*): About this situation . . .

TALMADGE (*rising*): Our children wish to marry.

JOSEPH: And you see no problem in that?

TALMADGE: Is there one?

JOSEPH: There could be a problem of faithfulness to the Church.

TALMADGE: Brother Fly, I didn't know! Zanita always struck me as being very devout.

JOSEPH: She is!

TALMADGE: Then what's her problem?

JOSEPH: My daughter has no problem!

TALMADGE: Then I see no reason why I should object to her marrying my son.

JOSEPH: Your son has the problem—excuse me. Let me rephrase that: Your son has potential for problems.

TALMADGE: Moroni is an upright young man who . . .

JOSEPH: I'm referring to his ideas on marriage.

TALMADGE: I'm still in the dark, Brother Fly.

JOSEPH: From whom did your son get his ideas about marriage?

TALMADGE: From your daughter, of course.

JOSEPH (*sighs*): Brother Cannon, you are not a stupid man.

TALMADGE: Thank you, Brother Fly. I hope the sentiment remains mutual.

JOSEPH: Men such as yourself didn't outsmart the Feds by being naive. They know exactly what and what not to hear; how to answer and how to evade a question.

TALMADGE: Brother, why don't you just ask what you want to know.

JOSEPH: Very well, but I'll need time to choose my words so you'll understand.

TALMADGE: Take all the time you need. Would you like a dictionary? I have one in the house.

JOSEPH: Thank you no, Brother. (*Pause.*) "Raise up a child in the way he should go, and when he is older he will not depart from it." Is that scripture true?

TALMADGE: All scripture is true.

JOSEPH: But that particular verse?

TALMADGE: A man has his free agency and can always reject his upbringing.

JOSEPH: But don't most people tend to live as they were raised?

TALMADGE: Sister Snow raised her children as good Latter-day Saints, but her oldest boy ran off to San Francisco and became a Catholic Priest. Tragic. Very Tragic . . .

JOSEPH: Have you raised your children to be good Latter-day Saints?

TALMADGE: I've tried my best.

JOSEPH: And you've succeeded?

TALMADGE: So far.

JOSEPH: Have you a testimony of the Church?

TALMADGE: Indeed! Have you?

JOSEPH: Indeed. Have you a testimony of the New and Everlasting Covenant of Marriage?

TALMADGE: Of course.

JOSEPH: And your children?

TALMADGE: They're free to choose for themselves what they will believe.

JOSEPH: What is your testimony concerning marriage, Brother Cannon?

TALMADGE: That *all* must marry in order to enter God's Kingdom.

JOSEPH: And they must be married for time and all eternity by the priesthood—not just "until death do you part"? Why is that?

TALMADGE: So that they might become gods themselves in the next life . . .

JOSEPH: And create worlds of their own just as our Heavenly Father has?

TALMADGE: Why, Brother Fly, you're a regular gospel scholar.

JOSEPH: How were our spirits created?

TALMADGE (*with a sigh; it's all so elementary*): The Gods created our spirits in the same way our parents created our bodies: they were begotten by our Heavenly Father and born of our Heavenly Mother.

JOSEPH: I know we have the same Heavenly Father, but have we the same Heavenly Mother?

TALMADGE: I can't remember. That was before I was born. Can you remember, Brother Fly?

JOSEPH: I'm not speaking of you and me alone, but of all the world's people. Have we the same Heavenly Mother?

TALMADGE: The Church says we do not.

JOSEPH: Some past Church leaders have *speculated* that we do not.

TALMADGE: No, the prophets have always taught that we do not.

JOSEPH: Then are some of God's children bastards?

TALMADGE: I've known my share of them.

JOSEPH: I'm speaking literally now. Are some of God's children misbegotten?

TALMADGE: Certainly not!

JOSEPH (*as if winning a case*): Ahah! Then God must have more than one wife.

TALMADGE: You've been a Mormon all your life and just now realizing this?

JOSEPH: It's true?

TALMADGE: All of the gospel is true.

JOSEPH: But why does God need many wives? Couldn't one Heavenly Mother have borne us all?

TALMADGE (*chuckles knowingly*): Oh, Brother Fly, Brother Fly . . . how many people have lived on this earth?

JOSEPH: Millions.

TALMADGE: And how many other worlds has Heavenly Father created?

JOSEPH: Worlds without end.

TALMADGE: Each filled with millions of his children. Now, how long does it take a woman to carry a child to term?

JOSEPH: Nine months, of course.

TALMADGE: Of course. And isn't a man's spirit a more complicated and miraculous thing than his body?

JOSEPH: I suppose.

TALMADGE: Then it stands to reason that it takes at least nine months for a Goddess to carry it to term. Now, if Heavenly Father had only one wife, think how long it would take her to bear—oh, let's say—only a million spirits. Allowing some rest time between births, Heavenly Father would have to wait eternities just to have enough children to populate even one tiny planet. Why, he wouldn't be a very powerful God at all, and that one poor Heavenly Mother would be exhausted and probably a nag from all that birthing. She'd always be chewing on Heavenly Father's ear, and Heaven would be a living Hell. Therefore, common sense tells us that Heavenly Father must have many wives.

JOSEPH: How many?

TALMADGE (*after a thoughtful pause*): Two hundred.

JOSEPH: Two hundred?!

TALMADGE: Some gospel scholars have figured as many as a thousand or more, but if I were God, I could get the work done quite well with only two hundred.

JOSEPH: But since Heavenly Mother is powerful in her own right, couldn't she bear many spirits at one time?

TALMADGE: How many? Two? Three?

JOSEPH: A dozen . . . even a hundred.

TALMADGE: Like a litter?

JOSEPH: I wouldn't put it that crudely.

TALMADGE: NO!

JOSEPH: Why not?

TALMADGE (*with a sigh*): It's very simple. Humans are made in the image of the Gods, and humans don't have litters. A Heavenly Mother might have twins or triplets—if they run in her family—but she can't birth a litter like a sow or dog or cat, and it's blasphemy to even suggest such a thing.

JOSEPH: Does Moroni think it blasphemy?

TALMADGE: Why not ask *him*?

JOSEPH: Have you encouraged him to continue polygamy?

TALMADGE: With my children, I teach by example. Now I've some questions for you. Were the founding prophets true or false?

JOSEPH: True . . .

TALMADGE: And does truth change?

JOSEPH: What?

TALMADGE: Shall I pick my words more carefully? If two and two make four today, will they tomorrow?

JOSEPH: Of course!

TALMADGE: Why?

JOSEPH: It's a mathematical law.

TALMADGE: It's God's law and his laws never change!

JOSEPH: Oh, I know what you're driving at!

TALMADGE: Good! Then I needn't go on with these stupid questions like some damn lawyer! I know the prophets' teachings on polygamy are true!

JOSEPH: That was sixty years ago!

TALMADGE: It was true then and it's true now!

JOSEPH: Maybe God has changed his mind about it!

TALMADGE: Truth never changes!

JOSEPH: If I can change my mind, why can't God change his?

TALMADGE: Why do *you* think God commanded the Principle?

JOSEPH: Maybe it was to test our faith.

TALMADGE: Like Abraham being asked to sacrifice Isaac?

JOSEPH: What's wrong with that?

TALMADGE: So you're comparing marriage to human sacrifice? It was a burden placed on us as a test?

JOSEPH: It was a burden to my mother—and to many other women!

TALMADGE: It will ensure all of those women a crown of glory in eternity!

JOSEPH: But what about *this* life? The Principle had to be abandoned for the Church and our state to survive!

TALMADGE: Do you think God would have abandoned our people after all the persecution we endured? If we had held out just a bit longer, he would have saved the Church from the Feds and given us statehood—and we wouldn't have had to compromise our Faith!

JOSEPH: I *know* the Church's decision to end polygamy was God's will!

TALMADGE: You don't *know*! You *believe*!

JOSEPH: I know!

TALMADGE: You *believe* you know, and I *know* you only believe you know, because what you believe is false!

JOSEPH: It is not!

TALMADGE: I know the Principle is God's will because I've lived it! You haven't lived it, so you can never know that I don't know!

JOSEPH: But I do know!

TALMADGE: Know what?

JOSEPH: That . . . that you're wrong! I know it because the Holy Spirit is burning in my bosom! I can feel it!

TALMADGE: Holy Spirit my eye! That's the lunch you prayed over!

JOSEPH: Is not! It's the Spirit!

TALMADGE: Well, the Spirit's burning in me, too!

JOSEPH: The same Spirit can't be burning in both of us!

TALMADGE: It sure can't! It must be *another* Spirit burning in you!

JOSEPH: Oh ho! Like the Devil? Is that what you're implying?

TALMADGE: I didn't want to mention names.

JOSEPH: I know it's the Holy Spirit burning in me!

TALMADGE: I know it's the Holy Spirit burning in me!

(*The WIVES and CHILDREN come running out of the house.*)

JOSEPH: I know the Lord would never let any man lead the Church astray!

TALMADGE: Where in the Hell did you get an idea like that?

JOSEPH: I will not stand here and be subjected to profanity!

TALMADGE: Hell isn't profanity! It's a geographical location. It's where you get your far fetched ideas, and it's where you can go in a handcart for all I care!

MORONI: Papa!

JOSEPH: I should have known you'd digress to this when you delivered that sermon to me under the guise of a prayer!

TALMADGE: You were mighty anxious to pray yourself!

JOSEPH: Only so I might be spared another sermon by another over-the-hill self-righteous polygamist!

HELEN: Joseph, please!

TALMADGE: A lot of good my "sermon" accomplished!

JOSEPH: You, Brother, could learn a little humility!

TALMADGE: Why, I'm one of the most humble men there is!

JOSEPH: I'll never find out about that as I never intend to speak to you again! Helen, come on!

HELEN (*handing glass of root beer to REBA*): Well . . . ah . . . thank you for the root beer, Sisters.

TALMADGE: I guess this means we no longer have "quite a situation on our hands"?

JOSEPH: I wouldn't let my Zanita marry into your family if it were the last one on God's green earth!

TALMADGE: Thank Heaven! Otherwise, we'd have to see each other on holidays and at family gatherings, and I would have to pretend to like you for the children's sakes. I don't think I could be that much of a hypocrite!

JOSEPH: You might be surprised at how easily hypocrisy comes to you! Helen, are we going or not!

HELEN: Yes, Joseph.

(*They start off.*)

MORONI: Brother Fly, can't we . . .

JOSEPH: And stay away from Zanita!

TALMADGE: Tell her to stop chasing my son!

JOSEPH: Hardhead! Apostate!

(*The FLYS are gone. MORONI, sad and silent looks after them.*)

EVANGELINE: I knew it would come to this if they discussed theology.

REBA: Talmadge, couldn't you put aside doctrines for a moment and think of what's best for Moroni?

TALMADGE: I was thinking of what's best for Moroni. Now, leave us alone. I need to talk to him, man to man.

EVANGELINE: Oh, spare us please! *Another* man to man talk?

BEULAH: We'll be inside.

(*The WIVES and CHILDREN go into the house. TALMADGE puts his hands on MORONI's shoulders and squeezes them.*)

TALMADGE: I tried reasoning with that man, but he's no Latter-day Saint. Forty years ago they'd have slit his throat for apostasy.

MORONI (*breaking away*): I don't care about forty years ago. It's 1903, he is a Latter-day Saint, there are many more just like him and I want to marry his daughter.

TALMADGE: Marry her. I'll put up no fuss.

MORONI: But he will unless you apologize.

TALMADGE: For what? My life? Having my family? NO! I won't. I can't. (*Pause.*) You look tired. You've been losing sleep—

MORONI: Papa, all the other fellows my age are married with

children. In less than two years I'll be twenty-five, and according to Brigham Young, if I'm still unmarried, a menace to society!

TALMADGE (*chuckling*): A bachelor who's a menace at twenty-five was probably a menace at nineteen. Wild boys are like wine. They've always been seductive, they just become more so with age.

MORONI: But I've never been wild. I've never really looked at girls the way other fellows have—

TALMADGE (*chuckling*): You're a virtuous young man—

MORONI: No! I'm not! I've always felt with women . . . Numb? . . . Scared?—I don't know! They've always been so . . . above men. (TALMADGE *laughs*.) It's not funny, Papa!

TALMADGE: You just respect women.

MORONI: No! Listen to me for once! (*Pause*.) How do you do it, Papa? I mean, *three wives*?

TALMADGE: What do you mean? I just *do* it.

MORONI: But you don't seem to . . . *see* them. All of this is hard on them. I know you don't mean to, but you hurt them—in little ways you don't see.

TALMADGE: What?

MORONI: The thing is, I don't see how any man can avoid hurting women. It's as if it's in their nature. But it's not in mine. I've never wanted responsibility for hurting some girl. But Zanita's—I don't know!—so pleasant, so agreeable that it all seems . . . *safe* somehow. The Church says everyone *must* marry. Isn't that true? *Everyone*? Then I better marry Zanita—soon, or I might not ever!

(MORONI *sits on the steps and looks away, visibly shaken*.)

TALMADGE *cannot understand*. *Pause*. Then . . .)

TALMADGE (*uncomfortably*): Now don't get yourself all upset. (*Pause*.) You're always doing that . . . getting yourself upset. You've always been so . . . tender hearted. . . . So sensitive for a boy. (*Pause*.) Would you like a blessing. (*No answer*.) Why don't I give you a blessing? (*He takes a small vial from his pocket, stands behind MORONI, pours oil from the vial onto his head, places the vial back in his pocket and places his hands on MORONI's head*.) Moroni Talmadge Cannon, in the name of Jesus Christ and by the authority of the holy Melchizedek Priesthood, I anoint you with oil and seal this father's blessing upon your head. Be strengthened. Stand proud. For you are one of our Heavenly Father's choicest sons! Accept the dominion given you. Power in the priesthood be upon you now and always. You will be given beautiful, precious children numerous as the stars in the sky and *wives* to bear them for you, to be a comfort and a blessing to you . . .

MORONI (*tearing away*): No! Keep your blessing! I don't want it! Keep everything and let God keep the *wives*!

TALMADGE: Moroni, listen to me—

MORONI: I only want *one wife*—Zanita!

TALMADGE: Marry her, but know that it's your right, your privilege and *responsibility* in the priesthood to have more—many more!

MORONI: I don't believe this!

TALMADGE: The Principle is a commandment.

MORONI: Brother Fly was right about you!

TALMADGE: You have to start planning for eternity *now*—

MORONI: I don't care about eternity!

TALMADGE: That's blasphemy!

MORONI: What you're saying is blasphemy! The Church stopped performing plural marriages!

TALMADGE: Does the Church govern God?

MORONI: I won't argue theology!

TALMADGE: The Manifesto was only a trick to beat the Devil at his own game! The *Church* might not perform plural marriages, but that doesn't keep certain priesthood leaders—the apostles, even the prophet himself—from performing them by their own authority.

MORONI: Rumors!

TALMADGE: Facts! The Principle must continue—

MORONI: That's what the old timers say!

TALMADGE: That's what the prophet and apostles *now* say! I should know! I'm getting married myself when I return to St. George!

(*Silence*. Then . . .)

MORONI (*overlapping*): What?

TALMADGE (*overlapping*): I was going to tell the family tomorrow. No one else must know. (MORONI *stares at him in disbelief*.) What?

MORONI: Mama doesn't know? She doesn't even suspect?

TALMADGE: She'll have no problems with this.

MORONI: You really believe that, don't you? Who is she—this new wife of yours? Is she young and pretty? How old is she, Papa? My age? Is she more suited to be my wife than yours?

TALMADGE (*sincerely hurt*): I have sacrificed everything—*everything!*—to bring you and your brothers and sisters into this world! I deserve better than this from you!

MORONI: How many more, Papa? How many more “aunts” and brothers and sisters do I have hidden away?

TALMADGE: I only have *three*! What's wrong with you? I thought you'd be happy for me.

MORONI (*disgusted*): Well, why wait until tomorrow? Mama! Mama! The whole family's here now. Why postpone the good news? Aunt Beulah! Aunt Reba!

TALMADGE: You don't think they'll understand?

MORONI: We'll see.

TALMADGE: Son, I know women.

MORONI: And I know Mama.

(*The WIVES and BOYS come out on the porch*.)

REBA: What is it?

EVANGELINE: Uh-oh! They've had their man-to-man talk.

BEULAH: What's the matter?

MORONI: Papa has a surprise.

(*All eyes turn on TALMADGE*.)

MAHONRI, ETHER & JASHER: A surprise? What is it, Daddy? What?

BEULAH: Talmadge?

MORONI: Go on, Papa.

TALMADGE: There is to be a wedding.

BEULAH: Congratulations, Moroni!

REBA: I knew everything would work out!

MORONI: No. Aunt Reba, I'm not the one getting married.

TALMADGE (*sheepishly*): I am.

BEULAH: What?

TALMADGE: I was going to tell you tomorrow, but Moroni didn't think the good news could wait.

REBA: What?

BEULAH: Is this a joke? I don't understand.

EVANGELINE (*smiling, with calm authority*): No, Talmadge.

TALMADGE: No?

EVANGELINE: No. I forbid it.

TALMADGE: You *forbid* it, Evangeline?

EVANGELINE: As first wife it is my right to say there will be no new wives.

TALMADGE: You have no authority to *forbid* anything.

EVANGELINE: You have enough wives!

TALMADGE: I will be the judge of that!

EVANGELINE: Oh, is that the way it is now?

TALMADGE: That's the way it's always been. As first wife you are to set an example of obedience to the priesthood for your sister wives.

EVANGELINE: All my life I've been obedient! Now it's your turn!

BEULAH: She's right, Talmadge. The Church says no new plural marriages.

TALMADGE: True. But the priesthood can act independently of the Church.

EVANGELINE: Who is she, Talmadge? Some milky white, doe-eyed young thing in St. George?

TALMADGE: All of you think you know me so well, don't you? I hate to disappoint you, but, no, Evangeline. She's two years your senior: a widow with seven children.

REBA: Do you love this woman, Talmadge?

(Pause. Then . . .)

TALMADGE: Yes, Reba . . . yes, I do.

(Another pause. Then—)

BEULAH: I'm with Evangeline! I forbid it also!

TALMADGE: Now *you're* forbidding, too? What is it with you women?

BEULAH: Certainly two wives can have some say-so!

TALMADGE: Why are you so upset? Jerusha married her dead husband for eternity. Our marriage will only be for this life.

EVANGELINE: Let's strike a bargain. Forget this—Jerusha, did you say?—forget about marrying her for this life only, and we'll let you marry a dozen beautiful young girls of your choice for the next life. Once I'm dead I won't mind them a bit!

TALMADGE: No bargain!

EVANGELINE: And where will your new bride live? Surely you won't desert her in St. George during the fall and winter.

TALMADGE: During the winter she'll live here in Provo.

EVANGELINE: Oh. Here in this house?

TALMADGE: I'm renting the Cole's place on Second East . . .

BEULAH: The house with the big front porch I told you I liked so much?

EVANGELINE: I've a better idea. Let her live right here in this house.

BEULAH: Oh, that's a fine how-do-you-do!

EVANGELINE: Hear me out, Sister. You and Reba have had your eye on my big house on Main Street. There are several good sized rooms not now in use, and if Talmadge's wedding plans go through, our large bedroom will also be vacant.

MAHONRI: You mean we get to move into the big house.

EVANGELINE: That's right. You and your brother can even have our big double bed as your own. I'll sleep in your sister's old room—in the single bed.

MAHONRI: I knew this would happen sooner or later!

ETHER: And we didn't even have to use the whiskey bottle!

TALMADGE: Evangeline, be sensible. What are you going to do? Divorce me?

EVANGELINE: So you've got me trapped, do you?

TALMADGE: I don't want you trapped. I only want you to be reasonable.

EVANGELINE: In other words, submit to your will again.

TALMADGE: Not my will. The Lord's.

EVANGELINE: I know my resources are few. All I have is the house in my name. But in that house is our bedroom—

BEULAH: No more talk of bedrooms in front of the children, Evangeline!

EVANGELINE: Why not in front of the children? Let them see things as they are. Talmadge, marry this woman and my bedroom door is closed to you forever.

MORONI: Mama!

REBA: Evangeline, don't!

EVANGELINE: I must! It's all I have left with which to bargain. As it turns out, it's the only place I've ever had any power over him. Isn't that right Talmadge? (*He doesn't answer. There is a long, painful pause and Talmadge is unable to look EVANGELINE in the eyes. Finally . . . softly . . .*) Talmadge?

TALMADGE (*looking at her sadly*): Evangeline . . .

EVANGELINE: You could at least let me have that one illusion.

TALMADGE: I've never been able to lie to you.

EVANGELINE: No, you've always found it so easy to be totally honest with me. (*To MORONI.*) After all my years of defending the Principle, you must think me a great fool.

MORONI: No, Mama. Not you.

(Pause. EVANGELINE strolls over to look at TALMADGE's banner.)

EVANGELINE: So this is the Beehive State, is it? Well in the hives there's no such thing as a *king* bee. You've upset the hive, Talmadge. Don't get stung. (*Smiling.*) Boys, your wicked Aunt Evangeline is going to make you ice cream over at the big house!

ETHER: Chocolate?

EVANGELINE: Chocolate it is! Beulah, do you want to move your clothing over tonight?

BEULAH (*who has started removing clothes from the clothes line*): Tomorrow will be soon enough. Boys, help me with your Aunt Evangeline's laundry.

ETHER: We're really moving?

BEULAH: Into the big house on Main Street!

(EVANGELINE, BEULAH and BOYS exit.)

MORONI: I'm going to see the bishop. I will marry Zanita!

(MORONI exits. REBA looks at TALMADGE.)

REBA: Evangeline was wrong. You haven't always been honest with her . . . not about me. (*Pause.*) I thought I would be the last one in your life.

TALMADGE: I did, too.

REBA: You're truly in love with this Jerusha, aren't you?

TALMADGE: I am.

REBA: Maybe in love for the first time in your life?

TALMADGE: I think so.

REBA: Well, I can't fight against that.

(REBA starts off.)

TALMADGE: You're going with them?

REBA: For now. Sooner or later I'll have to tell them the truth about us. After I do, I'm sure they won't want me around.

TALMADGE: Reba, *you* at least can be reasonable—

REBA (*hurrying off*): Good-bye, Talmadge.

(TALMADGE, now left alone, flops down on the porch steps, dismally, his chin in his hands. He looks around the yard to make sure no one will hear him. Then . . .)

TALMADGE: Damn it all to Hell!

C U R T A I N



ACT II

SCENE: *The same as before. Early the next morning—24 July 1903.*

AT RISE: MAHONRI and ETHER are throwing rocks at the house. TALMADGE comes running out of the house, buttoning up his shirt and tucking it in his pants. He looks as if he hasn't slept a wink all night.

TALMADGE: Boys, stop that! You'll break a window!

MAHONRI: Good!

TALMADGE: Put those rocks down! Mahonri, do you hear me?
(TALMADGE steps towards them and MAHONRI, with stone in hand, raises his arm higher and glares at TALMADGE.) Young Man, don't you even think about it! Now both of you drop those rocks now!

ETHER: Promise you won't beat us!

TALMADGE: Have I ever beat you before?

ETHER: Promise!

TALMADGE: All right! I promise—even though you both deserve a good spanking.

ETHER: We don't deserve a spanking! You do!

TALMADGE: What did I do?

MAHONRI: You upset Mama and Aunt Reba and Aunt Evangeline, and now they're gonna be suffocates in the parade today!

TALMADGE: They're going to be *what*?

MAHONRI: Suffocates! They're gonna march like a bunch of *suffocates*!

TALMADGE: Do you mean *suffragettes*?

MAHONRI: Yeah—that! And we don't want them to!

ETHER: Nobody else's mother is a . . . one of those!

MAHONRI: They're making banners and everything!

ETHER: Daddy, tell them they can't do it!

MAHONRI: You're the Patriarch! You hold the priesthood and they're only women. They have to listen to you.

ETHER: All the other women listen to their husbands.

MAHONRI: The only reason they're marching is because of you.

TALMADGE: Is that what they told you?

MAHONRI: No. Last night we couldn't sleep, so we snuck downstairs and listened outside the kitchen door to them talking.

TALMADGE: Why couldn't you sleep? Did you miss your own bedroom?

MAHONRI (*happily*): No, Daddy. We like Aunt Evangeline's house. We got to sleep in your old bed.

ETHER: Mama says we're gonna live there from now on. Are you living here?

TALMADGE: It'll be kind of lonely.

MAHONRI: Don't worry. We'll take turns coming by to visit you, and on holidays maybe Mama will let us spend the night here.

ETHER: You can have our old bedroom, Daddy.

TALMADGE: Thank you.

MAHONRI: But first you have to stop them from marching in the parade today.

TALMADGE: What does Moroni say about all this?

MAHONRI: He isn't here?
TALMADGE: He didn't come home last night?
MAHONRI: Aunt Evangeline thought for sure he was here fussing with you again.
TALMADGE (*starting for the house*): Well, your Aunt Evangeline was wrong.
ETHER: Where are you going?
TALMADGE: To call the police.
MAHONRI: But you have to stop Mama and Aunt Evangeline and . . .
TALMADGE: Boys, you'd have more luck stopping them than I would.
(*The BOYS throw down their stones in frustration and stomp off right. TALMADGE starts up the steps when REBA enters the yard from left leading JASHER. She looks as tired as TALMADGE.*)
REBA: Talmadge. . . ?
TALMADGE: Reba, is it true that Moroni didn't come home last night?
REBA: He wasn't here?
TALMADGE: No. I'm calling the police.
REBA: Wait! We need to talk.
TALMADGE: Later. When Moroni left here he was more angry than I've ever seen him.
REBA: Now! Talmadge.
TALMADGE (*taken aback*): Reba? The tone of your voice—
REBA: So what if Moroni stayed out all night? He's a grown man and this is Provo, Utah! What trouble could he possibly get into *here*, for goodness sakes?
TALMADGE: Maybe he's left Provo!
REBA: Not without taking Zanita.
TALMADGE: Maybe he has. Maybe they've run off to be married by some money-grubbing *minister!*
REBA: I doubt that. Moroni doesn't share your enthusiasm for secret weddings.
TALMADGE: So I'm still the villain, am I?
REBA: I didn't come here to talk about you, but about *me!* (*She starts to cry.*)
TALMADGE (*trying to comfort her*): Oh, look. You've gone and gotten yourself all upset and crying. Come over here and sit down.
REBA: I'd rather stand, thank you! (*to JASHER.*) Go inside and pick out some clothes for the parade.
JASHER: I've never matched my clothes before, Mama.
REBA: Then this will be your first time.
JASHER: What if they don't match?
REBA: You're a big boy now. You know your colors. I trust you.
(*JASHER goes into the house.*)
TALMADGE: You look exhausted.
REBA: I've good reason.
TALMADGE: You didn't sleep well? (*REBA laughs scornfully at the ridiculous question.*) You haven't told Evangeline or Beulah . . . anything, have you?
REBA: Not yet.
TALMADGE: Are you moving into the big house?
REBA: That depends on your reaction.
TALMADGE: To what?
REBA: My pregnancy. (*TALMADGE'S mouth drops open in stunned silence.*) Why don't you call the police about Moroni and we'll talk later.
TALMADGE (*still stunned*): Moroni can take care of himself.

REBA: Look what I've done: gone and gotten you all upset. Come sit down.
TALMADGE: You're certain?
REBA: I've been sure for three weeks now.
TALMADGE: You haven't told the others?
REBA: I wanted you to be the first to know. If Beulah suspects anything, she hasn't let on. There's no reason why she shouldn't know with the way I've been fainting and falling about recently. She must think me such a light-headed little simp!
TALMADGE: But when Jasher was born the doctor said you could never have any more children.
REBA: It seems we've been visited by a little miracle—of all times! (*Pause.*) Jasher nearly killed me. I'm afraid, Talmadge—afraid that this baby is a judgment—a punishment from God.
TALMADGE: A punishment for what?
REBA: For breaking every oath and covenant I made when we married. I have broken them all in my heart. Sometimes I simply despise Beulah and her boys, and other times Evangeline because she is so strong. Beulah and I laugh and say terrible things about her. Then the boys hear us and throw rocks at her house. That's no way for a mother to influence her child! Sometimes I wish that a disease or accident would strike this family so there'd be only you and me and Jasher. Sometimes I hate the Principle, and I . . . I hate—please don't hate *me* for this!—I hate God for commanding it—*sometimes!* I'm sorry, Talmadge. Last night I couldn't sleep because for the first time I almost hated you. I thought I'd be the last one in your life. Some of my aunts were so bitter because they couldn't be my father's first wife. I never cared about that as long as I could be the last. And I thought—I was so sure. But now I find out there's to be another and that you have never been in love with anyone. So last night I almost hated you. For a moment I wished we had never married, and I'm afraid this pregnancy is a punishment for my wickedness. (*She begins to cry. TALMADGE puts an arm around her.*)
TALMADGE: Heavenly Father wouldn't punish you in this way. Where do you women come up with such crazy notions?
REBA: But I've broken my marriage covenants—
TALMADGE: In our hearts *all* of us have. God forbid we should be struck down for it. Heavenly Father understands.
REBA: But he's a man. How could he?
TALMADGE: It's a mystery to me. Maybe that's why he's God.
REBA: Why do you have to marry someone else?
TALMADGE: It's not because *you're* deficient in any way.
REBA: But *I* must be if you need someone new.
TALMADGE: I don't know . . . maybe when you're older you'll understand . . .
REBA: Talmadge, don't do that!
TALMADGE: What?
REBA: Condescend! Whenever I press a point you treat me like a child!
TALMADGE: Forgive me, Reba. You're not a child. I know that. (*Pause.*)
REBA: You're still going to marry this lady from St. George?
TALMADGE: If it's God's Will.
REBA: Well, when God tells you what he wants you to do, come to me and I'll tell you what I'm going to do.
TALMADGE (*tenderly*): I'll tell you what you're not going to do—
REBA: I'm not a child. I won't obey you.

TALMADGE: Then can I tell you what I wish you *wouldn't* do? I wish you wouldn't move in with Evangeline.

REBA: Well, I didn't marry her. . . .

TALMADGE: I wish you would stay here.

REBA: With you?

TALMADGE: I'll be here.

REBA: For a quarter of the time if God approves of your plans.

TALMADGE: It'll be a good time, that quarter. *(Pause.)* Reba, I'll try to make it up to you. I'll be a better father to Jasher and this baby and a better husband to you.

REBA: Beulah won't like it if I stay.

TALMADGE: You just leave Beulah to me.

REBA: You're talking as if you're my father again.

TALMADGE: Old habits are hard to break.

REBA: Try your best.
(She gently kisses him. They embrace.)

TALMADGE: Now I think you'd better go inside and make sure that our little boy is wearing clothes that match.
(BEULAH and EVANGELINE appear dressed in white for the parade and carrying signs which read "Plural wives for national suffrage" and "Women of Utah—vote!" They catch REBA and TALMADGE embracing.)

EVANGELINE: Now isn't that a touching sight? I've imagined the two of you sharing a tender moment such as this many times, but never did I envision so sweet a little picture.

TALMADGE: Well, if it isn't the household brigade.

EVANGELINE: Indeed. Coming for armaments. Materials for more signs are in Beulah's kitchen.

TALMADGE: What do you hope to accomplish with this marching?

EVANGELINE: Oh? Reba's told you of our plans? How thoughtful of you, Sister.

TALMADGE: Ether and Mahonri told me, and if you walked here from Main Street carrying those signs, I'm sure every gossip in Provo knows about it by now.

EVANGELINE: Let's pray not. Without the element of surprise our appearance at the parade will prove shamefully anti-climatic.
(Heading for kitchen.) Now you two continue with whatever you were doing.

BEULAH: What were you doing, Reba?

EVANGELINE: Why, Beulah, whatever is going on here is between Talmadge and his wife.

BEULAH: Aren't I his wife?

EVANGELINE: Only when it's your turn. You see, the Principle is rather like a game of hide-and-seek. When Reba is "it," you hide and keep out of her sight. When you're "it," you cover your eyes and she hides. You can take my turn if you like. After yesterday's little revelation I won't be playing again. It seems Talmadge never thought me much good at the game to begin with.

BEULAH: If you're not playing any more, Evangeline, neither am I.

EVANGELINE: That leaves you with only two players, Talmadge: Reba and your new friend in St. George.

REBA: Would both of you stop it!

TALMADGE: Yes! I've had enough of this . . . wicked talk!

BEULAH *(to REBA)*: I thought you were finished with him!

REBA: I never said that!

EVANGELINE: That's true, Beulah. We did all the talking last night. She just sat silent, looking pitiful and lost.

REBA: That's exactly how I felt. And underneath all your high talk and manners, I think you feel the same way, Evangeline.

EVANGELINE: You've the gift of discernment, Sister, but I have my self respect.

REBA: A lot of good that alone will do you!

EVANGELINE: It's kept me company on many a night these past fourteen years. Which is more than I can say for Talmadge.

BEULAH *(To REBA)*: Why didn't you just say you were coming back to him?

REBA: And be eaten alive by the two of you?

EVANGELINE: Poor child . . .

BEULAH: Poor child, my eye! You're always trying to get him to yourself!

REBA: So are you!

BEULAH: But I've never resorted to sneaking about! You tell us that you're taking Jasher for a walk, and lo and behold, we find you here!

TALMADGE: I've had enough of this!

BEULAH: Oh, Talmadge, you know you're enjoying this!

TALMADGE: Enjoying *this*?

BEULAH: Having three women fight over you?

TALMADGE *(sarcastically)*: Of course! I'm having a splendid time! Let's forget the parade and keep at this all afternoon!

REBA *(to BEULAH)*: I brought Jasher here to change for the parade!

BEULAH: Then why aren't you dressing him?

REBA: I'm following your advice and giving him a little freedom, Sister!

BEULAH: I'm going to the bishop right now! Ether! Mahonri! A new wife indeed! I don't believe for one moment the Church approves of any of this! If the bishop will do nothing, I'll go to the stake president and on up to the prophet himself!
(Calling.) Mahonri! Ether! *(MAHONRI and ETHER appear at right.)* Come on! We're going home!

MAHONRI: Which home?

BEULAH: To Aunt Evangeline's!

ETHER: Where are you going to carry those signs?

BEULAH: In the parade today—if I live that long!

MAHONRI: We're not coming with you if you carry those stupid signs!

BEULAH: Young man, you'll do as you're told!

ETHER: Daddy, don't let her do this!

BEULAH: Your daddy has nothing to do with it! Now come along! I have to see the bishop before the parade!

MAHONRI & ETHER: No!

REBA: Boys, don't be fresh to your mother.

BEULAH: I can handle my own children, Sister! You two *move* before I pick a switch!

REBA: Oh, that's fine!

BEULAH: I'll thank you to keep out of this!

REBA: No wonder they misbehave with you always threatening to beat them!

BEULAH: They're boys! They can take it!
(JASHER appears at the kitchen door dressed in contrasting plaid knickers, shirt, tie and socks.)

JASHER: Mama? Is this all right?
(ETHER and MAHONRI start laughing at him. Even EVANGELINE stifles a laugh.)

REBA: Jasher, what have you done?

JASHER: I like checks. *(The BOYS laugh louder.)* Stop laughing at me!

MAHONRI: You can't go to the parade like that!

JASHER: I can if I want!

REBA: Come on, Jasher. Let's find something else for you to wear.
 JASHER: I didn't do all right?

(ETHER and MAHONRI laugh louder.)

REBA (glaring at them): You did just fine!

BEULAH: Boys, keep quiet or he'll start crying again!

JASHER (to BOYS, starting to cry): Stop laughing at me!

REBA: Now, Jasher, just stop that! You did just fine! If you want to wear that to the parade, you can!

JASHER: Then everyone will laugh at me!

REBA: So you'll laugh right back at them!

MAHONRI: Little Jasher's too puny to do that!

ETHER: Why does he always have to be such a cry baby?

BEULAH: Leave Little Jasher alone!

REBA (exploding): Stop calling him "little"! "Little Jasher" this! "Little Jasher" that! I'm sick of hearing it!

BEULAH: Why are you so sensitive all of a sudden? We don't mean a thing by it! He is little for thirteen.

REBA: He is not little and he's not thirteen!

BEULAH: She's out of her head! I do believe she's taken complete leave of her senses!

REBA: No, I've come to my senses!

TALMADGE (moaning): Not today, Reba! Wait until tomorrow at least!

REBA: Talmadge, I can't take living this lie another minute! (To the WIVES.) Jasher is only ten years old. He was born during my first year of marriage to Talmadge.

BEULAH: You were married in Mexico in '89, and that makes Jasher thirteen.

EVANGELINE: That's right, Reba.

REBA: No, Sisters.

BEULAH: Yes! You were married in August of '89.

REBA: How would you know, Beulah?

EVANGELINE: She would know because I sent her to Mexico as my proxy for the ceremony, to place your hand in Talmadge's.

REBA: Which she never did.

TALMADGE: Well, now you've done it Reba!

EVANGELINE (overlapping): What?

REBA: She has to find out sooner or later, Talmadge! It's all very well for you to keep it a secret when you're traipsing off to St. George all the time! But I have to live here with them!

BEULAH (to EVANGELINE): I . . . I was carrying Ether . . . I was ill! That Mexican heat was unbearable!

EVANGELINE: You've deceived me all these years?

BEULAH: You never asked me about it! You just assumed—

EVANGELINE: I assumed you were an honest woman!

BEULAH: Don't use that self-righteous tone with me! I consented to the marriage! I obeyed the commandment!

EVANGELINE: That wasn't enough!

BEULAH: That is the gospel according to you!

REBA: Don't be too angry, Evangeline. You, more than anyone, should be able to sympathize with what she was feeling.

BEULAH: Sympathize? She wanted revenge!

EVANGELINE: Call it what you like. I wanted you to feel what it was like to give your husband to another woman.

BEULAH: Up until then I never really felt like Talmadge was my husband because of you! For God's sake! I was eight months with child!

EVANGELINE: And I was six months along when I placed your hand in Talmadge's.

BEULAH: Yes, and strong as the mountains around us!

EVANGELINE: To look strong was my duty to the Church. It wasn't easy—not at all!

REBA: I'm sure it wasn't, Evangeline. But if you had seen Beulah then: avoiding everyone—even Talmadge—and when the pains began, Talmadge was worried—well, help me explain, Talmadge! You were there!

TALMADGE: I was worried about the baby, so I took her to the nearest station, ten miles away, and put her on the next train for Utah.

REBA: Before he got back, Apostle Taylor, who was running from the Feds, had to leave; but he said he'd perform the ceremony when he returned that way in a month.

TALMADGE: I returned to Utah to check on your health, Beulah, and that's when I was arrested for unlawful cohabitation.

BEULAH: Why didn't you tell me you hadn't married her?

REBA: I asked him not to. I couldn't let you think you had won that day with your sudden sick spell.

TALMADGE: We had no idea that I'd spend nearly a year in prison. When I was released one thing led to another and we didn't get around to having the ceremony until June of '92.

REBA: When Talmadge moved the entire family here five years ago, we decided to tell everyone that Jasher was older—that he was eight.

BEULAH: But why lie about that?

TALMADGE: We had to protect the Church. We couldn't let anyone know that we had been married *after* the Manifesto.

REBA: That wasn't the only reason. We wanted this family to have some peace and quiet after all those years of running and hiding.

EVANGELINE: Have you had any peace, Reba?

REBA: I've hardly slept a night through since I moved here.

(Pause.) Jasher, do you understand any of this? (JASHER nods, then pauses, then shakes his head "No.") Then listen to me. Your father and I have been very unfair to you. We meant to do what was right, but we made a mistake. We've let you think that you're thirteen, when you're not. Your father married me on June 19, 1892, in Arizona, and you were born nine months later. Your real birthday is March 22, 1893.

JASHER: So I'm only ten?

REBA: That's right.

JASHER (after a pause): Does this mean I have to be twelve all over again?

REBA: Yes.

JASHER (disappointed): I hated being twelve.

REBA: Then think of it as a present—a Pioneer Day present—from your father and me. We're giving you three more years.

JASHER (pointing at ETHER and MAHONRI): It was when I was twelve that they started calling me puny all the time.

MAHONRI: Did not!

JASHER: Did so!

REBA: Then ignore them! You're not puny. You're as big and strong as any ten-year-old boy should be.

TALMADGE: That's right, Jasher.

REBA: And think of this: other boys aren't ordained a deacon until around twelve. You were ordained when you were nine. And you didn't have to wait until you were eight to be baptized. In a way you're blessed. You're special like the Prophet Samuel or John the Baptist.

EVANGELINE: Looking at Jasher, it all seems so obvious. I should have known that it wasn't in Talmadge to father a runt.

BEULAH: This can't be!

EVANGELINE: It is, Beulah, so accept it.

BEULAH: You're not surprised?

EVANGELINE: Only by the fact that Reba could keep this secret so long. You're stronger than I imagined, Reba.

REBA: Thank you, Evangeline.

BEULAH: But the deceit that's been practiced in this family . . .

EVANGELINE (*pointedly*): By all of us, Beulah.

BEULAH: Nothing's really as it seems.

EVANGELINE: Hardly anything.

BEULAH: Who can you trust? If even the Church authorities are hiding things, who can you trust?

EVANGELINE (*looking at TALMADGE*): Trust whoever you like. Just beware.

BEULAH: Maybe the Church has some higher purpose in doing all this, some purpose we can't understand.

REBA: Maybe.

BEULAH: I'm trusting the Church authorities.

EVANGELINE: I suppose that's no better or worse than trusting anyone else.

(MORONI *appears*.)

TALMADGE: Young man, where have you been?

MORONI: I told you I was going to see the bishop.

TALMADGE: All night?

MORONI: Afterwards I wasn't sleepy, so I went for a long walk.

(JOSEPH and HELEN FLY *enter the yard behind MORONI*.)

TALMADGE (*to JOSEPH*): What do you want?

JOSEPH: It wasn't my idea to come back here.

HELEN: Bishop Kimball suggested that we come.

JOSEPH: He said we should settle our difference privately . . . though I suppose privacy in this family is nothing but a fond, fruitless fancy.

EVANGELINE: Joseph, you'd be surprised at the number of things we do privately.

MORONI: Bishop Kimball assured Brother Fly that I have no intention of ever entering the Principle. And he also assured him that you, Papa, will not try to go against the law of the Church in this matter.

TALMADGE (*scoffing*): The law of the Church!

MORONI: That's right, Papa. The bishop says that severe action will be taken against any Church member entering or advocating new plural marriages.

TALMADGE: That's the line we've been feeding the Gentiles for thirteen years.

JOSEPH: This time it's different.

TALMADGE: I'll believe that when I hear it from the prophet himself!

JOSEPH: It may come to that, Brother, unless you open your eyes and realize that this blatant flaunting of the Principle all these years after the Manifesto makes all of us in the Church look like liars and cheats. I wonder what the Gentiles next door think of this family?

TALMADGE: The Steinbergs mind their own business.

JOSEPH: But what they must think! Two women with children living alone together in this house and then you, going into the house in the evening and not coming out until morning—all right here in the open! I wonder what questions the Steinberg's relatives back East ask them. "So, do Mormon men really have harems?" And they could tell them all about it because right here, not twenty feet from their clothes lines, is a living example!

TALMADGE: Don't preach to me! All my life I've sacrificed for the Church and our people—

MORONI: This is getting us nowhere!

TALMADGE: I won't sneak around like an adulterer or a whoremonger!

MORONI: No one called you any of those things! Now, Papa, I want you to promise Brother Fly that you will never try to persuade me to enter the Principle.

TALMADGE: If you want to sell your eternal exaltation for a mess of pottage . . .

MORONI: Papa, you owe me this much!

EVANGELINE: He promises, Moroni.

MORONI: Papa?

TALMADGE: You must detest me.

MORONI (*firmly*): You know that I don't.

TALMADGE: I suppose I've failed in my duty as a father—

MORONI: Papa . . .

TALMADGE: All right! . . . I promise.

MORONI (*offering JOSEPH his hand*): Then it's settled, Brother Fly? Can I marry Zanita??

(JOSEPH *hesitates, then reluctantly shakes MORONI's hand*.)

HELEN: Now there's just one more tiny little matter . . .

JOSEPH: Oh, yes. (*To EVANGELINE*.) This concerns you, Sister Cannon . . . you and your sister wives. (*To HELEN*.) You're a woman, you explain it to them.

HELEN: The bishop asked us to ask you . . . well, he wishes that you and Sister Cannon—and you too, Sister Cannon—would reconsider marching in the parade today.

TALMADGE (*to EVANGELINE*): I knew if you marched here with those signs every gossip in Provo would know about it.

BEULAH: Maybe Moroni told the bishop.

HELEN: No, I think it was the gossips.

TALMADGE: Sister Coles, no doubt.

HELEN: No. The bishop's counselors. They feel this could hurt the Church's image.

MAHONRI: Don't let them do it, Daddy!

TALMADGE: Be quiet, Mahonri!

(*During the following conversation, ETHER and MAHONRI quietly take the wives' signs, which are now resting against the porch, into REBA's kitchen unseen*.)

HELEN: If you march and talk about women becoming more involved in politics, people may get the impression that all is not well with your home life; that maybe Brother Cannon is abusing you. Sisters, we girls know that the only women who take to the streets marching and demanding things are those who are unfulfilled in their divinely ordained domestic duties.

JOSEPH: If you march, Sister Cannon, people will get the wrong idea about the Principle: that it robs women of their freedom and happiness—

EVANGELINE: But isn't that why you're opposed to it, Joseph?

JOSEPH: I'm opposed to it because the Church has discontinued the practice, and I am obedient to the Church.

EVANGELINE: Oh, Joseph, everyone knows that you hate the Principle because of your mother's suicide.

JOSEPH: I never, ever said that! It is gossip and you are unkind to throw it at me!

TALMADGE: Just yesterday you said that the Principle ruined your mother!

JOSEPH: No! I never said those exact words!

EVANGELINE: But you are opposed to it?

JOSEPH: I'm opposed to anything that might tarnish the Church's image!

TALMADGE: When I was young, the Saints said, "To Hell with our image! We'll obey the Law of the Lord whether it offends the world or not!" The Lord has called us to be a peculiar people, and if you're afraid to be that—

EVANGELINE (*laughing bitterly*): Joseph is just as peculiar as you, Talmadge! We're all peculiar! Peculiar, illogical and not completely honest, any of us! What about the truth—how we really feel about things?

JOSEPH: The time for the truth is when we're alone among ourselves.

EVANGELINE: And at other times what are we to do? Sing "All is well! All is well!"?

JOSEPH: We cannot hang our dirty garments in public! What of the weak in the Church, whose fragile testimonies could be crushed if they thought our women were feeling abused or unhappy?

EVANGELINE: Anyone that weak has no business in the Church.

JOSEPH: Everyone has business in the Church, and it is up to us who know better to strengthen their faith?

EVANGELINE: So now you want to protect the Principle?

JOSEPH: I want to forget it! It's past! But if we are to have reminders of it—and that's just what you are—the least you can do is put up a good front.

EVANGELINE (*singing, bitterly*): "All is well! All is well!" (*To the family.*) Come on, everyone! You know this hymn! Sing! (*Singing.*)

We will make the air with music ring!
Shout praises to our God and King!
Oh, how we'll make this chorus swell!
All is well! All is well!

(*No one has joined her. She turns to JOSEPH.*) Come, Joseph. If I have to start singing this song, you have to join me.

JOSEPH: "Start singing," Sister Cannon? Why, you've been singing this song for years.

EVANGELINE: And you haven't?

JOSEPH: All right, I confess. I've kept my feelings to myself, denied them—all to keep some type of order, some steady ground to build my life on. You want honesty, Sister Cannon? Then look me in the eye and admit that you've done the very same. (*EVANGELINE, looking him in the eye, is silent.*)

HELEN: You have to admit that my husband makes good sense, Sister Cannon. I'm blessed to have such a good man to take care of me. And I know, despite everything, that Brother Cannon is also a good man. So why don't the two of you—(*To BEULAH and REBA*)—and the two of you—work out your differences right here in your own home. I don't think any of you really want to march in that parade today. Aren't you just feeling a little frustrated, a little unappreciated at home?

EVANGELINE: Don't you ever feel that way, Helen?

HELEN (*with a laugh*): Why, I just suppose I do. Joseph can tell you all about my little moods. But when those times come, I just put those unpleasant thoughts out of my mind and count my many blessings. I think of where I would be without Joseph and the children. Then I swallow my pride, close my eyes to whatever is bothering me, put my shoulder to the wheel and press on.

EVANGELINE: You can do that and sleep nights?

HELEN: Oh, I'm not saying it's easy. Joseph helps. As I said, he puts up with my moods—and I put up with his. Oh, yes! Joseph has his little moods, and I put up with them, just as Moroni will put up with Zanita's moods and she'll put up with his. That's what marriage is all about: putting up with each other's moods. (*Laughs, sighs.*) I do feel sorry for those Gentile women who are marching in the streets for their rights. I know that there are even women in the Church who feel that way. My heart just bleeds, it just breaks for them. I feel for them with every fiber of my being because I know how unhappy they are, how dissatisfied they are. But when you're tempted to despair, you just have to force yourself to be satisfied. You just have to gird up your loins and force yourself! These poor unsatisfied women remind me of the Apostle Peter before his conversion on the road to Damascus, when he was so miserable from always kicking against the pricks.

JOSEPH: That was the Apostle Paul, Helen.

HELEN (*with a laugh*): Well, you can see who the gospel scholar is in our family! These women are just like the Apostle Paul. No righteous woman could ever be happy kicking against the pricks, you know.

EVANGELINE: Maybe I'm just not all that righteous, Helen.

HELEN: Of course you are! Aren't you just feeling a little overworked because of the holiday and all?

EVANGELINE: Maybe I'd feel better if I marched in the parade. Beulah, are you coming?

BEULAH (*to HELEN*): The bishop would rather that we didn't?

HELEN: That's what he said.

BEULAH: Then I'm obeying the bishop.

EVANGELINE: I suppose I'm marching alone then . . .

TALMADGE: What's that smell?

(*Suddenly smoke pours from REBA's kitchen.*)

BEULAH: Mahonri Moriancumer Cannon, what have you done now?

REBA (*running to the door, looking inside*): My ovens on fire! Boys, get out of there!

(*MAHONRI and ETHER run out. MORONI, with a bucket from the porch, runs inside, followed by TALMADGE.*)

BEULAH: What were you doing in there?

MAHONRI: Burning those stupid signs! You can't march today! You just can't!

BEULAH: You nearly burned the house down over that?

ETHER: We're tired of people talking about us! Daddy can't control any of his wives!

BEULAH: That does it! I am really going to pick a switch now! (*MORONI and TALMADGE come out coughing and gasping.*)

MORONI: The fire's out, but Aunt Reba, your kitchen's a mess. (*REBA hurries into her kitchen.*)

TALMADGE (*to MAHONRI and ETHER, furious*): You and you! Come here! (*He advances towards them. They back away.*)

ETHER: No! Mama said she's gonna pick a switch.

TALMADGE: Oh no! I want to use my own two hands! (*He chases them around the yard, catches MAHONRI, turns him over his knee and begins spanking him. Suddenly REBA stumbles from the kitchen and faints. TALMADGE drops MAHONRI and everyone runs to her.*) Reba! Reba!

BEULAH: It's smoke inhalation! Why did she go into that smoke filled kitchen?

EVANGELINE: The foolish girl!

TALMADGE: She's not foolish! She's going to have a baby!
(*Everyone falls silent. Shock. Then . . .*)

JOSEPH: At *your* age? (*looking at TALMADGE.*)

TALMADGE: Reba . . . Reba . . .

MORONI: She almost fainted yesterday while hanging laundry.

BEULAH: Why didn't you tell me?

MORONI: She didn't want me to.

TALMADGE: She wanted me to be the first to know, and she was afraid of *your* reaction.

BEULAH: Afraid? Of me? Her own sister wife? What could I do about it? Say, "No, Reba, you don't have my permission to be pregnant?" (*Bending over Reba.*) Reba . . . Reba, it's me, Beulah . . . Reba?

REBA (*coming to*): What . . . What . . . ?

BEULAH: You're all right. Just lie still for a few minutes. Why didn't you tell me about the baby?

REBA: I'm sorry, Beulah. The doctors told me I couldn't have any more children after Jasher. I don't know how it happened.

BEULAH (*looking at TALMADGE*): Well, you didn't do it yourself. (*To REBA.*) And what are you sorry about? Bringing another life into the world?

REBA: I was afraid you'd disapprove.

BEULAH: And if I did, what could I do about it? Can you stand up now?

REBA: I think so.

EVANGELINE (*helping REBA stand*): Talmadge, you're in the way! Don't you think you've done enough?

TALMADGE: Excuse me!

BEULAH: Reba, would you like a blessing?

REBA: Why, Beulah . . . yes . . . yes, I would.

BEULAH: Then let's get you up to the bath tub. We can wash and anoint you there. (*EVANGELINE and BEULAH help REBA to the door.*) Excuse me a minute, Reba. (*She crosses down to HELEN.*) Helen, thank you for what you said earlier. You were right. Sometimes the only way you can survive it all is to close your eyes to whatever is bothering you and press on.

HELEN (*giving her a hug*): Oh, bless you, Sister.

BEULAH: Will you help us with the blessing?

HELEN: Joseph?

JOSEPH: I think we need to be leaving.

BEULAH (*to REBA as they exit into the house with EVANGELINE*): I'm sorry you were afraid to tell me. I must be an awfully wicked witch sometimes.

JOSEPH: Come along, Helen.

HELEN: We'll see you later at the parade. Moroni, will you be picnicking with us afterwards?

MORONI: Yes, Sister Fly.

HELEN: How nice! I hope that Sister Cannon—the third one, that is—Reba?—will feel up to coming out this afternoon.
(*The FLYS exit, leaving MORONI and TALMADGE alone. There is a long, awkward pause. Then . . .*)

TALMADGE: So, you got what *you* wanted.

MORONI: Did I?

TALMADGE: You're marrying Zanita.

MORONI: I suppose.

TALMADGE: You don't sound too happy about it.

MORONI: I feel like I've been married all my life: worrying about Mama and all your wives and children.

TALMADGE: There's no need for *you* to worry about them.

MORONI: Somebody has to when you're running all over creation! When did you find out about Aunt Reba?

TALMADGE: Just a while ago.

MORONI: She tried to tell you yesterday but you had other things to worry about.

TALMADGE: Well, I can't be in two places at one time!

MORONI: Then the last thing you need to do is marry someone else! Why do you need so many wives?

TALMADGE: Gentiles marry out of need. I married out of obedience to God.

MORONI: You don't love Aunt Beulah and Aunt Reba?

TALMADGE: I love everyone in my family! I've stood up for them. Gone to prison for them . . .

MORONI: But you married them out of obedience?

TALMADGE: Yes, of course.

MORONI (*after a slight pause*): With Mama . . . it was different, wasn't it? When I was very young, long before Aunt Beulah, I remember the two of you *seemed* happy. I just took it for granted that you loved each other. Did you, or were the two of you just being obedient?

TALMADGE (*after a pause*): Obedience brings happiness—

MORONI: You're talking theology again, Papa—

TALMADGE: But it's true!

MORONI: Did obedience bring you happiness?

TALMADGE: I have great joy in my family. I take pride in you and your brothers and sisters—

MORONI: If you were happy, you wouldn't want to marry this . . . woman in St. George.

TALMADGE: Her name is Jerusha!

MORONI (*silence, then awkwardly*): Is she . . . pretty?

TALMADGE: You might not notice her on the street, but she's very easy to talk to. On Sabbaths, after meetings, I often dine with her and her family. During the week if I'm finished on the farm early and it's still light, I ride over to her house. We sit on the porch, watch the sun set. It's very pleasant, very restful. Her oldest boy is your age. In fact, he was born December 3, 1879, two days before you. Isn't that a coincidence? He's unmarried also, but then he's not as nice looking as you.

MORONI: I'm not interested, Papa! I wouldn't take a million dollars for any of my brothers or sisters, but I wouldn't give you a plug nickel for another one! So just leave him out of this! I want . . . I want you to apologize to Mama.

TALMADGE: For what?

MORONI: Maybe you only married her out of obedience—I don't know, I don't want to know—but she needs you.

TALMADGE: Why, Evangeline's the most self-reliant person I've ever known!

MORONI: She wants you to love her!

TALMADGE: I've worked all my life to provide for her, never once complaining. I give her everything she's asked for—more than I've ever given the other two . . .

MORONI (*overlapping, to himself*): It can't really be this hopeless! It can't be!

TALMADGE (*overlapping*): . . . I've made no demands on her because I knew her hands were filled with you children—

MORONI: But the woman you really love is in St. George?

TALMADGE: Moroni, some day when you're older . . .

MORONI: Don't finish that sentence if you're implying that one day I'll be like you. I never want that to happen!

TALMADGE: You do despise me.

MORONI: I wish I did. I'd be less confused. You won't be allowed to marry this lady. The bishop said a storm's brewing in Washington over whether a Mormon can be a senator if the Church allows members to break the polygamy laws.

TALMADGE: The Church will never completely renounce the Principle—certainly not for political power!

MORONI: They already have. You will only have three wives. One of them is my mother and you owe her an apology whether you believe it or not.

EVANGELINE (*from inside the house*): Talmadge!

MORONI: Papa, *please!* The way I remember the two of you, that wasn't just my imagination, was it?

EVANGELINE (*from inside*): Talmadge!

TALMADGE: All right, Moroni.

(MORONI starts to quickly hug TALMADGE, but when he sees

EVANGELINE coming out of the house, he quickly stops himself.)

MORONI: How's Aunt Reba?

EVANGELINE: Feeling much better. Talmadge, you're wanted on the telephone. It's the bishop.

TALMADGE (*hurrying into the house*): What does he want?

EVANGELINE: Your future father-in-law is a very discerning man. What he said about denying one's true feelings about the Principle . . . very discerning. It galls me to say that because I detest the way he talks down to Helen. Then again, she doesn't seem to mind. Maybe I'd be happier if I were as simple minded as she.

MORONI: I think we'd all be happier in this family if we weren't so set in our ways. I know how Papa can be, but if you'd just—I mean, if we'd just . . .

EVANGELINE: What? Give in a little more?

MORONI: Not exactly.

EVANGELINE (*overlapping*): Because that's all I've been doing all these years . . .

MORONI: I'm not criticizing, really. You've always been the strong one. When he married Aunt Beulah you didn't speak for a week—to anyone. They went off for a week and you said nothing.

EVANGELINE: Do you think I could have stopped him from marrying her?

MORONI: No, but at least he would have known it bothered you. It bothered me! When I was nine I started having this nightmare. We were all in heaven—the Celestial Kingdom—and on this throne like a God was Papa, surrounded by all these beautiful Goddess wives, but you and me and the other children were separated from him somehow. He was loving and adoring to all his Goddess wives. They were so beautiful that I hated them! And I called to you, "Mama, do something so we won't lose him! Tell him that you . . . love him!"

EVANGELINE: You don't think I love your Papa?

MORONI: I know you do!

EVANGELINE: It's because I loved him that I said nothing. Your Papa loves the Church first and foremost. As much as we hate to admit it, it's the truth. If I had protested or voiced my doubts, that *would* have been the end of it! My heart was full of hell when he took Beulah, but I fought to appear strong: indifferent to her and devoted to the Church.

MORONI: But Papa thinks you're indifferent to him! You two are separated . . . but I am both of you! I can't choose sides! (*Pause.*) Anyway, it's over now. The bishop said plural marriage is gone, never to be brought back.

EVANGELINE (*stunned*): Then what was all the sacrifice for? If something so important can change, maybe none of it's true.

MORONI: Of course the *Church* is true.

EVANGELINE: Then where's my place in it? Where do I belong? Maybe on display in some Gentile museum back East: a concubine in a Mormon harem, circa 1903.

MORONI: I'm glad you've gotten your sense of humor back.

EVANGELINE: But I'm sealed into the Church. It's the only place I'll ever be understood, respected, even pitied. You and your brothers and sisters are the sealing agents; not priesthoods, oaths, or covenants. Through you I'm sealed to your Papa and through him to the Church. Maybe that was the plan all along. The prophets knew that the Principle was the only way to knot us all together so that we'd never leave the Church . . .

MORONI (*overlapping*): Now, Mama, stop it . . .

EVANGELINE (*overlapping*): How very clever they were . . . clever and cruel.

MORONI: Mama, you don't believe that! (*Pleading.*) Things will be different now. You'll see! I'll marry Zanita and things will get better—from now. You're just feeling overwhelmed because of the holiday—like Sister Fly said.

EVANGELINE (*studying MORONI's eyes*): Wise Sister Fly.

MORONI: You'll feel better after the parade and picnic. We all will. (*TALMADGE comes out of the house looking perplexed.*) I'll see if I can help Aunt Beulah get the boys ready for the parade. (*MORONI kisses EVANGELINE's forehead and looks to TALMADGE and goes into BEULAH's kitchen.*)

EVANGELINE: Why the fallen countenance?

TALMADGE: They did it. The Church sold out to the Gentiles. If I marry Jerusha, the bishop said both of us and who performs the ceremony will be excommunicated. He really said that—over the telephone. Damned contraption.

EVANGELINE: Ah, poor lamb. Lost your one true love, have you?

TALMADGE: I thought the news would make you happy.

EVANGELINE: You were right.

TALMADGE: You love to see me hurt, don't you?

EVANGELINE (*smiling*): After all these years together, do you honestly think I find pleasure in your pain?

TALMADGE: I'm hurting and you're smiling.

EVANGELINE: I'm hurting also and smiling. It's how I register pain.

TALMADGE: Why does an older woman like Jerusha threaten you? Beulah was only twenty-two when we married. It may have bothered you—

EVANGELINE: More than you'll ever know.

TALMADGE: But you never said a word. Nor did you have that smile on your face.

EVANGELINE: I was younger then. I hadn't learned to radiate while dying.

TALMADGE: You didn't smile when I married Reba.

EVANGELINE: After Beulah I thought I could accept anything.

TALMADGE: Then why can't you accept Jerusha?

EVANGELINE: I was wrong.

TALMADGE: But Jerusha's an older woman!

EVANGELINE: Her age has nothing to do with it! It's what you've finally found in her. Even though the Church won't allow you to marry her, she'll continue to occupy a place in your heart . . . the place I occupied, or *thought* I occupied, until yesterday.

TALMADGE: About that . . . I'm sorry for what I said.

EVANGELINE: Did Moroni put you up to apologizing?

TALMADGE: Of course not! I'm truly sorry I said . . . all that.

EVANGELINE (*smiling*): But don't you remember? It's what you didn't say that was so wounding.

TALMADGE: Then I'm sorry for what I didn't say!

EVANGELINE: Don't apologize if you were being honest.

TALMADGE: You deserve better from me!

EVANGELINE: I deserve the truth from you. If it hurts you to speak it or me to hear it, then so be it. But after all these years, we need to know exactly where we stand in relation to one another. So, come, Talmadge! Put your shoulder to the wheel and tell me outright.

TALMADGE (*finally, at a loss for words*): Oh, Evangeline . . . Evangeline . . . I'm so tired.

EVANGELINE: That's no answer.

TALMADGE: I look back and all I see is a rush and whirl of sneaking about, hiding from the law, praying for deliverance, trying to maintain a business and households; trying to treat wives and children equally so no one gets their feelings hurt—I'm exhausted! Why did we ever start this life of ours in the first place?

EVANGELINE: I don't know why you married me. It was a commandment. If nothing else you were an obedient soul. Then, there were the cravings of the flesh—I know on my part there were. The time, the place, the ceremony—who knows why anyone does it? I thought I married you for only one reason.

TALMADGE: You loved me?

EVANGELINE (*smiling*): Ah, so you were there after all.

TALMADGE: You were so strong, overwhelming. I was drawn to you but at the same time you made me feel like a helpless puppy or a child.

(*Pause.*)

EVANGELINE: I never really had you, did I, Talmadge?

TALMADGE: We had . . . passion in the beginning.

EVANGELINE: The children and time killed that.

TALMADGE: We've had an adventurous life. Nothing dull about it. We had some happy times.

EVANGELINE: Yes, we did . . . some. But we never really had each other, did we?

TALMADGE: I suppose not.

(*Pause. Then . . .*)

EVANGELINE: Will we ever?

TALMADGE (*sadly*): I suppose not.

EVANGELINE (*smiling, softly, to herself*): Ouch.

TALMADGE: Who knows? Come the Morning of the First Resurrection, when we're both restored to our prime, I'll look at you and feel the old passion again.

EVANGELINE: Dear Heart, if that's the best we can hope for, just leave me moldering.

TALMADGE: You wanted the truth.

EVANGELINE: I want the lie. But the truth is what I deserve. All in all it's the best thing for me. Thank you for finally giving it to me.

(*EVANGELINE crosses to TALMADGE, takes his face in her hands and bends down to kiss him, but he turns his face away. She straightens up and looks down on him, as if considering this final rejection. Then she turns to leave the yard.*)

TALMADGE: Isn't there anything else I can say?

EVANGELINE: No. This isn't a theological debate. This is life as it really is. It can't be restructured or rephrased to make it less

offensive or to make it go down like mother's milk. We'll have to digest it for the meat that it is.

(*EVANGELINE slowly turns and smiles sadly at TALMADGE. Then turning away, she slowly leaves. He watches her go, sadly. She is almost out of the yard when . . .*)

TALMADGE (*softly*): Evangeline? Whatever will you do? Where will you go?

EVANGELINE (*simply*): To the house to pick up the children for the parade. (*TALMADGE is stunned.*) Where did you think I was going? (*She looks at TALMADGE, sees his amazement and laughs.*) Oh, Talmadge, you didn't think I was leaving? Just because of our problems? (*She laughs harder.*) There are more people in this family than you and I. They're the children, Reba, Beulah, this new baby—

TALMADGE: The way you looked, I thought you were going away.

EVANGELINE: No, Talmadge, you won't get rid of me that easily. We were married for time and all eternity, remember? In that ceremony I was taught that you were to be my husband and Lord. Well, draw near, dear Lord. Here's a confession for your ears only. Mark it well as I'll not repeat it again. My dear Talmadge, you're not now, nor will you ever be a God. Neither will I or anyone else on this sweet earth. We just don't have the makings for it. We have our hands full just trying to get along as human beings, and Christ knows we've made an awful mess of that.

TALMADGE: But, "As man now is, God once was. As God now is, man may become."

EVANGELINE: Oh, I know all that. I just don't believe it. Not one word. Not one jot or tittle.

TALMADGE: You don't mean that.

EVANGELINE: Oh, but I do.

TALMADGE: I don't believe you!

EVANGELINE: You have your free agency.

TALMADGE: You're trying to goad me by playing the apostate.

EVANGELINE: I've never been more sincere in my life.

TALMADGE: I *know* the Church is true!

EVANGELINE: And you go right on "knowing" that. I know otherwise.

TALMADGE: What do *you* know?

EVANGELINE: That this whole business of life is much more simple than you and the Church make it out to be. I know I have children who need me. And I need them.

TALMADGE: You brought those children into *my* family.

EVANGELINE: They're more my family than yours, and I won't allow you or the Church or my own foolhardy attempts to make your gospel work come between me and them any longer.

TALMADGE: My God! You *are* an apostate!

EVANGELINE (*proudly*): Yes, I am. Tell Moroni, the children or anyone else and I'll feign ignorance. Expose me and I'll deny it.

TALMADGE: Your words will expose you!

EVANGELINE: No, Dearest Heart. The words are only for you, this once. I'll be the most dangerous and clever of apostates. I'll never utter a testimony of anything again, but I'll be at every Church meeting, listening and just smiling. How could I do otherwise? It's all I've ever known. And I will lavish on our children and your wives and everyone else all the love and understanding that until now I reserved for you and the Church. That love will become more important to them than

all your doctrines, priesthoods, and powers because it will be free, no conditions attached! Our children will know that I love them regardless of their standing with the Church or your god. That's all I have to offer. All I've ever had. I wasn't enough for you—too easily attained, I suppose; too simple for your patriarchal taste. It will be more than enough for them. I'll win all their hearts in the end, and I'll never have to utter a word. (TALMADGE is struck dumb. BEULAH, REBA, their BOYS and MORONI come out of the house, all dressed for the parade. EVANGELINE buzzes over to them.) Well, there she is! Your color is looking good, Reba. Are you sure you're up to going out in this heat?

REBA: After that beautiful blessing you and Beulah gave me, I feel up to anything. You should have heard it, Talmadge.

EVANGELINE: Well, you certainly look fresher. Doesn't she, Beulah?

BEULAH: That's the word I'd use: fresher.

EVANGELINE: I feel refreshed myself.

BEULAH: You look it. Has something happened?

EVANGELINE: I've just seen the day for what it is, and I feel clean—all over.

BEULAH (with a laugh): What?

EVANGELINE: I just feel good! This is going to be a real nice Pioneer Day! Now, we need to stop at the big house to get the other children and those picnic baskets we packed.

MAHONRI: Do we get to sleep at your house again tonight, Aunt Evangeline?

BEULAH (looking at TALMADGE): I think we'll stay here from now on.

ETHER: Aw, Mama! We like the big house!

EVANGELINE: Let them spend the night anyway, Beulah. I'll watch them, and wouldn't you like a night off? I can imagine how stuffy this little house can be on summer nights with everyone home, and with Reba's baby coming, you can't stay

squeezed in here much longer. Talmadge, when did you say you were building each of these women their own house?

REBA: Talmadge, you're really going to build me a house?

EVANGELINE: You each deserve your own place. Don't they, Moroni?

MORONI (shocked): Ma'am? . . . Ah . . . yes, ma'am! Yes, Papa, Aunt Reba and Aunt Beulah each need their own house.

EVANGELINE: Go to it, Son. He'll listen to you. And don't let him tell you he can't fit it in the budget because the farm in St. George is doing fine this year.

MORONI: Yes, Mama!

EVANGELINE: Well, shall we go? Come along, Talmadge, don't just stand there like a helpless puppy or child.

BEULAH: Come on, Talmadge. Get your banner.

MAHONRI: Can I carry it to the parade for you?

TALMADGE: I don't feel like marching today after all.

MORONI: Do you want me to carry it in the parade for you? I will if you'd like.

TALMADGE: Thanks, Son. But there's no need to bother anymore.

BEULAH: Yes, it is so hot today. (Everyone starts off for the parade.) Now that we're on better terms, maybe the Flys will join us at the picnic.

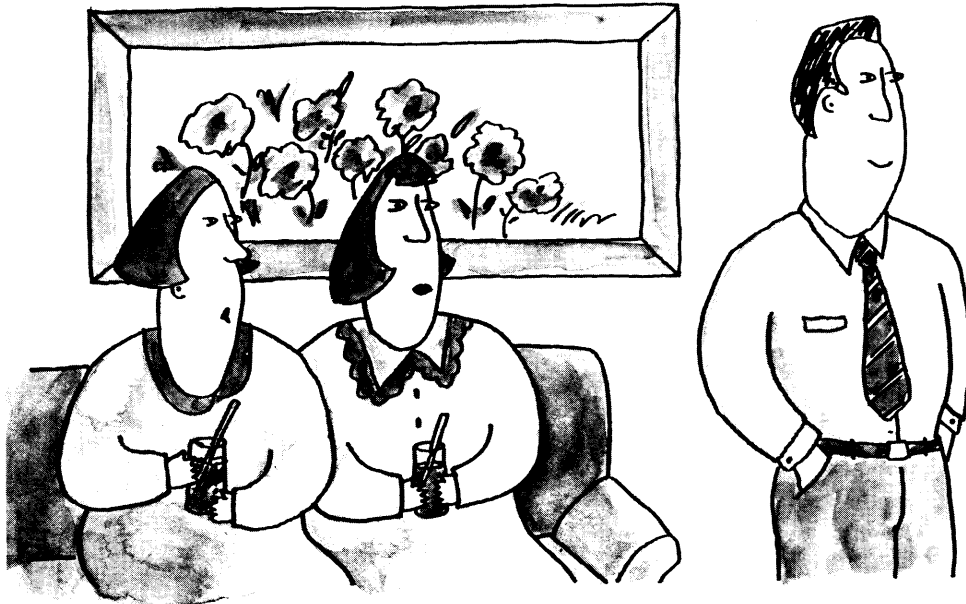
EVANGELINE (exiting): Wouldn't that be special? Both families together!

REBA (exiting): Yes! Together!

(The WIVES, chatting happily, have exited, followed by the BOYS who are playfully teasing one another. The sun is shining and in the distance on State Street the band can be heard playing.

TALMADGE is left in the yard all alone. The last measures of "In Our Lovely Deseret" can be heard as he looks at his banner, then exits. The lights over the yard begin to fade, the last ones fading on the forgotten banner: "DESERET: This is STILL the place!")

C U R T A I N



"I'll tell you what it doesn't say. It doesn't say that the men's baseball team gets new uniforms."

MONOLOGUES AND DIALOGUES

ON DRINKING COKE

By Robert A. Rees



THINGS GO BETTER WITH COKE.
—Coca-cola advertising jingle

COCA-COLA IS A powerful symbol in the Mormon community. For some it is the perfect private heresy. For others it is a sure sign of decadence and an indication that the drinker is on the high road to apostasy. Many more Mormons drink coke than admit to doing so, which suggests that not all Mormons are comfortable with this minor vice, this small dissonance with the Word of Wisdom. From all I can gather, quite a few Mormons drink coke or other caffeinated soft drinks casually and many would probably admit, if they were pressed, that they are addicted to it.

I have had some people tell me that a person who drinks coke shouldn't be allowed to get a temple recommend. I remember having a dialogue with some of my priests several

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years ago when I was serving as young men's president. It went something like this:

Young men: Brother Rees, can you get to the Celestial Kingdom if you drink coke?

Me: (trying to avoid a direct answer on the grounds that it might incriminate me) What do you think?

Young men: Well, we've been talking about it, and we don't think so.

Me: You mean that if you kept all of the commandments and drank coke, God would keep you out of the Celestial Kingdom?

Young men: Well, maybe you could get to the Celestial Kingdom if you drank coke, but you couldn't get to the highest degree of the Celestial Kingdom.

Me: What do you think is worse, to drink a coke or to say something unkind to someone?

Young men: (Most felt it was worse to drink a coke, but one wasn't as sure as the others.)

Me: Why?

Young men: Because its against the Word of Wisdom.

Me: (Still trying to get them to go a little

deeper) What is worse, to drink a coke or to be grossly overweight.

Young men: (Several of whom would have a spread problem in middle age) Definitely coke.

How did this little soft drink become such a powerful symbol among the Mormons? Perhaps it is inevitable that a culture that has so many prohibitions would produce an attitude that allowed for conformity to the Church's strict definition of the Word of Wisdom while at the same time providing a way around it. I know many Mormons who would never be caught drinking a cup of coffee or tea, who wouldn't even consider drinking decaffeinated coffee, but who feel perfectly okay (most of the time) drinking a diet coke. In spite of the caffeine they consume, these Mormons think of themselves as keepers of the Word of Wisdom, and in temple recommend interviews have no hesitation in affirming their obedience to this commandment. Others, the non-coke drinkers, look on such behavior as hypocritical. Caffeine is caffeine, they say, and whom do these people think they are kidding? Certainly not God. Coke is the first step on the road to ruination.

Coke drinkers defend their minor vice by saying that there are a lot worse things that the self-righteous non-coke drinkers take into their bodies without compunction. Things like chocolate, sugar, too much meat, or too much food altogether. When these people start living *all* of the Word of Wisdom, the coke drinkers argue, including washing their bodies with strong drink and eating herbs and fruits in the season thereof, then they will have room to talk. The diet coke drinkers console themselves by saying that its a lot better to drink diet colas than to be two hundred pounds overweight.

Most closet coke drinkers know that caffeine is bad for them, but so are lot of other things, they argue, so you can't be fanatical about it. They cite statistics that Utah consumes more candy bars per capita than any other state in the nation. (I don't know whether that's true, but I noticed the other night when I was in the cafeteria at the Los Angeles Temple that there was a ton of candy bars at the check-out stand.)

Coke drinkers share a certain camaraderie and they like to tell stories that show either that drinking coke is acceptable or that non-coke drinkers are pharisees. Apocryphal stories abound. There are always stories about general authorities and coke. Two that I heard involve Bruce McConkie. In the first, some missionaries come to Brother McConkie with a dilemma: they have a convert ready for bap-

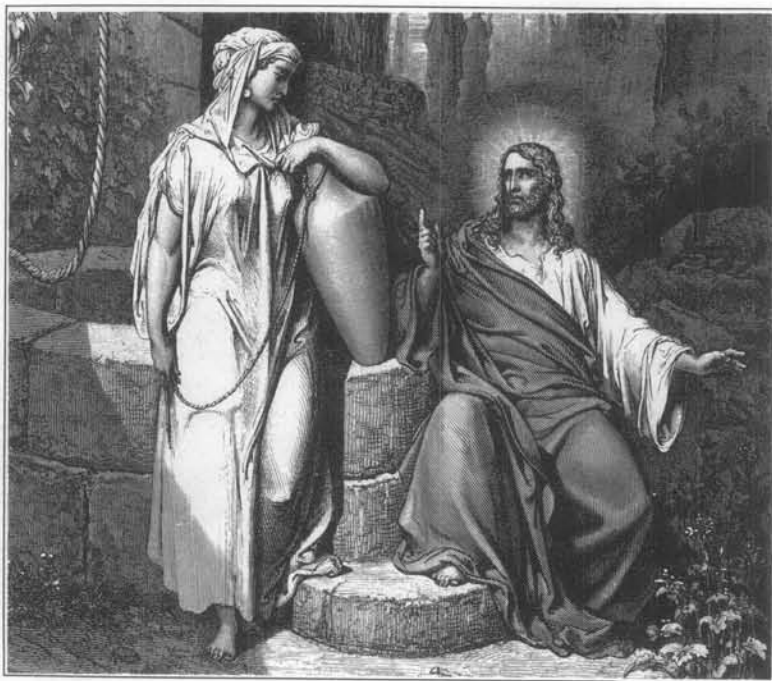
tism who is willing to conform to Church standards except that he won't give up Diet Pepsi. What should they do? Brother McConkie is reported to have told them to buy their investigator a case of Diet-Pepsi and give it to him as a present at his baptism. In another story Elder McConkie confesses that he couldn't have gotten through law school if it hadn't been for Diet Pepsi. A friend who used to be a personal assistant to President McKay tells the story of being at a concert with President and Sister McKay and going to the lobby to get them something to drink. Apparently there were several kinds of soft drinks available but only Coke cups in which to serve it. He was concerned that the President of the Church might not want to be seen with a Coke cup so he went back and told President McKay what the situation was. President McKay said it was okay to use the cup and as my friend turned to go and get it, added, "Just make sure it's filled with Coke."

I guess the point of all this is that we shouldn't trivialize our religion over these matters; certainly we shouldn't judge one another over them. Thoreau said of John Brown, "He would have left a Greek accent slanting the wrong way and righted up a fallen man." As Christians we should be looking for ways to include others in the circle of our fellowship, not exclude them for reasons that are unworthy of the great cause we espouse. ☐

ANOTHER VOICE

THE GENDER QUESTION

By Marie Cornwall



GUSTAVE DORÉ: JESUS AND THE WOMAN OF SAMARIA

RECENTLY I SAT at a banquet table with Church members whom I did not know. The topic of conversation turned to women and their experience in the Church. Two questions were raised that night which I would like to address. First, why is it that women come together for women's conferences when men don't come together for men's conferences? My answer to this question is simply, "Because women want to." Women want to meet together to talk about their lives and how to respond to the challenges and problems they face. I don't think we need to justify our interest in women's conferences; they are simply something we enjoy. When it becomes important

to men that they have the opportunity to meet together to talk about their common experiences, the challenges of fatherhood, the role of men in society, or just to be with fathers and brothers and friends, they will organize and hold men's conferences. In the meantime, BYU will continue to invite members of the Church, both women and men, to the BYU Women's Conference.

The second question is a little more difficult to answer. One man, a bishop, who was concerned about the experience of women in his ward but puzzled by their many different responses to the Church, asked "What is it that Mormon women want?" The question cannot really be answered by me or by anyone else because women are individuals. Their lives and circumstances are different; their needs and desires are different. But perhaps the fact of those differences is the answer. My preference is to be recognized as an individual, not as a member of

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a category. I would rather be known as someone who loves dogs and kids and mountain hikes than as a single Mormon woman, a sociologist, or a BYU faculty member. The first description is much more central to who I am than the second.

By the same token, I grow tired of our constant attention to the "role of women in society." It is the singular noun "role" that bothers me. If I could draw I would create a cartoon. In the first frame I would picture women in a demonstration kitchen much like the kitchens we have in the home economics department at BYU. The instructor has just demonstrated how to roll a little piece of dough. She has placed it carefully in the center of her table. In the next frame we see the same roll several minutes later. It has grown in size to where it appears to be just right for baking. Then in the next frame, the instructor and other women in the kitchen look with amazed faces at the same roll, which has risen far more than it normally should. And in the final frame we see the women fleeing before an overgrown, enormous roll which is about to devour them. This is the "role" of woman.

Actually, rolls come by the dozen, and if you buy a whole dozen at a time you get a better bargain. Not only that, but you can find wheat, rye, or sourdough rolls, crescent or parkerhouse rolls. And if you really want to get complex, these days you can buy twelve grain rolls, and if you buy a baker's dozen you actually get thirteen instead of twelve. So let's not talk about women's "role," but instead let's talk about the importance of parenting, community service, scholarship, and leadership. Let's talk about who women are and what their experiences are. And then we won't need to worry about what it is that women want because we will be better able to accommodate the individual woman who is Relief Society president or wife or social worker or scientist or mother or PTA president.

As I think about the diversity of women's lives, I recall a conversation I had last fall with a woman in Cache Valley, Utah, where I had been asked to speak at a conference for the single sisters of the stake. She was assigned to introduce me. As I told her a little about my experiences, she shook her head and with a quiet sigh said, "I've got to do something with my life." Later I asked her to tell me a about herself. She said that she had cared for her younger brothers and sisters after the death of her parents and that she currently worked at Thiokol. I asked what she did there. She was employed as a technician, helping to test equipment to be used in the space program. I said to her, "It sounds to me like you

are involved in the space program. You're making the dreams of tomorrow possible, and you say you have to do something with your life? What exactly did you have in mind?"

Shortly thereafter, I talked briefly with my cousin Diane who had just turned forty. That is an event soon to come for me and we were discussing her experience. She told me she had cried all morning. When I asked why, she replied, "Because I haven't done anything."

"But Diane," I said, "You are the mother of eight children, and you feel you haven't done anything?"

"Anyone can have children," she replied.

"That's not true, Diane," I said. "Would you like me to give you a list of the women I know who can't have children, or can't have as many as they wish?"

Sisters, let's stop having these conversations. Let's stop saying to each other, "Your life is better than mine." The Lord says, "I command thee that thou shalt not covet thy neighbor's wife. Nor seek thy neighbor's life" (D&C 19:25). I always thought these commands referred to adultery or murder. But think about the way that second statement is phrased in the context of the first. "Nor seek thy neighbor's life." Do you covet your neighbor's life?

People frequently tell me that my life seems so exciting and interesting. It is, sometimes, but if my private struggles were as readily apparent as my public accomplishments I doubt that anyone would want to trade places with me. Sisters, do not covet your neighbor's life. You may want what appears to be her special blessings and opportunities, but life is a package deal, and it is not likely that you would be so covetous of her difficulties if you really understood them.

There is another question I would like to address. It is what I call the gender question. The gender question takes many forms, but generally it asks "what is the experience of women in this area?" or "how would we understand things differently if we compared the experience of women with the experience of men?" Why is it that we need scholarly research that asks the gender question?

Let us begin with history. For a number of years Jill Mulvay Derr, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, and others have worked to create a history of the women of the Church. Did you know, for example, that for many years it was deemed the responsibility of LDS pioneer women to care for and to heal the sick? They accomplished this task by educating one another about effective medicines and herbs and by administering to and praying for the sick. My own great grandmother was told in a patriarchal blessing, "Thy

mind shall expand, wisdom shall be given thee and thou shalt counsel in righteousness among thy sex and in thy habitation. Thou shalt be enabled through prayer and faith to heal the sick of thy family and hold the adversary at bay that health and peace may reign in thy dwelling."¹ What a great heritage we have. Do you know the history of Mormon women? Do you make sure your sons and daughters learn about the accomplishments of grandmothers as well as grandfathers? My Grandmother McAllister made fine quilts and grew the most beautiful roses in all of Mill Creek. My Grandmother Cornwall raised chickens and sold the eggs to support two sons and two daughters in the mission field. If we do not seek out and discover the history of women, we have only remembered half the story. Do we want future generations of women to have only half the story, to wonder as we do now about Nephi's sisters, about the women who followed Alma to the Waters of Mormon?

We must be assured that when the history of South Africa is written, that the story of Julia Mavimbela is told—a story about an unassuming woman who taught the children to plant seeds, to begin to build again in a country where difficulty and strife had already destroyed too many lives, who dedicated her life to bringing the restored gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Soweto.

What about the gender question when studying film or poetry or literary criticism? Do male writers portray women and women's lives accurately? Do male critics judge women too harshly and misunderstand the intent of their work? Can we stand by and allow male critics to judge the poetry of Emily Dickinson with observations such as "the woman poet as a type . . . makes flights into nature rather too easily and upon errands which do not have metaphysical importance enough to justify so radical a strategy?"² Don't men and women learn more about our own humanity when they read the writings of both men and women and come to understand both the common and the unique approaches of diverse authors?

And what about the gender question in psychology? Psychologists have begun to realize that theories of individual development are primarily based on the experience of men, not the experience of women. Let me demonstrate what we learn when we ask the gender question when studying development. A description of healthy teenage boys with well-developed identities suggests they are "oriented toward personal success and greater self-differentiation . . . active, growing

youths who are exploring a variety of possibilities, . . . [they] express the spirit of what they would like 'to be' . . . rather than what they want 'to have' . . . [they have a] recognition and tolerance of variation among people . . . [which] allow themselves to grow in their own direction."³ The tendency has been to ask why girls don't seem to be so self-sufficient, autonomous, and independent. But listen to the same psychologist describe healthy teenage girls with well-developed identities: "they are the most articulate and the least self-conscious . . . these are serious girls . . . who take themselves seriously. . . they are engaged in a process of valuing themselves for the kind of people they are. They are . . . attempting to discover who they are and who they want to be in relation to the significant others in their lives. . . . Their girl friends matter to them as people. . . . Friends are to listen to you, to share things with, and . . . to be partners in identity testing."⁴

The psychologists who did this study concluded "the single most predominant and recurrent difference found between girls and boys at this age is that girls have a far greater interpersonal focus, while the boys' identity rests more directly on their development of autonomy. . . . Interpersonal ties serve not only as a vehicle for exploration of the girl's emerging sexual nature but also as a means of defining her individuality and goals."⁵

When one asks the gender question in psychology, one soon discovers that there are a variety of ways in which people develop and that the uniqueness of female development is a wonder to behold and not something that needs to be remolded so that it is consistent with male-defined models of how individuals should develop.

When sociologists recently asked the gender question, they found very interesting differences between the relationships boys form and the relationships girls form. In a large-scale study of the social networks of girls and boys in seventh through tenth grades, researchers found that four out of every ten girls surveyed selected a same-sex friend as the most significant other in her life. By comparison only two of every ten boys did so. Boys reported about the same level of intimacy with mothers, fathers, and same-sex friends, while girls reported much higher levels of intimacy with their same-sex-friends than with mothers and fathers.⁶ How can scholars ever come to understand the complexity of social institutions without asking the gender question?

If asking the gender question provides us with additional insights in the academic

world, how much more important it is that we ask the gender question in our religious communities. Perhaps we will understand what Mormon women want when we better understand how the experiences of women and men differ in the Church. Sensitivity to the diversity of experience within the Church can only occur when we are willing to seek out that which is common to men and women as well as that which is unique ☪

NOTES

1. A blessing given by John Smith, Patriarch, upon the head of Charlotte Cornwall, daughter of John and Sarah Carter born in Hampstead, Berkshire, England, June 21, 1840. Blessing No. 376. Salt Lake City, October 27, 1882.

2. John Crowe Ransom, quoted in Alicia Suskin Ostriker, *Stealing the Language: The Emergence of Women's Poetry in America* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1986), p. 5.

3. Ruthellen Josselson, Ellen Greenberger, and Daniel McConochie, "Phenomenological Aspects of Psychosocial Maturity in Adolescence. Part I. Boys," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* vol. 6, no. 1 (1977), pp. 41-42.

4. Ruthellen Josselson, Ellen Greenberger, and Daniel McConochie, "Phenomenological Aspects of Psychosocial Maturity in Adolescence. Part II. Girls," *Journal of Youth and Adolescence* vol. 6, no. 2 (1977), p. 159.

5. *Ibid.*, p. 162.

6. Dale A. Blyth and Frederick S. Foster-Clark, "Gender Differences in Perceived Intimacy with Different Members of Adolescents' Social Networks," *Sex Roles* vol. 17, nos. 11/12 (1987), pp. 689-71.



"Today's lesson is how to defend yourself if you forgot your rattail comb or mace."

REVIEWS

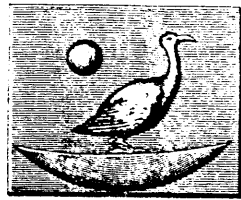
THE RHYTHMS OF REFLECTION

THE LORD'S QUESTION: THOUGHTS ON THE LIFE OF RESPONSE

by Dennis Rasmussen

Keter Foundation, 1985, 113 pages, \$6.95

Distributed by Deseret Book Company



Reviewed By John Durham Peters

NORMALLY ONE DOES not review books that have been out for several years. But this book is an exception: its half-life should be much longer than most other books, LDS or otherwise. In fact, it may well be read many generations hence, and some of its sentences would withstand the erosions of time and fashion if they were engraven in granite. With this fine book of religious reflection, Dennis Rasmussen has single-handedly enlarged the Mormon literary tradition, opening up a genre that heretofore has hardly been explored: devotional writing. We do have a flourishing literature of soul-searching in personal essays and journal entries, but this book invites us to explore and make good the contemplative possibilities of our faith. For this and other reasons, the book deserves to be more widely known.

This short book consists of ten chapters, each one a meditation on a question posed somewhere in the scriptures, such as: Where art thou? Do I not fill heaven and earth? Whom shall I send? and Whom seekest thou? Rasmussen uses each question as basis for contemplating his own experience and, through that, the human condition. The premise of the book is that questions are central to human understanding and action.

JOHN DURHAM PETERS teaches communication studies at the University of Iowa.

Questions are not only requests for information; they often invite a response and commitment from the whole soul. Our whole life, he suggests, is a question posed by God; we must not only find answers: we must become answers. Questions thus concern both knowing and being. Though "questioning" in Mormon circles is often a synonym for querulousness or lack of faith, Rasmussen shows how it can be both an art form and an act of worship: "Man learns his most serious questions from God. If anyone should doubt this, he may turn to those who question God most relentlessly. Who are they? Not the skeptics but the prophets" (94).

Rasmussen, who teaches philosophy at BYU, repeatedly casts his lot with the prophets instead of the skeptics, though it is his profound acquaintance with both (the scriptures and the history of philosophy, respectively) that gives the book much of its resonance. Rasmussen makes a quietly insistent case for the unity of reflection and faith, questioning and devotion. This synthetic task is clear already in the first pages. Chapter 1 introduces two traditions of reflection about human nature: the Greek tradition that says our essence is to question, and the Hebrew that says it is to be questioned by God. Rasmussen himself favors the divinatory stance of the Hebrews over the argumentative stance

of the Greeks, and this allegiance colors the style and substance of the book. Thus Prometheus, who has often furnished modern intellectuals with a favorite self-image, only defeats himself: "Man cannot rob heaven, not because God will defend it, but because he has already offered it to man" (5). Similarly Rasmussen sees contemporary ideals as potentially false gods, and Greek ones at that: "there are still those who seek to revive the gods of paganism, only now the gods have modern names: not Kronos but Progress; not Aphrodite but Sex; not Apollo but Culture; not Athena but Science" (48). His thought traces its genealogy sooner to Sinai than Athens. Though Rasmussen would choose the deserts of Yahweh over all the splendor of Greece, he has learned much from both.

Philosophical vocabulary does not appear in the text, but philosophical concerns frequently appear as hints and echoes (the interest in questions puts one in mind of Heidegger, Gadamer, and Ricoeur; a line borrowed from Wittgenstein appears in the text; philosophical issues are often subtly engaged without a red flag marking them). Yet one needs no philosophical background to learn from this book, though perhaps what Rasmussen does not say is as important as what he does say. He has given us a set of philosophical prose psalms.

One of the chief themes of the book is the holiness of common things, the ways that ordinary things can be transfigured through love, service, or devotion. In considering the saying that the common people heard Jesus gladly, Rasmussen suggests: "As an artist takes common colors and blends them into beauty, Christ took common things and raised them up to sanctity. He led men to see, as they never had seen before, the hidden holiness in the world. Leaven and salt, wind and sea, publicans and sinners—all revealed before his eyes their inner goodness" (61-62). Yet Rasmussen's vision of the powers of transfiguration is not unearned. He continually gives the negative its due: "To find the glory of the Lord in his creation is not to indulge in sentimental ecstasy. The writers of scripture knew that the lamb and the lion do not yet lie down together. But this knowledge did not prevent them from finding God even in the world as it now is" (17-18). This passage displays the characteristic motion of the book: devotion passing through the flame of the hardest questions for the sake of purification and renewal.

The belief that common things reveal the holy is not only a moral stance, but a literary one as well. Perhaps the most interesting and striking thing about this book is its voice. Its

philosophical sophistication, devotional intent, and literary style combine to make it an exemplary performance. I do not mean that the book assumes dramatic poses—few books are as unpretentious as this one—but that the book not only talks about the consecration of intellect, it *enacts* it. It is a running demonstration of what a consecrated mind might look like, of how intelligence can be the glory of God. Its literary style is thus not a mere ornament, but a philosophical and spiritual experiment. Questions of style have to do with what kinds of selves we create for ourselves and invite others to become in our

presence: like life, writing poses hard choices. Rasmussen carefully avoids the pomp of the academy and the specialization of the learned; his book combines the way of knowledge with the way of love. The short simple rhythms of the sentences—none longer than fifty words and most around ten or fifteen words in length—suggest the pausing for breath, the waiting for a response.

The Lord's Question should become and remain a milestone in Mormon devotional literature. It is a key corrective to a religious tradition that has made too little time for the self to explore itself in the presence of God.

He invites Mormons to step out of their beehive for a moment and to savor the marvelous works within as well as outside the soul. *The Lord's Question* is, consequently, an intensely personal book. It has an overheard quality: Rasmussen does not presume to talk about human experience in terms of a generalized "we"; rather, he invites us to eavesdrop on his own wonderings and even prayers. It is explicitly an "I" that speaks here, abstracted from the hustle and bustle of daily life. Like much traditional religious reflection, the book concerns a lone self face-to-face with God and the world. The book calls "time out," which gives it much of its appeal and poignance. Transcendence from the mundane is a traditional mark of this genre of spirituality.

Despite the personal focus of the book, the reader does not learn much about the biography and daily life of the author/speaker: Does he have to grade student papers, change diapers, wash dishes, or home teach four families every month? How is his spiritual life shaped by his wife and children? These are questions left unanswered in these reflections. Is a price paid for such transcendence? We should recognize that the genre of devotional literature comes to us with a history: those who have most deeply plumbed their own souls have usually been those with the leisure to reflect in solitude, insulated from commitments of family and mundane life (by monasteries, for example). Not every self can find a voice that is separate from its ties to others: this feat of abstraction seems easier for men than women in our culture, for good and ill. I wonder if the solitary persona of most devotional literature, including this book, is not itself something to be questioned. This is not to reduce this wonderful book nor to deny the need for solitary reflection, but to suggest the need for a variety of voices, and to remind of our incessantly social selves. Might not a Mormon devotional literature explore the spiritualities resulting from our profoundly communitarian theology and forms of worship? What kinds of religious reflection could be written that make the wonders and trials and mysteries of kinship central—kinship with each other and with God? Time will tell.

The Lord's Question also raises interesting issues about the sociology of Mormon language. Its tone is utterly lacking in trumpets and cymbals: it ranges from wonder to rhapsody to commentary, and is always simple, plain, and accessible. Rasmussen treads lightly on the reader's attention: he is scrupulous in his accessibility, punctilious in his plainness. He does not harangue or preach; he suggests and wonders. His inspiration seems to be the

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speech of the scriptures, especially of the Hebrew poets and Jesus: he writes as one who has learned the lesson in Doctrine and Covenants 50 that joy and edification come from understanding. He repeatedly demonstrates a fine awareness of the dangers of self-assertion that accompany dramatic or ironic language. In the studied humility of its persona, *The Lord Question* fits the main patterns of contemporary Mormon oratory and discourse, while also going beyond them. Some of his anecdotes remind one of Sacrament Meeting material (e.g., 74, 83, 93), and some of his cadences are reminiscent of the polished General Conference addresses of a Neal A. Maxwell. He works within a familiar register of speech, and yet shows us the literary potentials of our habitual styles of talking. Yet, despite all the eloquent anti-Christians and "plain" prophets in the Book of Mormon, simplicity is not necessarily a virtue (though it almost always is): there is, of course, the case of Isaiah, and Jesus apparently told parables sometimes precisely so that he would not be understood. Rasmussen stays well within the circle of devotion: nothing in the book could cause a little one to stumble. But are there no benefits in difficulty? Is there not a place for irony, perplexity, and contradiction, humor and the grotesque, in our most deeply spiritual reflections? Again, time will tell: other writers may take the devotional spirit in new directions and find surprising ways of singing God's glory in language. Unlike Rasmussen, they may sometimes brush our linguistic habits against the grain. But whatever happens, I have no doubt that stylistic questions will be grappled with—properly—as matters of utmost moral import.

These comments on the book's transcendental stance and style are not meant as criticisms. If the book was not, essentially, the inauguration of a new genre in Mormon writing, I would not be justified in speculating about directions that genre might go. Besides, Rasmussen has not claimed to write anything but a personal book (his one-sentence preface renounces any authority to instruct): in his intensity, generosity, and profundity we can all rejoice.

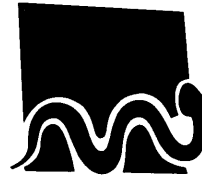
"Whereof one cannot speak," said the philosopher Wittgenstein, "thereof one must be silent." He meant that things of ultimate concern—the mystic matters of wonder—should not be spoken about lest they turn into nonsense. Reading Rasmussen makes me want to revise this dictum: Whereof one cannot speak, thereof one must sing. More people should know of his fine voice. ☞

A WALDEN FOR THE AMERICAN WEST

DESERT SOLITAIRE

by Edward Abbey

University of Arizona Press, 1988, \$24.95



Reviewed by B. W. Slaughter

LET ME START this review by admitting that *Desert Solitaire* is one of my all-time favorite, special-place-on-the-shelf books. Quite frankly it changed my life—and it wasn't even published by Deseret Book. So you may ask: if it's not *Deseret Solitaire*, why review it in *Sunstone*? Well, because (1) Elbert Peck asked me to do a review, (2) it takes place in Utah, (3) Abbey talks about us Mormons (or, excuse me, those "other" Mormons), and (4) this book can help us understand the importance of our relationship with nature—which should be of utmost importance to Latter-day Saints with our insights into our Heavenly Parents' plan.

With this beginning you know my bias. *Desert Solitaire* is considered the anthem of the outdoors, a classic argument for the need to experience nature. Many say it is the book that began it all: the demonstrations, the ecotage, and the new consciousness that wild lands must be saved for their own sake. First published in 1968, when America was more preoccupied with matters in Vietnam, a place far removed, both spiritually and physically, from southeastern Utah, it was *not* a best-seller—at least not at first. But by 1971 both Simon & Schuster and Ballantine Books republished *Desert Solitaire* in paperback, and as Abbey states, "both editions continue to burrow along like seditious moles a few feet underground, hidden but alive, the first now in its twelfth printing, the second in its six-

teenth" (11).

The reason for this review is that *Desert Solitaire* is now published in a beautifully illustrated twentieth-anniversary clothbound edition by the University of Arizona. Abbey tells us of the book's beginning: "This book was begun in the summer of 1956—thirty-one years ago. Hard to believe but true. For me that time seems like a different age, almost a different world, a pattern of events archaic to antiquity. I was working that summer as a ranger at a little national park in southeast Utah called Arches. The place was remote then, the roads rough and rocky, the tourist travel sparse. I worked and lived alone, twenty miles from Moab, the nearest town, and my duties were light. I spent much of my time watching cloud formations, praying for flash floods, exploring the canyons for new and undiscovered natural wonders. With much free time on my hands I kept a diary, or more exactly a journal, since I did not make entries every day. I recorded my observations of life, wildlife, books, flowers, ideas, birds, emotions, and sensations—particularly those feelings that came with prolonged solitude" (9).

A solitude and a book very much in the tradition of Thoreau and his book *Walden*. In fact, Larry McMurtry (of *Lonesome Dove* fame) has called Abbey "the Thoreau of the American West." As with Thoreau, Abbey spent much of his life in the defense of nature, particularly in the West. In this effort he tried to convey to his readers an appreciation of the wilds in the hope that we too would take up the fight, and in doing so also pass the word for others to join.

B. W. SLAUGHTER, an incurable naturalist and former *Sunstone* staff member, compulsively hikes the Wasatch Mountains.

Abbey's writing challenges us, makes us laugh, makes us mad, and mostly makes us feel and think. The first sentence of *Desert Solitaire* is such a challenge: "This is the most beautiful place on earth." Prior to reading this, conventional wisdom told us that the desert was an ugly, useless wasteland. Abbey teaches us to see the grace and beauty of all nature, of all wilds for their own intrinsic worth—not for their scientific value, not for tourism and not for economic gain. For example:

"If Delicate Arch has any significance it lies, I will venture, in the power of the odd and unexpected to startle and surprise the mind out of their ruts of habit, to compel us into a reawakened awareness of the wonderful—that which is full of wonder. A weird, lovely, fantastic object out of nature like Delicate Arch has the curious ability to remind us—like rock and sunlight and wind and wilderness—that *out there* is a different world which surrounds and sustains the little world of men as sea and sky surrounds and sustains a ship. The shock of the real. For a little while we are again able to see, as a child sees, a world of marvels. For a few moments we discover that nothing can be taken for granted, for if this ring of stone is marvelous, then all which shaped it is marvelous, and our journey here on earth, able to see and touch and hear in the midst of tangible and mysterious things-in-themselves, is the most strange and daring of all adventures" (52).

In the relatively mundane, sterile, workaday world, reading Abbey's words brings one back to life—feeling the excitement of being alive. *Desert Solitaire* is full of humor, wit, sarcasm, and even meanness, but all to make a point. Abbey is sometimes hard, sometimes soft—but always honest, maybe brutally honest at times.

Additionally, the book is visionary, sometimes romantically so. (Any book that begins "this is the most beautiful place on earth" must qualify as somewhat romantic.) Yet at other times Abbey is an Old Testament prophet, booming: "My God! I'm thinking, what incredible shit we put up with most of our lives—the domestic routine, the stupid and useless and degrading jobs, the insufferable arrogance of elected officials . . . the foul, diseased and hideous cities and towns we live in . . . while patiently enduring at the same time creeping strangulation of the clean white collar and the rich but modest four-in-hand

garrote!" (154). Surely, as the *New York Times* stated, *Desert Solitaire* is "rough, tough, combative . . . a ride on a bucking bronco."

What does Abbey have to say of us Mormons, you may ask—is he hard or is he soft? Is he humorous, or does he take us seriously? The answer is yes: he is all of the above, and he even throws in a little Old Testament doomsaying. On the hard side: ". . . racially prejudice . . . what can you expect of a sect which gave Utah a governor like J. Bracken Lee and . . . a secretary of agriculture like Ezra Taft Benson . . . whose founding father Joseph Smith claimed to have carried about under his arms solid gold tablets which, if they were the size he said they were, weighed about half a ton?" (223). On the soft side he states the Mormon pioneers "achieved a way of life in which there was much to be admired. . . ." (223). Specifically he points to mutual aid, cooperation, and sharing, to name a few qualities. Abbey the doomsayer

bemoans the fact that the old Mormon communities are now disappearing as they become "swamped" by American industrialism, commercialism, and urbanism. He warns us (and remember this was published in 1968): "Certainly in Salt Lake City itself there is no lack of intriguing social problems—air pollution, traffic jams, angry adolescents, babies born in sinlock and all the rest of it . . ." (225). It certainly sounds like the 1989 Salt Lake City I live in.

Edward Abbey died in February 1989 at the age of 62. The verse he wrote with his life is found in *Desert Solitaire*: "we need the wilderness whether or not we ever set foot in it" and "it is not enough to understand nature, the point is to save it." I challenge you to read this book, Abbey's masterpiece, and if you do you will go on a wonderful bronco ride of an adventure that will make you upset, mad, make you laugh, think and feel. It will force you out of your ruts! ☞

TEFNUT

Tefnut, the Great Mother, came weeping to Egypt
In those before times, but soon laughed,
For through her sons a new line began,
Not the father's line, but Pharaohs called her
Mother, sacrificing children, seeking
The secret of the patriarchal key word.

Hathor, Ishtar, Freya, Durga, and Kali,
She was Anath, consort and mother of Baal,
Ashtoreth over Moloch. She was Eve.
What secrets did she insist on knowing
When she took the fruit? Made to be a
Helpmeet, she helped Adam out of Eden.

Mother of all but that parentless power he forfeits
When dominion and compulsion weigh
The soul, how can she make him just—as she
Would be? Wrestle an angel? What did Hagar
Want from Abraham for Ishmael that the
Father saved for ancient Sarah's son?

Is it the power to throw upon a wheel
A world? To set the time for stars to burst
As signs to man? To spin the earth in space,
To make the sun stand still and mountains move,
Practicing not on mountains but on clods?
What is such power to one who makes the mover?

—PENNY ALLEN

MORMON SOCIOLOGISTS HOLD LANDMARK MEETING

FOR SOME time LDS sociologists have been regular participants at Mormon scholarly gatherings such as the Mormon History Association's annual meetings and Sunstone symposiums. Because of their specialized analytical skills and perspectives they have been seen by many as a important contributors to the discussion of Mormonism. However, this fall for the first time ever nearly all sociologists who study Mormons were gathered in one place to share their research with other sociologists and, turning the tables, Mormon scholars from other disciplines were minority contributors.

This October 27-29 the joint meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) and the Religious Research Association (RRA), held in the Salt Lake Marriott Hotel, legitimized Mormon studies for North American sociologists of religion and also bonded Mormon sociologists.

Fearing low conference turnout. SSSR/RRA rarely meets west of the Mississippi. But due to the lobbying of RRA board member Stan Weed, a researcher in the Church's research and evaluation division, the organizations agreed to come to Utah and this year's conference attendance broke the record high by one person.

Although the conference had sessions on many religions, Mormonism was prominently featured. At the Thursday opening session Ray Briscoe, with LDS research and evaluation, humorously introduced conference goers to Utah and Mormons using demographic data and Calvin Grondahl cartoons. Friday night the Church hosted a generous open house/buffet dinner on the panoramic 26th floor of the Church Office Building for all conference attendees.

Later, the Friday evening ple-

nary session featured Mormonism as a case study in the growth of new religious movements. University of Washington sociologist Rodney Stark presented his research on the growth of the LDS church. He said the Mormon phenomena challenges the widely-accepted sociological assumptions that secularism and modernity will eventually replace religion. Stark concluded that, based on his growth studies, Mormonism will become a new world religion.

Indiana University-Purdue University historian Jan Shipps, author of *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition*, shared research from her forthcoming book on Mormonism in the twentieth century. She discussed the evolving methods Mormons developed to create a Mormon ethnic identity and questioned whether those methods could survive the challenges of the growing international church. She believes Mormonism will evolve from an ethnic religious group to a world religion.

Stark and Shipps's presentations were discussed by BYU sociologist Darwin Thomas and Eileen Barker of the London School of Economics.

Many attendees felt that this serious discussion of Mormonism by respected non-LDS scholars made Mormon sociology a respectable field of study in the eyes of many in attendance. During the following days, for the first time in the organizations' history, the Mormon sessions were attended by numerous scholars not in Mormon studies.

In addition to the impact on non-Mormon sociologists, the conference brought together a significant number of scholars interested in Mormon sociology, many had never met each other before, including Shipps and Stark.

ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS annual symposium will be held in Salt Lake City at Westminster College on 27 January 1990. Contact William A. Wilson, Department of English, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

DAYBREAK, an LDS single-adult newsletter (\$5 for six issues, Box 705, Belmont, CA 94002), recently listed the following LDS get-acquainted organizations: * **Latter-day Friendship Connection**, a bi-monthly newsletter which includes photos and personal descriptions (\$25 membership fee). 19602 Rocky Road, Santa Ana, CA 92705 714/838-8387. * **Latter-day Ideals**, a "confidential dating service exclusively for highly selective LDS men and women who are seeking eternal companions." 250 W. 700 S., Suite 402, Salt Lake City, UT 84101, 801/531-9888. * **Latter-day Singles Referral Service**, a referral service for LDS single-adults "based on personality profile test and a personal survey" (\$30 enrollment). PO Box 25181, Las Vegas, NV 89193, 702/877-9121. * **Selective Singles/Perfect Partners**, a dating service for "selective LDS singles from San Diego to Santa Barbara, CA (ages 23 & up)." PO Box 25181, Los Angeles, CA 90025, 213/207-6133.

MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION. 1990 is MHA's birthday. As part of the celebration Linda Thatcher and Jeff Johnson are compiling a history. For a historical organization, we need to have a greater sense of our own history! Please help Linda and Jeff by sharing your memories of MHA. Pictures and anecdotes about all aspects of MHA are needed. Send them to MHA, PO Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602.

MORMON WOMEN'S FORUM and a coalition of Utah women's groups are presenting "Mother Wove the Morning," a new one-woman play written and performed by Carol Lynn Pearson. The play features sixteen women throughout history—paleolithic, Egyptian, biblical, Gnostic, medieval, Shaker, etc.—whose dramatic stories "show that the human family has always longed for its Mother in Heaven, has often exiled her, and is now inviting her to come home."

The play will be performed at 7:30 P.M. on January 5-6, 10-13, 17-19, 24-27 at the Salt Lake Art Center (20 South West Temple) and at 7:30 P.M. on 20 January at Utah Valley Community College (Student Center Ballroom). Tickets are \$12 at the door or \$10 in advance from SmithTix: 801/467-5996. For more information about the Mormon Women's Forum, call 801/295-2736.

PLOTTING ZION, a symposium on communal societies, will be sponsored by the Sunstone Foundation in 3-5 May 1990 at the Excelsior Hotel in Provo, UT. Proposals are now being accepted.

SYMPOSIUM XII will be held on 22-25 August 1990 at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. Proposals for papers and panels are now being accepted at the Sunstone office.

SUNSTONE WEST SYMPOSIUM will be held on 2-3 March 1990 at the Doubletree Hotel at Plaza Los Fuentes in Pasadena, California. Proposals for panel discussions and papers are requested. Contact Steve Eccles, 1482 Winston Court, Upland, CA 91786 (714/982-4752).

SUNSTONE WASHINGTON D.C. SYMPOSIUM will be held 7-8 April 1990. For more information or to submit proposals contact Donald Gustavson, 413 Clearfield Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

Almost every sociologist doing research in Mormon studies attended (it is still possible to identify every one). Altogether there were seven sessions dealing specifically with Mormons and also numerous scattered Mormon papers in other panels and sessions.

Among Brigham Young University sociologists attending, Stan Albrecht and Bruce Chadwick spoke on the Indian Student Placement Program, Howard Bahr and David Hunt on "Disaffiliation, Demographic Switching, and Mormonism," Cardell Jacobsen on black Mormons, Tim Heaton on whether Mormon families are different from others, Phillip Kunz on a family's 100 year Mormon history, Marie Cornwall on women and the institutional Church, Larry Young on the dilemmas of organizational growth, and Jim Duke on changes in institutional Mormonism.

Sociologists from other universities included Clark Knowlton, University of Utah, on minority relations and Mormonism, Hans Baer, University of Arkansas, on his book *Recreating Utopia in the Desert*, Armand Mauss, Washington State University, and Philip Barlow on a sociological explanation of the evolving LDS use of the King James Version, Gordon and Gary Shepherd, Oakland University and the University of Arkansas, on how the missionary experience sustains a lay religion, and Merlin Brinkerhoff, University of Calgary, on the Mormon missionary.

From the Church Office Building, D. Wayne Brown on predicting LDS church growth, Linda Charney on the conversion process, Perry Cunningham on recruitment, retention, and disaffiliation, Douglas Hooper on retaining new Church members, Joseph Olson on family and Church influence on missionary service, Kay Smith on the relationships among life values, activities, and religious concepts, Margie Holmes on religious values in adult life stages, Mary Lou

McNamara on self-reported effects of spiritual experiences, Kristen L. Goodman on the Church's international demographics, and Don Larson on Mormon/non-Mormon Scandinavian migration.

Scholars from other disciplines included Canadian anthropologist Keith Parry on identity conflict of Mormon Indians, BYU historian

Jessie Embry on LDS African-Americans, University of North Texas philosopher Joe Barnhart on "The New Mormon Scholars and the Crisis of Conscience," BYU psychologist Allen Bergin on "Religion and Mental Health: Mormons and Other Groups," BYU political scientist David Magleby on Utah Mormon voting behavior, University of Utah historian Davis Bitton on symbolic elements in the Mormon identity, and Washington University anthropologist David Knowlton on the Anglo Mormon missionary culture in Bolivia.

Of particular note was the considerable participation by Church-employed researchers who shared data from their confidential studies for the Church's research and evaluation division. Scholars not familiar with the extensive religious research funded by and for the Church were impressed with the sophisticated studies the Church commissioned (some knowledgeable outside sociologists say it is some of the best in the world). Scholars familiar with the very-private Church studies were impressed that the Church permitted much of the findings to be shared publicly, even in an academic conference. And some Church members who first learned of the Church's secret research at this conference praised it but also felt that it should be made available to the general membership.

All in all, the conference afforded Mormon sociologists an opportunity to gather together and talk, and there were many informal meetings. Some scholars felt that there will be more sociological collaboration and Mormon research as a result of the confer-

ence. Marie Cornwall is editing a book of collected papers on Mormon sociology which will feature many of the papers presented at the conference, due out in 1991.

One sociologist compared this conference to the middle sixties when there were sufficient professional historians to form the Mormon History Association. While there already exists the Society for the Sociological Study of Mormon Life (SSSML) which publishes a periodic newsletter and occasionally sponsors sessions at conferences, and there is some

discussion of it publishing a journal, perhaps there is now gathered the critical mass of scholars and research necessary for Mormon sociology to become a full-fledged collaborator in Mormon studies along with history.

An overheard hallway conversation where a Mormon historian solicited a sociologist may signify the future contributions for Mormon sociologists: "I have all this data which I don't know how to make sense of," said the historian. "I need a framework to interpret it. Do you have any ideas." ☞

CHURCH SEEKS O.K. FOR 10,000-HOME PROJECT

By Hand Carré

THE MORMON CHURCH has requested authority to develop a portion of its 300,000-acre Deseret Ranch near Orlando, Florida, into a 10,000-home residential area. Orange County officials have expressed concern over the massive project's impact on traffic, utility services, and the environment.

The Associated Press reported that the Church's proposal would receive a lengthy review, mainly because the site is outside the area the county currently provides with roads or waterlines. "No immediate mention . . . about footing the bills" for such development was made by officials of Magnolia Management Corporation, the LDS church-owned company in charge of the land, the A.P. story said.

Magnolia officials said they had been under intense development pressures to either build on or sell the property. "We've farmed the land and loved it and nurtured it," said John King, Magnolia's general manager. "We've told everyone else to stay off but we've been bombarded by offers."

County Commissioner Linda Chapin said that "the Mormons have historically been very good stewards of that land. They have set some impressive standard [for protecting sensitive environmental

areas] in this plan" which could be used to evaluate future proposals as well. But county planning director Ed Williams said that the site is not suitable for homes. Up to now, development in the area has been industrial—an electronic test site for defense contractor Martin Marietta and a wastewater treatment plant.

Traffic is also a problem since the site can currently be reached only by a toll road and the already overburdened two-lane Alafaya Trail. County Commissioner Hal Marston said that "without better access, there is no way we could permit that sort of thing to go forward."

The Church has owned the sprawling ranch, which lies in three counties and is half the size of Rhode Island, for about 50 years. ☞

ONE FOLD

By Hand Carré

RLDS PRESIDENT EMERITUS DIES

W. WALLACE SMITH, president emeritus of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, died 4 August 1989 in Independence, Missouri, after a long battle with cancer. He was eighty-eight years old.

President Smith served as leader of the RLDS church from 1958 to 1978, when he named his son Wallace B. Smith as president-prophet and was honored with the title president emeritus.

He was born on 18 November 1900, the son of Joseph Smith III and Ada Clark Smith. In 1924 he married Rosamond Bunnell. They had two children, Rosalee and Wallace Bunnell. The family lived in Missouri and Oregon until 1947 when Smith was called by his half-brother, President Israel A. Smith, to the RLDS Council of Twelve Apostles. In 1950 he became a member of the First Presidency and in 1958 succeeded his half-brother as fifth president of the church.

Under his leadership the church's missionary program became a worldwide effort, expanding into twenty additional nations. During his administration the clarification of church theology began and he issued a call to the church to prepare for building a temple in Independence. (*Saints Herald*)

CHINA PLANS NEW RELIGIOUS LEGISLATION

THE OFFICIAL *China Daily* newspaper reports that new legislation on religion is being prepared to "strengthen religious liberty" and improve Chinese relations with overseas religious communities. However, it added, "no foreign religious organization will have permission to get mixed up in internal affairs of the country." (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

ZAMBIAN STATE PAPER CRITICIZES CHURCHES

IN A departure from its usual tone on church questions, the state-run *Sunday Times* strongly criticized the attitude of foreign missionaries and churches towards African culture. "Every possession of black civilization, the church said was evil," reads the editorial. "The church sought to make us ashamed of the very things we as Africans believed in. . . . Its basic thrust was the cultural genocide of the black race. . . . The church has a lot to do to improve its image in Africa," it concluded. The editorial came in the wake of the visit by Pope John Paul II to Zambia last May. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

SCHOOL PRAYER SUPPORT DECLINES

ONLY 17 percent of American adults now favor spoken prayers in school, according to a recent *Parents Magazine* poll, even though many believe that such a practice would promote positive values among children. "Americans are far more conscious of religious pluralism" says American religion historian Martin Marty who estimates that 70 percent of adults objected to the 1962 and 1963 Supreme Court deci-

sions banning state-sponsored prayer and Bible reading in schools. In spite of rejecting school prayers, today 68 percent approve of a moment of silence each day; only 12 percent opposed both prayer and a moment of silence. (*Religion Watch*)

THE WORLDWIDE CHURCH OF GOD REFORMS

IN SPITE of reports that the Worldwide Church of God has consolidated its strengths and has grown since the death of founder Herbert W. Armstrong, the September issue of *Ambassador Report*, a newsletter published by former WCG members, reports there are "hints that all is not well" in the movement, now under the leadership Joseph Tkach. By the end of July church income had grown by only 3.2 percent, "almost three points less than the low six percent growth rate that had been expected. . . . This, in an organization that used to boast of an annual growth rate of 30 percent"

The decline is attributed partially to "widespread lack of confidence in WCG teachings." Tkach, the *Report* says, is even questioning and altering several fundamentals set down by Armstrong. The ban on birthday celebrations has been lifted, possibly to be followed by removal of the ban on voting in government elections. In almost explicit contradiction of Armstrong's teachings, Tkach claims that Jesus did not tell his followers to watch world events for the end times, and has put new emphasis on the person of Jesus rather than on the coming of the kingdom of God, indicating to *Ambassador Report* that he aims to bring the WCG "more in harmony with [mainstream] protestantism."

A third shift is in Tkach's emphasis on racial equality, departing from Armstrong's emphatic belief that "the modern Israel," meant English-speaking countries. Perhaps because of such doctrinal changes, members are now, "more than ever . . . reading publications that are challenging . . . WCG doctrines." There is even some debate over Armstrong's place in WCG history, stemming especially from reports that he committed incest. Even distribution of his magnum opus *Mystery of the Ages* has been halted by Tkach "because of its evil influence" "some speculate that it will be only a few years before Tkach turns [Armstrong] into a non-person."

LORD'S EXCOMMUNICATION SPLITS SCOTTISH CHURCH

ABOUT A dozen congregations in Scotland have formed the Associated Presbyterian Churches (APC) in response to the excommunication of Lord Mackay, chief judicial officer for most of the United Kingdom. Mackay was expelled from the Free Presbyterian Church of Scotland (FPCS) for attending two funeral eucharists for Roman Catholic colleagues. About 30 percent of the FPCS clergy and membership have joined the APC, splitting families in the Scottish highlands where the 7000-member FPCS is concentrated.



LAYING MONEY
DOWN ON A
NEW STATE LINE

AS IF taking a cue from Nevada's prosperous State Line Casino in Wendover, two Idaho-Utah border convenience stores selling Idaho lottery tickets have experienced a minor economic boom.

Thanks to an out-of-state gambling itch, Franklin's La Tienda store, 20 miles north of Logan, was Idaho's highest lottery retailer through August 1989, boasting more than \$222,750 in sales, four times the biggest seller in Boise. While number two vendor, the Kwik Stop in tiny Malad on the I-15 corridor, totaled over \$166,250.

Although lottery director Wally Hendrick said Utah's dollars probably accounted for less than 5 percent of sales, some have speculated whether the unanticipated success of the lottery, together with Utah's willingness to bet across the border, will spark another debate on gambling within the beehive state. But for now, Utahns hoping to get lucky will have to include travelling expenses in their calculations when figuring how much they can afford to lose.

CINEMA IN
YOUR FAITH

IN ADDITION to two announced film projects about the Hofmann forgery-bombing case (CBS's mini-series "The Mormon Murders" and 20th Century Fox's *A Gathering of Saints*), two more LDS related films are now in the works.

"A big love story and a wonderful piece of American history," as director Ken Annakin calls it, *Joseph and Emma* is the story of the Mormon founder and his first and most famous wife. Reportedly, the LDS church has been denied access to the script; Annakin says he's going it alone. "We've approached the production about offering technical assistance," said Keith Atkinson, California LDS public communications spokesperson. "Our only concern is historical accuracy. We don't want to come in and be judgmental, but when phone calls aren't returned, we have to wonder why."

Annakin, whose former work includes *The Magnificent Men in their Flying Machines*, has a 5 million dollar budget for the film, which stars David Hoxby of the Royal Shakespeare Company and Ellen Wheeler from TV's "All My Children" in the title roles. Shooting began last October in Ohio.

Meanwhile in neighboring Illinois, and on location in Utah to Missouri and England, the LDS church plans to make a historical film, which reportedly will follow a woman's reminiscences as she looks back from the placing of the Angel Moroni on the near-completed Salt Lake Temple to her family's trek through Far West, Haun's Mill, and Nauvoo, her father's mission to England where he converts her future husband, and the Exodus West to Salt Lake. The 6 million dollar budgeted movie is directed by Academy Award winner Keith Merrill and will premier at the renovated Hotel Utah.



Pacific Northwest SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

NOVEMBER 10-11, 1989

1989

SEATTLE, WASH.

AUDIO CASSETTES

- #1 **Confronting Racism and Sexism from popular Mormon Theology**
-Eugene England, Phd.
- #2 **"Towards a Theology of the Left"**
-Paul I. Wright
- #3 **"Developing Healthy attitudes towards People with Disabilities"**
-Romel W. Mackelprang
- #4 **"Co-Dependence and the Dilemma of Obedience"**
-Connie Lundgren Hiatt
- #5 **"Alternative Views of Zion from Native America"**
-Bonnie Lynn Mitchell
- #6 **"The Anatomy of an LDS Music Creation"**
-Dr. A. Laurence Lyon, Lloyd T. Hanson
- #7 **"Personal Identity and Religious Community"**
-Bennion, Lamb-Kwon, Nielsen, Wallace
- #8 **"Alternative Voices: Do We Need Them?"**
-Panel: McKenzie, Mauss, Noakes, London
- #9 **"Discovering your Gay Son or Daughter"**
-Panel: Degler, McGrath, Fitzgerald, Beighle
- #10 **"Plural Wives in the Penitentiary 1880-1890"**
-Jessie Embry, Lorie Winder Stromberg
- #11 **"Towards a Book of Mormon Exegesis"**
-Clyde Forsberg
- #12 **"Ethics and Advocacy"**
-Romel W. Mackelprang, Stephen L. Matthews
- #13 **"Show and Tell: 50 years in the Church"**
-Charlotte England, Theresa Roth
- #14 **"Sexual Assault in the LDS Community"**
-Panel: Emery, Larsen, Monroe
- #15 **"The Fifth Ward Anti-Discrimination Project"**
-Panel: London, Nicholson, Nubee, Wright
- #16 **"Anthony M. Stenhouse, 1849-1928"**
-Robert McCue
- #17 **"Pillars of my Faith"**
Panel: Butler, Bailey, Sharon Hall, Stanton Hall
- #18 **"The Funeral of Juanita Brooks"**
-Levi Peterson, PHD

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