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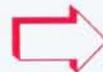
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READERS' FORUM



LIGHTEN UP

IF I GO on after mortality I'd prefer to go forward smiling. As much as possible. So, keep those delightful cartoons and any other light items flowing. All life is sacred, yet there are no "sacred cows." Lighten up a little, huh, Brother Rees (SUNSTONE 14:1).

HOWARD W. JOHNSON
Lyndonville, VT

INCLINING TO CARING ACTS

IT IS UNFORTUNATE that Orson Scott Card's otherwise excellent and thought-provoking essay contains a serious flaw that is, incidentally, a major cause for many of the problems facing homosexuals in and out of the Church—equating homosexuality with same sex intercourse. Phrases such as "tempted toward homosexuality," "homosexual tendencies," and "repenting of homosexuality" are fuzzy at best and downright misleading at worst. Being a fan of Card's science fiction, I know he has the ability to be very precise; I regret that he was not in this essay. When he speaks of repenting of homosexual behavior, I find his argument compelling. When he speaks of repenting of homosexuality, I find his argument ridiculous. Homosexuals can no more "repent" of their homosexuality than I can of my heterosexuality, but we can both refrain from sexual relations and other behaviors that have been proscribed by a faith we subscribe to.

If we can just separate the act from the inclination, the behavior from the person, we can make significant advances in loving, caring for, and ministering to the sizeable gay and lesbian population among the Saints. If I had a child born with a hearing deficit, I wouldn't counsel that child to "repent" of deafness. Rather, I would caution him about pitfalls, help him to esteem himself as a valuable human, and encourage him to treasure the gifts and share his life with others. I believe Card would also.

ARNOLD V. LOVERIDGE
Salt Lake City

SEXUAL DRIVING PERMITS

AFTER DIGESTING THE H. Wayne Schow and Stan Roberts articles on homosexuality, it was a much different experience to read Orson Scott Card's essay (all in SUNSTONE 14:1). Card errs in equating the regulation of sexual drives with denial of them. Asking unmarried heterosexual persons to curtail their sexual drives until they can be channeled in marriage is not the same as asking homosexual persons to curtail their sexual drives, period.

VAL HOLLEY
Washington, D.C.

ON WHAT AUTHORITY?

ORSON SCOTT CARD ("The Hypocrites of Homosexuality" SUNSTONE 14:1) anticipates that he will be accused of homophobia for what he wrote about gays. I think that his basic ignorance of the subject is a better judgment.

What is his expertise on homosexuality— that he once knew a handful of horny gay college students? People mature. They learn to integrate their sexual impulses with love and respect for others. Card's view of homosexuality has remained as puerile as the people he condemns; it has not developed beyond that shallow initial acquaintance. In all my dealings with gay men and women, I have never encountered a single one who appealed to "genetic predisposition" to excuse him/herself from a morally responsible use of sex. Why is Card pretending this is an issue? If the average fifteen-year-old boy "predisposed to copulate with anything that moves" can become a morally responsible adult, so can the not-particularly-pure-minded young homosexual.

For the gay as well as the straight Mormon, responsible use of sexuality within the context of sexual freedom is a source of spiritual empowerment. Repression is as spiritually disfiguring, incapacitating, and unnatural for homosexuals as it is for their counterparts. The scriptures condemn repression (1 Timothy 4:1,3). Only a perverse God would create deep, permanent desire in certain

human hearts and then deprive them of any real hope of fulfillment.

For Card and those who share his prejudice, the mercies of God toward homosexuals are a sealed book. As they see it, the Lord by means of his prophets has repeatedly condemned homosexuality. But has he? Where are these prophetic denunciations so often cited by the opponents of same-sexuality? They are not found in the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, or The Pearl of Great Price—an astonishing omission given the alleged gravity of the sin. They are not in the Bible either. The linkage of the story of Sodom (Genesis 19) with homosexuality is wholly unsupported by the text. Both Jesus and Ezekiel identified the sin of Sodom as “inhospitality” to divine messengers (Ezekiel 16:49,50; Matthew 11:24).

The prohibitions against male-male sex in Leviticus refer to sexual acts within the context of idolatrous worship. Also, if the intent were to outlaw homosexuality in general, it is odd that there is no symmetrical proscription of female-female sex, idolatrous or otherwise, in the Bible.

In Romans 1:26-27 the Apostle Paul is not describing homosexuality but sexual inversion. He is talking about men and women

who, as a consequence of their idol worship, have turned from their natural heterosexual inclination to a lustful gratification with the same sex (somewhat like the situational homosexuality in prisons today). These are people who deliberately *chose* a kind of eroticism that is unnatural for *them*.

Modern prophets and apostles have not condemned homosexuality on the strength of prophetic authority, despite their generally negative opinions of it. Though most undoubtedly feel that it is already condemned in scripture, not one has published an original revelation stating that homosexuality or homosexual relations are a sin. Not even statements from the First Presidency which have appeared in various editions of the bishop's handbook can make the claim of definitive, prophetic revelation since they represent an arbitration of policy, not doctrine. They, too, depend upon the traditional (albeit erroneous) appeals to biblical scripture for their authority.

Ultimately, the Church's policies are a matter of tradition. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints can move forward under the guidance of new revelation on this issue, or it can lapse into the moral sloth that has marked the decline of God's people at the

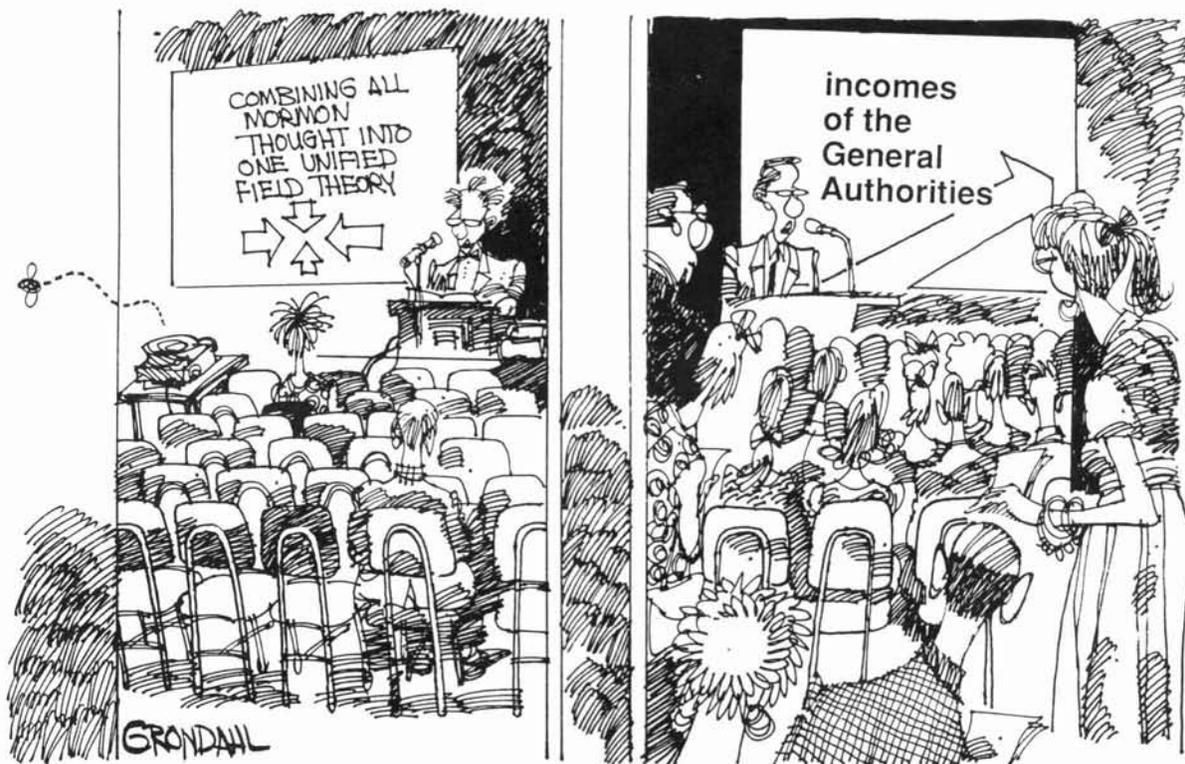
close of every dispensation. We think that it cannot happen to us, even as we cling, Pharisee-like, to the old insufficiencies. This is the hypocrisy with which we, the Church, should be more concerned. Let us hope that when Christ comes a second time, we are not surprised to find gays and lesbians entering the Kingdom before we do.

ALAN DAVID LACH
Los Angeles

HOMOPHOBIC RAMEUMPTOMS

ORSON SCOTT CARD's argument that “when one's life is given over to one community it cannot be given to another” simplistically suggests that Church membership precludes membership in any other community. As Christians and good citizens we often need to learn to be exemplary members of various communities. Membership and allegiance to our friends in that community does not imply a *de facto* acceptance of all its standards. For instance, my status as a Republican does not signal my agreement with every party platform, yet I am not

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ashamed to declare my membership. Usually it is the outrageous behavior of some individuals that draws attention and fuels stereotypes.

Card also makes the erroneous assumption that homosexuality is determined by one's sexual behavior. In truth, one may be heterosexual or homosexual whether or not he or she is, or ever has been, sexually active. People can no more repent of *being* homosexual than they can of being heterosexual. Nor should they. It is one's behavior, not orientation, that demonstrates their degree of commitment to Gospel principles—"by their fruits shall ye know them." And if, perhaps, that commitment is deemed to be flagging, who can cast the first stone? Only God knows the heart.

As a gay Latter-day Saint I accept the responsibility to represent both of my communities honorably (as do many others). My temple recommend is valid. While it is no magic qualifier, it means to me that I can answer with an unqualified "yes" to the question, "Are you morally clean?" And only my priesthood leader can ask that question.

Card also supposes that tolerance of homosexuals "would be, in the long run, the destruction of the Church." How noble of him to rescue the Church from the sin of tolerance! The Kingdom of God will prevail in spite of man if necessary. We cannot presume that its success depends on our vigilance of one another. The practice of tolerance will

strengthen those who learn it, as well as the kingdom—more so than will Card's condescending attitude.

All humans have sinned. All are dependent upon Christ's atonement for forgiveness. The Book of Mormon cautions us not to say, "the man has brought upon himself his misery; therefore I will stay my hand and not . . . impart unto him of my substance [love, fellowship, etc.] . . . for his punishments are just . . . whoever doeth this, the same hath great need to repent" (Mosiah 4:17-18).

As for the laws against homosexuality, which Card advocates, we cannot afford to allow such abuse of the Constitution. God will not justify a theocracy at the expense of free agency. Such was Satan's premortal plan. The Book of Mormon clearly explains that the laws of this land, as well as the Gospel, exist to ensure the rights of the individual to self-determination, insofar as the exercise thereof does not deprive any other of his or her rights.

Finally, the assertion that homosexuality is somehow a threat to "safe, stable, dependable marriage and family relationships" is ludicrous. Homosexuality is not contagious. There is no conspiracy to "recruit" heterosexuals (as if such were possible). Most homosexuals are the product of a heterosexual society that vigorously attempts to "convert" them, to no avail. An increased tolerance of homosexuality does not lead to more homosexuals, only to more honesty and less hidden suffering. Homosexuals do not

advocate the abolishment of marriage and family, nor are we an inherent threat to children. Statistics clearly show that, per capita, there is a higher incidence of child molestation by heterosexuals. Card's exaggerated fears can only be seen as homophobia.

Homosexuals are no better or worse than heterosexuals—both have their hypocrites. Neither can afford to stand atop the Rameumptom and cast stones. Brother Card should stick to his forte: writing award-winning fantasy.

MARTY BEAUDET
San Francisco

CENSORING CARD

IT IS, PERHAPS, presumptuous for a non-Mormon to respond to an article clearly oriented toward Mormons. But Orson Scott Card's article was brought to my attention by a customer. Since we carry a large number of science fiction works I read what he had to say.

Card has the right to believe anything he wants regardless of how much pure twaddle is involved. Private organizations such as the LDS church have the right to establish any rules they so choose to define membership. Those members of the LDS church who don't like the position are free to try to change that position or leave the Church. But neither Card nor the Church (nor any church) has the right to take those private rules and impose them through laws on the rest of us. Card does not realize the difference between a private organization such as the LDS church and the larger secular society based on the rights of the individual, not on the collectivism of the group. A free society recognizes that some people will engage in actions that other people dislike, but it tolerates those activities. So-called societal "regulations of sexual behavior" were viciously used to persecute the early Mormons. Such actions were reprehensible then and are reprehensible now. Private interactions, sexual or religious, should not be the business of the government. If that rule is applied equally to all people, the Church can do as it pleases in the confines of the temple and the homosexual can do as he or she pleases in the confines of his or her bedroom. Such is the principle of equal liberty for all.

And in keeping with this right to freedom of association, my bookstore will no longer stock the works of Orson Scott Card. We advocate individual liberty and Card doesn't,



so we will no longer voluntarily contribute to his economic well-being.

JIM PERON
San Francisco

LETTING FREE AGENCY WORK

I EXPRESS MY deepest gratitude for the articles on homosexuality by H. Wayne Schow, Stan Roberts, and Orson Scott Card. In all my searching and studying, at last, something has been written that brings understanding and sensitivity to a subject that many have been trying to ignore. Although each author approached the subject from a very different viewpoint, when I read each of them I said: Yes! I know just what you mean and how you feel.

We have a homosexual son. (That has been the most difficult sentence for me to say.) My husband first found out when Joe (not his real name) came to his father because he needed financial assistance for counseling. Joe was twenty-one years old, had just come home from a mission, and was in a desperate emotional battle. He had contemplated suicide and was now at his wits' end. I was told a year later. They had delayed telling me because they knew how much it would hurt me. They were right. The rest of the story is similar to Schow's. However, Joe is still living in Salt Lake City, graduated from the University of Utah, Summa Cum Laude, and has an excellent career. He is involved with the gay community and does not have AIDS—yet.

Joe lives with one foot in the closet and one foot out. We have a good relationship with him and see him often. He wants his family to accept him, his lifestyle and friends, but knows we can only be involved in a superficial manner. We have a large family, and they all know about Joe; some accept him better than others. Brothers-in-law have a particularly difficult time, and I have seen Joe hurt by their remoteness or outright rejection.

The day he brought his temple clothing to me and said he could no longer be active was a devastating day in all of our lives. "There is no place in the Church for me," he wept. Since then we have seen his not-so-gradual descent from believing the gospel but not accepting the "man-made" organization to now saying he thinks there is *probably* a God.

I can't help but feel angry about the two bishops and a stake president who told him that if he lived the commandments, stayed morally clean, and went on a mission he would get over his feelings. He did all of the above but did not get over his feelings. Perhaps ten years ago the counseling he would have received might not have helped, but I know that those Church leaders should have told his parents, with or without Joe's consent, so that we could have gotten help for him when he was fourteen.

I have grown through this experience—our whole family has. But I think a mother carries the greater guilt, more of a sense of responsibility, more feelings for having failed her child. She was the care-giver, the teacher, the nurturer, wasn't she? I've learned that I cannot allow my child's behavior to determine my happiness or well-being. I have turned to other things, a mid-life career, new associations, new talents. What has happened has allowed me to let go of my child in a way that has been positive for him and for me. I have developed a more mature kind of love for my son, one that allows me to admire his accomplishments, enjoy our time together, and let free agency work.

Here is a poem I wrote.

CHANGE IN AUTUMN

The leaves are turning autumn hues,
The air feels crisp and clean.
I walk, and see the evidence
Of nature's changing scene.

In dread I watch you changing too,
Before my very eyes,
From teachable, to actions that
I never could surmise.

Outstripping all medieval tools:
This rack I'm stretched upon.
I'm torn between my love for you
And judging what you've done.

Knowing that you've lived a life
That others never knew,
I find myself racked once again
Defending what is you.

And there are things I only sense
From deep within your soul:
Your zest for life, a brilliant brain,
A hunger to be whole.

I've sought for solace; now I see
What they will never see.
And find in me uncommon strength
To let us both just be.

ANONYMOUS
Ogden, UT

A COMMUNITY OF DOUBTERS

I WAS SET back by Charles Sellers' letter (SUNSTONE 13:4) on Scott Kenney's personal essay "At Home at Sea" (SUNSTONE 13:3). I realize that there are those who still believe as simply as they have always believed. Nevertheless, I personally was so moved by Brother Kenney's essay that I sat down myself and wrote an essay outlining my own beliefs.

Sellers says, "I am convinced that the Church has what most honest seekers are looking for." If it does, I and all the others who are no longer enthralled by the Church are dishonest seekers, a judgment I am not prepared to accept.

I disagree with Sellers that the Church is doing a pretty good job with both the living and the dead. I am not saying that the Church is not involved. It is. But the mission of the Church is too narrow, self-serving, and exclusive. The Church has taught me how to pay my tithing, do home teaching, genealogy, etc., but it never did teach me how to develop a personal relationship with God or how to serve the poor other than do my duty at the welfare farm.

Any person in the Church should have the right to voice his feelings and concerns about the effect the Church has had or continues to have on our lives without the fear that doing so will destroy someone's testimony. Sellers's statement that "doubts are inevitable, but people should be careful about broadcasting them" is a perfect example of why the Church has yet to establish true community. A true community is one in which all feel safe in their hopes, fears, joys, faith, and doubt.

CLAYTON W. COOK
Woodland, CA

WOMEN'S BEST FRIEND

I AM NOT sure whether or not I should laugh at Hal Pierce's attempt to convince misguided feminists that male control is really to women's advantage (SUNSTONE 14:1). Does he really expect to convince us that the best way to create equality between the sexes is through men's control of women? He implies that if feminists really wanted to help women, they would champion patriarchy so that men wouldn't feel threatened and retaliate against

women. Who would have guessed that patriarchy is women's best friend? How could we feminists have been so blind?

Pierce vaguely refers to women's "distinct and definite advantages in sexual and familial things that men can never obtain." Yet he is unclear about what advantages women would have to give up to gain equal footing with men in economics and decision-making. Would women be unable to have multiple orgasms or bear and nurse children if they stopped submitting to male domination?

The truth is, there are no advantages for women under patriarchy. However, I can think of plenty of disadvantages for both sexes under patriarchy—primarily, stressed and unbalanced lives.

REBECCA ENGLAND
Salt Lake City

DELUDED INTELLECTUALS

I WAS APPALLED at the criticisms of the forthcoming BYU-produced LDS Encyclopedia (SUNSTONE 12:6). It is not the place of SUNSTONE to criticize those assigned to oversee this project. Any authority that you feel you have to do this is a delusion in your own eyes. I wonder what God thinks when he sees you self-appointed, so-called intellectuals kick against the pricks and criticize everything you see his servants do. Have a little humility and try to agree with God, or go join another church that accepts the opinion of the world and blows with every wind of doctrine.

DENNIS B. HORNE

CONSPIRACY THEORISTS

I THOROUGHLY ENJOYED Martha S. Bradley's well-researched article, "Changed Faces: The Official LDS Position on Polygamy, 1890-1990" (SUNSTONE 14:1). Her history of the official Church position, however, only told half the story. The Woodruff Manifesto of 1890 actually meant that the Church in truth and in all sincerity ceased the practice of plural marriage, while the priesthood took it underground. This separation of Church and priesthood was nothing new. The identical situation existed in Kirtland, in Missouri, in Nauvoo, and in Utah until 1852.

The apparatus for the final underground practice was set up by Church President John

Taylor. In 1882 he issued an "Epistle" authorizing marriages outside the Endowment House and temple. In 1884 at Rudger Clawson's trial Taylor testified under oath that he had set apart "hundreds of men" who were authorized to perform marriages, with endowments, at any place convenient.

This was called the "Grand Conspiracy," and my father, John W. Taylor, was active in it. The Manifesto said that the practice was discontinued because it was against the law of the land. My father subsequently had one wife in the United States, one in Canada, and three (including my mother) in Mexico.

In addition to the 1890 Manifesto, and another in 1904, there actually were about a dozen, each pinching off a loophole, until the 1933 final-final-final one—no exceptions, we mean it this time.

While the practice has been discontinued, the doctrine still stands. If you are well enough connected today you can be married to a dead spouse in the Principle to attain your glory in the hereafter. I personally am acquainted with two people who have had this done. This situation explains why the fundamentalists are alive and well and thriving in Zion. A short time before Rulon Allred, who was head of the largest fundamentalist group, was assassinated by Ervil LeBaron's goons in a power struggle over who had the "keys," I asked one of his daughters to find out how many belonged to his organization. She reported that he claimed a membership of 70,000. While this no doubt was an exaggeration, certainly the practice is a far cry from the official Church figure.

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR
Redwood City, CA

THE SUCCESSFUL MISSIONARY

AS ONE WHO served under Elder Russell M. Ballard when he was president of the Canada Toronto Mission, I feel compelled to respond to John Armstrong's article ("Encounter with An Apostle," SUNSTONE 14:1) and set the record straight. My experiences with President Ballard were very much like those described in the article, but I came away with a different view of things.

President Ballard taught us the principles of successful missionary work. Among the most important were that missionaries should always be looking for opportunities to teach the gospel and that they should not be timid

when telling others about it and inviting them to be baptized. When he took over the mission, the baptismal rate was very low. As he instilled these principles in us, our faith in the gospel and our ability to teach increased and our baptismal rate dramatically rose. These were the same lessons that he gave to Armstrong and his mission. Apparently Armstrong's expectations got in the way.

One of the most refreshing aspects of Elder Ballard's life is that he takes his calling seriously; it's his life's work. It is a virtue that he practices what he preaches. For this reason I object to the characterization of him as rude and insensitive. Elder Ballard was in Armstrong's mission to teach the gospel and oversee the work. He was not there to be entertaining over dinner. We should admire his zeal and devotion.

In publishing the article, SUNSTONE has done a disservice to Elder Ballard and its readers. You have only reinforced the suspicions of many that SUNSTONE would rather be a *Mormon Enquirer* than a forum for our highest thoughts about Mormon culture. I hope you will live up to the goals you have set for the magazine.

TED VAGGALIS
Lawrence, KN

SUNSTONE ENCOURAGES CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO "READERS FORUM." WE EDIT FOR SPACE, CLARITY, AND TONE.



SO MY DAD SAYS,
"LISTEN, I'LL BUY YOU
A HARLEY AND YOU CAN
DO TWO YEARS WITH
THE HELL'S ANGELS
INSTEAD!"

FROM THE EDITOR

DOUBTING IN THE CONTEXT OF FAITH



By Elbert Eugene Peck

A COUPLE OF years ago I sat through a Gospel Doctrine class responding silently to myself over and over, "I don't believe that. . . . I don't believe that. . . ." Fortunately that is not a regular occurrence for me. Still, the sense of alienation during that experience was frightening, for with each expression I felt further estranged from the community I cherish and want to be part of, fearing that verbally sharing my views would have branded me. Even if that wasn't true, I was in a double-edge situation: while speaking up would annoyingly and unappreciatively disrupt the prepared lesson, continued silence would only exacerbate my internal schism. So I became reflective. How many thoughtful, believing Saints, I wondered, increasingly feel like they are not full-fledged citizens because they mutely question some of the assumptions of the household of God?

This year the tables are turned: I teach Sunday School and, unfortunately, others silently dissent. While researching a recent lesson on Old Testament wisdom literature (Proverbs and Ecclesiastes) I unexpectedly encountered a hopeful dynamic: the scriptural marriage of prophetic revelation and human insight and a public dialogue between the Establishment voice and the doubter.

Diverging from the Law and the Prophets, which biblical books reveal Yahweh's covenant and warnings to Israel with unquestioned divine authority, the book of Proverbs celebrates the divine in human wisdom—the grass-roots knowledge attained from analyzing personal experience and from observing humankind and creation. Apparently, many of the collected sayings in the book were originally oral truisms of the tribes which were later gathered and artistically crafted by the Ben Franklins of Jerusalem. Believing that "the fear of the LORD is the foundation of knowledge" (1:7),¹ Proverbs subordinates its

human understanding to God and acknowledges its limitations by openly embracing conflicting maxims in the book. In pursuit of God and his righteousness, Proverbs' pragmatic counsel focuses on the worldly wisdom of how to achieve the good life here and now, covering such items as slothfulness, vanity, backbiting, thriftiness, as well as the practicable aspects of keeping the commandments. In spite of this down-to-earth agenda, when I read Proverbs I am inspired to live a higher ethical life directed to God and my neighbor, and I feel a spiritual affinity with the editors' quest to find the Divine in the world's learning.

Nevertheless, when you think about it, it is to Israel's credit that it placed these bottom-up, common-sense revelations of everyday Saints in the biblical canon *alongside* the top-down, "thus saith the Lord" revelations of Moses and Isaiah—an Old Testament tradition that has not yet been restored in this dispensation.

If we had a latter-day book of proverbs, what popular LDS phrases would be in it? Perhaps the famous (to Mormons) Emerson quote: "That which we persist in doing becomes easier. . . ." Probably "No other success can compensate for failure in the home" would be included as well as, "It's not where you serve, but how" and, "When the prophet speaks, the thinking is done." Maybe, using the parallel form of ancient Israel, we'd craft one proverb from two opposing commonplaces: "Obedience is the first law of heaven; but one should not live on borrowed light." (I realize most of the above examples originate with Church leaders, which might say something about our culture.)

In any event, I think we should acknowledge, celebrate, and consider the democratic aspects of inspiration among the rank and file members in today's commu-

nity—for instance, the increasing awareness of the lack women's contributions in Church deliberations—as well as the authoritative statements from the general prophets, seers, and revelators. Proverbs gives us a precedent and a model.

IN direct contrast to the believing aphorisms of Proverbs is the skeptical essay of Ecclesiastes.² The obviously well-educated author of this book was reared on the "how to" norms and commandments of the "Establishment" wisdom which produced Proverbs and prescribed a Puritan-like industriousness. Yet this Jewish sage, whose perceptions are also primarily based on observation and experience (not revelation), questions and rejects the simplistic platitudes in Proverbs and cynically notes that, although God rules, exactly how is an unfathomable mystery: "Sometimes the just person gets what is due to the unjust, and the unjust what is due to the just" (7:14) for "food does not belong to the wise, nor wealth to the intelligent, nor success to the skillful; time and chance govern all" (9:11).

Obviously sensitive to the injustices of his society and apparently not in a position to correct oppression, throughout his lengthy, "futile" ("vanity" in the King James) discourse of trying to discern cause and effect in the social world, the Preacher vehemently spurns the wisdom tradition of single-minded toil if it denies one from enjoying the good things of life now (2:22-23; 4:7-8; 5:11, 16) because success is unpredictable (3:1-11), because comfort from wealth is chancy (2:18-21), and because labor regularly brings neither profit, improvement, originality, nor remembrance (1:3-11). Similarly, the author abhors the zealous pursuit of luxury. Instead, he advocates an enjoyable work which keeps options open, embraces the day-to-day ordinary joys which are gifts of God (2:24; 3:22; 9:7-9) and accepts evil. "I know that there is nothing good for anyone except to be happy and live the best life he can while he is alive" (3:12).

Upon consideration, it is also remarkable that this book criticizing its own contemporary orthodox theology is in the biblical canon, especially with its emphasis on here-and-now enjoyment. Too, this disillusioned preacher is clearly a sincere intellectual who has had few or no personal spiritual experiences: "I perceived that God has so ordered it that no human being should be able to discover what is happening here under the sun. However hard he may try, he will not find out" (8:17-18). Yet, the speculative author

of Ecclesiastes does deeply believe in God and his justice, however incomprehensible, and concludes that our duty is to "fear God and obey his commandments. For God will bring everything we do to judgment" (12:13-14). (Interestingly, some scholars believe that that oft-quoted and reassuring closing affirmation is an upbeat addition by a post-exilic correlation committee.)

While Ecclesiastes' message obviously must be supplemented by and defer to the witnesses and oracles in the other books, the fact of its presence in the Bible is alone important: the devout doubter and the questioning intellectual have a dignified and visible place in the believing community. This point was recently affirmed by Lowell Bennion in commenting on the father's petition to Jesus on behalf of his convulsive, "dumb" son, "Lord, I believe; help thou my unbelief" (Mark 9:24):

The cry of the father . . . resonates in my own heart. . . .

Jesus did not rebuke the father for his unbelief, and the father confessed his unbelief to the Savior in the context of asking for help. I believe that our Heavenly Father is pleased with such confessions. What could make for healthier growth than expressing doubts in a context of faith.¹

What could indeed? Although Jesus and the Bible generously embrace doubters within a believing context, it is nevertheless a challenge for doubting, yet believing, Saints to share their questions within the believing community today and receive non-judgmental succor. Fortunately, the presence of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes gives solace and hope to the skeptic and to those who have few spiritual experiences. Still, we must find ways to cultivate our common faith in Christ while abiding—and hopefully bearing—the burdens of the questioning citizens in the Kingdom (which I believe all of us are on occasion); cultivating that healthy, believing context in which the expression of doubts engenders love, acceptance, and oneness. ☒

NOTES

1. All scripture quotes are from the Revised English Bible with the Apocrypha, Oxford University Press and Cambridge University Press, 1989.

2. See Addison G. Wright, "Ecclesiastes (Quoheleth)" in *The New Jerome Biblical Commentary* edited by Raymond E. Brown, et al., Prentice Hall (Englewood Cliffs: 1990), 490.

3. Lowell L. Bennion, *Legacies of Jesus*, Deseret Book Company (Salt Lake City, 1990), 44.

THE TABLE

The fan moving the New York night
cannot conceal the sound of someone turning
and turning in bed. Beth switches on the light,
and Elise laments, "I've spent years fighting
the idea of a broken heart and contrite spirit.
Wouldn't you know that truth would come
to me through images of food?"

"Moses had to see the whole world to realize
he was nothing. I saw me planning
a fine meal for a friend. Then I dreamed
I stood in the grocery line, realizing
I had no money. The friend paid.
And, of course, I'd filled too many bags,
but the friend carried them for me.
But then there was too much to do,
and this place is so small and hot,
so the friend pitched in. Oh, I grated
fresh ginger, basted cornish hens,
and set out the finest plates, but I
could give nothing of my own. And I cried."

"And then the sequence switched,
to a meadow with a table
so long no one could take it all in.
The linen was fine, the table heaped
with clear jellies, glazed meats,
puddings, berries and clotted cream."

"Minstrels came by, but they would not eat,
saying no one spreads a table for second-rate
musicians. Then well-dressed people
laughed that a table in a meadow
is a hoax. And beggars wanted to wash
their clothes before approaching the feast."

"It was true that no one could bring a thing
to the feast, but no one was expected to.
Being contrite is not sackcloth
and ashes, after all, not sacrifice.
Each person needs only to reach—
that's the whole thing, the reach."

"What about you?" asks Beth, fully awake.
"You reached to the table didn't you?"
"No," Elise cries, "I looked around to ask
you to go with me, and then I awoke.
But I'll reach next time, don't you think?"

Reassuring her, Beth turns out the light.
But no one in 12N can sleep. Each turns and turns,
seeing the times she's been afraid to reach,
seeing changes she must make to accept the feast.

—LORETTA RANDALL SHARP

THE DEVELOPMENTAL PROCESS OF MORMON WOMEN

By *Debbi Christensen*

WE ARE NOT HUMAN BEINGS HAVING
A SPIRITUAL EXPERIENCE;
WE ARE SPIRITUAL BEINGS HAVING A
HUMAN EXPERIENCE

AS A RESEARCHER AND CLINICIAN, my goal is to more clearly understand the human experience and how it influences our eternal progression. As a therapist, I utilize that understanding to aid in women's eternal development.

This paper shares a perspective, not an absolute truth. The perspective was built largely through a qualitative research project in which I conducted and analyzed biographical interviews of thirteen Mormon women.¹ I was looking for similarities among diverse women of our Mormon culture to discover the process of their development, the impetus for development, the resources used in development, and the impact of the culture on female development.

WHAT IS DEVELOPMENT?

WHEN I say "development" I refer to the steps we go through as we become more and more mature, or, in our LDS language, become Christ-like. Human development has been analyzed with a variety of methods and perspectives. Basically, most developmental theorists state that development is a hierarchical, sequential process. As we progress through the stages of development we experience ourselves as qualitatively different. The highest stage of development is marked

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by liberal thought, a non-judgmental attitude toward others, a belief in relative reality, and a sense of intrinsic worth.

Development is a dialectical process. In other words, for us to develop there must be discrepancies in our teachings, our beliefs, and our experiences. We develop by attempting to reconcile these discrepancies. Some discrepancies cannot be reconciled, in which case, it is through acceptance of the paradox that we mature.

For the women in my study, their psychological maturity began with a crisis that threatened important assumptions, often unconscious, stemming from their culture. As they grappled with the discrepancy between expectations and experiences, these women came to realize that their assumptions were not necessarily valid. Those women who took an active stance in response to that realization and reconstructed a new framework of beliefs experienced a sense of power. These women stated that this experience led to psychological maturity. These unconscious assumptions created the necessary dialectic for growth. The failed assumptions for Mormon women centered around motherhood, being cared for by others, and issues of women's roles and power in the Church. The women I interviewed seemed to have been taught at some point in their formative years that motherhood was an absolutely fulfilling experience and that they could expect to be taken care of by others if they lived "worthily." For many women, this teaching just does not meet with their reality.

Similarly, the issue of women's power and roles was brought to awareness in the participants by both (1) real experiences with the assumption of the fulfillment of motherhood and the consistency of care and (2) increased awareness of philosophical and theological inconsistencies. In the cases where this issue was brought into consciousness by another failing assumption, questioning the status of

women provided not only another false assumption but also served as a resource for processing experiences and seeking resolution in restructuring experiences into another, more valid, framework.

Although many of the women said that motherhood was more difficult and perhaps not as totally fulfilling as they had been led to believe, all of the women who were mothers listed motherhood as one of the three most powerful experiences in their adult lives. For them, motherhood was defined as a critical life phase; but it appeared to be easily confused with life purpose. These women came to realize that their purpose in life depended on adequate self-definition. Women who subordinated their identity and expected to find it in their children experienced a sense of alienation from self. A child does not provide a woman with a self-definition, but the process of raising children does allow women the opportunity to express their self-definition. This sense of alienation from self was also found in women who subordinated their identities to their husbands and expected to find their identity within a marriage.

For example, Donna was involved in a marriage of inequality. Being raised to believe that women are "subject to" their husbands, she said she was "probably more sure of [herself] in high school and college than [she] had been since her marriage." She described her original attitude toward her role as wife:

The way I was raised you are subject to your husband. He is the last word, he is the decision-maker, and I took all of that literally, and he took it literally. So I set about being the best little wife that I could, and I learned . . . I mean, I kept an immaculate house, and I remember busting around to scrub floors every Saturday, whether they needed it or not. I kept everything washed and ironed. This was just something I did. Anytime anything did not turn out to be absolutely perfect, I felt like a failure. I felt like it was up to me to see that the relationship went well. It was up to me to see that everything in that house went smoothly. It was my responsibility. If he was unhappy, it was my fault. I was to be there to comfort him, to give him somebody to talk to. We get that in women's magazines in the Church; . . . how to help him have a healthy heart, how to help him reach his potential; how

to help him do this, how to help him do that. . . . I got lost. . . .

Let me give an example of something: I have taught in the Relief Society three different times since [my husband] was bishop. Recently I was just called to teach [in Relief Society] again. The first lesson I gave [this time], I prepared all by myself.

Imagine that . . . at 49, preparing my own lesson [for the first time]. A friend of mine, whom I have known since we had moved into this area, said, "That was the best lesson I have ever heard you give. It was you. It was not [your husband]." And I just realized that I did not dare give a lesson before but what he read it, corrected it, told me some things to say.

In contrast to Donna, who submitted herself to her husband and found marriage to inhibit her growth and development, the women in the study who did not submit themselves to their husbands or consider themselves as less than equal found marriage to be an important force in their development. These marriages were experienced as growth-promoting rather than alienating.

RELATIONSHIPS AND DEVELOPMENT

IN addition to the dialectic challenges, individuals also must experience a sense of safety or security in order to grow from the challenges. For all the women in my study, the major resources supporting them in the developmental process were equal relationships—relationships of equality with both women and men and relationships with deity. In all cases, unequal relationships obscured the self and limited their development.

Every woman in this study mentioned the importance of relationships in her life. All indicated that female relationships increased in importance over time or during times of stress. Each woman, in speaking of her rela-

tionships with women, emphasized the equality that was experienced in those relationships to promote growth. Many of the women indicated experiences with relationships that expressed a deep, profound interconnectedness, sometimes with a single woman, often with all women.

Not only were relationships with women growth promoting, relationships with men were also experienced as contributing to individual growth. However, as with relationships with women, these relationships must have been experienced as equal relationships before they could be considered as developmentally positive. All relationships that the women experienced as unequal served to obscure the self and inhibit the development of the woman.

Coral expressed the support she found in her relationship with her father and later in her marriage:

[My father] helped me feel very confident about myself as a woman and as a person. . . . He had great respect for me as a

human being and thought that I should run for president if I wanted to. . . .

My husband has a great deal of respect for me too, and that's really helped a lot. He's just always given me free agency to do or be anything I wanted to do or be. I know that if I wanted to become an astronaut next year, he'd say, "Go and be an astronaut." If I wanted to run for Sandy City Mayor, he would say to go for it. He's just very supportive of me in the same respect that my father was, and that's been very positive for me. He's been very understanding, and sometimes I think he understands me better than I understand myself. Just having him as a husband has probably been one of the greatest impacts (in my life). . . .

As in motherhood, women who subordinated their identities and expected to gain their identity from their husbands, experienced a sense of alienation from self. Women who found expression for their self-

identity within their marriage found the marriage relationship to be fulfilling and growth-promoting.

Many of the women in this study expressed experiences of support and nurturing from their relationships with deity. These relationships were especially important when other relationship resources were lacking or were insufficient for their needs. These relationships contributed to the developmental process. As in other relationships, they changed over time. All but one of the women involved in this study reported that her relationship with deity had evolved. The pattern for these changes was clear, starting with a relationship of fear and developing into a relationship of love. Another important change in their relationships pertained to a realization of the importance of the gender of deity. Over half of the women in this sample indicated that they had individually struggled with the dominant concept of a male deity; about a third reported that a recognition of and relationship with female deity had been highly significant in their lives. Although the biographical interview included a question concerning the changes experienced in relationships with deity, I made no mention at any point encouraging the women to consider the gender of deity.

A typical word that women used to explain their early relationship with deity was "fear." This seemed to result from their early concepts of a deity suggested by the use of the following words: condemning, stern, punishing, blaming, demanding, exhausting, and remote. Some of the women reflected that this concept was the result of their early understanding of significant others in their lives, particularly their fathers. There was little comfort and support found in these relationships with deity. The women prayed because they felt "duty bound" to do so or were fearful of the consequences if they chose not to pray.

This concept eventually was replaced with a concept of a loving God, gently leading them, encouraging them, understanding them, and showing compassion toward them. At this point, the relationship deepened and was considered to be a resource in their lives. Carol clearly described these changes.

My relationship with God has matured as I see my Heavenly Father in larger dimensions. I view him as a kind, loving Father still, but far more intelligent and universal. I rarely used to think of Heavenly Mother, but now I do. I wonder if many of the

Development is a dialectical process. There must be discrepancies in our teachings, our beliefs, and our experiences. We develop by attempting to reconcile these discrepancies. It is through acceptance of the paradox that we develop maturity.

references to God in the scriptures shouldn't be plural—referring to both Father and Mother. I think they planned and created together, not just spiritual children, but all that pertains to the universe. God's commandments are from both. Both have equal power. The scripture "all that my Father hath shall be given unto him"

I take to mean that women will share equally in all that the Father hath, including "his" priesthood. I feel God's love and approval. I feel direction and inspiration in my life that gives me purpose and joy in my labors. . . .

Barbara spent a number of years struggling with women's issues in the Church. She says of her experience:

It was very strange to me, because I never let go of my spirituality. I had this philosophy that if you did, you

would be smashed on the rocks. I held on to deity. I actually explored a lot of religions. I looked at oriental religions. I got into meditation. I did yoga. . . . And I found this nice thing about female deity. . . . When I actually started coming back in philosophically with the Church, it had to be with my "Mother in Heaven" with a pretty strong place. . . .

Casey, while seeking resolution for struggles over defined women's roles and limited women's power, entered into a study of deity:

The sex of God in history: that was staggeringly important. . . . I have a manuscript that I wrote some time ago, . . . just letters from me to God the Mother, telling her what's been happening in the human family, in a single-parent male's family, and asking her to come home, which of course, is asking us to acknowledge that fact that certainly our creator is female quite as much as male, and I've done a lot of reading in this. All that research was hugely important to me,

in ascertaining the fact that it was not I who was out of line.

For Casey, the recognition of a female deity enabled her to redefine her importance as a woman. Her female God provided a role model for a strong female and was a source of support during and after her struggle with the philosophical and theological underpinnings of the feminist issue in the Mormon church.

Motherhood was easily confused with life purpose. A child does not provide self-definition, but the process of raising children does allow women the opportunity to express their self-definition.

THE CHURCH AND DEVELOPMENT

EVERY woman in this study, even those who had chosen to dissolve their membership in the Mormon church, indicated that the institution of the Church had a pronounced impact on their lives. The most frequently chosen word describing this impact was "profound," indicating the great extent to which women are affected by and enmeshed within their cultural context.

As in other relationships, the Mormon church had both the capacity to

obscure and reveal the self. Similar to feminism, the structure of the Church appeared to create the dialectic necessary for growth and provided a resource for growth. One large group of women did not list the structure or teachings of the Church as providing support during times of personal struggle with development. When questioned about not including the Church as a resource, the women stated that it clearly was not a resource that they utilized during their struggles. Rather, the Church, its teachings and culture, created the dialectic thesis against which they struggled to confirm their sense of identity and gain a sense of autonomy.

Many of these women, particularly those who struggled with the dialectic created by the issues of feminism and Mormonism, indicated that religion was not just belonging to a church, but to a people. As they experienced their process of life, the commitment to the Mormon people became much more powerful than their commitment to the organization.

As these women progressed through the developmental process, they began to view

the Church with much more complexity than the simplicity of youth had allowed. They learned to see aspects of good and aspects of bad and weigh these against one another as part of their decision to separate or commit.

These women demonstrated a perception that religion is "home." "Home," as herein used, reflects the bonding that occurred between the child and her culture. This bonding, for most participants, seemed to begin in early childhood and continue throughout the life process. Some of the women in the study had left the structure of the Church at a time in their life and later returned to the Mormon people with a new commitment. Others in this study were disenfranchised from the Church by their own choice. A study of the differences indicated that for some women, the Mormon church and the culture that surrounds it provided a sense of "home." The resolution to stay in or return to the Church was not necessarily a statement of agreement with its principles and policies. For some of these women it was more often a statement of commitment to the people with a recognition that they could have impact on bringing into awareness and change some of the Church principles and policies. Those who stayed and those who returned recognized that their impact was needed in this institution and was, perhaps, greater than it would be in another institution. Those who chose to leave did so because they felt that their impact could be greater outside the institution of the Mormon church. According to Casey:

I'm not going to run off and leave them. I have four generations invested in this thing. I have a lot of emotional, spiritual, financial investment in this, and I'm not going to let somebody else just ruin this organization. I'm going to insist on my input—insist on raising my hand and saying, "Hey that's too dumb to even think about. We're not going to do it that way." I'm not going to walk away. My goal is to take all the good stuff that is there and to make it be better—insist that it be better than it is.

As Barbara reflected on the changes in her life and the sense of "home" found in the Mormon church, she stated: "I've always been a Mormon, and whether I'm an in-Mormon or an out-Mormon, I'm a Mormon. That's always been the same." Candace expressed a similar view: "You can be a good Mormon or a bad Mormon, but you're always a Mormon."

For some the decision of commitment began with a recognition that commitment

could be made in several realms. A sense of responsibility and freedom was evident in Carol's statement that: "This is the context within which I have chosen to engage with the struggles of life and growth."

There are other changes made in relationship with the Church. Women expressed that through their life processes they became less rule-oriented. The increased importance of female relationships was also reflected as they began to view the cache of relationships as a major resource coming from the Church. Women became less convinced of their leaders' credibility, not giving their trust so freely, expecting leaders to prove that they were worthy of their confidence before that confidence was given. Women began to view the Church as less central and more peripheral to their lives, less restricting and more enlarging.

SELF-CONCEPT AND MATURITY

DURING the biographical interview the women in this study were asked to provide a description of themselves. The majority of the women freely contributed descriptions of self that were detailed and complex, indicating a deep level of self-understanding.

Contrary to the dominant theories in developmental literature, women described their adult lives as an enlargement of self rather than a change in self. They could readily point to various phases of their lives; however, these were external to what they perceived as their basic identity. Their basic identity provided a thread that ran through and tied together all of their life experiences and phases. Repeatedly, the women spoke of an identity that had been present and intact in the earliest years of their lives but had, at some point, been obscured. They described the presence of a distinct sense of self, lost before or during marriage and motherhood and only retrieved in its original form after the struggles of adulthood. The idea of a self obscured and reclaimed repeated itself throughout the interviews. Barbara stated it this way:

The major resources supporting the developmental process were equal relationships—with both women and men and with deity. In all cases, unequal relationships obscured the self and limited development.

I used to be different, and now I'm the same. I came back to myself. Sometimes I'm in a lot of pain and sometimes I'm not in so much pain, but basically, I'm the same person. I've gone down a long path of a lot of experience, but I'm still the same person. I even still feel like the same person pretty much.

Both Jane and Ellen described the life questions of their adolescence as being obscured by answers from the Church or by marriage. The questions of their youth returned at a later time in their lives, a time during which they described themselves as being more in touch with "who they really were." When they retrieved the questions, they experienced them to be identical to their adolescent questions.

All of the women in this study responded to self and gender descriptions in very positive terms. All of these women expressed positive feelings concerning their womanhood. In addition, the group of women who had experienced the dialectic of feminism spoke of the power and strength emanating from their femininity. They had a clear sense of excitement about their femininity that was absent from the gender descriptions of those who had not experienced this particular dialectic. Although not all of the self-labeled "feminists" mentioned this sense of power, a large number of them did and none of the "non-feminists" mentioned a sense of power connected with being female.

According to Casey:

Being a woman means to me to have the opportunity of being the new brigade that life is sending in to save the world in terms of effecting a balance, where male aggression can be tempered by female cooperation. Being one of those who are so badly needed. . . . I always felt that as a human being, I was capable. But in terms of power coming from the fact that I'm a woman, that's new in the last ten years or less.

With the exception of two women, the participants expressed dissatisfaction with the

roles and expectations of society. They felt that the messages they had been given by society were restricting. Those who attempted to meet the expectations of others experienced this as limiting and confining. The process of throwing off the messages of society was seen as enlarging. Carol stated:

During the earlier years of my marriage, I felt very confined by being a woman. I found it quite confining. I think I was trying to live by the expectations of others, and so, being a woman wasn't confining, but trying to meet expectations of others was extremely confining, and I think it is for anyone, whether they're a man or a woman. You can really miss out on a lot of joy if you do that.

These women eventually found that being a woman is not connected with any particular role. The experience of womanhood was finally expanded to include each woman's individuality and an acceptance of that individuality. The experience of self reclaimed and enlarged through the process of life forms the basis for a definition of the qualities of maturity.

These women's complex notions of maturity challenge previous developmental literature that places self-sufficiency and autonomy as important in maturity. These women placed little emphasis on the ability to stand alone. Their goals were to benefit others, to balance many aspects of their relationships, taking into account the needs of others involved. This "balancing" was seen as important even in times of struggle and crisis. The married women often expressed an awareness of their husbands' issues and fears as they began the questioning process as well as a tempering of their own process so that it might be more palatable to their husbands. They measured their growth to prevent threatening the relationship with their husbands.

Through the process of life, these women learned to find a sense of responsibility for self. Learning how to rely on their own resources contributed to a sense of "empowerment" and a realization of the adequacy of their personal resources.

These women became less conforming and less interested in stereotypical thinking. An aspect of maturity was defined as the cessation of the obsessional need to please other people. They became more calm. They expressed a desire for simplicity in their lives. They reported less striving to accomplish goals and purposes, and more acceptance for their innate worth, without a need to measure

this worth in accomplishments. Their thinking became less banal, more complex, less provincial, more universal.

IMPLICATIONS

RELIGION and religious cultures are designed to decrease doubt and provide a sense of security to those involved in the religion. Religious organizations, by their very nature, cannot encourage the doubt and questioning that is necessary for development. If they were to do so we would lose the dialectic that is necessary for development. Personal power is only gained after struggle. Freedom to think creative thoughts, without undue concern for the rewards and punishments of the system, is a mark of maturity. No system can provide rewards for those who deny themselves the rewards of the system in their search for freedom from the restraints of the system. Oftentimes we are guilty of complaining that we get no rewards, honor, or recognition from our religious system when at the same time we are searching for individuality and some degree of freedom from those rewards.

"In an absolute sense, conflicts are never solved by the dialectic. But in a relative sense, they are being solved."² It is this process of solving, not necessarily the solution, that creates growth, development, and creativity in individuals. Contradictions should no longer be perceived as deficiencies that have to be eliminated but as challenges and invitations for growth. Stability and crisis ought not to be seen as positive and negative respectively. Stability and crisis are both interrelated components of our growth process. The crisis is as necessary as the stability. Because of the dialectic created by the imperfection of our culture, we have plenty of grist for the mill of development. It is by struggling with the imperfections of our culture that we develop into Christ-like individuals.

Many contradictions were present and unresolved in this research endeavor. The

need for equality speaks powerfully to the issue of patriarchy. Yet the very struggle for a sense of personal power within patriarchy has created incredible strength and maturity in these women—a strength that may well be absent if not for the struggle. The denial of power within the patriarchal system demands that these women seek sources outside of the system in which to express their abilities and power, perhaps impacting their universe on a larger scale. The denial of priesthood power demands that these women gain a deep and intrinsic sense of personal power.

Religious organizations, by their very nature, cannot encourage the doubt and questioning necessary for development. No system can reward those who, in their search for freedom from the system, deny the rewards of the system.

The existence of contradiction or paradox can be the gift of knowledge, leading to the discovery of a more fundamental truth. Premature resolution of the paradox may blind us to the more fundamental truth. Both humility and faith are demanded as a part of accepting and growing from the contradictions or paradoxes within our culture.

These women demonstrated that in their struggles for personal power and understanding they were often in conflict with the system. They experienced anger. The anger was an important part of their process, but not the entire process. Resolution was not found in the anger but in action—not in their hatred but in their acceptance of their value and the value of others. Resolution was not found in manifestations of power from the system; this has not yet happened. Growth and development was found in personal manifestations and belief in their power and value as women. Development was found in their personal belief in the possibilities of change in the future; in their courageous expressions for equality; in their ability to throw out inequality and submission in their individual lives, not demanding that others do the same. Maturity and growth was found in their ability to discard a part of the system without necessarily discarding the whole system.

Perhaps we also will find a more fundamental truth when we begin to love knowledge for its own sake, not as a means to power; when we cease to impose hierarchies on each other, even developmental hierarchies, using these hierarchies to prove

our superiority or our stance. Perhaps we will find a greater truth when we understand our interconnectedness, honoring all that is living, refusing to define an enemy. Perhaps we will find growth when we cease to condemn others for their differences, choosing instead to embrace the diversity that is within us all. Perhaps we will find growth when we are not only outraged over our own suffering, but over the suffering of everyone. Perhaps we will find growth only as we each, individually, strive to honor the equality of all. ☐

NOTES

1. I also used the Washington University Sentence Completion Test, designed by Jane Loevinger to ascertain a woman's developmental level, to analyze the biographical interviews.

2. Susan Lourenco, "The Dialectic and Qualitative Methodology," *Contributions to Human Development*, Vol. 2, J. F. Rychlak, ed. (New York: Kaizer, 1976), 103.

PSALM

A SKEPTIC'S PRAYER

Is it true
Thou lovest best
Thy meek, unasking children?

Thou has made us
So diverse, so various,
Yet in the image of a Sire
Who filled the universe
With His creative fire.

What father has supposed
His child would grow to manhood
Only hearing and affirming?
What man could honor such a son?
How could a mind that,
Like a sponge,
Absorbs but never questions,
Doubts,
Or wonders why
Be offspring and apprentice
To a God?

It may be, Lord,
Thou canst never love me

—MARGARET RAMPTON MUNK

(Printed in *So Far*, 59.)

Continuing Revelation and Schism in the Church

DEFENDERS OF THE FAITH:
VARIETIES OF RLDS DISSENT*By William Dean Russell*

AS IS WELL KNOWN TO SUNSTONE READERS, MORMON fundamentalists began to break away from the LDS church after it stopped the practice of plural marriage and teaching related doctrines. They wanted to preserve the "true" gospel taught by Brigham and Joseph. Currently the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (RLDS), of which I am a member, is confronting a similar challenge of fundamentalist schisms as a result of theological changes, and the parallels are often interesting and occasionally deadly frightening.

There has been a deepening theological division within the ranks of the RLDS church over the past thirty years or so. A growing professionalism in the top leadership of the church has led to a more liberal or ecumenical approach to theological issues. This has meant that those aspects of RLDS belief which are held in common with other Christians have been given comparatively more emphasis and those aspects of our thought which are unique to our movement have been given less emphasis.

This de-emphasis of certain RLDS fundamentals—such as the idea that the primitive Christian church fell into apostasy and was later restored—has quite naturally been resisted by people who are sometimes called "conservatives" or "traditionalists." Most often they are called "fundamentalists" because they want to hold fast to certain fundamental doctrines and practices which they feel are absolutely essential. Fundamentalists believe that the leaders of the church have been moving away from many of the unique or distinctive features of RLDS thought and, in the process, are becoming more like mainstream Protestantism. Therefore, they regard ecumenism as apostasy.

The issues for the RLDS are fairly similar to those which divide fundamentalist and liberal Protestants. The central issue

in both the Protestant and RLDS cases is the authority of scripture: fundamentalists explicitly or implicitly adopt some form of the idea of biblical inerrancy or infallibility, and liberals regard scripture as conditioned by human fallibility and historical circumstances.

In Latter Day Saintism, the fundamental/liberal division has an additional dimension: biblical inerrancy is expanded to include the Book of Mormon and the revelations to the latter-day prophets. The fundamentalists take these additional scriptures as fully trustworthy and tend to interpret them in a strict, literal fashion. Liberals contend that these scriptures are also conditioned by history and human fallibility. But Latter Day Saint liberals have an additional problem: the unique Latter Day Saint scriptures support the fundamentalist interpretation of the Bible. For example, scriptures produced by Joseph Smith assume that Moses wrote the Pentateuch, that John the son of Zebedee wrote the book of Revelation, and that the book of Isaiah had a single author. These assumptions are contrary to the majority consensus of biblical scholars.

In the mainline Protestant denominations, the fundamentalist/liberal controversy was fought early in the twentieth century, with the liberals prevailing in most cases by the end of the 1920s. In my view an appropriate date to begin an overview of the developing controversy in the RLDS church is 1958—the beginning of W. Wallace Smith's tenure as president of the church. Many RLDS people on both sides of this issue see this as the point when these schismatic issues began to emerge.

At the October 1958 World Conference, W. Wallace Smith was ordained prophet, and he named F. Henry Edwards and Maurice Draper as counselors. Edwards was a holdover from the First Presidency of Wallace's brother and predecessor, Israel A. Smith. W. Wallace Smith called Clifford Cole and Charles Neff to the Council of Twelve. He also broke lineage in the office of Presiding Patriarch by calling Roy Cheville to that office, passing over apparent successor Lynn Smith, son of the outgoing patriarch, Elbert A. Smith, grandson of David H. Smith and great grandson of Joseph Smith, Jr. Although the RLDS Presiding

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Patriarch does not have much power, the appointment of Cheville broke with a significant tradition and was a symbol of change. In fact, some fundamentalists believe that passing over Lynn Smith for Presiding Patriarch was the first sign that W. Wallace Smith was in apostasy. Each of the men Smith called to high office—Maurice Draper, Clifford Cole, Charles Neff, and Roy Cheville—played a role in the movement of the RLDS church toward a more ecumenical understanding of the nature of the gospel and the church.

In the early years of W. Wallace's presidency, some staff members at the offices at World Headquarters in Independence, Missouri, began to take graduate courses at Saint Paul School of Theology, a Methodist seminary in Kansas City which opened its doors in 1959. A few members of the church's religious education department began taking courses the first year they were in operation, and several staff members graduated with Master of Divinity degrees.

Formal theological training of church staff members had a liberalizing effect on the materials published for Sunday School use, on the materials published in the *Saints' Herald*, and on other church publications. These trends were apparent at least as early as the fall of 1960 when the religious education department published a year-long series of quarterlies on the Old Testament for senior high students. These quarterlies adopted an essentially evolutionary view of the Old Testament. Written by Garland Tickemyer, then the president of the all-church High Priests' Quorum, these quarterlies created controversy. Some congregations refused to use the quarterlies. Some members of the Quorum of Seventies were quite vocal in their opposition to Tickemyer's interpretation of the Bible.

In the summer of 1960, Chris Hartshorn retired as editor of the *Saints' Herald*, the official magazine of the church. Seventy-two-year-old conservative Hartshorn was replaced by twenty-nine-year-old Roger Yarrington, a professional journalist with a moderately liberal theology. Hartshorn had trained his copy editor to be on the lookout for statements in articles which were "not in harmony" with traditional RLDS teachings. Yarrington had to retrain her, explaining that since he had approved the articles for publication by the time they reached her desk, she need not concern herself with correcting the theology.

There were a number of liberal articles printed in the *Herald* in the early 1960s; the two most controversial were by James Lancaster and Lloyd Young. In "By the Gift and Power of God" (1962) Lancaster concluded that the Book of Mormon was translated as Joseph Smith sat with his face buried in a hat dictating to his scribe, the plates under cover on a nearby table. This was a shock to many Latter Day Saints schooled in the traditional story which has Joseph looking at the golden plates through a spectacle-like Urim and Thummim and translating the reformed Egyptian characters into English. Lloyd Young's article, "The Virgin Birth" (1964), cautiously suggested that the evidence for Mary's virginity at the time of Jesus' birth is not very strong. Letters of protest poured into Herald House when these two articles were published.

Finally, from 1958 to 1960 Graceland College added four

liberal faculty members in the religion and philosophy areas: Lloyd Young, Paul Edwards, Robert Speaks, and Leland Negaard. Speaks and Negaard had graduate degrees from two of the leading Protestant theological seminaries in the country—the University of Chicago and Union Theological Seminary in New York. A few years before their arrival, two historians, Robert Flanders and Alma Blair, began to examine Latter Day Saint history with the tools of their discipline. Charges that these faculty members undermined the faith of students were often heard in the early 1960s.

I mention the department of religious education, Herald House in Independence, and the faculty at Graceland because, generally, the threat to orthodoxy which concerned the fundamentalists was coming from the staff of church departments and institutions, not from the top leaders themselves. At this point, it appears the fundamentalists saw as their mission to inform the leaders about the dangerous things their subordinates were teaching.

IN the 1970s the fundamentalists became concerned that the liberal theology which certain staff members had articulated in the 1960s was being accepted by the top leadership—the First Presidency and the Twelve Apostles. This concern was triggered in around 1969 when the fundamentalists discovered certain facts relating to the development of a new curriculum by the religious education department. Certain theological papers—called position papers—had been authored by members of a curriculum committee which included some members of the First Presidency and the Council of Twelve. When these papers were leaked to the church public, fundamentalist saints were shocked at their extremely liberal contents. One example illustrates the point quite well. In the position paper on the Book of Mormon, the author viewed the book as fiction and Joseph Smith as its author.

Most of these papers were written by department of religious education staff members Donald Landon, Geoffrey Spencer, Wayne Ham, and Verne Sparkes. Sparkes was a graduate of Union Theological Seminary in New York; Spencer and Ham were graduates of Saint Paul School of Theology in Kansas City.

By the end of the 1970s, W. Wallace Smith's son, Wallace B. Smith, was president (ordained in 1978), and it was becoming clear that the top leadership espoused the ecumenical approach. The position papers of the late 1960s might have been dismissed as the work of staff members, but in 1979 the First Presidency delivered a series of lectures promoting similar ecumenical or liberal views. The Presidential Papers, as they were called, brought the fundamentalists' search for heresy right to the door of the prophet and his counselors.

The early 1970s also saw the first significant separatist or schismatic movements resulting from the theological shift. In 1970 Barney Fuller began publishing *Zion's Warning*, a fundamentalist newspaper challenging the liberal direction the church leadership was taking. Before long he had organized a congregation of RLDS fundamentalists in Independence, which

rented a building for Sunday morning worship services. But Fuller himself eventually rejected Joseph Smith and the Restoration tradition, becoming an evangelical Protestant preacher. However, his associate, Gene Walton, eventually proclaimed himself a prophet and now heads a very small RLDS splinter group. Walton has produced several revelations.

At this point most fundamentalists had no desire to separate from the church. They continued to have hope for the institutional church, but they longed to hear the old fundamental gospel preached. So in 1979 a Restoration Festival was held. This consisted of a weekend of preaching, praying, and testifying in the old tradition. Led by Greg Donovan of Detroit, this independent group of fundamentalists rented facilities at Graceland College and attracted between two and three thousand worshippers. Because the first Restoration Festival was a big success, it was repeated several times. Eventually, the Restoration Festival became an independent organization holding similar weekend retreats several times a year. Fundamentalists began publishing a monthly magazine, the *Restoration Voice*, which often reprinted articles from the *Saints' Herald* of the 1940s and 1950s—the period just prior to W. Wallace Smith's presidency.

Still, in 1984 there were only a few small fundamentalist groups meeting outside the authority of the institutional church when Wallace B. Smith announced his revelation permitting the ordination of women. For many fundamentalists, this act was the last straw. To their way of thinking, the gospel is unchangeable, and, since no women had been called before, it was obvious that God didn't want women in his priesthood.

In the six years since the revelation was announced, many separatist "branches" and "congregations" have been organized. At the present time, I have identified 221 independent local groups in thirty-two states, Canada, and Australia. Fifty-five of these groups are in Missouri, many in the Independence area. Other states with large numbers of such groups are Michigan, Oklahoma, and Texas.

I use the word branch for a group of people who organize themselves in a fashion comparable to a regular congregation with elected officers and regular worship and study meetings. Many of these branches administer communion, baptisms, ordinations, and weddings, even though they are not recognized by the RLDS church and even though many of the priesthood administering these ordinances have been silenced by the institutional church (silencing means priesthood authority has been removed).

On the other hand, a "group" is simply a collection of people who meet to study or worship but have not as yet organized in the form of a congregation with elected offices. Frequently such small groups meet in homes for scripture study or prayer. In some cases they simply have no priesthood leaders. On a recent fact-finding trip west, for example, I stopped in Salinas, California, where there are about twelve fundamentalist schismatics. (A "schismatic" is a person who is willing to break with the church; some fundamentalists still attend the regular RLDS congregations and thus are not schismatic.) However,

in Salinas since they have only one priesthood member—an eighteen-year-old deacon—they cannot have the normal congregational worship activities and cannot perform any of the sacraments or ordinances. They meet regularly for Bible study but travel to another area for communion. These branches and groups are independent of the institutional church and normally hold their classes and worship services at the same time as the institutional church—Sunday School and preaching on Sunday morning and prayer and testimony meetings on Wednesday night.

I AGREE with the opinion of Apostle William T. Higdon, expressed to me in an interview on 17 August 1989, that the fundamentalist reaction to the ordination of women has come in three waves responding to the biennial World Conferences of the church held in 1984, 1986, and 1988.

In the first wave immediately after the approval of the revelation approved at the 1984 conference, there were not many people yet ready to leave the church or organize separate branches. Higdon estimates that there were only about 100 formal withdrawals from the church which were caused directly by Section 156, the revelation granting women the priesthood. Formal withdrawals may only be the tip of the iceberg, of course, but the important point is that there were few local schismatic groups formed in these early months. There were many meetings of concerned fundamentalists such as the International Elders Conferences but little formal schism.

Many fundamentalists still believed Wallace B. Smith was a prophet—he had just made a mistake and it would be corrected, probably at the next World Conference in 1986. They came to the 1986 conference determined to get the conference to formally rescind Section 156. But President Smith ruled that a motion from a stake to rescind a revelation in the Doctrine and Covenants was out of order. Since he reasoned that only the prophet can propose a revelation only a prophet can initiate a move to rescind a revelation. About 90 percent of the conference delegates supported his ruling. This action meant that the fundamentalists could not look to the World Conference to remedy the situation, since they could not initiate a rescission of a revelation. And even if they could have, they would not have had the votes needed to succeed.

Instead, the fundamentalists developed a strategy of preserving beachheads or enclaves in the church where true saints (namely fundamentalists) could maintain local congregations or stakes which would resist liberalism and resist ordaining women or using women in priesthood capacities. In a stake, for example, they might all gravitate to the congregation which was the most fundamental. (Unlike the LDS, we do not insist that a member attend the congregation closest to home.) That congregation could decline to call women to the priesthood and decide not to use ordained women who moved into the congregation. Liberals in the congregation would tend to transfer to other congregations which were not so fundamental.

Ideally, these beachheads or enclaves would allow both fun-

damentalists and liberals to remain within the church. In defense of this strategy, fundamentalists noted that several jurisdictions in the church had permitted such special-interest enclaves for persons whose views are to the left of the mainstream. There were many issues involved in this struggle, but the ordination of women became a convenient symbol and litmus test: if a congregation had not ordained any women and was not using women in priesthood capacities, it was regarded as fundamental. Those congregations which were ordaining women were regarded as liberal.

Many fundamentalists saw the Blue Valley and Central Missouri Stakes as such beachheads. The delegations from these two stakes had been strongly fundamentalist at the 1986 World Conference. At stake conferences they were able to vote down all priesthood calls for women which were presented for vote. Since both stakes are near Independence, fundamentalist members from outside of the Center Place, as we call Independence, could "gather to Zion," so to speak, by moving to the Independence area and attending fundamentalist congregations in one of these two stakes. And fundamentalist members already living in nearby stakes could transfer their membership to congregations in the Blue Valley or Central Missouri Stakes and not have to drive far to their new congregation. In a three month period after the 1986 conference, about 600 persons transferred their membership into Blue Valley Stake.

In response, the leadership of the church decided not to allow fundamentalist enclaves or beachheads to exist. Some fundamentalist-controlled congregations were dissolved or reduced to mission status. In others the headquarters replaced fundamentalist pastors with pastors who were either liberal or at least supported the World Church leadership, especially on the use of women in priestly capacities. In addition to the use of ordained women, other tests of loyalty to the World Church have been whether congregations use the new hymnal and the church's curriculum materials and whether they follow priesthood guidelines established since 1984. When a loyal pastor was installed, in many cases the fundamentalists have walked out and formed their own separate branches.

The World Conference of 1988 voted to uphold the actions of the church leaders which disallowed enclaves of fundamentalists who do not support the World Church. As a result, a third wave of schism has occurred. Many fundamentalists who previously had held out hope now saw no reason to stay in the church if fundamentalist beachheads were not to be allowed. They saw little option but to leave the church altogether or worship in separate congregations unauthorized by the RLDS church but faithful to a fundamentalist interpretation of the gospel.

It doesn't appear that anything occurred at the 1990 conference which will produce a fourth wave of fundamentalist defection. Yet it is certain that the defection has not as yet run its course. There are still plenty of fundamentalists who have not yet made a final decision as to which way to go. It is a very difficult break to make because the RLDS church places a very high premium on the authority of the institutional church and the need for loyalty to it. The dilemma is this: The more

firmly you believe the traditional message of the church the more likely you are to be disturbed by the direction the church is going. But the more firmly you believe the traditional message of the church, the more difficult it is for you to break with the authority of the church because you take that authority so seriously.

It is possible that most of the defection which will occur has already occurred. The interesting question, is what will happen to the fundamentalist groups? Will they become stable and cooperate with one another? So far they seem to be achieving that objective, although certainly there are rifts within the fundamentalist community. Another question is whether by missionary efforts they can grow in the future.

As I indicated earlier, at the present time I have identified 221 local independent branches or groups. I estimate that about ten percent of the original RLDS membership is involved. Many of these local groups of fundamentalists seem to be aligned in a loose way with the Association of Independent Groups and Branches, commonly called "The Association." The Association takes what I call the "non-separatist strategy." The founder of the Association was Terry Emerick of Independence. Its leading strategist and spokesperson is Richard Price of Independence. Their strategy is to consider themselves still to be RLDS. They are the true RLDS church because they hold to the true RLDS gospel. The RLDS hierarchy is considered the "liberal faction" of the church and is held to be in apostasy. Therefore, these non-separatist fundamentalists do not attend the regular RLDS congregations because they see them as being controlled by the hierarchy. Neither do they pay tithing or give other financial support to the institutional church. They do, however, retain their RLDS membership and priesthood. It is true that frequently the regular church leaders have silenced fundamentalist priesthood, and, in a few cases, they have expelled them from the church. But the fundamentalists simply don't recognize these silencings or expulsions as valid. They reason that the silencings were performed by church leaders who have gone into apostasy and therefore have lost their authority. Indeed, for some it has become a badge of honor to have been silenced. One prominent fundamentalist told me, "When we get calls to administer to the sick, they often ask for us to send a silenced elder."

It seems to me that the Association of Independent Groups and Branches is somewhat like the Southern Baptist Convention—a loose association of local congregations, each retaining its own autonomy. But Latter Day Saints believe in having a prophet and apostles and bishops. So the RLDS fundamentalists do not expect to remain in independent Restoration branches forever. They believe God will some day move to purify the RLDS church, either by removing President Smith and his liberal associates or by causing Wallace to repent and return to the true gospel or by raising up a new prophet. If someone arises proclaiming himself or someone else to be the true prophet, the Association would take no position on the question as to the validity of such a claim.

If the time comes when Association members have accepted

one or more claims to the office of prophet, the Association will no longer need to exist. Its purpose is only to serve in the interim. During this interim the proper thing to do is to organize independent Restoration branches because of the lack of World Church leadership with authority.

ALTHOUGH the vast majority of fundamentalist schismatics are taking this non-separatist strategy, a second and different approach—which I call the separatist approach—is being taken by other fundamentalists. They are considerably less numerous than the non-separatists. The separatists consider the RLDS church hopeless and believe that God has given up on the RLDS church, and that true saints should leave the church and look for God to call a new prophet, apostles and other officers of the general church. A major difference between the separatists and the non-separatists is that the non-separatists do not do anything more than that which a local branch can do by itself. They will ordain up to the office of elder but will not ordain a person to any of the high priestly offices or the office of seventy. They will not organize the church higher than the local branch. They have local autonomy, similar to the Southern Baptists and other denominations with congregational church government.

The separatists, however, are prepared to organize beyond the local level. The best example so far is the Church of Christ Restored, with its base in Michigan. Their leader is Bud Ormsbee from Cheboygan, Michigan. They have more than a dozen congregations and have ordained seven apostles. To vote in their meetings, one must formally withdraw RLDS membership. When they feel that God has designated his choice for prophet, they will proceed.

A similar group is the Church of the Lamb of God, which originated in Maine, has a stronghold in the state of Washington, and only recently began holding regular worship services in Independence. They have ordained twelve new seventies, and many believe they will soon formally organize as a new church.

THERE is a third approach to dissent: the self-proclaimed prophet. The Church of Christ Restored in Michigan and the Church of the Lamb of God do not yet have prophets. They are building a church first and anticipate that a prophet will emerge. But some men have stepped forward and proclaimed themselves as prophets, expecting to build an organization thereafter.

Eugene Walton, former RLDS seventy, is one who has produced revelations. His following is very tiny—only six members. His ability to get out and win yet more converts was hampered last year by six months in jail for refusing to pay alimony to his exwife. He refused on the grounds that God had instructed him to spend full time preaching and, therefore, he couldn't earn the money necessary to meet the alimony obligation. (Before we laugh at Walton, however, we should recall that there is historical precedent for prophets doing time. And in the civil

rights movement being jailed was a badge of honor, just as being silenced is an honor for the fundamentalist.)

Another reasonably well-known would-be-prophet was John Cato, who in 1986 proclaimed himself prophet and also produced revelations. His group, the Church of Christ, Zion's Branch, publishes a newsletter which has included Cato's revelations. His term as prophet was short lived; less than a year after his calling he left Zion's Branch and joined the LDS church. Zion's Branch survives but without a prophet to lead them.

Another well-known prophet is Bob Baker, a Graceland college alumnus. He had a considerable following before he proclaimed himself prophet. Since then his following has dwindled and is now very small. Several lesser-known figures have asserted their prophetic claims. A couple of them have died before getting much earthly recognition of their calling.

Undoubtedly, the best known prophet is Jeff Lundgren who with twelve of his followers now stands accused of a mass murder in Kirtland, Ohio, in April 1989. He was dissatisfied with the decision to ordain women and gathered a following in Kirtland, mainly among persons similarly dissatisfied. He had a revelation which asserted that ten people needed to die to purify his community. Once that purification took place, they would receive the golden sword (apparently the sword of Laban in the Book of Mormon), and Lundgren would establish world dominion as prophet. He read something in the scriptures which led him to conclude that the number could be cut in half, so the five members of the Dennis and Cheryl Avery family were murdered. His group had dissolved a few weeks before the bodies were found, and indictments were issued in January 1990.

I am not yet certain whether to include the community established by "the Brother of Clark," east of Lamoni, Iowa. Their leader, formerly known as Ron Livingston, and his people apparently have no quarrel with ordaining women. So possibly they do not fit within the confines of this study, which focuses on the fundamentalist reaction to the growing liberalism or ecumenism in the church. But part of the fundamentalists' critique is the apparent deemphasis of the Book of Mormon in the RLDS church, and the Brother of Clark is, above all, a zealous believer in the Book of Mormon. My impression is that many of the people he has attracted are fundamentalist and strong Book of Mormon advocates. So his group probably fits.

FINALLY, looking again now at the whole movement, I cannot at this point see any strong leader emerging to unite the RLDS fundamentalists. The largest single figure in the movement is Richard Price. He has earned his prominence from his three books and many other writings, including quite a few full-page *Independence Examiner* advertisements—in effect long articles criticizing RLDS church actions. But Price is a quiet little man. I don't think he has the charisma necessary to be prophet himself. And Price himself looks for a descendant of Joseph the Martyr, one named Smith, to be the next true prophet. Where he will find such a man is difficult to imagine. But Price's

strategy of retaining the true faith in independent local Restoration branches is a satisfactory strategy for those who are comfortable having the church exist on the local level only. They are comfortable with the American tradition of congregationalism—of local control. Although the RLDS scriptures call for central authority in various general church offices and officers, perhaps many of these people are really Southern Baptists with two extra books of scripture to interpret strictly. And since their disappointment has been with general church officers thwarting their efforts to preserve the gospel as they know it in their local congregations, they don't want to be in a hurry to create a new central bureaucracy which might frustrate them all over again. Better to take your time and be very sure before accepting anyone's claim to be prophet; better to beware of those who attempt to create a central organization and collect tithing. Meanwhile local leaders can retain control of their own groups and preach the true gospel as they see it.

I think Richard Price's non-separatist strategy can enable the RLDS fundamentalists to survive for a reasonable period of time, although I doubt that their numbers will grow significantly. Those who claim to be prophets so far have achieved very little success. Non-separatists, of course, are always capable of becoming separatists any time a prophet arises in whom they

can place their trust. If a charismatic leader does not arise as prophet, drawing many of the separatists and non-separatists to his side, the RLDS fundamentalists will continue to be split in many directions. Eventually, even the more prudent faction informally led by Richard Price might dwindle as they wait for a prophet. I assume they can't wait forever. Yet it is true that even today, James J. Strang's followers still await the calling of another prophet to succeed Strang, and Strang died in 1856. That really takes patience. But there are only about 300 people patient enough to continue the vigil, 134 years after Strang's death. ☒

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FOR THOSE LOOKING TOO HARD FOR LOVE

You wonder, when the tree boughs hang heavy
With apples that swell with days of sun and rain,
Why the fruit has not yet fallen into your hands.
You have forsaken climbing, for the boughs of love
Are too fragile, too tenuous for the studied search.
Standing in the orchard's shadow has cost you time
As you wait and wait like a wine goblet filled
To overflowing, that sits untouched on the table.

Arise now. You have stood by the fence, searching
The horizon like a poet bereft of vision too long,
Or a disciple whose master has left him to his own fire.
The fields lie about you, untilled and untamed.
They know your name, but you are deafened
By the sound of your voice, calling out names
That have no face, no meaning to them.
Blinded by your desire, you cannot hear the beat
Of the earth that does not cease.

It is the rhythm of growing things that live each day
In the fullest measure of joy and grace. And you,
So gifted with more thought and feeling, do not understand
As much as the green and winged children of the planet.
They fell from Paradise with you, but it lives within them,
Never really lost, but hidden from the view of man.
If you could see, how much more joy is yours in the finding.
You, lined with the thoughts of godhood, you with the
lineaments of
The Creator. His stamp is upon you, but in your loneliness,
His gentle breath at your back is nothing but a chill wind.

—CARA BULLINGER

"The greatest enemy of art is the collective mind"

SPIRITUALITY AND MODERN ART: BEYOND THE LITERAL IN SEARCH OF THE SUBLIME

By Linda Jones Gibbs

AS AN ART historian I am often faced with the sometimes tiresome task of having to defend modern art; tiresome because people really don't want to appreciate it—they want to dare or defiantly challenge me to supply them with some explanation that fits their frame of reference. When I do respond, my defense might include such reasons for its development as twentieth-century advances in psychology, particularly Freud's study of the subconscious which helped legitimize the artist's search for a reality drawn from the deep recesses of the mind.

Representational art was also a casualty of the World Wars. The abstraction of art reflected, to some degree, the desire of artists, many of whom came from war-torn Europe, to escape from the horrible realities of that first global war. They sought to create a new reality that bore no resemblance to the threatening world in which they were forced to live. Reality in the twen-



FIGURE 1
Georgia O'Keeffe, "The Grey Hills."

tieth century was also rapidly changing, becoming increasingly elusive and complex with the onset of technology. Mass production, as the antithesis of the creative individualist, alienated the artistic sensibility.

While these and other social and philosophical influences are valid and interesting explanations for the development of modern art, they really don't help one to appreciate its aesthetic value. We

are awed by a sunset not because we understand the scientific principles that produced it but because of the harmony of tone and unearthly light it brings. It seems to me there are more profound and subtle reasons for validating modern art, reasons which are difficult to verbalize as they involve the abstract or intangible nature of the human spirit and my belief in its innate but rarely cultivated ability to respond to the abstract in the visual arts.

As I have visited museums throughout the years—especially those collections large enough to chronicle the history of western art—I have become aware of what happens to me as I go from room to room, from early Christian art through the Renaissance, Medieval, Baroque, Rococo, and on to the Impressionists, the Post Impressionists, and finally Modernism. While I can enjoy

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and appreciate most periods of art, it seems that my spirit lifts and I can feel my mind opening as the weight of the centuries and their didactic political and religious claims on art dissipate. I am not always responding to their aesthetics (I do not claim to love all modern art) but to a sense of the freeing of the creative spirit.

It is interesting to note that in the twentieth century there was an evolution of artistic sensibilities or consciousness that encouraged this new freedom, not only in the visual arts but also in music, dance, literature, and drama. This correlation among the arts can be traced, of course, throughout history. As the French poet and critic Charles Baudelaire explained: "Things have always found their expression through a system of reciprocal analogy ever since the day God uttered the world like a complex and indivisible statement."¹

FOR the purposes of this paper I will define spirituality as a concern with that which is non-material, incorporeal, and unearthly, but not necessarily things sacred. In addition, I will define modern art as art that does not attempt to imitate three-dimensional reality. This could include either art which has its origin in some natural form and art with no basis in the "real world." I am also limiting my remarks to pictorial art of the western world. Our culture has a distinctive longstanding tradition of realism. (Abstraction in art is, of course, not alien to most other cultures.)

The spiritual potential in modern non-representational art lies initially in its very avoidance of pictorial illusion and deception—an acknowledgement that works of art on canvas are not an objective mirror of the physical world. Modern art can be a search for the essence of things, stripped of the superfluous. It is often a search for a deeper reality behind corporeal forms. Sometimes the modern painter begins with a feeling, then searches for the correct form to embody it. Objects are no longer copied; rather "sensations realized," as explained by Ambroise Vollard, a nineteenth-century Parisian art dealer of the avant-garde.

The very process of painting is a revelatory one. Even the creation of the most representational artwork is difficult to

describe. The great modernist Wassily Kandinsky attempted to explain this process: "Construction on a purely abstract basis is a slow business, and at first seemingly blind and aimless. The artist must not only train his eye but also his soul, so that he can test colors for themselves and not only by external expressions."²

All art is, in fact, an abstraction. Georgia O'Keeffe encouraged the viewer to even see the true abstract essence in realistic forms (Figure 1). She explains:

It is surprising to me to see how many people separate the objective from the abstract. Objective painting is not good painting unless it is good in the abstract sense. A hill or tree cannot make a good painting just because it is a hill or a tree. It is lines and colors put together so that they say something.³

Art historian William Gerds also reminds us that what we think of as "realism" isn't real at all. He describes the paradox of traditional art serving as both preserver and deceptor:

Much art is made to embody permanence, timelessness: portraiture records an individual for ages, landscape inures the memory of a place, and historical pictures memorialize great and valorous deeds. Yet these very works, established as icons, embody their opposites, for the portrait stops time as time cannot be

stopped, and later appearances give lie to the durability of the image.⁴

This irony is reiterated in a story about a man who came to view a portrait of his wife in Picasso's studio. "What do you think of it?" Picasso asked. "Well," replied the husband, "it doesn't look much like her." "How does she really look?" asked Picasso. The husband took a photograph of her from his wallet and said, "like this." Picasso studied the photograph, then handed it back saying, "Small, isn't she?"⁵

For many modern artists, reality is beyond the screen of the conventional world as we directly experience it. The modern artist is the lone inventor seeking the singularly unique, seek-



FIGURE 2

Marc Chagall, "The Birthday."

ing a more profound reality. This search does not depend upon some general public agreement about reality but on the artist's own inner instincts and insight, a personal vision that reconstructs reality through private experience. In writings of the abstract expressionists, Maurice Tuchman, for example, wrote that they demonstrated "a concern for the quality of the inner life, an interest in spiritual development and wholeness, and a mistrust of material values and appearances."⁶ Jonathan Borofshy, a current modernist, explains: "I don't feel like I'm trying to escape the world, as much as trying to get above it for an overview of the larger issues—to try to see it as a whole—the tensions and the beauty, the touch of God."⁷

Many artists have painted sunflowers but it took Van Gogh to paint them metaphysically, not botanically. Likewise, Robert Henri counseled his students that "reality does not exist in material things. Rather paint the flying spirit of the bird than its feathers."⁸

This search for a deep inner reality, which is usually a private activity, is perhaps what alienates many Mormons who, according to Arnold Friberg, are often wrapped up in the "Beehive Syndrome"—the concept of working as a unit rather than as individuals, the need for group sanction of an idea or activity, the obsession with correlation. Herbert Reid in his book *Art and Alienation* wrote that "the greatest enemy of art is the collective mind [which] is like water that always seeks the lowest level of

gravity; the artist struggles out of this morass to seek a higher level of individual sensibility and perception."⁹

There is an inherent danger in trying too hard to defend abstract art. To explain too much might destroy its finer subtleties. One can better understand the spiritual intent of many modern artists simply by reading their own elucidations on the subject. The remainder of my paper will deal with the philosophies of several well known twentieth-century modern artists and of several contemporary Latter-day Saint artists who I feel have sought truths beyond the literal and attained a spirituality in their art.

SEVERAL years ago I traveled to the east coast to see a large retrospective of Marc Chagall. People of all backgrounds

respond to the intense spirit of his work, yet few realize the courage it took for him to stretch his abilities, to move beyond merely imitating others. When first in Paris studying the contemporary and historical art in the city's museums and galleries, Chagall wrote: "I had the impression that we were still wandering over the surface of the paint, that we were afraid to plunge . . . and overturn the customary surface under our feet."¹⁰ He accomplished this through developing a way of seeing the world with what he called his "third eye." This willingness to be distinctive seems to be a prerequisite for the truly creative. Certainly to acknowledge one's own uniqueness is a divine attribute.

"Art seems to me above all a state of the soul," Chagall stated.¹¹ It is difficult to overlook that conviction in such works as "The Birthday," a celebration of the joy of being in love (Figure 2). In this picture of Chagall bringing flowers to his fiancée Bella, his ecstasy and aliveness cause not only his soul but his entire body to levitate above her. He wrote:

The psyche should get into the paint. You must work the painting with the thought that something of your soul penetrates it and gives it substance. A picture should be born and bloom like a living thing. It should seize . . . the profound meaning of whatever interests you.¹²

Even in his many biblical depictions Chagall strove for a deeper interpretation behind the narrative. He

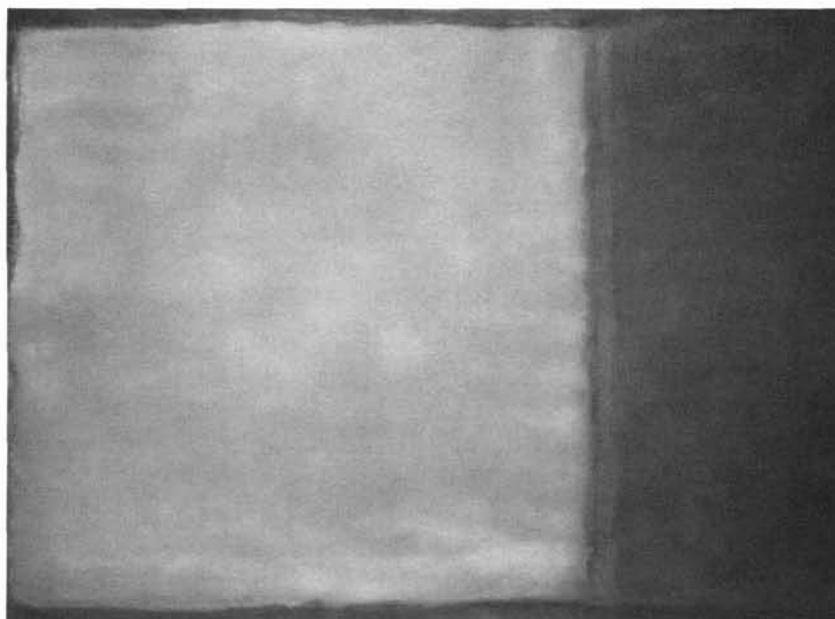


FIGURE 3
Mark Rothko, "Ochre and Red on Red."

explained:

A truly great work is penetrated by its spirit and harmony. Since in my inner life the spirit and world of the Bible occupy a large place, I have tried to express it. It is essential to show the elements of the world that are not visible and not to reproduce nature in all its aspects.¹³

Chagall's paintings contain recognizable subject matter presented in a surreal manner. But the real challenge for many is to respond to non-objective painting. One of the earliest modern artists to try and explain the spiritual basis of his non-objective art was Wassily Kandinsky in his treatise *Concerning the Spiritual in Art*. In it he frequently refers to the artist's search to express the "inner life."

Kandinsky contended that although reason and purpose were

an important part of his work, he wanted none of the calculation to appear, only the feeling. It is this soul search, Kandinsky claims, that breathes meaningful content into even the most abstract art. "It is very important," he wrote, "for the artist . . . to search deeply into his own soul, develop and tend it, so that his art has something to clothe, and does not remain a glove without a hand."¹⁴

Kandinsky further elaborates on the spiritual value of painting:

"Good drawing" is drawing that cannot be altered without destruction of this inner value, quite irrespective of its correctness as anatomy, botany, or any other science. Similarly colors are used not because they are true to nature, but because they are necessary.¹⁵

Too often, he adds, academically trained artists do not hear what he calls the "inner resonance." The result, he feels, is correct drawings which are "dead."

This reminds me not only of Van Gogh and the intrinsic animation bursting from his sunflowers and his creative use of color but also of Cezanne. Although he ignored traditional perspective, he could make a living thing out of the most inanimate object, be it a table top or teacup. Many of these modern artists held the somewhat radical notion that all things have spirit.

Kandinsky also made some profound analogies between the creating of art to the living of one's life. He wrote:

If an artist conforms to the basic principles of composition, color, etc., the possibilities are endless. So are our possibilities for life experiences if we live the basic truths. "There is no must in art, because art is free."¹⁶

I HAVE long been drawn to the color field paintings of Mark Rothko. They project a compelling space that appears both empty and rich with meaning simultaneously. Rothko, indeed, explained that he favored the "simple expression of the complex thought." He not only wanted to avoid illusion but hoped that his works would cease to be concrete, that the images would

appear to transcend their boundaries. Rothko, like many other modernists including Kandinsky, Chagall, and O'Keeffe, painted large. Rothko explained that he did so in order "to be very intimate and human. To paint a small picture is to place yourself outside your experience. . . . However you paint the larger picture, you are in it."¹⁷

Rothko's biographer Diane Waldman wrote that his art is "not earthbound." She stated:

He achieved a harmony, an equilibrium, a wholeness . . . that enabled him to . . . fuse the conscious and the unconscious, the finite and the infinite, the equivocal and the unequivocal, the sensuous and the spiritual. He had left behind all that spoke of the carnate, the concrete. He had reached the farther shore of art.¹⁸

Rothko was very much a colorist, but he wanted the viewer to go beyond the surface delight of his paintings. Color to him was a vehicle to express basic human emotions. "The people

who weep before my pictures," he wrote, "are having the same religious experience I had when I painted them. And if you are moved only by their color relationships, then you miss the point."¹⁹

A prime example of Rothko's search for spiritual depth through color can be seen in a series of paintings done for a chapel at St. Thomas University in Houston. The "Triptych" depicts the Passion of Christ through his typical use of red and black, which in this case are intended to evoke his belief in the passion of life, the finality of death, and the reality of the spirit. His black,

however, is one of the richest colors in his palette. His hues often seem to go beyond mere physical color to become symbols of deep thought processes. The paintings were designed to harmonize with the architecture and the changing light of the chapel interior, thus attempting a total aesthetic and spiritual environment. (The painting discussed here does not reproduce well in black and white; another example of his work, "Ochre and Red on Red," is shown in Figure 3.)

A MOST important artist/teacher of the twentieth century, Robert Henri, has perhaps been remembered more for



FIGURE 4

Bruce Smith, "Go Ye Therefore into my Father's House."

his writings than his art. In reality he was not a true modernist. Henri began as an impressionist and developed into a rugged realist, a leader of the so-called Ashcan School. Yet his advice to his students is applicable to the artistic freedom which modern artists have sought.

The frontispiece to *The Art of Spirit*, a compilation of his writings, begins with one of his most famous dictums. He declared:

There are moments in our lives, there are moments in a day, when we seem to see beyond the usual. Such are the moments of our greatest happiness. Such are the moments of our greatest wisdom. If one could but recall his vision by some sort of sign. It was in this hope that the arts were invented. Sign posts on the way to what may be. Sign posts toward greater knowledge.²⁰

Henri believed that art should not be an end in itself but a springboard for deeper awarenesses. He felt that few artists reached what he called the "undercurrent," or real life. He wrote:

On the surface there is the battle of institutions, the illustration of events, the strife between people. On the surface there is propaganda and the effort to force opinions. The deeper current carries no propaganda.²¹

Just as life should be a progression rather than a repetition, he hoped that in art "the vision and expressing of one day will not do for the next."²² Along this line he suggested new treatments of old themes:

If you must paint a "Good Samaritan" do not paint the old story, in the old form, but let your subject be the recurrence of the spirit of the good Samaritan as it presents itself to you in your own environment. These great moments didn't happen just once—they continue to happen.²³

AS if taking Henri's advice, Latter-day Saint artist Bruce Smith converts the biblical story of the Prodigal Son into a series of uniquely personal visual images (Figure 4). His painting, "Go Ye Therefore Unto Thy Father's House," contains very little in

the way of literal connections to the biblical narrative. The remainder of the parable is told through still life images which Smith, in his other works, frequently uses to convey subtle meaning.

In the first panel on the left can be seen an arrangement of apples. Some painted with clarity while others appear to be dissolving, losing their substance. These represent the prodigal son at the outset of the parable as he is searching for his identity. This search, which leads him to riotous living followed by destitution, is represented in the central panel. Here the forms are at their most abstract. Nothing is rendered with clear vision. It is here that one of the two literal clues to the story appear in the swine herd huddled below the cluster of grapes.

The right panel shows the happy ending of the parable. The sharply focused still life symbolizes broadly the son's return to his home and more specifically of the feast which his father prepared in his honor. Again, Smith slips in another literal

reference—that of the fattened calf. Over the entire drama floats disjointed pieces of drapery. The artist describes these as symbolic of the mantle of the Lord or his influence hovering over our lives.

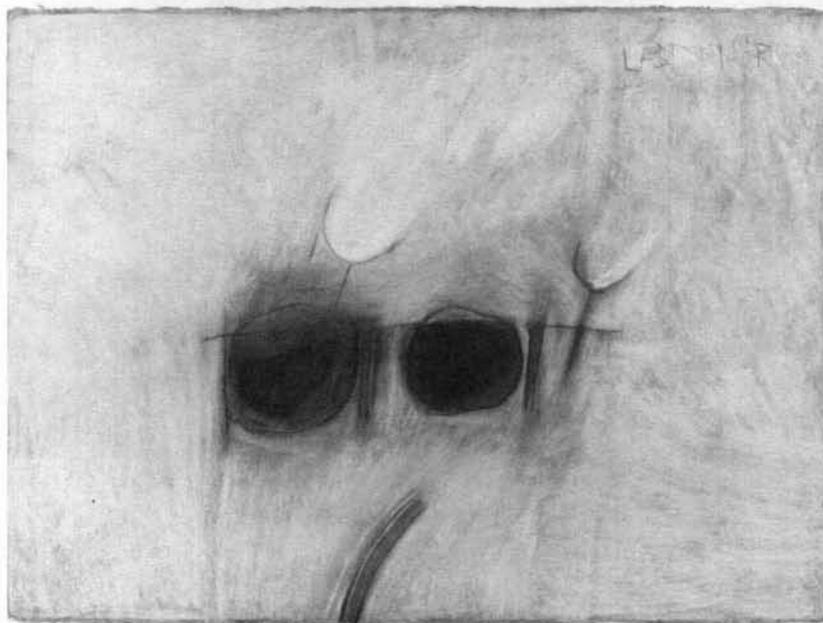


FIGURE 5
Beth Anne Anderson, "The Last Supper."

ANOTHER Latter-day Saint artist, Beth Anne Anderson, converts the well known biblical episode of the Last Supper into the simplest of images—a single place setting of dinnerware (Figure 5). Utilizing the diaphanous nature of her medium, pastel, she creates a sense of ethereality

about the concrete everyday plate and utensils, making one feel that they might dissolve at any moment. Here lies perhaps a suggestion of the fleeting temporality of worldly existence.

Anderson's reduction of a subject that has historically been painted with visual complexity and detail to a simple image of what is presumably Christ's place at the sacramental table, subtly suggests the loneliness he must have felt as he prepared to confront his betrayer. By abstracting her theme and simplifying the form, the artist offers the viewer multiple levels on which to experience the poignancy of this critical event in Christian history.

Wulf Barsch is a Latter-day Saint artist well known for his search for spiritual realms within his paintings. "The Mirror Image or Treasures of the World" (Figure 6), is characteristic

of his paintings in that it contains recognizable imagery imbued with symbolism. This painting, for example, relates a far deeper vision than poplar trees lining a horizon and what seems to be their reflection in the lower picture plane. Through the use of a mirror image of natural forms, the work illustrates Barsch's belief that Babylon and Zion closely resemble one another on the surface and that the former can easily deceive one into believing it is the latter. To be able to discern truth from falsehood requires powers beyond purely optical observance.

By the very nature of abstraction, modern art discourages us from making strong temporal connections. We, as Latter-day Saints, claim to want to be not of this world but we seem uncomfortable when the visual arts invite us to do so. While it is true that some modern artists are indifferent or opposed to the notion of spiritual aspects in their art, many of them have attempted to get at the spirit rather than the letter of the artistic law. "Your drawing should be an expression of your spiritual sight," wrote Henri. "You should draw not a line," he added, "but an inspired line."²⁴ Utah sculptor Mahonri Young made a similar statement when he counseled artists to "first learn to place a mark where you mean it to be. Then learn to make it mean what you want it to mean."²⁵

I DO not wish to imply that people who dislike modern art do not possess a spiritual nature. They are simply ignoring an opportunity to receive spiritual sensations not unlike those to be found at the symphony or ballet. It is ironic that people who can be uplifted by the beauty and harmony of well constructed notes and the flowing expressive movement of the human figure may still demand didacticism from the pictorial arts. They close their ears to the melody in color and their eyes to the dance in line and rhythm in form.

True art appreciation is more than a pleasurable pastime.

It requires energy, the willingness to be contemplative, to set aside one's egotism and judgments. Modern art requires that we no longer cherish our ignorance but have a desire to reach out to commune on a soulful level with the feelings of a fellow human being, to face the reality of another without feeling threatened, to regard with respect the artist's intent. We must try, as Henri states, to get on the inside of art and press out. Again Kandinsky has a relevant comment:

The spectator is too ready to look for a meaning in

a picture—i.e. some outward connection between its various parts. Our materialistic age has produced a type of spectator or "connoisseur," who is not content to put himself opposite a picture and let it say its own message. Instead of allowing the inner value of the picture to work, he worries himself in looking for "closeness to nature," or "temperament," or "handling," or "tonality," or "perspective," or what not.²⁶

When we demand that art always be literal, we are asking it to become our own imaginations, to fill every crevice of our own capacities for creativity. As contemporary art critic Theodore Wolfe explains, modern art requires an act of faith. It often involves taking a trusting leap into the unknown with a belief that there exists something of substance and meaning.

In the eleventh passage of the Chinese Tao Te Ching it is written:

Thirty spokes converge at one hub;
What is not there makes the wheel useful.
Clay is shaped to form a vessel;
What is not there makes the vessel useful.
Doors and windows are cut to form a room;
What is not there makes the room useful.
Therefore, take advantage of what is there,
By making use of what is not.²⁷

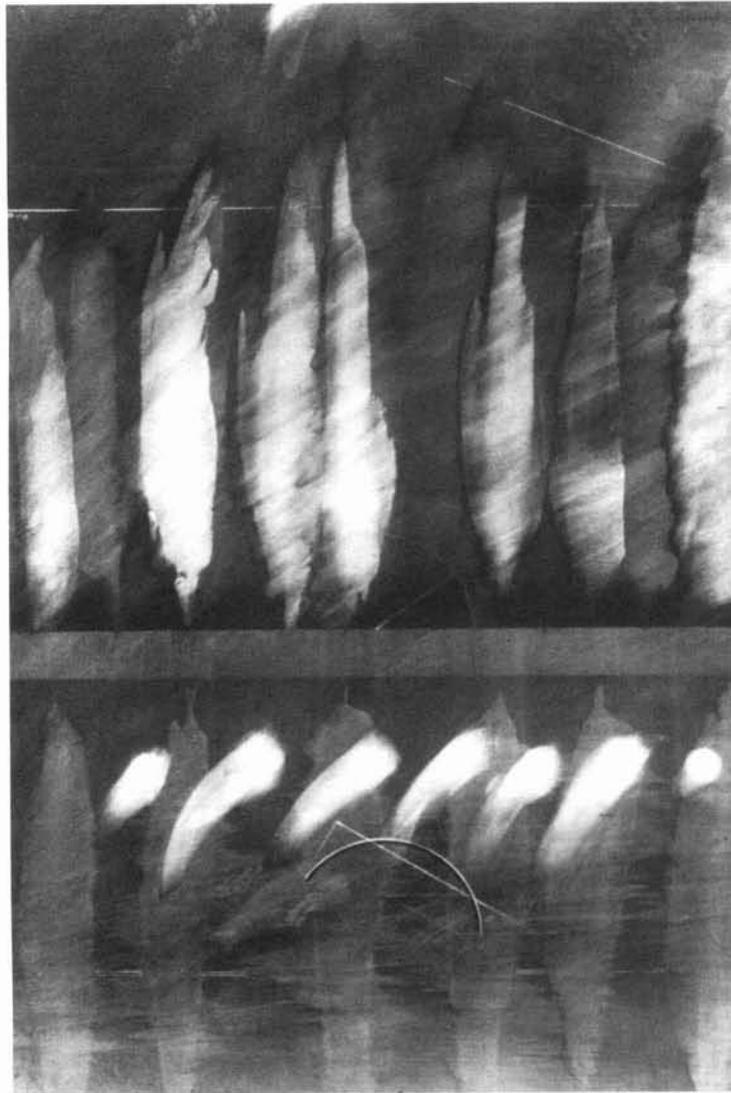


FIGURE 6

Wulf Barsch, "The Mirror Image or Treasures of the World."

In other words, the material connotes utility, the immaterial, essence. To be spiritually sensitive and perceptive requires that we listen for knowledge in silence and train ourselves to see and feel what is not literally before our eyes. Modern art can be seen as an ally rather an enemy to the spiritual self, an exercise in fine tuning our visual sense, refining it as a tool of perception and reception of truth and knowledge. ☐

NOTES

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3. Georgia O'Keeffe, *Georgia O'Keeffe*, (New York: The Viking Press, 1976), Figure 88.
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5. Sydney J. Harris, "Of the Fine and Vulgar Arts," *Clearing the Ground*, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1986), 193.
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18. Waldman, 69.
19. Waldman, 58.
20. Henri, 13.

21. Henri, 94.
22. Henri, 115.
23. Henri, 218.
24. Henri, 242.
25. Artist files, Museum of Church History and Art, Salt Lake City, Utah.
26. Kandinsky, 49.
27. R.L. Wing, *The Tao of Power, A Translation of the Tao Te Ching by Lao Tzu*, (New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1986).

FIGURES

1. Georgia O'Keeffe, "The Grey Hills," 1942, oil on canvas, 24" x 36", Indianapolis Museum of Art, Gift of Mr. and Mrs. James W. Fesler.
2. Marc Chagall, "The Birthday," 1915, oil on cardboard, 31¼" x 39¼", Museum of Modern Art.
3. Mark Rothko, "Ochre and Red on Red," oil on canvas, 92½" x 64¼", The Phillips Collection, Washington, D.C.
4. Bruce Smith, "Go Ye Therefore Unto Thy Father's House," 1984, oil on canvas, 51" x 59", Museum of Church History and Art.
5. Beth Anne Anderson, "The Last Supper," 1982, pastel, 22" x 30", Museum of Church History and Art.
6. Wulf Barsch, "The Mirror Image or Treasures of the World," 1983, oil on paper, 36" x 25½", Collection of Michael and Linda Jones-Gibbs.

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The puzzle of modern population growth in a war-torn Third World country

MULTIPLY EXCEEDINGLY: BOOK OF MORMON POPULATION SIZES

By John C. Kunich

AS LATTER-DAY SAINTS WE ARE URGED TO STUDY the Book of Mormon and apply its teachings to our lives. In "likening the scriptures unto ourselves," however, we sometimes anachronistically ascribe contemporary attitudes, practices, and phenomena to Book of Mormon peoples. Although usually innocuous, this penchant for viewing the long-ago through now-colored glasses can sometimes distort our understanding of the text.

In this essay I examine one possible problem in contemporary LDS interpretations of the Book of Mormon. In the context of today's much-publicized population explosion, and from the perspective of an era accustomed to miracles in medicine, technology, nutrition, and transportation, I believe we have overlooked a fundamental difficulty in Book of Mormon population sizes. Assuming that Book of Mormon peoples were like us, we have accepted that the multitudes of Nephites and Lamanites reported in Mormon scripture sprang from two small bands of Palestinian emigrants, inasmuch as they had hundreds of years in which to "multiply exceedingly." However, an understanding of historical demography may challenge this traditional interpretation of the scripture.

After briefly summarizing the scriptural information on Nephite-Lamanite population levels, I will explain the basic principles necessary to place these data in perspective. Finally, I will discuss the resulting implications for the Book of Mormon and our comprehension of its message.

BOOK OF MORMON POPULATION SIZES

ARRIVING at a reasonable estimate of Nephite-Lamanite

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numbers is more an art than a science. The authors of the Book of Mormon favored hyperbolic generalities in this area. Terms such as "multitude," "numerous," "exceedingly great," "innumerable," and "as the sands of the sea" impress more than inform. For example, nowhere in the text is it explained how many Lamanites constitute a multitude. These terms probably meant different things to different authors, and they may have varied according to context as well.

The text does provide sufficient details to allow us to gain some feel for population levels at various points in time. As will be seen, there are several specific reports as to numbers of military combatants and casualties. Arguably, these data may be skewed by the loyalties of the authors who may have exaggerated enemy numbers, both as defeated adversaries and as threatening opponents. However, where such numbers as 12,532 are used, it seems unlikely that they were arbitrarily chosen as a suitably large figure. This degree of precision appears to signify an actual count rather than a wild guess or inflated propaganda ploy. Thus I will treat these specific numbers as substantially accurate and use them as a frame of reference in interpreting less precise terms. And although there are gaps in the scriptural record, we have enough "snapshots" of the numbers at different times and places to permit reasonable extrapolation and interpolation.

It is important to begin with an estimate of the number of original ocean voyagers who, according to LDS tradition, were the literal ancestors of all subsequent Book of Mormon peoples and, for some, all present day Native Americans. The scriptures mention two pioneering groups as forerunners of the Nephite and Lamanite nations: the peoples of Lehi and Mulek. I do not include the Jaredites because of their total extinction (except for Coriantumr) and lack of contribution to the Nephite-Lamanite colonizations (Ether 15:12-34).

When Lehi's group set sail from the Old World in about 591 B.C., his group consisted of the following men: Lehi; his sons Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, Jacob, and Joseph; Zoram; and

the two unnamed sons of Ishmael (1 Nephi 7:6; 16:7). Ishmael himself died before they began their ocean voyage (16:34). In accordance with the Book of Mormon practice of female anonymity, we know the name of only one of the seafaring women: Lehi's wife Sariah (1 Nephi 2:5). But we are told that Ishmael's five daughters also made the trip, having become wives of Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, and Zoram. Ishmael's wife and the families of Ishmael's two sons, as well as Nephi's "sisters," also are mentioned as part of Lehi's band (1 Nephi 18:9; 2 Nephi 5:6).

Of this group, some were relatively old with grown children of their own (Lehi, Sariah, and Ishmael's wife). Others (at least Jacob and Joseph) were born "in the wilderness" following Lehi's exodus from Jerusalem but prior to their ocean voyage and thus were very young (1 Nephi 18: 7, 19; 2 Nephi 2:1; 3:1, 25). Also, there were apparently other small children, such as the "family" or children of the sons of Ishmael and the children of Laman and Lemuel (1 Nephi 7:6; 2 Nephi 4:3, 8-9).

It is unlikely that there were other passengers on Lehi's vessel. Jacob, Joseph, and other children were too young to have wives. And if Nephi's sisters had husbands, they probably would have been named or at least noted, but there is no such mention of them.

Therefore, Lehi's group apparently consisted of nineteen adults, plus Nephi's sisters. However, because this essay is concerned with population growth, it is significant that Nephi's sisters had no mates, at least not until boys from the families of Ishmael's sons or their own nephews (sons of Laman, Lemuel, Sam, or Nephi) grew to maturity. Similarly, Jacob and Joseph could not have had spouses until their nieces or the daughters of Ishmael's sons reached marriage age. It is also important that Lehi, Sariah, and Ishmael's wife were elderly or spouseless or both, and therefore no longer reproductive. Thus we are told of only fourteen emigrants who were reproductive at the time of their arrival in the New World: Laman, Lemuel, Sam, Nephi, Zoram, the two sons of Ishmael, and the wives of each.

When these colonists divided into two main groups, the Nephites included Nephi, Zoram, and Sam, and the families of each, plus young Jacob and Joseph, Nephi's sisters, and "all those who would go with [Nephi]" (never named) (2 Nephi 5:6-9; Alma 3:6). The Lamanites were Laman, Lemuel, Ishmael's sons, and the families of each, as well as later dissenters from the Nephites (2 Nephi 4:13; Alma 3:7; 43:13; 47:35).

We have little information on Mulek's colonists. They left Jerusalem a few years after Lehi's group, when Zedekiah was taken captive, and eventually became "very numerous" before joining the Nephites (Omni 1:14-19; Mosiah 25:12-13). The

only specific population information concerns their numbers in 120 B.C. At that time the Mulekites reportedly outnumbered the Nephites, but both groups combined totalled less than half the size of the Lamanite population (Mosiah 25:2-3).

Although Mulek's group began multiplying in the New World shortly after Lehi's, both events may be considered effectively simultaneous. Then, if we assume a roughly equal reproductive rate for the Mulek and Lehi populations, the size of Mulek's original reproductively capable group must have been less than half that of Lehi's emigrants, given the above information from Mosiah 25:2-3. Therefore if there were fourteen initially reproductive members of Lehi's group, there were fewer than seven in Mulek's. There may have been additional voyagers, as with the elderly, unmarried, and young children of Lehi's band, but only fewer than seven were then capable of producing offspring.

From these two small clusters of pioneering emigrants came the population growth which resulted in the Nephite and Lamanite nations. That story comprises much of the Book of Mormon. However, for ease of reference, I have condensed the pertinent population-related information into table 1.

Nowhere in the Book of Mormon is a complete census reported; there are accounts of certain numbers of converts being baptized or warriors dying or people emigrating, but no figures on total population sizes. In order to approximate such data, we need to use a conversion factor to relate known but partial numbers to the population of the entire group. Book of Mormon scholar John L. Sorenson has performed this type of analysis, concluding,

Our first numerical data come at about 90 B.C. from the battle in which Amlicite dissenters suffered 12,532 slain and the loyal Nephites 6,562 (Alma 2:19). All these people were "Nephites," politically speaking; the account does not talk about Lamanites at all. It is reasonable that not over half the combatants were slain, which means that at least 40,000 warriors were involved, and perhaps somewhat more. Various studies of ancient warfare suggest how to translate that figure to total population. The ratio usually believed to apply is one soldier to about five total inhabitants. Using that figure, we may conclude that the total population of those "who were called Nephites" was 200,000 or more.¹

Coupling this information with the contemporary report (Mosiah 25:2-3) that the total number of Nephites was less than half the size of the Lamanite population at that time, Sorenson estimated the Lamanite population at over 400,000 as of 90 B.C. He also found circumstantial evidence supporting that figure:

The carrying capacity of the entire world for a hunting/gathering way of life is only about five million people.

A decade after the Amlicite conflict we get still more data. Alma 28:2 says that "tens of thousands of Lamanites were slain and scattered abroad." The writer had not used the expression "tens of thousands" when the nearly 20,000 Amlicites and Nephites had been slain, so the term here must mean many more than that—at least 30,000 Lamanite dead. An attacking army on the order of 75,000 or more seems called for. The usual ratio of 1:5 yields a figure of 375,000 for the total population . . . but that figure is probably too low. (The Lamanites were operating hundreds of miles from home, which leads to the conclusion that somewhat fewer than one out of five were mobilized. It would take more people at home to support them on a lengthy expedition such as the geography suggests for this case.) If the ratio of one in six is used instead, the total Lamanite population from which the force had been drawn would be on the order of 450,000.²

According to Sorenson, despite the lack of more detailed information and the possibility that Nephite estimates of enemy casualties might be inflated, "the size of the Nephite and Lamanite populations we have calculated is probably of the correct order of magnitude." Although it is impossible to verify directly Sorenson's warrior/civilian ratio for Book of Mormon populations, it is true that substantial numbers of people were noncombatants. For example, Moroni complained to Pahoran that the army was being neglected while the people back home "are surrounded with thousands of those, yea, and tens of thousands, who do also sit in idleness, while there are thousands round about in the borders of the land who are falling by the sword" (Alma 60:22). And Zeniff, while sequestering the women and children safely beyond the field of battle, sought reinforcements among old men and young men who were otherwise non-warriors (Mosiah 10:9). LDS church president Spencer W. Kimball seemed to recognize the principle that noncombatants outnumber actual warriors when he wrote, "The Lamanite population of the Americas, at the greatest number, must have run into many millions, for in certain periods of Book of Mormon history, wars continued almost unabated and the soil was covered with the bodies of the slain."³

Sorenson's formula may actually underestimate the number of civilians necessary to support an ancient army. Even in modern times, the ratio of noncombatants to combatants has usually been much higher than 4 or 5 to 1:

It is essential to realize that in these [historical] examples, nothing approaching the present-day situation arose, where 10 per cent of a national population might often be on active service in a war. In

Until the Industrial Revolution, human population was increasing at a rate dwarfed by modern figures.

Serbia in the First World War, as many as a quarter of the population may have joined the armed forces . . . [In ancient times] it was not possible to absent large numbers of people from agricultural work.⁴

Therefore, it is likely that far more than four or five civilians were needed to support a single warrior during an ancient campaign of more than a very short duration.

If we apply Sorenson's ratio to other military data, we can determine an approximate total population size for other periods in the Book of Mormon era as well. For instance, in 187 B.C., 3,043 Lamanites and 279 of Zeniff's people were killed in just one day and night of combat. Certainly plenty of Lamanites were left alive after this slaughter, because a "numerous host" of them was mentioned a decade or so later (Mosiah 9:18; 10:8, 20). Even if half the Lamanite army died in that one day in 187 B.C., Sorenson's 1:5 multiplier yields a total Lamanite population of 30,430. If the Nephite total were somewhat less than half that figure, as it was sixty-seven years later (Mosiah 25:2-3), then 10,000 to 15,000 Nephites were alive in 187 B.C.

The reader may make similar calculations for other points in time by referring to the population information above. Various combinations of casualties, reinforcements, and civilian noncombatants may be pieced together, along with an appropriate multiplier, to estimate total populace at several stages in Book of Mormon history. For the present, however, we have sufficient working information to place these data in perspective. To do so, we must first discuss humankind's numbers throughout history and the factors that influence population growth rates.

HUMAN POPULATION GROWTH THROUGHOUT HISTORY

IT is sometimes difficult for people in the twentieth century to comprehend the profound and fundamental changes that have occurred recently in human history. Such myopia is understandable, given that most of us have never known a world without, for example, penicillin, safe drinking water, antiseptic surgery, and readily available food. But unless we disabuse ourselves of the assumption that things have always been this way, we cannot appreciate the multiple revolutions that have coalesced to produce our modern world.

If we imagine a world without agriculture and domesticated animals, a world in which we depend on our ability to find, track, hunt, and kill wild game on a frequent basis and to scrounge sufficient edible vegetable matter, we can gain some insight into the precarious existence that confronted humanity before the Agricultural Revolution.⁵ Before approximately 8000 B.C., humans struggled to eke out a subsistence level of

nutrients as hunters and gatherers. Such a migratory, unpredictable, catch-as-catch-can society requires a large amount of space per person, approximately one-to-two square miles per human being. To illustrate this, the carrying capacity of the entire world for a hunting/gathering way of life is only about five million people.⁶

Population growth during this pre-agricultural period was virtually nonexistent, roughly .001 percent per year or less.⁷ Starvation and severe malnutrition were the rule rather than the exception. Cities were out of the question; people roamed

in small bands to follow the food supply. Stability was found only in death.

It should be evident that our hunting/gathering ancestors had no reliable medicines, no inoculations, no climate control, no rapid transportation, and no modern hygiene. Infant mortality was extremely high, and life for those who survived infancy was difficult, dirty, and short. The earth's population increased only with glacier-like slowness through all but the last 1 or 2 percent of humankind's existence on this planet.

With the advent of the Agricultural Revolution, people in

TABLE 1

Dates	Events	Dates	Events
588-70 B.C.	Nephites began to multiply (2 Nephi 5:13).		
560	Nephite-Lamanite wars already 40 years after leaving Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:34).		27, 35); too many Nephite men, women, children killed to number (3:1-2); another Lamanite and numerous Nephite army not many days later, many Lamanites slain (vv. 20-23); thousands and tens of thousands slain in one year (vv. 25-26).
544-42	Nephite multitude gather together (Jacob 7:17); continual Nephite-Lamanite wars (Enos 1:20-24).		
399	Nephites multiply exceedingly and wax strong (Jarom 1:5, 8); Lamanites exceedingly more numerous than Nephites (Jarom 1:6).	85	3,500 Nephites baptized in one year (Alma 4:5).
323	Nephites have had many serious wars (Omni 1:3).	81	Lamanites slay all inhabitants of great city of Ammonihah (Alma 16:9-11).
279-130	Mulekites exceedingly numerous, have many wars (Omni 1:14-19).	90-77	Thousands of Lamanites, many cities, brought to believe (Alma 23:5, 9-13); Lamanites kill 1,005 (24:22); more than 1,000 Lamanites saved (vv. 26-27); many thousands saved (26:4, 13).
187	Numerous hosts of Lamanites (Mosiah 9:14); 3,043 Lamanites, 279 of Zeniff's people slain in one day and night (v. 18).	76	Tens of thousands of Lamanites slain and scattered, plus many Nephites in largest battle since left Jerusalem (Alma 28:2-3); many thousands mourn (vv. 10-12); many thousands killed during 15 years of war (vv. 10-11); too many killed to number (30:1-2).
178-60	Numerous hosts of Lamanites (Mosiah 10:8); so many Lamanites killed they did not number them (v. 20).		
145-22	Lamanites slay many Limhi people (Mosiah 21:8); Limhi people suffer much loss (vv. 11-12); many still left alive (v. 17).	74	Alma speaks to 2 multitudes of Nephites (Alma 32:4, 7); thousands of Lamanites at war (43:5); Priests of Noah's descendants almost as numerous as Nephites (vv. 13-14); Lamanites more than double Nephites, enemies much more numerous (vv. 21, 51).
130	King Benjamin's army kill many thousands of Lamanites (Words of Mormon 1:13-14).		
124	Great multitude of King Benjamin's people, too many to number, because they had multiplied exceedingly and waxed strong (Mosiah 2:2, 7-8).	73	Many thousand Nephites and Lamanites converted (Alma 37:9-10, 19); Nephite, Lamanite dead exceedingly great, too many to number (44:20-22).
121	Lamanites too numerous to fight against (Mosiah 22:2); multitude of Limhi people (8:4).	72	Numerous host of Lamanites (Alma 48:3; 49:6); more than 1,000 Lamanites slain (49:23).
120	Mulekites more numerous than Nephites, but Mulekites and Nephites together are less than half as numerous as Lamanites (Mosiah 25:2-3).	71	Many Nephite cities (Alma 50:13-15); thousands of wicked Nephites in bondage or perish (v. 22); Nephites multiply and wax strong (v. 18).
100-92	Nephites very numerous, scattered everywhere (Mosiah 27:6).		
87	12,532 Amlicites, 6,562 Nephites slain (Alma 2:17-19); numerous host of Lamanites (v. 24); Lamanites and Amlicites almost as numerous as the sands of the sea, too numerous to number (vv.	67	Lamanite army wonderfully great despite many thousands slain (Alma 51:11); 4,000 Nephite dissenters killed (v. 19); Lamanite's numerous hosts take many cities, slay many Nephites (vv. 26-30).

effect increased the earth's carrying capacity, enabling it to support more humans. Agriculture was basically unknown prior to about 8,000 B.C.; before this, all human groups survived by hunting and gathering.⁸ Even after the emergence of agriculture, food production was still primitive by modern standards and prone to suffer from low productivity and frequent failure, but at least there was some degree of organization and dependability in the food supply.⁹ It was no longer necessary to rely totally on the vagaries of the hunt; some animals were kept in herds, and some crude cultivation

of low-yielding crops was practiced. Pesticides, preservatives, genetically selective breeding of plants/animals, effective irrigation, and fertilizers were thousands of years into the future or in their infancy, but it was still an improvement over a scavenger subsistence. For the first time, "some members of early agricultural communities were able to turn entirely to other activities, all of which helped to raise the general standard of life."¹⁰

Agriculture enabled people to found and maintain farming villages and eventually cities. The increased availability and

Dates	Events
66-64	Enormity of Lamanite numbers (Alma 52:5, 12); Moroni sends large number of men (v. 7); much bloodshed, more taken prisoner than slain (vv. 35, 40).
65	10,000 Nephite reinforcements, plus wives and children (Alma 56:28).
64	2,000 stripling warriors (Alma 53:18)
63	Additional 6,060 Nephite men (Alma 57:6); enormity of Nephite numbers (v. 13); 2,000 Lamanites killed, many prisoners (vv. 13-14); 1,000 Nephites slain (v. 26); 2,000 more Nephites arrive guarding food (58:7-8); Lamanites' numerous hosts in army (vv. 8, 15, 18).
66-62	Vast number of Nephites slain (Alma 56:10); Lamanites take many cities (vv. 13-15); great slaughter of people of Nephihah (59:7-8); numerous Lamanite armies (vv. 7-8); thousands of Nephites killed (60:5, 7); tens of thousands of Nephites not in army (v. 22).
61	6,000 Nephite men join Helaman, 6,000 join Lehi and Teancum (Alma 62:12-13); many Lamanites slain, but 4,000 not slain (vv. 15, 17); greatness of Nephite numbers (v. 19).
60	Nephites multiply and wax exceedingly strong (Alma 62:48); great slaughter of Lamanites (v. 38).
55	5,400 Nephite men, with their wives and children, emigrate North; many others die trying (Alma 63:4-10); numerous Lamanite army, great loss of Lamanites (v. 15).
51	Numerous Lamanite army (Helaman 1:14, 19); great slaughter of Nephite people and Lamanites (vv. 27, 30).
46	Exceedingly great many Nephites and people of Ammon emigrate North (Helaman 3:3-5, 12).
43	Tens of thousands baptized into church (Helaman 3:24-26).
38-30	Long war, numerous Lamanite army, great slaughter of Nephites (Helaman 4:1-11, 16-20);

Dates	Events
	Lamanites exceedingly more numerous than Nephites (v. 25).
30	8,000 Lamanites baptized (Helaman 5:19).
28	Nephites and Lamanites multiply and wax exceedingly strong (Helaman 6:12).
23-20	Many great Nephite cities (Helaman 7:22; 8:5-6).
21	Nephi goes from multitude to multitude (Helaman 10:17).
17	Thousands of Lamanites and Nephites die in famine (Helaman 11:6).
16	Nephites multiply, spread, and cover face of the land (Helaman 11:20).
11	Numerous robbers war with Nephites and Lamanites (Helaman 11:30-32).
A.D. 1	Robbers slaughter many (3 Nephi 1:27).
15	Numerous robbers slay many, cause much death and carnage (3 Nephi 2:11-13).
17	Nephites march by the thousands and tens of thousands to fight robbers (3 Nephi 3:22, 24).
19-21	Robbers slain by thousands and tens of thousands, in largest slaughter ever (3 Nephi 4:11, 21, 24); many thousands become prisoners (v. 27).
34	Many slain as 16 cities destroyed (3 Nephi 8:8-10, 14-15; 9:3-10; 10:13); great multitude still left alive (11:1; 17:1, 5, 9-10, 12-13, 15, 18, 21, 23, 25); 2,500 people see and hear Savior (17:25).
36-60	People of Nephi multiply exceedingly fast (4 Nephi 1:10).
322	Nephite army of over 30,000 (Mormon 1:11).
331	Nephite army of 42,000; Lamanite army of 44,000 (Mormon 2:9).
346	Nephite army of 30,000; Lamanite army of 50,000 (Mormon 2:25).
364-75	Thousands slain on both sides (Mormon 4:9).
385	230,000 Nephite warriors killed (Mormon 6:10-15); greatness of Lamanite numbers (v. 8).

constancy of food and stability in lifestyle resulted in a greatly increased population growth rate. By the time of Jesus, world population had risen to 200-400 million, with an estimated annual growth rate of .04 percent.¹¹ Although an infinitesimal growth rate by modern standards, it represented a forty-fold leap from the hunting/gathering era.

Unfortunately, the lack of a reliable food source was only one of the problems holding down the population; moreover, the dawn of urban existence brought with it a whole array of new threats to human life. Increased association with herding animals introduced new diseases such as anthrax, tuberculosis, and brucellosis, and the concentration of more people into less space facilitated the spread of disease. Disposal of waste became a serious problem, as did transportation of food to the urban areas.¹² Life expectancy was still fairly short, about 30-40 years, and infant mortality was still very high. Famines and outbreaks of disease, when they occurred, were apt to be devastating, because modern checks against these potential killers were still many years away. Cities were filthy agglomerations of people and beasts.

The evidence of narrow streets and small rooms in houses huddled within the compass of defensible walls tells us that crowding in ancient cities was extreme. Garbage accumulated in the houses, where the dirt floors were continually being raised by the debris, and human wastes were rarely carried further than the nearest street. The water supply, from wells, rivers, and canals, was likely to be polluted. Life expectancy was short, due in part to the high infant mortality. Flies, rodents, and cockroaches were constant pests. Even air pollution was not absent. In addition to dust and offensive odors, the atmosphere was filled with smoke on calm days. Even today, in large preindustrial cities such as Calcutta the smoke of thousands of cooking fires, in addition to other human activities, produces a definite pall of smoke and dust which seldom dissipates for long. Under these unhealthy conditions, the death rate must have been high in Mesopotamian cities.¹³

During the thousands of years between the Agricultural Revolution and the next great change in human development, the Industrial Revolution, global population levels inched gradually upward. From about five million during the hunting/gathering era, the population grew to 200-400 million in A.D. 1, and continued to rise until it reached about 470-545 million in A.D. 1650.¹⁴ If this increase in global population is plotted on a graph versus time, the curve is virtually flat for the vast majority of humankind's existence, with a very slight,

almost imperceptible upward slant. However, it would be wrong to assume that the population everywhere was growing at the same rate for all those millennia. Where conditions such as absence of famine, disease, and war were especially favorable, human numbers increased at a faster rate than the global average. Conversely, areas disproportionately stricken with natural disasters, pestilence, famine, plague, or war suffered a loss of population or experienced a much slower growth rate. Thus the average global growth rate subsumed substantial local variation within its smooth, sluggish slope.

The year A.D. 1650 is often used as the beginning of the modern era and the birth of the Industrial Revolution. It is important to remember that until that time, human population was increasing at a rate dwarfed by modern figures; at .04 percent annually, it took over 1,500 years for the world's population to double.¹⁵ The Agricultural Revolution had greatly enhanced humankind's growth rate from that of the hunting/gathering period, but the rate was still negligible by today's standards. This is logical when one considers the dearth of preventive medicine, antiseptic surgery, antibiotics, proper sanitation and hygiene, pesticides, and other modern advances that have made current growth rates possible. Even during the glory days of the great civilizations in Rome, Egypt, and Greece, life

was precarious, tentative, and brief.

The Industrial Revolution comprised an interrelated group of revolutions causing an unprecedented, prolonged, and tremendous surge in world population and growth rates. Revolutions in medicine, energy production, transportation, food production/preservation/distribution, communication, and information all hitched rides from one another to lift humanity to a level previously only dreamed of even in the palace of Caesar. The nature, cause, spread, and treatment of disease was discovered and infant mortality began to fall; for the first time, people could have a fair chance of living out their biblically allotted three-score and ten years. With longer life expectancies, more people lived up to and through their reproductive years. The advent of preventive and curative medicine not only reduced mortality rates but made life more enjoyable, hopeful, and productive for more people than ever before. One expert summarized the factors causing this dramatic population growth:

1. Increased productivity ushered in by the agricultural, commercial, and industrial revolutions resulting in higher levels of living--including better nutrition, better living conditions, and better health.
2. The emergence of national governments with the elimination of internecine warfare and the emergence of national markets which permitted a more equitable

The large numbers of Book of Mormon peoples could not have been produced from the tiny Lehi-Mulek colonizing groups.

distribution of the nation's product. 3. Improvements in environmental sanitation and personal hygiene, resulting in uncontaminated food and potable water and a decrease in the probability of infection and contagion. 4. The natural disappearance of some of the agents of disease and death; for example, scarlet fever. 5. The development of modern medicine, climaxed by chemotherapy and the availability of pesticides.¹⁶

Table 2 illustrates various estimates of global annual growth rates and population sizes during these eras. These increases from the .04 percent annual growth rate of the pre-Industrial period to .4 and higher beginning in the Industrial age were primarily the result of decreased mortality, not increased birth rate.¹⁷ Basically, people continued to reproduce at the same rate as before, at least for a time, but more of their offspring survived to have children of their own. These soaring growth rates translated into an "explosive" world population. In fact, during the second half of the twentieth century, "there could be a greater increase in world population than was achieved in all the millennia of human existence up to the present time."¹⁸ The six-fold increase during the 310 years from 1650 to 1960 "is a phenomenal achievement, which stands in sharp contrast to the situation that must have existed during the many thousands of years of man's existence on the earth before this time . . . In other words, the rapid increase in the world's population began only recently."¹⁹

Again, these global figures mask local and regional differences, but these differences are not random; they are the predictable result of the operation of "unique combinations of local conditions."²⁰ Especially significant is the fact that greatly accelerated, explosive population growth, the "Vital Revolution," first occurred among nations first experiencing modernization, and did not reach significant proportions among the peoples of Asia, Africa, and Latin America (which constitute two-thirds of humankind) until after World War II.²¹ It was only then that the so-called underdeveloped countries received, virtually instantaneously, the medical advances that had been evolving in the rest of the world. Most significant were inoculation for infectious diseases, reduction of malaria through DDT spraying, and the cure of infectious disease through antibiotics.²² Essentially, people in underdeveloped countries continued to maintain the high birth rate of an agrarian society, while suddenly enjoying the low death rate of the industrialized world. This "death control" produced "the most rapid, widespread change known in the history of population dynamics."²³

This change can be seen by comparing annual growth rates

for industrialized and developing regions. From 1750 to 1920, the industrialized regions as a group had far greater growth rates, as mortality rates declined and birth rates remained high, but beginning in the 1920s and increasing after 1940, the developing regions outpaced the industrialized areas. For example, from 1940 to 1950 and from 1950 to 1960, industrialized regions grew at .35 percent and 1.26 percent annually, respectively, while developing regions expanded at 1.44 percent and 2.07 percent. Prior to 1920, developing regions never had an annual growth rate in excess of .52 percent, while industrialized regions reached peaks of 1.05 percent from 1850 to 1900 and 1.26 percent from 1950 to 1960.²⁴

One researcher, considering the trends described here, reached "some indisputable, significant conclusions: 1. Contemporary population growth rates could not possibly have obtained for any long period in the past. 2. Contemporary population growth rates cannot possibly persist for long into the future."²⁵ Another wrote:

Where formerly less than half of all children grew to maturity, today, in the advanced countries, nine-tenths reach voting age. But the rate of population growth, which in the past only under very exceptional circumstances ever rose to 2 percent a year (on rare occasions 3 percent for short periods), has now

reached the point where these percentages have become the norm for entire continents. At these rates of increase in regions such as tropical Latin America, i.e. at three percent a year or better, we could create enough human protoplasm to cover the surface of the earth in no more than three centuries.²⁶

I have mentioned the large differences in growth rate that may exist not only between industrialized and developing regions, but between continents within each region and among nations and sub-nations within each continent, at least short-term. Some of these differences reflect differential rates of migration. When examining population growth rates it is important to know whether the rates reflect the rate of natural increase (which includes birth and death rates but excludes migration rates) or the overall growth rate (which includes migration rates). For example, the phenomenal growth rates reported for North America after 1750 are due in large part to the swarms of immigrants (voluntary or otherwise) arriving from Europe, Africa, and Asia. The population of North America grew at 3.65 percent annually from 1750 to 1800, while the global population increased at only .50 percent, and Africa actually shrank at .06 percent. An understanding of the applicable rates of immigration and emigration is the key to proper evaluation of such data.²⁷ Indeed, industrialized nations in their entire history have rarely exceeded a natural

There is evidence that the Book of Mormon peoples had a low rate of growth. In addition to the hunting/gathering Lamanite culture, there is another powerful population retardant that was virtually omnipresent: War.

growth rate of 1 percent annually, even in North America.²⁸

It is also important to realize that high rates of natural increase have never persisted for more than a century or two. It is well known that, after the huge increase in growth rate spurred by the Industrial Revolution, the more developed nations experienced a "demographic transition" to a lower birth rate and a lower death rate, thereby stabilizing their populations.²⁹ With more infants surviving to maturity, it was no longer necessary to bear so many children in order to perpetuate the family. Also, the more industrialized and less rural the society, the greater the tendency for children to be economic drains rather than economic assets to the family. Instead of being additional field hands, they are simply more mouths to feed, clothe, house, and educate. Over time, developed regions thus transitioned from high birth rates and high death rates to high birth rates and low death rates, and finally to low birth rates and low death rates. Thus far, the underdeveloped regions have not undergone this transition, still maintaining their former agrarian birth rates, but this cannot long continue without causing economic collapse.

It is true that much of the data on population sizes and growth rates are only estimates, particularly for the periods prior to A.D. 1650.³⁰ Even today, census information is patchy

or of questionable accuracy in some parts of the world; centuries ago, the situation was far more uncertain. Historical demographers have devoted much time and effort to piecing together evidence from many sources to arrive at reasonable approximations for various times and places, but we can never know with absolute certitude what the actual figures were. Consider the following:

Our picture of world population in the past has been built up like a gigantic jigsaw puzzle, there is no one piece or source of evidence which tells us [the answer.] . . . Apart from the buried record and experimental results, evidence from comparable contemporary source is readily available from people living in Stone Age cultures in New Guinea, Australia, and elsewhere. Australian Aboriginals, insofar as they have not been affected by the dominant European culture, have found that their harsh environment, without the assistance of agriculture, will support about two-and-a-half persons to the square mile . . . Agricultural scientists can show what yields there will be from different sorts of crops in different environments and climates and thereby give a good indication of how much food is available. Physiologists and nutri-

TABLE 2
AVERAGE PERCENT ANNUAL GLOBAL GROWTH RATES
(according to source)

Date (A.D.)	U.N. ¹⁴	Smith ⁶ ; Ehrlich ⁷	Hauser ¹⁶	Bogue ⁹
1650-1750	.4	.3	.3	.34
1750-1800	.4	} .5	—	.50
1800-50	.5		.6	.43
1850-1900	.5	} .8	—	.68
1900-10	} .8		—	} .65
1910-20			—	
1920-30			—	1.07
1930-40	} .8	} .8	1.0	1.11
1940-50			—	1.10
1950-60	1.8	} 1.8	—	1.83
1960-	2.0		2.0	—

WORLD POPULATION

Date	Population (in millions)	Date	Population (in millions)
7,000-6,000 B.C.	5 - 10	1850	1,128 - 1,402
AD 1	200 - 400	1900	1,550 - 1,762
1650	470 - 545	1950	2,486
1750	629 - 961	1960	2,982
1800	813 - 1,125	1965	3,289

tionists can provide evidence on the needs of people of different body weights doing various amounts of work in different temperatures and humidities . . . The really important thing to remember about earlier populations is that simply huge errors in measuring and describing them are of very little significance in the light of what has happened since the middle of the seventeenth century--a time when our studies of population and society were beginning to be more reliable.³¹

This does not mean that the estimates are wildly inaccurate; they are of the correct order of magnitude and are within reasonable error limits. "Population data prior to the modern era are admittedly speculative. But they provide a reasonably sound perspective and permit a very firm conclusion: Whatever his precise numbers may have been, during his habitation of this planet man has experienced a great increase in his rate of growth."³² In addressing the postulate that world population might have been much higher long ago, only to decrease prior to the modern era, one authority made the following points:

[T]he combined evidence from paleontology, from the geographical distribution of plants and animals, from ecology and particularly plant ecology, from archaeology, from prehistory, and from history, masses such weight against [the postulate] as to be practically conclusive. In short, all the relevant evidence seems to indicate that there were as many (or more) human beings living on the face of the earth in 1630 as there ever had been at any prior time . . . Most particularly to be counted against [the aforementioned theory] is the fact that until recent times man's culture was not of the sort to make possible the existence of large populations on the earth. Hunting, pastoral, and primitive cultures are not compatible with large total populations . . . because high densities cannot be supported at these cultural levels or stages . . . So then we are left with . . . a very slow and irregular time rate of growth of world population over a very long time prior to the Middle Ages . . . followed by a relatively tremendous spurt of growth not yet ended.³³

Therefore, the evidence indicates that the basic trends described above are accurate to the extent the recognized scientific authorities in the field are capable of determining this. Based, then, on our knowledge of the time and place in which a people lived, the type of society they had, their degree of exposure to disease, famine, and war, and their level of technological advancement, we are prepared to estimate their growth rate with a reasonable degree of precision.

The excision from the gene pool of almost 20,000 men would have been felt long into the future in terms of a greatly reduced growth rate.

POPULATION PROJECTIONS FOR THE NEPHITE-LAMANITE PEOPLES

MATHEMATICAL models can simulate the population growth of a human community based on a given percent annual growth rate. Populations grow in the way that money grows in a bank account when interest is compounded; just as the interest dollars themselves earn interest, so people added to populations reproduce and add more people.³⁴ However, although simplifying approximations are feasible, it is most accurate to consider human "interest rates" to be compounded continuously, rather than annually, semi-annually, or quarterly. This is because people in any given group are born and reproduce more or less continually throughout the year.

The formula for computing the growth of human populations may be written as follows:³⁵

$$N_2 = (N_1) (e^{rt})$$

Where N_1 = the number of (reproductive) people initially

N_2 = the number of people after t years

e = the base of natural logarithms, approximately 2.718

r = the growth rate per year, expressed as a decimal, where $100r$ = the growth rate as a percent

t = the number of years elapsed between the initial measuring time and the final measuring time

This formula assumes that all people in the initial population are then capable of reproducing. It further assumes that there are no internal restrictions to mating with any other member of the population. If a given population forbids or restricts marriage with close relatives, then the growth of the population will be slower than indicated by the formula. As an aside, the approximate doubling time for a population may be obtained by dividing 69.31 years by the growth rate (in percent).

I computed the Nephite-Lamanite population sizes in table 3 using this formula. As an example of how to read the data, assume you want to know the population size fifty years after arrival, given an annual growth rate of 1.0 percent. Find 50 in the left hand "Years Elapsed" column; you will see this corresponds to 540 B.C. Then follow this line to the 1.0 percent annual growth rate column for the answer: 49 people. For N_1 , the initial population size, I used thirty people for the combined reproductively capable populations of Lehi's and Mulek's colonizing groups. As discussed earlier, a figure of twenty or so would be more in line with the information from the scriptures, but I chose thirty so as to allow for the slight possibility that there were more people in these groups than is

apparent from the Book of Mormon text. Thus the population sizes in table 3 are probably too large. Readers wishing to convert any of the data in these tables to reflect a different initial population size may easily do so.³⁶

The numbers in the table are also slightly higher than they should be because Mulek's group did not arrive in the New World until several years after the Lehi contingent, and thus got a late start. However, in the interest of simplicity, I assume Mulek's group began reproducing in the New World in the year 590 B.C., just as did Lehi's.

I selected the various percent annual growth rates for several reasons. I chose .04 percent because it is the approximate growth rate prevailing in the world between the Agricultural Revolution (about 8,000 years B.C.) and the Industrial Revolution (around A.D. 1650). Thus it represents the average annual global rate of natural increase during the actual period in which the Nephite-Lamanite population was reproducing. All other growth rates in table 3 are rates from the modern world. From A.D. 1750 to 1850, the world average was about .5 percent, more than ten times greater than the pre-industrial rate. The remainder of the rates, from .9 percent to 2 percent, are rates known only in very recent history, primarily in the post-World War II era. They are included here

to illustrate the difference between late-twentieth-century rates of population increase and the rates for all the preceding years of human history.

Finally, the population figures in table 3 represent the total reproductive-age number of all Book of Mormon peoples during the years indicated. Nephites, Lamanites, Mulekites, and all other "-ites" are combined, again for sake of convenience, because they are all assumed to have descended from the Lehi and Mulek pioneers. I assume an equal rate of natural increase for all groups, although there were significant differences in Nephite and Lamanite cultures and lifestyles for much of the period in question.

IMPLICATIONS

THE results contained in table 3 call for a reevaluation of our approach to the Book of Mormon. When these data are compared with the population information from table 1, and our knowledge of historical demography, it is apparent that the large numbers of Book of Mormon peoples could not have been produced from the tiny Lehi-Mulek colonizing groups. No growth rate even close to the rate of increase prevalent from 590 B.C. to A.D. 390 would have produced the population

TABLE 3
TOTAL BOOK OF MORMON POPULATION SIZE

YEARS ELAPSED/ DATE	PERCENT ANNUAL GROWTH										
	0.04	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.0
10/580 B.C.	30	32	33	33	33	34	34	35	35	36	37
20/570	30	33	36	37	37	38	39	40	40	43	45
30/560	30	34	39	40	42	43	44	46	47	51	55
40/550	30	37	43	45	47	48	50	53	55	62	67
50/540	31	39	47	49	52	55	57	60	64	74	82
60/530	31	40	51	55	58	62	65	69	74	88	100
70/520	31	43	56	60	65	69	75	80	86	106	122
80/510	31	45	62	67	72	78	85	92	100	127	149
90/500	31	47	67	74	81	88	97	106	116	152	181
100/490	31	49	74	82	90	100	110	122	134	181	222
110/480	31	52	81	90	101	112	125	140	156	217	271
120/470	31	55	88	100	112	127	143	161	181	260	331
130/460	32	57	97	110	125	143	163	185	211	311	404
140/450	32	60	106	122	140	161	185	213	245	373	493
150/440	32	64	116	134	156	181	211	245	285	446	603
160/430	32	67	127	149	174	205	240	282	331	534	736
170/420	32	70	139	164	195	231	273	324	384	640	899
180/410	32	74	152	181	217	260	311	373	446	766	1,098
190/400	32	78	166	201	243	293	355	429	519	917	1,341
200/390	32	82	181	222	271	331	404	493	603	1,098	1,638
210/380	33	86	199	245	302	373	460	567	700	1,314	2,001
220/370	33	90	217	271	337	420	524	653	813	1,574	2,444
230/360	33	95	238	299	377	474	597	751	945	1,884	2,985
240/350	33	100	260	331	420	534	679	864	1,098	2,256	3,645
250/340	33	105	285	365	469	603	774	993	1,276	2,701	4,452
260/330	33	110	311	404	524	679	881	1,143	1,482	3,233	5,438
270/320	33	116	341	446	585	766	1,003	1,314	1,722	3,871	6,642
280/310	34	122	373	493	653	864	1,143	1,512	2,001	4,634	8,813
290/300	34	128	408	545	729	974	1,301	1,739	2,324	5,548	9,909
300/290	34	134	446	603	813	1,098	1,482	2,001	2,701	6,642	12,103

sizes described in the scriptures, even if there had been no wars.

Consider the battle in 187 B.C. in which 3,043 Lamanites and 279 of Zeniff's people were slain in a single day and night (Mosiah 9:18-19). Obviously the total Book of Mormon population at that time was much larger than 3,322 because numerous warriors were left alive, as well as women and male noncombatants. But even to produce a *total* population as large as the *casualty* figures for that one day would have required an average annual growth rate of 1.2 percent during the preceding four centuries. To put this in perspective, a growth rate of 1.2 percent was never achieved on a global basis or in the industrialized regions of the world as a whole until A.D. 1950-60, and was not reached in the developing regions as a whole until the 1930s. This rate is thirty times the rate that existed in the world as a whole during the Nephite-Lamanite era. Moreover if, as is far more likely, the total population in 187 B.C. was in excess of 35,000, it would have taken an average annual growth rate of 1.8 percent to multiply the original thirty pioneers to that level at that time. This is a rate that has never been reached in the industrialized world, and has only been achieved in the world overall since A.D. 1950.

Let us take as a second example the Amlicite-Nephite war of 87 B.C. Recall that Alma 2:17-19 reports a total of 19,094 fatalities, and that Sorenson estimated the total Nephite-Lamanite population to be over 600,000 at that time (about 200,000 Nephites-Amlicites and over 400,000 Lamanites). For an original band of thirty reproductive individuals in 590 B.C. to proliferate even to 19,094 by 87 B.C. would require an average annual growth rate of 1.3 percent, sustained over the span of five centuries. Furthermore, to reach the 600,000 level Sorenson determined to have existed at that point, the growth rate would have had to be 2 percent, again maintained for five centuries. This is a level never reached on a global scale until A.D. 1960, and fifty times the actual world rate of the pre-industrial epoch.

Less specific information from the scriptures also produces some startling results when viewed in the light of data from table 3. For example, the Nephites and Lamanites had already had wars against one another by 560 B.C. (2 Nephi 5:34). Even if the original colonists had been multiplying at the unheard-of rate of 2 percent annually, the total number of reproductive-age Nephite and Lamanite men and women alive in 560 B.C. would have been a mere fifty-five. If half of those

YEARS ELAPSED/ DATE	PERCENT ANNUAL GROWTH										
	0.04	0.5	0.9	1.0	1.1	1.2	1.3	1.4	1.5	1.8	2.0
310/280	34	141	488	666	908	1,238	1,688	2,301	3,138	7,952	14,782
320/270	34	149	534	736	1,014	1,396	1,922	2,647	3,645	9,520	18,055
330/260	34	156	585	813	1,131	1,574	2,189	3,045	4,235	11,398	22,053
340/250	34	164	640	899	1,263	1,774	2,493	3,502	4,921	13,646	26,935
350/240	35	173	700	993	1,410	2,001	2,839	4,029	5,717	16,337	32,899
360/230	35	181	766	1,098	1,574	2,256	3,233	4,634	6,642	19,559	40,183
370/220	35	191	838	1,213	1,757	2,543	3,682	5,330	7,717	23,417	49,080
380/210	35	201	917	1,341	1,961	2,868	4,193	6,132	8,966	28,035	59,946
390/200	35	211	1,003	1,482	2,189	3,233	4,775	7,053	10,417	33,564	73,218
400/190	35	222	1,098	1,638	2,444	3,645	5,438	8,113	12,103	40,183	89,429
410/180	35	233	1,201	1,810	2,728	4,110	6,193	9,332	14,062	48,108	109,229
420/170	35	245	1,314	2,001	3,045	4,634	7,053	10,734	16,337	57,595	133,412
430/160	36	258	1,438	2,211	3,399	5,225	8,032	12,347	18,981	68,954	162,950
440/150	36	271	1,574	2,444	3,794	5,891	9,147	14,203	22,053	82,553	199,027
450/140	36	285	1,722	2,701	4,235	6,642	10,417	16,337	25,622	98,834	243,093
460/130	36	299	1,884	2,985	4,728	7,489	11,863	18,792	29,768	118,326	296,914
470/120	36	315	2,062	3,298	5,277	8,444	13,510	21,616	34,586	141,662	362,651
480/110	36	331	2,256	3,645	5,891	9,520	15,386	24,865	40,183	169,600	442,943
490/100	36	348	2,468	4,029	6,576	10,734	17,522	28,601	46,686	203,048	541,012
500/90	37	365	2,701	4,452	7,341	12,103	19,954	32,899	54,241	243,093	660,794
510/80	37	384	2,955	4,921	8,194	13,646	22,724	37,843	63,019	291,035	807,096
520/70	37	404	3,233	5,438	9,147	15,386	25,879	43,530	73,218	348,432	985,789
530/60	37	425	3,538	6,010	10,211	17,347	29,472	50,071	85,067	417,148	1,204,045
540/50	37	446	3,871	6,642	11,398	19,559	33,564	57,595	98,834	499,417	1,470,624
550/40	37	469	4,235	7,341	12,723	22,053	38,223	66,250	114,829	597,911	1,796,224
560/30	38	493	4,634	8,113	14,203	24,865	43,530	76,206	133,412	715,830	2,193,913
570/20	38	519	5,071	8,966	15,854	28,035	49,573	87,658	155,003	857,004	2,679,652
580/10	38	545	5,548	9,909	17,698	31,609	56,455	100,831	180,087	1,026,020	3,272,934
590/A.D.	38	573	6,071	10,951	19,756	35,639	64,292	115,983	209,232	1,228,368	3,997,571
600/10	38	603	6,642	12,103	22,053	40,183	73,218	133,412	243,093	1,470,624	4,882,644
610/20	38	633	7,268	13,376	24,617	45,306	83,383	153,460	282,433	1,760,657	5,963,675
620/30	38	666	7,952	14,782	27,480	51,083	94,959	176,521	328,141	2,107,889	7,284,049
630/40	39	700	8,701	16,337	30,675	57,595	108,142	203,048	381,245	2,523,601	8,896,757
980/390	44	4,029	203,048	541,012	1,441,504	3,840,824	10,233,706	27,267,263	72,652,429	1,374,300,000	9,756,500,000

fifty-five people were women, and some of the males were too old, too young, or too infirm to fight, or were occupied with agriculture or other tasks, then the total number of combatants on both sides in these "wars" must have been fewer than twenty.

Similarly, between 588 and 570 B.C., Nephi and his people constructed a replica of Solomon's temple (2 Nephi 5:16). By 570 B.C., the total reproductive-age Nephite-Lamanite population would have been forty-five people, even at the A.D. 1960 growth rate of 2 percent. If about half of these were Nephites, then fewer than two dozen people—including people busy with farming or hunting, infirm persons and pregnant women—were available to build a structure that required large numbers of skilled workers and a great deal of time in the Old World.

It is interesting to note that if the Lehi-Mulek groups reproduced at the .04 percent average annual rate which prevailed in the world as a whole during their era, they would have numbered only forty-four individuals in A.D. 390, 980 years after they landed. As discussed earlier, population growth was, by modern standards, virtually nonexistent during those thousands of years between the invention of agriculture and the dawning of the industrial period. It took well over a thousand years for the world's population to double during that era. This is counter-intuitive to us who have known nothing but the population explosion during our lifetimes, but the evidence is clear; rapid population growth is a recent phenomenon.

Another way of viewing the same principle is to note what would have happened had the thirty people of Lehi-Mulek multiplied at 2 percent annually. Those thirty individuals would have exploded into 9,756,500,000 people by the time of the Nephites' destruction in A.D. 390—double the total population of the planet earth today. Such a rate of growth has only existed very recently, and only for very short spans of time; it cannot continue for long.

COULD such a twentieth-century rate of growth have prevailed in the region inhabited by the Nephite-Lamanite peoples, while humans in the rest of the world were increasing at much slower rates? We know that there is substantial regional variation in growth rate today, and that such variation has existed throughout history. Since the global growth rate is an average, clearly some regions have a higher-than-average rate of increase while others lag behind or even decrease. Perhaps Book of Mormon peoples "multiplied exceedingly" at a rate thirty-to-fifty times the world average, so as to produce the enormous populations described in the scripture. There

are several ways in which such a supercharged growth rate might have been achieved.

First, the people may have been divinely spared from death due to disease, and thus achieved a reduction in mortality rates equivalent to that effectuated by modern preventive and curative medicine. Alma 9:22 speaks of the blessings the Nephites had received from the Lord, including being "saved from famine, and from sickness, and all manner of diseases of every kind." Alma 46:40-41 mentions "some who died with fevers, which at some seasons of the year were very frequent in the land," but indicates that others were preserved "because of the excellent qualities of the many plants and roots which God had prepared to remove the cause of diseases, to which men were subject by the nature of the climate." In fact, "there were many who died with old age."

However, this blessing is only specifically mentioned in reference to the Nephites, not the Lamanites. Also, as Alma 46:40 states, this blessing was not a panacea; some did die of fevers (see also Jacob 2:19; Alma 1:27,30; 3 Nephi 17:7-9; 7:22; 26:15; 4 Nephi 1:5). And although the blessing also states that they were saved from famine, there were several deadly famines during this era (see Mosiah 1:17; 9:3; Alma 53:7; 62:35, 39; Helaman 11:4-8, 12-15; 12:2-3). Thus, while there may have been some divine

intervention to spare the Nephites and Lamanites from destruction and "prolong their existence in the land," neither group was in any way spared the normal and natural consequences of living in the ancient world, where herbal remedies were their best hope and modern vaccines, antibiotics, and antiseptics were unknown.

A second possibility is that Book of Mormon peoples were extremely advanced, in essence a twentieth-century culture, complete with the myriad technological advances that have smoothed the path for modern growth rates. There is virtually no scriptural basis for this, however, other than the mention of "machinery" in Jarom 1:8. Still, it is possible that their technological innovations were so commonplace that they were not deemed worthy of mention.

There are problems with this theory, as well. For example, even the more advanced Nephites had only an agricultural society. They raised crops, kept herds of domesticated animals, and were able to build many cities, but there are no indications of heavy agricultural equipment, mass-production, rapid transportation/communication, engines, or anything of that nature (see 2 Nephi 5:11; Jarom 1:8; Enos 1:21; Mosiah 9:9; 10:4, 21; 21:16; Alma 62:29; Helaman 6:12; 3 Nephi 3:22). All of the information in these scriptures is consistent with the proposition that the Nephites were only as advanced as other contemporary cultures. Thus, there is no reason to presume

No group of people can maintain even a moderately high growth rate over a period of centuries scarred by a constant succession of wars.

that their growth rate was significantly higher than the .04 percent typical of such societies.

Second, even if the Nephites were relatively advanced, the more numerous Lamanites were not. If the Nephite descriptions of their enemies are close to accurate, the Lamanites were a primitive, nomadic, hunting/gathering society for much of their history. Enos 1:20 states that the Lamanites dwelled in tents, fed upon beasts of prey, wandered about in the wilderness, and that many of them ate nothing but raw meat. This description is juxtaposed with the observation in the next verse that the Nephites tilled the land and raised grain, fruit, and domesticated animals. Similarly, 2 Nephi 5:22-24 labels the Lamanites an idle people who "did seek in the wilderness for beasts of prey" (see also Jarom 1:6; Alma 17:14-15; Mosiah 9:12; Helaman 3:16). To the extent these scriptures are correct, the Lamanites lived in a pre-agricultural society for hundreds of years after their arrival in the New World. Although they eventually began to inhabit some cities (Alma 23:2-15), significant numbers of Lamanites still "lived in the wilderness, and dwelt in tents," even as late as 77 B.C. (22:28). This is important, because pre-agricultural peoples have a growth rate much lower than the .04 percent of pre-industrial agricultural societies. Recall that Parsons and others estimated the rate of natural increase of such peoples at .001 percent annually, and that societies dependent on hunting and gathering for their food require one-to-two square miles of space per person. Such imperceptible growth rates and sparse population densities contrast with the numerous hosts of Lamanites frequently described in the Book of Mormon. Thus, even a .04 percent growth rate seems too high given that more than half of the Nephite-Lamanite population lived under pre-agricultural conditions.

A third possible theory for abnormally high Nephite-Lamanite growth rates is that as with some antediluvians mentioned in Genesis, Book of Mormon peoples lived to extremely old ages and were able to reproduce for many more years than ordinary humans. Again, there is almost no scriptural foundation for this hypothesis, other than some lifespans apparently in excess of 100 years as obliquely mentioned in 4 Nephi.³⁷

On the contrary, even Jesus' New World disciples were only allotted seventy-two years (3 Nephi 28:3). And Mosiah 29:45-46 states that Alma the elder lived to be eighty-two, while Mosiah died at age sixty-three. Nowhere else is there any information pertaining to unusually lengthy lifespans; without such evidence it is difficult to afford much weight to this postulate.

Perhaps the actual descendants of the Lehi and Mulek groups constituted only a tiny fraction of the total population described in the Book of Mormon.

Finally, it is conceivable that the ancient Americans reproduced at an accelerated pace due to the intervention of God. However, there is no evidence for such miraculous procreation in the Book of Mormon. It is reasonable to expect that if there were a dramatic surge in the incidence of multiple births, a shortening of the gestation period, or a prolongation of the female reproductive years, the authors of the Book of Mormon would have mentioned it. Instead, all we find is the standard scriptural phrase, "multiply exceedingly and wax strong." To suggest, without other evidence, that this signifies divinely enhanced biological propagation does not seem justified.

INDEED, there is significant evidence that Book of Mormon peoples had a lower than normal rate of growth. I have already discussed the evidence concerning a nomadic hunting/gathering Lamanite culture, with its concomitant low rate of natural increase. But there is another powerful population retardant that was virtually omnipresent during most of the Nephite-Lamanite era: war.

Table 4 contains a summary of the multitudinous bloody conflicts of the ancient Americans. From the beginning of the split between the Nephite and Lamanite groups, a succession of wars took a terrible toll on the people. Until the generations immediately following Jesus' visit to the New World, there was virtually no respite from the horrors of war. It is essential to understand that war hampers population growth in several ways, not simply in the obvious sense that some combatants are killed. Consider the following:

Direct military losses represent but a small part of the effects of war on population growth . . . Most of the men killed in war are comparatively young . . . This means that the number of couples which were of the age to have children in the generation following the war was considerably reduced by reason of this shortage of men . . . A third source of loss in population growth arising from war is the reduction in the births during the war below what could reasonably have been expected had there been no war . . . The chief point to bear in mind is that the effects of war on population growth over a period of several decades are by no means measured adequately by military losses; such losses are small compared with those arising from the reduction in births to be expected as a result of the disturbances of war.³⁸

MOREOVER, actual combat losses hardly tell the whole story of fatalities caused by war. Ancillary deaths may equal or exceed deaths on the battlefield.

Prolonged warfare . . . though it might kill comparatively few men by the sword, might decimate population nonetheless. Armies harbored many diseases, notably typhus and venereal diseases, and as

they moved about could spread them through wide tracts of country. In addition war took men off the land and in doing so reduced the production of food much as a bad harvest might. And war meant heavy taxes

TABLE 4

Dates	Events	Dates	Events
560 B.C.	Wars already waging within 40 years after leaving Jerusalem (2 Nephi 5:34).	68-67	Moroni's army defeats Morianton's (Alma 50:26, 35); 4,000 Nephite dissenters slain (51:10-11, 17-20, 22-28).
544-421	Lamanites continually seeking to destroy Nephites; wars (Enos 1:20, 24); Lamanites delight in wars and bloodshed, seek by power of arms to destroy Nephites continually (Jacob 7:24).	66-64	Nephite-Lamanite war, much bloodshed (Alma 52:4-7, 25, 34-35; 56:13).
420-361	Many times Lamanites battle Nephites (Jarom 1:7); in 238 years, wars and contentions for much of the time (vv. 13-14).	64	Stripling warriors slay Lamanites (Alma 56:54).
323	Nephites and Lamanites have had many seasons of serious war and bloodshed (Omni 1:3).	63	Nephite-Lamanite battles (Alma 57:6-9, 23-28).
279	The more wicked part of the Nephites are destroyed (Omni 1:5).	62	Lamanites slay many of Nephiah (Alma 59:7).
279-130	Much war between Nephites and Lamanites (Omni 1:10); many wars among Mulekites (v. 17); serious war, much bloodshed with King Benjamin's army, many thousands of enemy slain (v. 24; Words of Mormon 1:13-14).	61-60	Exceedingly great length of Nephite-Lamanite war, more slaughter (Alma 62:15, 25-26, 35, 38-39, 41).
187	War between Zeniff's army and Lamanites; 3,043 Lamanites and 279 of Zeniff's men killed in one day and night (Mosiah 9:18).	53	Another Nephite-Lamanite war, great loss (Alma 63:14-15).
178-60	Zeniff's army kills too many Lamanites to count (Mosiah 10:20).	51	Lamanite army of Coriantumr wars with Nephites (Helaman 1:14-15, 19-20, 25-32).
145-22	Lamanites defeat Limhi's people (Mosiah 20:9-11; 21:2, 7-8, 11-12).	35-31	Long Nephite-Lamanite war, much slaughter (Helaman 4:5-11, 13, 16).
90-77	Lamanites war against Anti-Nephi-Lehis, kill 1,005 (Alma 24:20-22, 28); war, many battles, including destruction of Ammonihah (25:1-8); Lamanites slay Anti-Nephi-Lehis (27:1-4).	20-19	Civil war for 2 years among Nephites (Helaman 10:18; 11:1-2).
87	Tens of thousands slain in Nephite-Amlicite-Lamanite war, including 12,532 Amlicites and 6,562 Nephites in one day (Alma 2:17-19, 27, 38; 3:1, 23, 26).	12-11	War against robbers (Helaman 11:24-29, 30-33).
81	Lamanites kill all people of Ammonihah, Zoram defeats Lamanites (Alma 16:2-3, 8-9, 11).	A.D. 13-	War with robbers throughout all the land, many slain and cities laid waste, Nephites threatened with utter destruction (3 Nephi 2:11-13, 17-19).
76	Tremendous battle, largest since Lehi left Jerusalem; tens of thousands of Lamanites slain and scattered by Nephites (Alma 28:2-3, 10-12).	18-22	War against robbers, greatest slaughter since Lehi left Jerusalem; tens of thousands of robbers slain (3 Nephi 4:1, 5, 11, 21); huge Nephite army (3:22, 24).
74-73	Nephite-Lamanite war (Alma 43:3-5, 37-39, 41-44; 44:21-23).	322	Nephite-Lamanite war, 30,000 Nephite army, many slain (Mormon 1:8-11).
72	Nephite-Lamanite wars never ceased for the space of many years (Alma 48:22); immense slaughter, over 1,000 Lamanites killed (49:21); more battle with Lamanites (50:7).	326-30	Nephite-Lamanite war; 44,000 Lamanite army, 42,000 Nephite army (Mormon 2:1-5, 8-9).
		345	Nephite-Lamanite war (Mormon 2:16).
		346	Nephite army of 30,000; Lamanite army of 50,000 (Mormon 2:25-26).
		360-62	Nephite-Lamanite war (Mormon 3:1, 4-9).
		363-67	Thousands slain on both sides in war (Mormon 4:1-4, 7-11, 13-16).
		375-80	Exceedingly great slaughter (Mormon 4:16-23; 5:4-9).
		385	Final immense slaughter of Nephites, 230,000 killed in battle (Mormon 6:10-15).
		401	Lamanites war with themselves (Mormon 8:8).

which took money away from those most in need of it to tide them over a poor harvest.³⁹

These war-related side effects are well known and have plagued humanity throughout the ages. In fact, in World War I, "there were more civilian deaths because of lowered resistance to disease, and fewer births owing to the enforced separation of married couples."⁴⁰ "War is clearly a dysgenic force in that it gathers together the finest physical and mental specimens of a people at the time of the height of their reproductive powers and arbitrarily kills off large numbers of them, and prevents normal family relations among the rest for appreciable periods of time."⁴¹ Far from being a simple matter of life or death, war is a powerful and complex phenomenon.

Although war has been an important population check throughout man's history, its precise effects on mortality have been exceedingly difficult to measure. Deaths among military personnel may occur on the battlefield, later on as a result of wounds received during combat, or from war-associated deprivation and disease. Most wars have also caused heavy civilian casualties indirectly through disease carried by armies, plunder, famine following the laying waste of agricultural lands, and other hardships accompanying social and economic disorganization.⁴²

The Book of Mormon specifically mentions some of these ancillary effects of war on the Nephite-Lamanite peoples. Alma 3:2 states that "many women and children had been slain with the sword, and also many of their flocks and their herds; and also many of their fields of grain were destroyed, for they were trodden down by the hosts of men." Similarly, Alma 4:2 discusses "the loss of their flocks and herds, and also . . . the loss of their fields of grain, which were trodden under foot and destroyed by the Lamanites." And Alma 62:35, 39 references the famine that had been caused by the prolonged Nephite-Lamanite conflict. Clearly, at least during this portion of Book of Mormon history, the usual side-effects of war firmly gripped the people.

In contrast to the weakly supported theories of an accelerated Nephite-Lamanite growth rate, there is considerable evidence for the retardant effects of war. The long, virtually uninterrupted record of costly, destructive, devastating wars among the descendants of the Lehi and Mulek pioneers argues strongly against a higher than normal growth rate for these peoples. The more likely result of these continual slaughters was just the opposite: greatly reduced growth rates or even extinction.

For example, consider once more the 19,094 warriors slain in the Amlicite-Nephite battle of 87 B.C. (Alma 2:17-19). It is

likely that most of these men were still fairly young, and thus had not yet completed, or even begun, their families. Therefore, irrespective of how rapidly their numbers had been growing up to that point, the loss of so many reproductive males would have caused a plunge in the birth rate for many years to follow. Many thousands of babies would not have been born to the next generation, because their would-be fathers were killed in the war. Similarly, the children those children eventually would have

produced would also never have been born. The excision from the gene pool of almost 20,000 men would have been felt long into the future in terms of a greatly reduced growth rate. Moreover, this battle, bloody as it was, was scarcely unique. Just a decade later, in 76 B.C., an even larger battle took place, in which "tens of thousands of Lamanites were slain" (Alma 28:2-3, 10-12). And in A.D. 18-22, a still greater slaughter was visited upon the people, with additional tens of thousands killed (3 Nephi 4:1, 5, 11, 21).

Not just once or twice, but repeatedly and "continually" (Enos 1:20; Jacob 7:24) these tiny bands of immigrants, who must have been struggling to carve out an existence in a hostile, unfamiliar wilderness, were stricken with the effects of war. With initial populations so small, the very existence of their societies was precarious, even under ideal conditions. One epidemic or natural disaster could have caused their extinction

during their first centuries in the New World; even at a then unheard-of growth rate of 2 percent annually, the total number of Book of Mormon peoples would have been a mere 2,001 in 380 B.C. But when we add the destructive impact of war to the other problems facing these pioneers, it becomes clear that the most they could have hoped for was survival. No group of people can maintain even a moderately high growth rate over a period of centuries scarred by a constant succession of wars. The Nephite-Lamanite story is one of relentless conflict; the scriptures allow for only brief and infrequent periods of peace and recovery before the next war assailed the population. Given that the ramifications of warfare extend for generations, Book of Mormon peoples could never have caught their breath between wars sufficiently to sustain a high growth rate.

Moreover, the populations also experienced some reductions due to emigration. Alma 63:4-10 describes 5,400 Nephite men who, together with their wives and children, emigrated northward, while many others were lost in similar emigration attempts (see Helaman 3:3-5, 12). The loss of these groups must be considered when evaluating the population size of the peoples left behind (for example, vv. 24-26). Unless and until these emigrating groups rejoined the main populace, they must be subtracted from the reproductive base, just as if they were fatalities.

Lastly, the devastating upheavals, earthquakes, and floods

If the admonition to study the Book of Mormon is to have meaning, our study must be honest, open, and diligent, and not limited to preconceived views.

that took place in A.D. 34, at the time of the Savior's crucifixion, would have had an enormous dysgenic impact on the population for the remainder of Book of Mormon history. As described in 3 Nephi chapters 8 through 10, many entire cities were utterly destroyed, essentially setting back the population hundreds of years. The ensuing generations of long-denied peace would have scarcely begun to restore the populace to its previous level.

ALL of these factors taken together argue against the population sizes reported in the Book of Mormon. This conclusion may be disturbing, but it is important that we try to confront this problem rather than hide from it. Perhaps the actual descendants of the Lehi and Mulek groups constituted only a tiny fraction of the total population described in the Book of Mormon. The "true" Nephites and Lamanites may have interacted with indigenous native groups, becoming their religious and/or political leaders by virtue of their more advanced cultural level. The authors of the Book of Mormon may have chosen not to mention these aboriginal peoples out of a penchant to focus only on the "chosen people." In this way, the enormous populations described in the scriptures may be accurate, but not as direct biological progeny from those two tiny clusters of immigrants.

Book of Mormon scholars Hugh Nibley and John Sorenson have discussed this possibility in some detail. Both seem inclined to view the Book of Mormon as a record of a relatively small, insular group of religious and political leaders. They feel that this explains various difficulties, such as the dark skin of the Lamanites. Sorenson has written:⁴³

The answer may be that the Lamanites in the original immigrant group became dominant over a native population of folk already scattered on the land when Lehi arrived. As far as the Nephites were concerned, those subject folk would have been treated the same as the original Lamanites, even if some physical or cultural differences between them were apparent . . . The fervid ambition of Laman and Lemuel to be rulers would have driven them to try to dominate not only the Nephites . . . but anybody else who happened to be around. Latter-day Saints are not used to the idea that other people than Lehi's immediate descendants were on the Book of Mormon scene. Abundant evidence from archaeological and linguistic studies assures us that such people were indeed present, so we need to understand how the Book of Mormon account accommodates that fact.⁴⁴

B. H. Roberts, on the other hand, believed that the Book of

Mormon itself contradicted this theory. Arguing against the proposition that the Lehi/Mulek people only occupied a small part of the Americas while indigenous groups proliferated nearby, Roberts wrote:

To this answer there would be the objection that if such other races or tribes existed then the Book of Mormon is silent about them. Neither the people of Mulek nor the people of Lehi . . . nor any of their descendants ever came

in contact with any such people, so far as the Book of Mormon account of it is concerned. As for the Jaredites, they are out of the reckoning in this matter . . . since their language and their culture, as active factors, perished with their extinction. Any beyond them, so far as a more ancient possession of the American continents is concerned, by previous inhabitants, . . . [is] barred probably by the Book of Ether statement that the people of Jared were to go "into that quarter where there had never man been," and nowhere is there any statement or intimation in the Book of Mormon that the people of Jared ever came in contact with any other people upon the land of America, save for the contact of the last survivor of the race with the people of Mulek, which does not affect at all the matters here under discussion.⁴⁵

It is not my purpose to resolve this continuing debate. I introduce the possibility

of the existence of other native inhabitants simply to offer one response to the conclusion that the Book of Mormon population sizes are impossible.

FINALLY, to return to a point I mentioned at the outset, there is one other possible explanation for the inflated population figures in the Book of Mormon: The ancient authors of the scriptural record may have greatly exaggerated all of their reports. This seemingly easy answer is, unfortunately, totally wrong.

First, as shown earlier, this hyperbole would have had to be thirty to fifty times greater than the actual population numbers. This is an enormous degree of puffery, if not outright falsification, sufficient to put any modern-day politician to shame. One could understand a biased author's doubling or even tripling the data to make them suit his purpose, but not a multiplication of that magnitude.

Second, this penchant for population inflation would have had to be shared by not just one or two but by several contributors to the Book of Mormon record. The figures listed earlier span centuries of history and fall within the purview of various ancient authors. Therefore, the tendency to distort population figures must have been not only pronounced but endemic as well.

There is no reason to assume that the Americans of old had

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a culturally inculcated multiplication factor which they used whenever recording population figures for their sacred history. The Book of Mormon contributors seem to have been perfectly capable of using numbers accurately. Of course, when terms such as "host" or "multitude" or "tens of thousands" are used, we can discern very little information as to the actual numbers involved. It is where these broad generalities are found that exaggeration or, more accurately, vagueness may be attributed to the Book of Mormon authors. But where, as in Alma 2:19, figures such as 12,532 and 6,562 occur, it simply does not comport with reality or common sense to assert that these numbers were grossly inflated exaggerations rather than precise, specific, actual counts.

Moreover, to argue that the numerous Book of Mormon population figures cited in this essay are uniformly wrong, and in several instances wrong by factors of thirty to fifty, is to open an entirely new Pandora's Box of difficulties. Latter-day prophets from Joseph Smith to Ezra Taft Benson have repeatedly emphasized that the Book of Mormon is the "most correct of any book" in existence. In contrast to the Bible, which is accepted as God's word only insofar as it is correctly translated, the status of the Book of Mormon as the word of God is an Article of Faith, without qualification or exception. No Mormon prophet or other general authority has ever stated that the Book of Mormon is "most correct" *except* in the many passages in which population figures are given, and that in those passages the scripture is drastically wrong.

The Book of Mormon is the sacred record of a religious people written for the most part by their religious leaders. These were holy men engaged in a holy mission. They cherished their history and endured great hardships to preserve it. Nephi killed Laban to obtain the sacred history of the Jews so that his group could bring it to their new home (1 Nephi 3:3-11; 4:7-18). Nephi was commanded by the Lord to make his own record and use it to instruct his people (2 Nephi 5:30-32). And throughout the entire span of Book of Mormon history, the preparation and safeguarding of the record was regarded as a solemn obligation and a direct commandment from God (for example, see Mormon 5:12, 8:16; Ether 2:11; Alma 37:2; and Jacob 1:1-2,4). There is no indication that the devout ecclesiastical authorities who wrote these accounts would have exaggerated, distorted, or in any way misrepresented the truth. On the contrary, they were doing God's work and strove to be as accurate as possible.

For all these reasons, the proposition that the unrealistically large population sizes reported in the Book of Mormon are merely the product of scriptural hyperbole is insupportable. It is utterly contrary to the evidence and to rationality.

CONCLUSION

THIS population study challenges many assumptions Mormons have about the Book of Mormon, including its historicity, its geography, the ancestry of Native Americans, and the Prophet's method of translation. I do not know the

answers, but if the admonition to study the Book of Mormon is to have meaning, our study must be honest, open, and diligent, and not limited to preconceived views. If we do not bring to our study of the scriptures all of our abilities, we acknowledge that the scriptures cannot withstand the same degree of attention we bring to our occupations and avocations. Such a superficiality is more akin to condescension than to reverence. If, for example, the descendants of the Lehi and Mulek bands formed only a small portion of the ancient American population, then we should consider where that leads us, e.g., to a reexamination of the literal darkening of the Lamanites' skin and the notion that present-day Native Americans are "Lamanites." Other alternatives must also be explored.

As Hugh Nibley repeatedly demonstrates, the Book of Mormon has powerful messages which speak to our modern situation. Our faith must be strong enough to withstand its hard truths. Real faith is not threatened by knowledge of the facts; they challenge us to ask, seek, and find. However, real faith is threatened by an unwillingness to feed it the truth and let it grow and "multiply exceedingly." ☐

NOTES

1. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985), 193.
2. Sorenson, 193-94.
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4. T. H. Hollingsworth, *Historical Demography* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1969), 230.
5. William Petersen, *Population* (New York: MacMillan, 1961), 343-75.
6. Robert L. Smith, *The Ecology of Man: An Ecosystem Approach*, 2d ed. (New York: New York, 1972), 67; Martin Bates, *The Prevalence of People* (New York: Scribner's, 1955), 27; see also Raymond Pearl, *The Natural History of Population* (New York: University of Oxford Press, 1939), 262; J. O. Hertzler, *The Crisis in World Population* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1956), 12-25; Richard A. Falk, *This Endangered Planet* (New York: Random House, 1971), 142-43.
7. Jack Parsons, *Population versus Liberty* (London: Pemberton, 1971), 33; Miller, G. Tyler, *Living in the Environment*, 4th ed. (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1985), 88-91; Ehrlich, Paul R., and Ehrlich, Anne H. *Population Resources Environment*, 2d ed. (San Francisco: W.H. Freeman, 1970), 6.
8. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 5.
9. Donald J. Bogue, *Principles of Demography* (New York: Wiley and Sons, 1969), 54.
10. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 12.
11. Parsons, 33; Lester R. Brown, *The Twenty-Ninth Day* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1978), 72-75; William R. Calton, *Overshoot* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1980), 18-23.
12. Smith, 67.
13. J. Donald Hughes, *Ecology in Ancient Civilizations* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 1975), 31.
14. U.N. United Nations, *The Determinants and Consequences of Population Trends*, Vol. 1 (New York: United Nations, 1973), 10.
15. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 6.
16. Philip M. Hauser, and Otis D. Duncan, "World Population: Retrospect and Prospect" in *Rapid Population Growth: Consequences and Policy Implications*, National Academy of Sciences (Johns Hopkins, 1971), 105-107.
17. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 9.
18. Hauser, *Rapid Population Growth*, 111.
19. Bogue, 47; see also A. M. Carr-Saunders, *World Population* (Oxford, 1936), 43; Peter R. Cox, *Demography*, 5th ed. (Cambridge, 1976), 195.
20. Philip M. Hauser and Otis D. Duncan, *The Study of Population* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1959), 389.
21. Hauser, *Rapid Population Growth*, 105.
22. David M. Heer, *Society and Population* (New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1975), 13.
23. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 22.
24. Bogue, 48-49.
25. Hauser, *World Population and Development* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1979), 5.
26. Sylvan J. Kaplan and Evelyn Kivy-Rosenberg, *Ecology and the Quality of Life* (Springfield, IL: Thomas, 1973), 44-45.

27. Bogue, 48.
 28. Hauser, *Rapid Population Growth*, 107-108.
 29. Smith, 68; Hauser SP, 107; Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 18-21.
 30. Mortimer Spiegelman, *Introduction to Demography* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1955), 417.
 31. Parsons, 25-27; see also Hertzler, 13.
 32. Hauser, *Rapid Population Growth*, 104. See also Parsons, 25-27; Fraser, Dean. *The People Problem* (Bloomington: University of Indiana Press, 1971), 13-18; Bogue, 47; Pearl, 259; U.N., 20.
 33. Pearl, 262-63.
 34. Ehrlich and Ehrlich, 9.
 35. *Ibid.*, 10.
 36. Simply divide the population size indicated in the table by thirty, then multiply by however many people it is desired to assume for the initial population size. For example, to see how many reproductive-age people would have existed 360 years after landing in the New World (230 B.C.), assuming an annual growth rate of .5 percent, and an initial

- population size of twenty rather than thirty, divide the figure from Table 3 (which is 181) by thirty (yielding 6.03), and then multiply this result by twenty ($6.03 \times 20 = 121$ people).
 37. Daniel H. Ludlow, *A Companion to Your Study of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 295-96.
 38. Warren S. Thompson, *Plenty of People* (Lancaster: Cattell, 1944), 75-78.
 39. E. A. Wrigley, *Population and History* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1969), 64.
 40. Cox, 180.
 41. Bates, 214.
 42. U.N., 144.
 43. See also Palmer, 64-66.
 44. Sorenson, 146.
 45. B. H. Roberts, *Studies of the Book of Mormon*, Brigham Madsen, ed. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985), 92-93.

A PHONE CALL FROM THE DESERT

Lodgepole pine rustle in the backyard,
 A small forest to remind me of the mountain.
 Moist coolness from Puget Sound blankets me.

In the desert of your departure,
 I roamed with a lost wind that howled
 In gullies and canyons. Red cliffs
 Echoed back its cry.

Orcas Island comes slowly to meet the ferry.
 Seagulls scold the coming tourists, then skim by,
 Playing with the wind, looking for fish on the sea.

I waited for you to return
 With the late summer rains,
 But I could not build a house
 With bleached logs and slivered bones.

Pine needles weave sunlight into pale green ribbons
 That rain gently upon fern and flower. Moss cushions
 My feet as I bend to count the five points of the sorrel-wood.

Grief hung low within me
 Like a dead fetus. I was hollow
 With the hunger of a lone dog,
 Having no tears left to drink from.

If you stayed with me, you may have loved
 These forests green with rain coming over the Cascades
 As a mist rising to quench the Garden of Eden.

I abandoned my memories and grief
 In the wastelands where the past
 Transforms itself continuously
 Into the hunted and hunter.

You called me from a public phone halfway across
 The planet. Your voice was a thin reed
 In the flood of trucks, cars, and people.

A tall stand of cedar rises from the desert,
 With a ring of tamerisk trees about it.
 Bones lie in the sage beyond, but birds
 Sing in the red light of morning.

You said that you finally know it is not
 Where we are, but who we are that matters.
 I miss you, you said. I want to come back.

The cedars smell sweetly, like a trunk
 Packed with a yellowed wedding gown.
 The tamerisk are silver green,
 As green as they can be in the desert.

I could not speak, thinking of hundreds of nights
 I prayed for your return, my love, my spouse,
 Grief exploding inside me like a dying star.

The roots of the cedar tangle
 Toward the empty streambed that
 Runs past, dry, dry as any heart
 That grieved too long.

—CARA BULLINGER

A Critique of the Methodology the New Mormon History

OUR OWN AGENDA

By David Earl Bohn

FOR SEVERAL DECADES NOW, THERE HAS BEEN INCREASING criticism of the Traditional manner of writing Mormon history.¹ Interestingly, much of the attack comes from within Mormon circles as well as from historians who have close ties to the Mormon community. While there are considerable differences among these historians, most would agree with Lawrence Foster in finding Traditional accounts deficient and primitive, suitable for Sunday School classes rather than for tough minded scholars.²

These Revisionist historians argue that Traditional accounts are biased and do not give full play to the facts. They fault them for not implementing the latest theories and methods of the social sciences and for wasting their time with dull and unimportant questions, questions akin to arguing over how many feathers there are on an angel's wings. Revisionists are impatient to move on to a better and more interesting history, one which would deal with the real men and women who made the Mormon past.³

I have dealt elsewhere with the first two criticisms—bias and method—and would now like to focus on the problem of defining what are the relevant, important, and interesting questions a historian dealing with the Mormon past should seek to answer.⁴ Of course, it is not altogether possible to separate this problem from the foregoing issues, and, in a way, a full treatment of what is interesting and what is dull in Mormon history brings us back full circle to the other points. But it is precisely this linkage which clarifies the problem and exposes the weakness of the Revisionist position.

To many people the question itself may seem foolish. Is it not obvious that the story of the Mormon past should be the story of what actually took place? Is it not merely a question of bringing the documents together and letting the facts speak for themselves?

Unfortunately, the matter is not so simple. Of course, historians should do their best to bring together and review the *actual* historical record, that is, the traces of the past pre-

served in texts and text analogues.⁵ But the actual historical record will always be incomplete. It can never contain more than fragments from the past. So the historian necessarily creates what we might call the *probable* historical record, that is, the historical facts that were not actually preserved, but given historians' current way of understanding, are assumed to have existed.

Finally, the ideal of most historians would be to obtain the *total* historical record, absolutely everything which occurred, existed, or is thought to be relevant to the Mormon past. Such a record would secure even that which was not written down or somehow preserved as an analogue. It would contain all of the facts that the people living at the time had no interest in or had no way of knowing were important, but which each future generation with its preferred theories would later judge essential to the understanding of the past.⁶

Not only would such a record be impossible to amass, but even as an ideal it is wrong-headed.⁷ Still were we to assume the possibility of such a record, it could not answer the question, what should Mormon history be about? This is because information does not interpret itself, it does not fall—of itself—into some obvious and true order. The historian cannot simply uncover the facts and let them speak their truth, for they could only speak in a voice of cacophony and confusions. Indeed the facts do not speak at all until the historian has organized them and given them body, structure, and direction.

Even when researchers use the most elementary set of categories to order their material, the mass of data is altered as the historian draws together into a whole bits and pieces which otherwise were not connected.⁸ And this is precisely the point. As historians begin to ask questions of the past, as they begin to craft their story, the very questions they ask and the very tools they use will in part determine how the past will be understood. As they introduce or accept an already existent chronology—cross-cutting categories of psychology, economy, politics, religion, culture, etc., and the related theories which map out those categories—the historian becomes more and more the creator of the past which will be remembered and not the midwife who lets the past tell its own story.

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For this reason, the question of what should be the principal theme of Mormon history—what is the core around which the story should be told—cannot be answered by simply allowing the historical record to tell its truth. As Paul Ricoeur has shown, the writing of history is much akin to the writing of fiction.⁹ It involves narrative, a projection of time, and a plot which cannot wholly be justified by the historical record itself, but are rather the inventions of the historian. The plot itself is a quasi-causal model which seeks to define and give an account of the many disparate “facts” as it draws the story to a climax.¹⁰ And of course, this brings us full circle to the categories and theories the historian uses to identify the relevant facts and to give structure to the historical record.

The point is that what is interesting or is not interesting in the Mormon past is decided before the historical record is even touched. It is a part of the pre-understanding that the historian brings to the historical record. So when Revisionist historians tell us that Traditional accounts of the Mormon past are not interesting, they are telling us much more about themselves than about the past. They are telling us what they are interested in.

AT this juncture, some might throw up their hands and say, “Then is it all a question of subjective judgment?”

No! This would be too facile an answer. While it is true that individual taste does play a role in what a writer or reader of historical accounts may prefer, it would be false to say that the dominant themes of Mormon historical research are merely the function of individual whim and fancy. Rather, in one way or another, every putting together of the Mormon past ties into a much larger set of prejudices which reflect the prior commitments of a whole movement of writers and consumers of accounts of the Mormon past.

History is not written in a vacuum. Because history is itself historical, it will bear the stamp of its age. The writing of history will inevitably reflect the diversity of opinion and conflict about how the historical record should be read and what its focus and direction should be. These convictions will be shared by *constituencies* who have a clearly defined interest in and commitment to given readings of the historical record.

Revisionist historians who demand a different kind of Mormon past, and who find the Traditional themes and subject matter of interest to the believing Mormon community to be trivial and inconsequential, are really calling for a wholesale abandonment of categories of self-understanding internal to the community in favor of a new set of standards external to the faith.

HISTORY AND THE COMMUNITY OF FAITH

WITHIN the Mormon community, the story of the Mormon past has been framed around the central theme of the

restoration of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, the mission of the Church in the present dispensation of time, and God’s power to unfold his purpose on earth.

There are many sub-themes which have typically been a part of such a story. One has been the account of the trials and tribulations of God’s people. We have traditionally drawn stories of courage and self-sacrifice from the experiences of the Saints. We have been buoyed up by lives of people who set aside wealth, power, and honor to devote themselves to the search for holiness.

On the other hand, we have not lost sight of the consequences of failing to fully commit oneself to the Lord’s work. We learn that even those called to high places can fall prey to pride and the carnal world. Our history then becomes a warning that as individuals and as a people, we can fall short of God’s expectations. Indeed, we can take revealed principles and turn them from their proper end in order to satisfy our own worldly desires.

This is why writing a believing history need not be a public relations job in which the weaknesses of the Saints and their leaders are carefully hidden and everything turns up rosy. The very possibility of individual and collective transgression is inherent in the believer’s language and categories of understanding. The scriptures themselves are a testament to the many shades of self-deception which color human activity, and our general unwillingness to adhere to a moral life. Our sacred writings disclose a very complex view of human possibilities, and of the way that they get worked into historical outcomes.¹¹

In the final analysis, the language of Holy Writ ties human conduct back to our individual and collective agency. It cannot remain morally aloof. It demands accountability from the most powerful to the most humble. Scripture attributes fundamental human failure not only to conditions arising from the finitude of mortal existence, but to an unwillingness to choose the good. It sees the powers of good and evil at work in human events not only in the sense of individual motives, but in the sense of larger historical forces. History is seen as the stage upon which the power of God will pour forth to abolish in one last and final conflagration the confines of mortality and the forces of darkness.

It is clear then that histories written from within the community of belief will find the foregoing themes of compelling interest. The community will read them in earnest for an understanding that places in clearer relief the duties and obligations of the present. And it will see in the commitment of past saints the same sense of spiritual confirmation that modern-day Mormons themselves feel in their own hearts.

Of course, actual accounts of Mormon history written within the community of belief could stress many other themes and sub-themes. The point, however, is that the nature of the history is led by the community of belief in which faithful Mormons share. It will necessarily reflect their individual and collective encounters with the Spirit. Indeed, for the faithful Mormon, a general account of their past worked out from within some other

framework would be a story robbed of its substance. Such a past would appear as something alien, distant, and trivial.

SECTARIAN VERSIONS OF THE MORMON PAST

ALMOST since the inception of the Church, other versions of the Mormon past have been scripted. The most inflammatory are the sectarian Christian attacks on Joseph Smith and Mormon religious practice. The reader has no difficulty discerning the underlying motivation of these narratives. They seek without apology to refute the historical truth claims of the Mormon church to be the restored church of Jesus Christ and of the Book of Mormon to be ancient scripture. Again, the theme and plot of the sectarian polemic is arrived at before any systematic examination of the record, though even the sloppiest of these histories will claim merely to be providing the reader with the incontrovertible and objective facts of the historical record. Clearly, it is in the interest of these histories to depict Joseph Smith and the Restoration as a fraud which distracts religious people from true Christian worship and leads them into evil and immoral practices. Indeed, for many sectarian historians, Joseph Smith and the Church are the fulfillment of biblical warnings concerning false prophets and wolves in sheep's clothing. Even the most liberal of these tales could not represent Joseph Smith as much more than a sincere man given to a lively imagination, one who may have made some contributions to Christian understanding, but at the same time was led astray and finally corrupted in his pursuit of true religion.

THE NEW MORMON HISTORY

THE New Mormon Historians would probably be offended by sectarian histories. By New Mormon Historians, I am referring to believing and non-believing historians who use the vocabulary of secular historiography and the underlying language of modern social science to create their version of the Mormon past.

Without going into unnecessary detail, these historians are likely to have received their training at well known American universities whose graduate programs are characterized by a growing concern for the professionalization if not the bureaucratization of the discipline. The well trained historian is seen to be one who strives to produce a rational and objective version of the past rooted in a naturalistic understanding of human behavior with a strong bent toward environmental explanation. The last thirty years have seen a growth in the popularity of positivism and the use of the methods and theories of the social sciences which have somehow been made to cohabit with a more ingrained historicism.¹² The entire orientation seems to be pervaded with the ideology of humanism and at least the faint hope of progress.¹³ Although this professional orthodoxy

has been challenged on many fronts and can no longer be said to unify American historians, it remains at home and well among New Mormon Historians.¹⁴

This might explain a certain prejudice against traditional accounts among those who consider themselves professional historians, for to make progress and to advance professionally they must necessarily challenge even sound historical interpretations. This prejudice deteriorates into retrograde debunking when faced with faithful accounts not based on the secular historian's objectivist assumptions. Religious history is quickly categorized as myth as the historian rescripts its content in the language of naturalistic explanation. In all of this, there is a strange fascination with the "new" as opposed to the traditional, and a tendency to exaggerate the importance of recently discovered material against a preponderance of "evidence" in the established record; thus, a line in a letter here, or a rumor written down there become the justification for a radical revision of traditional accounts. And when there are no documents, it is sufficient to invoke theories and conjecture to fill in the cracks. In view of this, it is not altogether surprising that New Mormon Historians were easily taken in by the Hofmann forgeries. Hofmann knew how to invent the kind of documents such historians longed to find in order to flesh out their naturalistic speculations about Mormon origins. So strong was their conviction of the authenticity of the Salamander letter and other counterfeit documents that the prosecution in the Hofmann case found it difficult to persuade them to "give up their attachment to the Hofmann forgeries," despite all of the forensic evidence.¹⁵

In any case, it is this audience of professional historians who share the same kind of training and prejudice about historical understanding that the writers of Revisionist history have in mind when they craft their stories about the Mormon past. This of course can create difficulties for believing historians. By applying the methods, using the theories and language, and appealing to the standards and criteria of naturalistic history, believing historians may be able to meet the expectations of prevailing fashion found in certain academic circles. Nevertheless, they will find themselves ill equipped to write meaningfully about those most fundamental aspects of the Mormon past to which they are committed. This is because the language of the profane in which secular historiography is written has no vocabulary for authentic spiritual experience and no words for the genuinely divine.¹⁶

The word *profane* itself means *before* [outside] *the temple*. Here, the temple is understood as the link between heaven and earth, the hallowed ground where God is present to and communicates with humankind. Otherwise, no matter how exquisite its design, it remains merely a building. The thick walls of the temple constitute an opaque boundary which excludes the unholy from God's presence. To be *outside the temple* is not to have access to that which is most sacred. From the outside, then, the temple is just a building and that which is most essential to its meaning cannot be encountered.

This imagery gives insight into why secular accounts can

only represent the sacred—the temple—from the outside and as something merely human. It also helps us understand why the believing historian who uses the language of secular historiography faces a frustrating dilemma.¹⁷ It is not only that the language of secular historiography is insensitive to the sacred, but that the *underlying methodology and theory which give the language meaning raises a wholly different set of questions*. As Ricoeur has shown, a narrative's plot is a quasi-causal model which seeks to draw together various elements of the story. It is based on a theory of why or how things happen. The theory defines in advance what information in the historical record is important and what is not. It then shows how those relevant facts should be put together in order to achieve a coherent explanation. Finally, implicit to the theory being used are standards of proof which pretend to show whether the historian's account can be accepted as valid or not.

It is critical to understand that what is seen as important and interesting in history depends on the language and theories that the historian brings to the historical record. More broadly said, what is interesting depends on the tradition of historical scholarship and interpretation that the writer uses to script his or her account of the past. Because the secular historian uses language which can only portray the spiritual as a human artifact, believing accounts of the Mormon past will necessarily seem strange, irrelevant, and above all, uninteresting. They are irrelevant because they do not follow the standard implicit in the naturalistic theories of secular explanation. They do not select out the right "facts" or focus on the right "underlying social forces."

Thus, what it selected out as relevant is not a matter of whim or caprice, nor can it be traced back to some imaginary standard of objectivity or proven methodology. What is interesting and important will depend on the tradition of understanding that historians bring to the past and use to craft their story.

THIS leads us to a decisive question: On what grounds can Revisionist historians claim that their accounts are inherently more interesting than accounts worked out from within categories of belief? What reasons can they advance to support the contention that their histories raise the right questions, the important questions about the Mormon past, and that their methods allow them to provide real answers to those questions, thereby bringing the New Mormon Historian closer to the "real human beings" who lived the Mormon experience? Can the New Mormon History actually justify the claim that somehow its plot line is inherently more interesting and salient and should serve as a model for the rewriting of the history of the Mormon past?

Aside from rhetoric, I can find very few arguments that speak convincingly to the question.¹⁸ Indeed, the question has not even been asked by most New Mormon Historians because the answer has simply been assumed. The fact that objectivist history and positivist methodology are fashionable among American historians does not seem to get to the heart of the

problem. History itself records that what is fashionable in one generation quickly falls out of fashion in the next. Nor should we be talked too quickly into believing that Mormon historians must use secular language in order to bring their secular counterparts to an understanding of Mormonism and its past. It seems obvious that if scholars do not come to understand us in our own terms, then they will never come to understand us at all. On the other hand, if popularity and acceptance or professional advancement and recognition are the fundamental justification for revising the way we put together our past, then, frankly, who cares?

Whatever the case, there is a real danger to writers operating within the community of belief. The danger is not that secular approaches to the past will somehow disestablish the truth claims of the Restoration. Rather, it is that the challenge of secular historiography will distract us from our central concern and will place the writing of Mormon history on the defensive. Indeed, if Mormon historians allow secular historians to set the agenda, to define what questions are relevant and what information is salient, if as a community we turn our attention away from the Restoration as the organizing principle of our self-understanding, we will end up arguing the issues of importance to secular historians, defending our terrain with their language, and trying to justify our beliefs by satisfying their standards and meeting their criteria. By doing so we assume a burden of proof which should be legitimately theirs to shoulder. Indeed, it is for them to show that the traditional and accepted language used in the telling of the Mormon past should be discarded. They should give reasons satisfying to us why the Mormon past should undergo a wholesale revision and be retold in a naturalistic language which denies a priori the claims of the Restoration.

Until that time, Mormon historians should strive to produce an intelligent and carefully researched account of our past: one of high quality and safeguarded by an honest effort to meet demanding internal standards, but above all one directed by the interests and concerns of believing Mormons as they seek to better understand the unfolding of the Restoration. ☐

NOTES

1. See for example Thomas Alexander, "Historiography and the New Mormon History: A Historian's Perspective," *Dialogue: Journal of Mormon Thought* (Here after referred to as *Dialogue*) 19 (Fall 1986):25-49; Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom* (University of Nebraska Press, 1966), viii-ix; "Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in the Twentieth Century," *Dialogue* 1 (Spring 1966):15-28; and M. Gerald Bradford, "The Case for the New Mormon History: Thomas G. Alexander and His Critics," *Dialogue* 21 (Winter 1988):143-150. Aside from Bradford's piece, *Dialogue* has held a monologue on scholarly articles critical of the methodology of the New Mormon History. Indeed, since New Mormon Historians or their adherents control nearly all academic outlets for the publication of views on writing Mormon history, most of the interesting discussion of these issues has been forced underground to be found in the lively exchanges of letters between New Mormon Historians and their critics or in occasional papers circulated to interested parties. The leading figure in this regard is certainly Brigham Young University professor Louis Midgley. Conditions favorable to open discussion seem to be improving. *Sunstone* has generally been more open to dialogue on this topic, and today fewer people seem to accept that a critical review of the methodology of the New Mormon History constitutes *ipso facto* an *ad hominem* attack upon historians and their private religious beliefs. In any case, one of the most interesting discussions of the problems of the New Mormon History is to be found in Midgley's "The San Antonio Discussion on Mormon Historiography" (4 Dec. 1981), unpublished; another excellent piece is his "The Challenge of Historical Consciousness by Study and Faith," *Essays in Honor of Hugh Nibley on the Occasion of His Eightieth Birthday* (F.A.R.M.S. and Deseret Book, 1990), 446-494. Also

see, James L. Clayton, "History and Theology: The Mormon Connection: A Response," *Sunstone* 5 (Nov-Dec 1980):51-53; "Does History Undermine Faith?" *Sunstone* 7 (March-April 1982):33-36; Robert B. Flanders, "Some Reflections on the New Mormon History," *Dialogue* 9 (Spring 1974):34-41; Lawrence Foster, "New Perspectives on the Mormon Past," *Sunstone* 7 (Jan-Feb. 1982):41-45; Marvin Hill, "Secular or Sectarian History?" *Church History* 43 (March 1974):78-96; "The New Mormon History Reassessed in Light of Recent Books on Joseph Smith and Mormon Origins," *Dialogue* 21 (Autumn, 1988):115-27. This latter article argues by way of assertion and anecdote against challenges to the New Mormon History; Louis Midgley, "Faith and History" in *To Be Learned Is Good If*, Robert L. Millet, ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987), 119-226; "The 'New History' of Mormon Origins: An Assessment of the Reassessment," 1988, unpublished; Jan Shippo, "The Mormon Past: Revealed or Revisited?" *Sunstone* 6 (Nov-Dec 1982):55-58; Moses Rischin, "The New Mormon History," *American West* 6/2 (1969):49.

2. Foster, 41.

3. See Foster, 41-44 and Shippo, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (University of Illinois Press, 1984), 29 and 43, for examples.

4. David E. Bohn, "No Higher Ground," *Sunstone* 8 (May-June 1983):26-32 and "The Burden of Proof," *Sunstone* 10 (June 1985):2-3.

5. Text analogues are non-textual elements of the historical record, generally artifacts of some kind, which like language embody meaning and are subject to exegesis. Therefore, in a very significant way text analogues are both read and fit into a tradition of interpretation like texts.

6. Total history can never be more than a given tradition's objectified estimate of what should constitute the historical record, an estimate defined by the methodological assumptions constitutive to that tradition.

7. This is because the very idea of our historical past as a kind of static object detached from the historian and open for his or her inspections overlooks the historicity of the writing of history itself. It fails to take into account what Gadamer calls *Wirkungsgeschichte* or the ongoing effect of history at work in the historians efforts to produce a history.

8. Even in the beginning stages of constituting the record, the staffs at libraries and archives, the frequent dumping grounds of historical texts and artifacts, will carefully process received materials, cataloging them in accordance with a taxonomy that anticipates what historians might want to see.

9. Paul Ricoeur, *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1983). In a sense, one should read the whole book to grasp the rich understanding of Historical Narrative that Ricoeur recovers for the reader, but most important is chapter 5, "In Defense of Narrative."

10. Ricoeur.

11. On the other hand, the historian is not God. While the Scriptures as revealed do make judgments of peoples and individuals, the historian will necessarily exercise discretion in coming to conclusions about the subjects of his or her inquiry. The danger of hypocrisy is always the companion of self-appointed judges.

12. Alexander, "Historiography and the New Mormon History." Some New Mormon Historians have belatedly sought to defend their approach by making appeal to this kind of historicism, a historicism which does not reach much beyond the mistakes of Schliermacher and Dilthey and which in the end presupposes a hidden objectivism.

13. See Peter Novick, *That Noble Dream: The Objectivity Question and the American Historical Profession* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 379-80. This work is certainly the most comprehensive discussion of the rise and fall of the American historical establishment.

14. Novick, 627-29. In the early 1980s I had everyday contact with well known historians writing secular accounts of the Mormon past. I was surprised at what seemed to be a total lack of understanding of the problems of historical methodology whether raised from an ontological or epistemological perspective. All seemed dedicated disciples of the historical establishment, unaware of the challenges already being made by historians elsewhere who were less willing to conform to professional orthodoxy. Further proof of this is to be found in the lively correspondence between New Mormon Historians and Professor Louis Midgley. One historian who has written in defence of the New Mormon History on methodological grounds has prohibited Midgley from showing their common correspondence to anyone. This is certainly understandable given its compromising content.

15. Among other places see Robert Lindsey, *A Gathering of Saints: A True Story of Money, Murder, and Deceit* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988), 334-35.

16. Shippo, "The Mormon Past." Drawing from the work of Eliade, Shippo tries to make a distinction between "Ordinary" and "Sacred" history, but at best she comes up with a caricature that elevates "ordinary" history which she apparently sees as recovering the objective truth about the Mormon past, and debases "sacred" which she sees as essentially mythical. One only need guess what a Derridian deconstruction of this antinomy would produce!

17. Some committed historians seek to resolve the dilemma by clearly stating in advance that they accept the truth claims of the Church. Although this brings the dilemma to the reader's attention, it does not resolve it. In the measure that the historians rely on naturalistic language to account for fundamentally prophetic phenomena, they will offer explanations which are essentially at odds with the claims of the Church. As a result, the believing historian is forced to compartmentalize his understanding of the Church into seemingly unbridgeable categories of the *spiritual*, accepted on the basis of faith, and the *secular*, rooted in naturalistic explanation. Such a dichotomy is unnecessary and the consequence of a failure to clarify the ontological grounds of the methodology implemented by the historian. For an excellent example of compartmentalized thinking see Malise Ruthven, *The Divine Supermarket: Shopping for God in America* (New York: William Morrow, 1989), 119-122.

18. Recently, for example, in "Historiography and the New Mormon History" Alexander seeks to defend the New Mormon History against its detractors, but fails because of an inadequate understanding of historicism. He fails to see that objectivism and positivism go hand in hand with historicist explanations. Marx, Freud and modern Structural Functionalism are obvious examples. He would have profited from James Faulconer and Richard Williams's excellent article, "Temporality in Human Action: An Alternative to Positivism and Historicism," *American Psychologist* 40 (Nov 1985):1179-88. See also their "More on Temporality," *American Psychologists* 42 (Feb 1987):197-99. Finally there is Marvin Hill's "The 'New Mormon History' Reassessed in Light of Recent Books on Joseph Smith and Mormon Origins," *Dialogue* 21 (Autumn 1988):116-27. Hill reviews a rather small number of possible books chosen seemingly at random. Even these reviews are disappointing. He wanders through the material in an unsystematic manner and fails totally to deal with any of the fundamental problems of method.



FORM TALK FOR HIGH COUNCILORS THE DIASPORA STAKE

(Instructions are in parentheses and underlined. If clarification is desired, check with stake executive secretary.)

MY DEAR BROTHERS and sisters, it is with great humility that I stand before you today to take a few minutes of your time and leave you with a message of importance which has been assigned to me. I pray that the Spirit of the Lord will be with me so that I can express the thoughts which are in my heart. I bring you greetings from the stake presidency, and I testify to you that these good brethren are called of God and receive inspiration in their stewardship over this part of the Lord's vineyard, and they have a genuine concern for each and every one of the members of this great stake.

(Insert the following if a youth speaker has preceded you: "I enjoyed very much the fine talk given by this young person who just spoke. I am sure you agree that we have been given much food for thought.")

(Insert the following if a youth musical number has preceded you: "I was touched by the wonderful music which has been played by this fine talented _____ (insert one: young brother/young sister/group) "I am sure we all felt the Spirit of the Lord.")

"I always enjoy coming back to the _____ Ward. While I do not know all of you, because there are so many new faces, I do know many of you and remember with fondness the fine times I have so often shared with _____ and _____ *(insert names of two or three old-time members of the ward)*. I love and appreciate your good bishop and his two fine counselors. I know that these great brethren are inspired in their callings in this great ward. You also have great officers and teachers in your ward who do a great work. I always like to think that in this great church it is not where you serve that is important, but how you serve.

"I always enjoy being assigned to speak with brother *(insert name of the other high council speaker)*.

This talk was discovered by a seminary teacher at 5:45 A.M. on a Monday morning in the chapel. While gathering hymnals from the choir seats for her class she noticed that a Bible had been left on the podium, probably by a sacrament meeting speaker the day before. When she opened it to see if a name was on the inside flyleaf, an envelope marked "confidential" fell out. Upon reading the contents she immediately knew the importance of the document: it explained why almost all high councilor talks are so similar. We obtained a copy by trading a first issue SUNSTONE and by promising to keep the source confidential; however, it is printed here only after being authenticated by the foremost experts in Church circulars.

He always gives a thoughtful and important message. He told me to take all of the time I wanted (pause until polite laughter from the congregation ceases). But since I am speaking first, I assure you that you will have plenty of time to hear from him. (Turn to other High Counselor and smile graciously. Look at clock. Face the podium again and wait for congregational laughter to subside.)

"I am reminded of a story. It goes like this: *(Tell any joke picked at random from your reference joke book or from the Readers' Digest. Wait patiently for laughter to subside. Look at clock.)*

"Seriously now, I have been assigned to speak with you today about the subject of _____ *(insert topic)*. According to Webster, _____ *(insert topic)* is defined as: *(Pick up dictionary. Open to definition. Read definition. Close dictionary and set it back on pile of books. Look at clock.)*

"This is an important and vital principle of the Gospel. We hear a lot about _____ *(insert topic)*, but repetition of this great principle is important to all of us.

"According to the scriptures: *(Pick up book of scripture. Turn pages to pre-selected scripture from the basic missionary scriptures. Note: It is desirable that selected scriptures have some relevance to the topic. Upon completion of reading, close book and set it upon the pile of books. Look at clock.)*

"Our latter-day prophets stressed the importance of this great principle of the Gospel: *(Pick up the book Latter-day Prophets Speak. Turn to any quotation of a Church president in the chapter of the book having the same title as the topic. After reading, close book and set it on the pile of books. Look at clock.)*

"Our present-day leaders have also stressed the importance of this great principle of the Gospel. *(Open copy of most recent general conference issue of the Ensign to pre-selected talk which the magazine index indicates is on the same subject matter as the topic)*. In the most recent conference, Elder _____ *(Insert full name, including the initial, of general authority)* had these thought-provoking words to say: *(Read any four paragraphs of the conference talk. Look at clock.)*

"One of my favorite poems is appropriate here. *(Read either (1) 'Invictus' by William Ernest Henley, (2) 'The Touch of the Master's Hand,' or (3) any poem by Edgar A. Guest. As an alternative: Read all four verses of your favorite hymn. Wipe eyes with handkerchief. Close book and put it on the pile of books. Look at clock.)*

"I see that my time is gone. I hope and pray that we will all remember the importance of the great principle of _____ *(insert topic)*."

(Add your standard testimony and closing). ☪

TRUTH AS MEANING: FAITHFUL HISTORY AND THE INTERESTS OF THE MORMON CHURCH

By Mark S. Gustavson

THERE HAS BEEN much talk in the past few years over the role of faithful history in the Mormon church. From the Michael Quinn/Boyd Packer debate to lesser-known discussions, the dispute focuses on whether an "accurate" recitation of history would be useful in the promulgation of the Faith or whether an "official" view of history would better serve the Church's proselytizing efforts. Recalling the heady days of the nineteenth-century Church, now comfortably long ago and far away, most Mormons appear to yearn for those early days of innocence and enthusiasm which are taken to be reflected accurately in present-day recollections.

Mormon theology is much like orthodox Christianity in its insistence on the absolute truth-status of certain pivotal factual/theological claims. No practicing Mormon, for instance, would be willing to back away from the claims that Christ literally was resurrected, or that Joseph Smith received ancient golden plates from an angel. These claims, among others, are part of a body of truth-claims which form a foundation upon which the Mormon church—its theology and organization—is based.

In order to substantiate a particular accounting of history—or to disprove it—both the profane and faithful historians engage in an unrelenting focus on Mormon history in order to reconcile "official" historical claims with contemporary opinions, or to point out the devastating contrasts with present attitudes.

Even *everyone* seems upset, for various reasons, when some elements of Mormon history do not appear to support the officially sanctioned version. If historical events reflect any particular outline of Mormon history,

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both the apologist and the Church critic move, far too easily, to the conclusion that Mormonism, as a *theology*, is either true or false as a metaphysical matter. (When I say critic, I do not mean believing professional historians, but individuals who use historical research to discredit the Church). But little thought is given to examine the reasons why Mormon historical research causes so much trouble. Consequently, the apologist and the critic both appear to believe that claims concerning specific *historical* events are co-extensive with the truth-status of Mormon *theology*. However, the many issues concerning the historical claims—or the importance attached to such verifications of the claims themselves—are often ignored.

Both critics and apologists may be addressing the wrong issues by failing to recognize that a defensible belief system may be relatively more important to both individual believers and the religion than the asserted "truth" of particular historical events surrounding the emergence—or continuing support—of that religion. This might be because of the relative dearth of commentary about the unique configurations of Mormon theology. This is an odd omission, too; much of the real strength of Mormonism lies in its unique metaphysical assertions. In the absence of much serious effort to develop Mormon theology, the faithful and critical alike fall back upon history—the poor handmaiden of religion—in an effort to prove or disprove the Faith. The believers are distracted by historical details, and theology occupies a secondary role.

One of the fundamental and frequently debated questions is whether an "accurate" view of history is possible, or even *desirable*. What counts as evidence for an objective view of an event? By what a priori standards should we decide that any particular accounting of

an historic epoch—much less a specific event—is *correct*? It is not clear that a historian's decision that a historical event was "true" or "false," as an epistemological matter, could be rendered apart from his or her background and training. The processes which lead to an "objective" view of history separate the researcher from his or her own experiences and values, thereby yielding a result that would be unreliable, sterile, and certainly uninformative. Rarely do qualified, interested persons take the time, or have adequate access to the facts, necessary to assemble anything like a *contemporaneous* recollection of the particular event.

The heavy emphasis on Mormon historical research also blurs the distinction between ideas and history. While a theology can arise in the absence of a carefully-defined body of supporting factual claims, historical "facts" do not *necessarily* suggest or entail theological beliefs. It is unclear, for example, that the truth or falsity of traditional Mormon beliefs depends on whether or not Joseph Smith was fooled by the Kinderhook Plates fraud. However, it is debatable whether Christianity, as it is presently structured, could survive if the claims of Christ's literal resurrection were abandoned or disproved. Where history is used as the chief buttress of the truth-claims of a religion, the metaphysical beliefs of that religious system will rise or fall on the popular beliefs concerning the core historical claims of that religion. It is no mystery, then, that the Hofmann forgeries were afforded so much deference by the General Authorities and the organized body of critics. Both the apologist and the critics genuinely believe that the importance of Mormonism depends, in the greatest part (if not exclusively), on the truth-status of Mormon historical claims.

Consequently, most of those defending the Mormon faith (especially those in "official" positions) have placed the religion in a perilous condition by expecting flawless behavior of Mormon leaders and the Saints that can neither be achieved nor realistically expected. Therefore, since *no* one can measure up to those crystalline standards, the faithful Mormon either retreats to entirely artificial accounts of history or is thrown upon the untender mercies of the critics who seem to be always lurking about, gleefully assaulting the faithful with the latest story of Mormon historical impropriety, real or alleged. It is a curious but not an unexpected thing, then, that those comfortably dead gain a level of virtue and insight with which they might have been uneasy while alive. Mormons have set themselves up for refutation and personal

distress by "creating" a carefully-laundered history, the outlines of which cannot withstand scrutiny if only for the reason that competing interpretations will always cause trouble for *one* prescribed version.

The matter of the claimed, inerrant rectitude for Mormon historical figures is most troubling. Though the apologists for the Faith may have unconsciously adopted the fundamental premises of the critics who assert that Mormon doctrine is false because Joseph Smith was *not* a morally perfect human being, there is some strength in the point that the veracity of a person's views may turn, to some degree, on his or her moral rectitude. Both the critic and apologist seem to fuse the general moral worthiness of a particular individual as a moral agent with questions concerning the authenticity of revelations uttered by that religious leader. It is likely that the apologist and the critic may have established an unreasonable expectation of Mormon historical figures, Church authorities, and the evidence. There ought to be a distinction made between the moral worthiness of a person and that person's status as a creature of his or her culture. While thoughtful persons are correctly uneasy about cultural relativism, the issue of the *intent* of a person properly plays some role in deciding whether historical figures should be given credence if their behavior differs from contemporary standards.

When viewing Mormon history, the critic must decide just how much of contemporary (moral) attitudes can be legitimately exported back in history to condemn—or *praise*—any past Mormon figure. At the same time, the apologist must *not* blindly approve of every action of each Church leader, either by denying the "truth" of demonstrated historical events or by dismissing those actions as indistinguishable from the actions of that society at large. After all, the believer is generally correct in expecting some elevated moral status in religious leaders. Prophets are defined, in part, by their ability to step outside the confines of any particular set of cultural beliefs, thereafter to cry repentance and salvation. If the actions of every religious leader or culture were excused—or accepted—on the grounds of consistency with contemporary cultural beliefs, it's unclear that the prophets would have a chance or that there would be any need of them.

I suspect that the critics of Mormonism and certain spokespersons *for* the Church are troubled by this issue but for different reasons. If a critic believes that religious history should display a monolithic and faith-promoting tradition, then *any* religious tradition (including

Mormonism) will be found wanting. Members of the LDS church may expect—or hope—to find a unified set of arguments and evidence in support of their views of religious history. When no such record is found by either critic or apologist, both sides improperly treat such "evidence" either as a refutation of the totality of the Church's claims or as evidence of the unfaithfulness of the people whose belief is tossed about by the winds of historical controversy. Interestingly, assertions of "possessing the truth" are closely allied with the position one takes when confronted with what may appear to be evidence contrary to one's expectations of a historical character or epoch.

Therefore, it is not useful to suggest, as many apologists do, that those who claim that Mormon history is uneven have not done careful research or are possessed of malignant intent. Such an analysis ignores the fact that when well-educated General Authorities assume their ecclesiastical position they adopt opinions that did not previously command their public allegiance. The power of an institution—its needs, expectations, and goals—drives and defines the opinions and decisions of those persons who serve it. Individuals in positions of power and authority in any organization proscribe the history that serves the institution and its goals, thereby defining and characterizing those persons and events that fall *outside* the parameters of the household of Faith. Nevertheless, it is troubling to notice the conflict between officially-managed history and the competing Mormon belief in free agency. It is inconsistent to insist on the metaphysical necessity of human freedom and then to encourage—or tolerate—the withholding of relevant information which would be necessary for the formation of an intelligent religious opinion.

AAGAINST the uneven history of the Mormon religion and its adherents, greater religious insight could certainly be gained by examining the provenance and compositions of Mormon *ideas*. It is on this ground that Mormonism will eventually enjoy its greatest internal success and public acceptance. Well after Mormon historical claims are dulled and made less important by the passage of years, the liberating outline of traditional Mormon theology will still command the attention and allegiance of thoughtful believers (on the assumption that the ascending influence of Mormon neo-orthodoxy can be checked).

The defensibility of the LDS religion is a function of the content of Mormon metaphysi-

cal concepts, and should *not* rest upon any particular (re-)construction of Mormon history. The composition of nineteenth-century Mormon views on philosophical pluralism and inherent human goodness are of far greater practical, intellectual, and spiritual value than whether or not Joseph Smith actually designated his son as the sole, rightful heir to the leadership of the Mormon religion. Unlike Mormon history, the Mormon *intellectual* tradition cannot be forged. Truth as *meaning*, and not truth as *history*, will probably be the greatest contribution of the Mormon religion to the body of the faithful, since the truth-status of religious propositions is *not* a function of any particular accounting of history.

However, popular Mormon religious (especially historical) discourse, both lay and official, sadly appears to have distanced itself from most of its ideological moorings. This may have occurred for the twin reasons that most believe that philosophical analysis is *insufficient* to adequately defend the Faith and that Mormon historical claims sufficiently meet the challenges of the infidel and critic. Consequently, we may see the emerging development of what amounts to a private language defense of the Mormon faith, where only the initiate can understand and participate in the life of the Mormon religion. Of course, this effort renders Mormonism, especially its history, comfortably immune from criticism and, most critically, probably prevents further development of Mormon metaphysics.

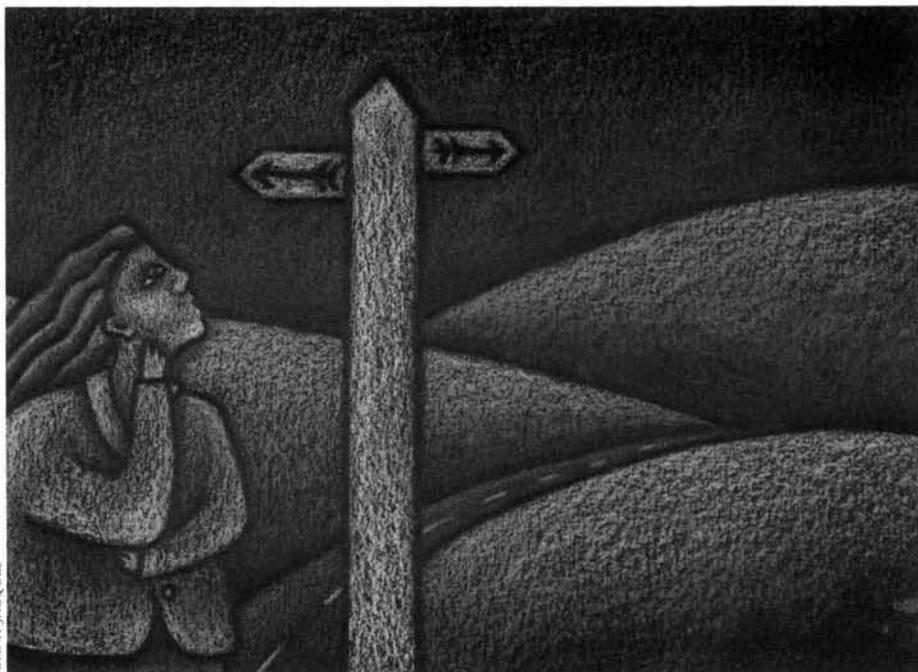
Instead of the unrelenting—and mind-numbing—focus on Church history, the temporal and eternal interests of the Mormon people would be better served if a healthy dose of concepts suffused our Sunday (and everyday) considerations. The Mormon tradition will not rise or fall on *any* particular version of an inevitably uneven history, but on whether individual Mormons can sufficiently apprehend, develop, and argue unique philosophical concepts.

Furthermore, by changing the focus from people and events to LDS intellectual concepts, Mormons will stake out a more defensible territory. If the faithful rest their beliefs on people, or historical events, then they will be cast adrift, their faith drowning with them. On the other hand, if religious beliefs are based upon the defensibility of Mormon *ideas*, then the Church may disarm the critics, strengthen the religion, and be able to free itself, at last, from the distracting—and ultimately disappointing—job of defending particular individuals or events in history. ☐

ANOTHER LOOK

WOMEN: CHANGING IDEAS AND NEW DIRECTIONS

By Marie Cornwall



DANA JACQUES

IS THERE SOMETHING new in the air? Are things changing for LDS women? There seems to be more press coverage about women in the LDS church (the Salt Lake-based Mormon Women's Forum, Ed Firmage's unabashed support for the ordination of women, Carol Lynn Pearson's one-woman play *Mother Wove the Morning*). These days I hear more talk of priesthood ordination, more attention to Mother in Heaven, more gathering of women to talk and think about who they are. Women are pressing for change—take for example the recent campaign to appoint women editors to the Encyclopedia of Mormonism project. Refinements in the temple ceremony indicate a responsiveness

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to women's experience. What does the next decade hold for Latter-day Saint sisters?

Of course, there are still those who in their heart of hearts hope all of this women's stuff will blow over. But I also hear more women and men beginning to anticipate change, even to expect it. After all, some change has already occurred. Women can now pray in sacrament meeting, there is an annual all-Church women's meeting, and occasionally there is a female speaker at general conference. I have heard conference addresses implore men to treat women better, to recognize the needs of their wives, to be responsible fathers, and to serve their families.

So what can we expect as we look toward the twenty-first century? More change, more of the same? Yes, there will be more change. There will be more accommodations to women's concerns and experience, but I doubt very much that they will be as far reaching as some hope they will be. And no, women's issues are not going to just fade

away. I can see that when I look into the fiery eyes of a younger generation of women whose expectations are greater than mine ever were. The gender issue strikes at the very core of Mormonism, at least the American version of Mormonism, and whatever happens is likely to have as great an impact as Wilford Woodruff's 1890 manifesto on plural marriage, the ordination of blacks, and the correlation movement in shaping the twenty-first-century Church. Predicting the outcome precisely is difficult simply because there are multiple forces—some pushing us toward a resolution, others pulling us away—but all equally forceful.

Church growth presents a great challenge for those who look for major change with regard to women. The tremendous growth the Church is experiencing (predictions are for more than 265 million Mormons by 2080) is creating a totally new church that can only succeed by reaching beyond the American culture, particularly the white, middle-class, well-educated, professional culture that dominates Mormonism in the United States and along the Wasatch Front. Consequently, as the Church grows, Wasatch Front members will experience a shift in power and emphasis as the Church takes on a more international focus. The new budgetary program is just the beginning. Think of the implications of the following statistics. In 1970, 82 percent of the Church population was in the United States and Canada. In 1980, English-speaking North America was still dominant with 64 percent of the Church population. However, current estimates of growth suggest that by the year 2000 only 43 percent of Church members will live in this region of the world; 40 percent will live in Latin America.

As a result, women's concerns which are framed within a middle-class American perspective will be viewed as less legitimate as they compete with the equally demanding concerns of a world-wide membership. For many women in the world, the patriarchy of Mormonism is a gentler, kinder form of male dominance: Yes, the husband still isn't home much, but in Mormonism he's more responsible and takes his fatherly duties more seriously. And he treats his wife better.

The feminist movement in the United States has always suffered from its white, middle-class proclivities. The tendency has been to emphasize those aspects of the movement that are of most concern to women who already have a choice (What university should I attend? Should I have a career or should I stay at home? Should I have another baby

or not?). U.S. feminists have not been as good at articulating the concerns of minority women or poor women. Mormon feminists and liberals can be faulted in the same way—there is too much attention to priesthood ordination and Mother in Heaven theology, not enough attention to spouse and child abuse or the feminization of poverty.

A recent issue of *Time* noted that most U.S. women avoid the feminist label. Despite their agreement with many of the issues of the movement (for equal pay, day care, maternity leave; against job discrimination and rape), only 33 percent actually identify themselves as feminist.¹ The same is true of most LDS women—they are very willing to talk about the shortcomings of the Church with regards to women, but few are willing to align themselves with feminism, and while most want things to be different, few by comparison talk of ordination as the solution.

CHURCH growth works against the resolution of gender issues in other ways. Growth is naturally associated with more bureaucracy and increased hierarchy. The essence of priesthood is sometimes lost in programs, duties, and responsibilities. It becomes associated with ecclesiastical hierarchy, layers of authority, regulations about who can do what. As bureaucratic and hierarchical processes come to dominate in the Church, the gender differences are magnified simply because of the additional administrative layers where women have little input or access to the decision making process.

Additionally, continued growth requires a large missionary force and sufficient leadership to run the branches, wards, and stakes. Everything is dependent upon having a sufficient number of Melchizedek priesthood holders to fill leadership positions. Since only men are ordained to the priesthood, organizational resources become focused on increasing the number of active LDS men. Imagine a fully functioning ward where there are only five active men who have been ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood. The gender problem is magnified simply because the men needed to administer the affairs of the Church are in short supply. And scarce resources take on added value. I've never heard a bishop bemoan the lack of women in a ward, and I doubt I ever will.

Ironically, these organizational issues not only work against the resolution of gender issues but they also assure that gender issues, especially the ordination of women, will be

kept boiling on the back burner. One thing that will continue to fuel the fire is our emphasis on family life. Large families support traditional gender roles. This would not necessarily be a problem except that we live in a society which values power, prestige, and status more than the production of children. Moreover, traditional women are viewed as consumers, not producers. The economic contribution of women who do not work for a wage is invisible to most people. This invisibility contributes to conflict not only between men and women but also among women. Women who are able to choose the traditional lifestyle, and who do so with the best of intentions, find that the sacrifices they make are not necessarily appreciated by other women or men. Similarly, women who choose a less-traditional lifestyle, also with the best of intentions, and women who are not able to choose a traditional lifestyle because of the circumstances of their lives, find that other women and men question their motives and worthiness.

MAJOR economic and social changes occurred in women's lives during the twentieth century. The increased demand for women workers has encouraged women to enter the labor force in record numbers. In the United States, 70 percent of all women work outside the home, and almost 60 percent of married women with children under six are in the labor force. The trends are similar for Mormon women—although data do suggest that more LDS women delay entrance into the work force until their youngest child is in school. Economic forces make it more and more difficult for a family to live on the income of one wage earner. Economists report that household earnings declined during the late seventies and eighties, forcing women to enter the labor force to supplement their husbands' earnings. Large Mormon families are particularly likely to feel the crunch, especially with the added expectations of tithes, missions, and college educations.

Increasing numbers of women are completing baccalaureate as well as advanced degrees. In 1987, women in the United States earned 51 percent of bachelor's degrees, 50 percent of masters degrees, 35 percent of doctoral degrees, 39 percent of law degrees, 31 percent of medical degrees, and 23 percent of all dentistry degrees. Our emphasis on learning and education within Mormonism suggests similar trends among LDS women, particularly since Latter-day Saints are among the most highly educated of religious groups,

second only to Jews and Episcopalians. While many occupations remain segregated by gender, today women are fully integrated in others: editors and reporters (51 percent women), accountants and auditors (50 percent), personnel and labor relations managers (49 percent), bus drivers (49 percent), and bakers (48 percent).

During the last two decades there have been major changes in language. Both spoken and written language has changed. Young women are more sensitive to sexist language and that sensitivity will extend to the language they find in the standard works. While my grandmother grew up in a world where "he" and "men" could be interpreted as both male and female, the next generation of readers will find the scriptures' lack of attention to women, particularly in the Book of Mormon, to be disquieting.

The study of theology has traditionally been a male domain. However, these days almost 4 in every 10 theology students are women. In 1986, women received 36 percent of all Master's degrees and 10 percent of all doctorates in theology. These women are working to make a claim on theology, interpreting scripture from a female perspective. The work of women in other religious traditions is already having an influence on LDS women.

The question of ordination will remain ever before us as it becomes more common in other religions. Consider the changing attitudes of American Catholics regarding ordination of women. In 1974, only 29 percent favored the ordination of women; in 1982, 44 percent favored ordination; and in 1985, 52 percent favored ordination.² A similar poll of Mormons might show the same trend, although I suspect far less than half would currently favor ordination. It is the younger, college-educated Catholics with high incomes who are most likely to favor women's ordination. That also seems to describe those who are raising the issue within Mormonism.

DESPITE the strains around gender issues, most LDS women will remain committed to the gospel and to the Church. Yes, sadly, there will be those who leave, emotionally if not physically. But as long as priesthood holders continue to be the scarce resource there will not be a sufficient number of disaffected women by comparison to create the kind of organizational pressure which produces radical change. Discussion about the ordination of women will always be with us in the future, but the "moral majority" within

Mormonism will most likely seek and find more conservative remedies.

In the future, more women will choose not to seek permission for their activities from a hierarchy they feel does not understand them. There will be more efforts outside the regular institutional channels to organize and create communities which give support to women's experiences. Women will take responsibility for caring for their own and their sisters' spiritual development (as always) by instituting or continuing such activities as *Exponent II*, Mormon Women's Forum, women's support groups, and even women's retreats organized at the ward and stake level. As women discover and feel comfortable with their own spiritual strengths they will increasingly use them in the privacy of their own homes and neighborhoods. Perhaps the most striking change will be the continued curiosity and discussion about Mother in Heaven. It is possibly the most important mechanism by which women will find a place within Mormonism. I do not know whether the institutional Church will discourage this curiosity, I hope that it does not.

The greatest limitation to change will be the conflict among women themselves. While conservatism of some women endures, other women offer solutions before they fully understand the problem. Moreover, the most conservative of LDS men will always quote the satisfaction of their own wives as sufficient evidence that there is no real problem. I suspect change will occur only to the extent that LDS women can agree on the issues which face them. But the task of identifying the core issues is difficult because simply talking about them creates conflict and controversy. And sadly, religions, like families, often choose to neglect the underlying problems which feed the dissatisfaction of their members if confronting them creates additional conflict and discord. ☞

NOTES

1. Claudia Wallis, "Onward, Women!" *Time*, 4 December 1989.

2. George Gallup, Jr., and Sarah Jones, *100 Questions and Answers: Religion in America*. Princeton Religion Research Center, 1989.

REVIEWS

A SOLID, BALANCED ACCOUNT

ESTABLISHING ZION:
THE MORMON CHURCH IN THE AMERICAN WEST, 1847-1869

By Eugene E. Campbell

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988, 346 pages, \$20.95



Reviewed by Dean May

IN 1973 THE HISTORY division of the Church Historical Department, under Leonard J. Arrington, Davis Bitton, and James B. Allen, planned a comprehensive sixteen-volume sesquicentennial history of the Church. Topics were proposed, authors assigned, and work began on the most ambitious project in Latter-day Saint historical studies since B.H. Roberts's *Comprehensive History of the Church* was published in 1930.

The fate of what is still spoken of as "the sixteen-volume history" has been complex, involved with decisions by the Church hierarchy that led to Leonard J. Arrington's replacement by G. Homer Durham as Church Historian and the removal of the History Division from the LDS Church Office Building to BYU, where it became the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute of Church History. One concern of some Church leaders was that scholarly works, including the sixteen-volume history, might be seen as having official sanction if published by the Historical Department of the Church, which could be constraining to authors or, in the view of some Church leaders, discomforting to the membership.¹

This project was not, however, abandoned, and the authors were encouraged to continue work on their respective volumes and seek publishers independently as each volume

was finished. *Establishing Zion* is the sixth volume to appear, and work continues on ten more, though some are modifications of the original design (see sidebar). Though varied in quality, as might be expected from a set involving sixteen authors sharing no common editorial pencil, the project has gone far toward realizing its potential as a major contribution to Latter-day Saint history. The publication of this book does much to bring that work along.

Eugene E. Campbell, former BYU history professor, had virtually completed the manuscript for *Establishing Zion* prior to his death in April 1986. With the cooperation of the Campbell family the manuscript was edited by the staff of Signature Books and appeared under their imprint in 1988. The book is a monument to the grit of Eugene Campbell, regarded by all who knew him as the one for whom the phrase "gentleman and scholar" must originally have been coined. He worked tenaciously to complete this volume, the summation of many years of diligent, thoughtful scholarship, thus assuring that no gap in the sesquicentennial history would be left by his passing.

In it Campbell offers a close, balanced account of the major events shaping the Mormon and the broader Utah populations from white settlement in 1847 until the great transformation brought by the completion of the transcontinental railroad in 1869. He

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chose the twin themes of colonization and confrontation to characterize the period. His clear and direct narrative dispels any notions that the West offered isolation and a secure haven for the Saints. They had barely dug in for the winter of 1847 when, in December, emissaries from Fort Hall entered their camp, suggesting the possibility of future trade. There was constant intercourse between Utah and California: Sam Brannan intercepted Young's pioneer company before they reached the Salt Lake Valley (after a daring dash from the San Joaquin Valley); returning members of the Mormon Battalion arrived from California within days of Young's party; Jefferson Hunt undertook a trading mission to southern California that fall; in 1849 Brigham Young sent out missionaries to gather in some of California's gold; at the same time a stream of California-bound argonauts began to flow through the Salt Lake Valley on their way to the mining camps; and San Bernadino was established in 1851 as a Mormon settlement. The Mormons, as Campbell makes clear, were not as isolated even in the first decades in Utah as we sometimes have thought.

Establishing Zion offers much detail and rich anecdotal material on colonization, Indian-white relationships, doctrinal change, religious reform, the Utah War, and other events marking the first twenty years of Mormonism in the Far West. Readers familiar with Campbell's previous essays on these themes will find few surprises here, and the book does not seem to be driven by an overriding conceptual framework. In some

instances the structure inhibits conceptual clarity. For example Campbell discusses in separate chapters the "inner colonies" and the "outer colonies," concluding that Mormon colonization shows no clear or consistent pattern, as if nothing were learned from repeated colonization endeavors. Such a perspective would arise naturally when lumping chronologically diverse but geographically concentrated colonies. Viewed over time, one can discern the evolution of a distinctive pattern in Mormon colonization of the West, tempered of course by the precise purpose of the colony and the geographical constraints the proposed site imposed. The earliest settlements were made in an individualistic and somewhat chaotic manner. By 1849, with Sanpete colonization, some patterns and rules were being established, reaching their clearest articulation in the 1850-51 settlement of Parowan. Thereafter "called" settlements followed the Parowan pattern when establishing a bridgehead in previously unsettled territory or seeking to exploit particular resources. Once such a settlement was established, spontaneous satellite towns grew up wherever niches offered a likely site.

Regrettably Professor Campbell was not able to document fully his manuscript prior to his death. There are no footnotes, which would have been of great value to careful students of the period, and the index is minimal. These defects are countered in part by a set of clear and useful maps, a good selection of enlivening photographs, and a general bibliography.

Establishing Zion offers a solid and readable account of the period and is a worthy increment to the ongoing list of publications arising out of the sixteen-volume project. ☐

NOTES

1. For a discussion of the events surrounding the transfer to BYU of the History Division by one intimately involved, see Davis Bitton, "Ten Years in Camelot: A Personal Memoir," *Dialogue* 16 (Autumn, 1983): 9-34.

VALEDICTION

God's people always leave.
He gives them compass and they
set sail, learning to lean into
the wind.

Point your sword
heavenward, hack
your unleavened bread, cut
kindling. But don't malign
the stars. They do the best
they can with what they've got.
It's hard to steer by the
sun. It's fast
broad strokes, brilliant but vague
are always only the start.

Stars are the leaves of heaven,
fluttering, gently
swaggering in the solar wind.
They will part and let you by
if you remember the password.
But remembering
too much will square
your horizon, turn the grass
too green, freeze seeds
in their pods.

In fall
every footstep is an
explosion. Stars ignite
every night. God smiles
when he sends us away.
If we return, he weeps.

—SCOTT SAMUELSON

WHAT BECAME OF THE SIXTEEN-VOLUME CHURCH HISTORY?

ESTABLISHING ZION is only the sixth book published to date out of the original sixteen volumes planned in 1973.

While publication of the sesquicentennial history was intended to begin in 1980 and continue regularly for several years, it is uncertain now whether all projects will be published. However, those published in order of publication are: Milton V. Backman, *The Heavens Resound: A History of the Latter-day Saints in Ohio 1830-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986); R Lanier Britsch, *Unto the Islands of the Sea: A History of the Latter-day Saints in the Pacific* (Salt Lake City: Desert Book Company, 1986); F. Lamond Tullis, *Mormons in Mexico: The Dynamics of Faith and Culture* (Logan: Utah State University Press,

1987), and Eugene Campbell, *Establishing Zion* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

Work continues by Max Parkin on the Missouri period; by Reed Durham on the migration to the West; by Charles S. Peterson on the period from 1869 to 1890; by Davis Bitton on cultural life in the nineteenth century; by Richard O. Cowan on the period from 1930 to 1950; by James B. Allen on the twentieth century after 1950; by John L. Sorenson, on cultural life in the twentieth century; and by Douglas Tobler on the Latter-day Saints in Europe. In addition, Lamond Tullis continues to work on a volume covering all of Latin America and R. Lanier Britsch on all of Asia. ☐

REVIEWS

THE JOURNAL OF DISCOURSES:
THE SEQUEL

COLLECTED DISCOURSES DELIVERED BY PRESIDENT WILFORD
WOODRUFF, HIS TWO COUNSELORS, THE TWELVE APOSTLES,
AND OTHERS

Volume I, 1886-1889; Volume II, 1890-1892; Volume III, 1892-1893
BHS Publications, 1987, 1988, 1989, \$15.95 each

edited by Brian H. Stuy



Reviewed by John Sillito

IN THE PAST few months, Constance Lieber and I have been editing a collection of the letters of Martha Hughes Cannon and her husband, Salt Lake Stake President Angus M. Cannon, written while "Mattie" was in self-imposed exile in England avoiding prosecution for polygamy. We spend a great deal of time looking at various diaries and journals covering the period of the late 1880s, and in the course of this research, both of us were struck with the influence the federal government had on the Saints during the "Raid." While we were generally aware that the government's actions helped develop a sense of solidarity among the Saints, the impact of the persecution on individuals was brought home to us more dramatically through reading these personal writings. The Cannon's referred frequently to the actions of the federal government and their allies against the Mormons as they tried to deal with the tensions resulting from their separation.

Moreover, we found accounts of the effects of the persecution as a recurring theme in other sources as well. Emmeline B. Wells, for
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example, remarks on the difficulty of maintaining customary marital and familial relationships during "these days of sorrow to our people," when the Saints felt that they were constantly under surveillance. As she notes in her diary on 29 October 1887: "it is very unpleasant to creep into one's own apartment when one has a right to go openly."

In light of the importance of this period in understanding developments in Church history, Brian H. Stuy has provided general readers and scholars of the Mormon experience alike with an important reference tool. These compilations—the first three volumes of a projected six volume series—bring together the writings of Mormon church leaders after the demise of the *Journal of Discourses* and prior to the beginning of the published conference reports. Stuy has prefaced each selection with a brief overview of the subjects covered in the particular address, making it easy to thumb through the selections looking for material. While most of the selections come from such expected sources as the *Millennial Star* and the *Deseret News*, others come from lesser known sources such as the *Logan Jour-*

nal, the *Brigham City Bugler*, and other small newspapers and magazines. It is clear from Stuy's compilation that the words of Church leaders printed in various places were an important source of information and encouragement for the Saints during trying times.

The first volume covers the crucial years from 1886-89 which, in Stuy's words, "were filled with persecutions and trials for the Church and its members" (1). This was a time when Church President John Taylor and other Church leaders were on the underground. A selection by Angus M. Cannon is typical of many of the writings in this volume dealing with the difficulties facing the Saints. At a special conference of the Salt Lake Stake held in the Tabernacle, Cannon remarks that the Saints are disappointed because "the seats . . . formerly occupied by the First Presidency . . . [are] now made vacant by the actions of wicked men." Cannon exhorts his congregation to turn to God during these difficult days when they seem "to be left to themselves for a season."

Tests are being made of us today with regard to our faith and integrity in the Lord. The law of celestial marriage . . . has been entered into and embraced by a considerable proportion of our people. As a consequence we have been put through a fiery ordeal, and but few have swerved from their integrity. What has been the result? If we have not been cast into fiery furnaces or fed to wild beasts, we have been imprisoned with the basest of criminals. We have been isolated from our loved ones, deprived of their presence and permitted to gaze upon the pale faces of our wives and children as they look down upon us from the summit of the wall enclosing the prison in which we were confined. If we had forsaken our wives, forsaken our children, gone back upon the covenants made with God, and preferred liberty and freedom to imprisonment, we could have obtained freedom, but we preferred prison bars to liberty as such a price. . . . I propose to hearken unto the voice of God, let the result be prison bars, penitentiary walls or death. (30, 33.)

Other discourses cover a variety of topics from the trek of the pioneers to great books and writers to the treatment of animals. Also included in this volume are selections from

the funeral services for John Taylor, Erastus Snow, and Eliza R. Snow.

The second and third volumes in the series cover 1890-1893, a period marked particularly by the issuance of the Woodruff Manifesto and the completion of the Salt Lake Temple. Stuy comments that these years witnessed an increasing millennialism as well as an awareness of the growing importance of political questions facing the Church. These themes run throughout the selections included in the second and third volumes.

In assessing this period, Stuy notes that the discourses covered in these volumes were particularly important as the Saints sought "comfort and assurance that the Lord . . . was still guiding his church." As he observes:

The events leading up to the Manifesto were complex, as were the events following its approval by the Church. . . . Many Saints saw it as an end to the persecutions, the raids . . . and breathed a sigh of relief at its issuance. Others saw it as a relinquishing of a commandment of God, and perceived the compromises made by President Woodruff as an indication of an apostasy by the church from the divine laws of God. Still others, including President Woodruff, perceived it as a way of preserving the Church until the glorious return of the Lord. . . . (xxvi)

In assessing these *Collected Discourses*, every individual reader may have a "wish list" of things they believe the books should include. For me, though Stuy is gathering the writings of General Authorities and other male leaders of the Church, the collection is unfortunately limited by not including writings of prominent women of the time. At the same time, while some explanatory references are included and, in volume one at least, a selected index is provided, the collection will be enhanced by an overall index which is in the works. In the meantime, such criticism should not detract from *Collected Discourses* which is an essential reference collection for the personal and institutional libraries of those concerned about the history of Mormonism during some of its most important years. ☐

SEA OF SINAI

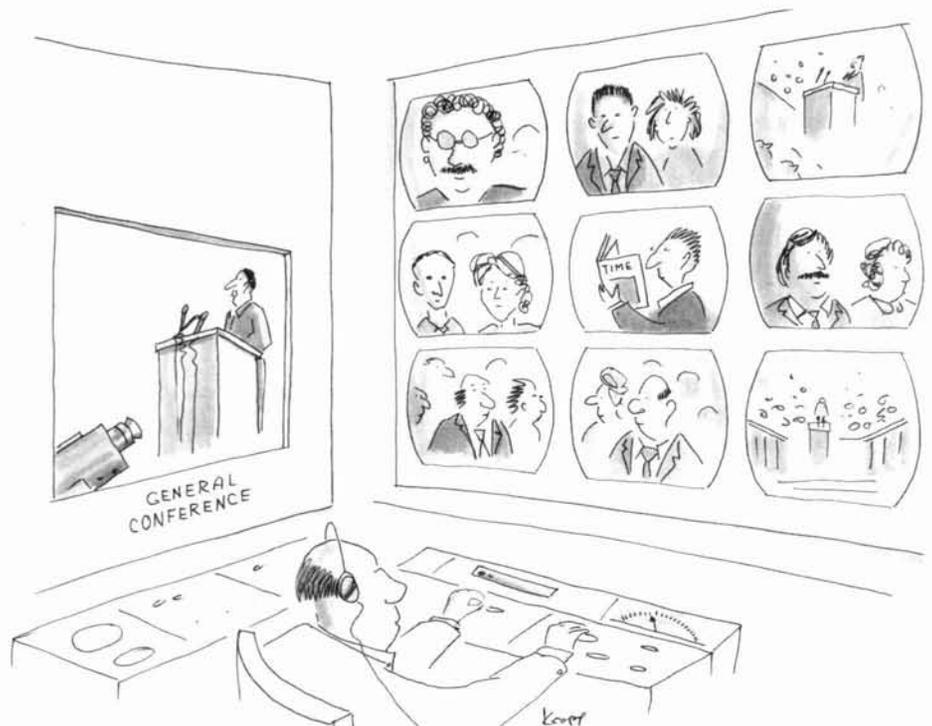
Sands, sun-tarnished, slip
through tracing Nile fingers,
trickling dust, pushing gritted-waves
in the slow thrust of burial seas:
writhing dunes, covering evenings,
unwriting runes scrawled
in pale sweeps of sanded hide

that swept immutability
under their slow and rising tides
and left nothing behind
but dawn and a new horizon
touched by a wave of wind
on an ever-setting sun.

All stench sunken, all sight.
No sign of evident history.
Only the calm remains
that was there before

and the silence of slow waves breaking

—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER



COMMENTS ON TEMPLE CHANGES ELICIT CHURCH DISCIPLINE

LAST SPRING at the April general priesthood meeting when President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled the men in the Church not to discuss the temple ordinances outside of the temple, few realized that his comments were a prelude to the soon-to-be-released new temple film which included changes in the ceremony and a streamlined narrative. Nor did it appear that even general comments on the changes would spark incidences of Church discipline and renew the discussion of the dynamic between the individual and the institutional Church.

After the temples were reopened in mid-April following a several-day closing to install the new film, news of the endowment changes spread by word-of-mouth throughout the Church, in spite of a First Presidency letter read prior to each temple session counseling members not to discuss the temple beyond its walls.

Members discussed the elimination of the penalties in the covenants, the softening of the text relating to women's relationship to men, and the Hollywood aspects of the music and cinematography. Eventually, accounts and rumors of the film's production circulated, including the fact that the actors portraying Adam and Eve are an LDS married couple who are professional models living in New York City and that their voices are dubbed even in the English version. It was obvious that the Saints felt a deep need to discuss and understand this ritual so central to their faith.

Inevitably, word of the changes were reported in the mass media. Salt Lake City Associated Press journalist Vern Anderson wrote the first story reporting the

changes. It originally appeared in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and was carried in numerous papers across the nation. Eventually, most national media reported the changes, including the *New York Times*, the *Los Angeles Times*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *U.S. News and World Report*. Most reports quoted at least one church-going Mormon commenting in a general way on the changes.

In a 14 May story, *Time* noted the deletion of "the pledge of wifely obedience demanded of women. . . . Now women merely join the men in pledging obedience to God." It also reported that although Mormons "still hold theirs to be the only authentic form of Christianity," the scene "in which Satan pays a Protestant minister" was removed, "perhaps

because it offended converts." *Time* speculated that a "briefer, modernized ritual could help reverse [the] trend" of fewer members attending the temple regularly.

While most press reports explained the temple ceremony only in the most general terms, both the *Los Angeles Times* and the *Arizona Republic* gave detailed descriptions of the penalty oaths, the veil ceremony, and other changes. Both quoted former and anti-Mormons, including prominent anti-Mormon author/publisher Sandra Tanner who attributed several changes to pressure from women's liberation groups. "I think this is in response to the feminist movement in the Mormon Church," said Tanner, head of Utah Lighthouse Ministries in Salt Lake City. "Many of the women objected to the obedience."

One former Mormon told the *Arizona Republic* that "removal of that part of the ritual is the equivalent of taking the Eucharist out of the Roman Catholic Mass."

Several publications noted the striking parallels between Masonic rites and the LDS temple ritual,

whose introduction corresponds approximately with Joseph Smith's acceptance into the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge.

The *Arizona Republic* noted that the Church deleted the "penalties" for revealing any portion of the rite to people outside the temple," but verbal oaths of secrecy remain binding and "the removal of the penalties does not mean Mormons will talk about the ceremony."

In a paper at the 1990 Washington D.C. Sunstone Symposium in April, a week before the changes were made, Keith Norman discussed the possibility that the penalties had "outgrown their usefulness," a quote which was later carried in some news stories. Norman, a Mormon with a Ph.D. in Christian studies from Duke University, told the *Los Angeles Times*, "I had no idea this change was about to be introduced."

Others have also regarded aspects of the endowment as archaic or obsolete. The *New York Times* noted that in 1927 an oath to avenge Joseph Smith's death on Missouri and the United States was dropped. The *Los Angeles Times* quoted L.A. LDS Bishop



Robert Rees that some of the deleted parts "were historical and cultural anachronisms." The *L.A. Times* also cited David Buerger's 1987 *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* article which said that "many Mormons found the temple ceremonies 'entirely meaningful' [but] were disturbed by 'the implied violence' . . . 'the portrayal of a Christian minister as a hireling of Satan' and the depiction of women 'as subservient to men.'"

In contrast to the *L.A. Times* and the *Arizona Republic*, most media reports respected the privacy and secrecy of the rituals and avoided describing them in detail or in quoting former or anti-Mormons. Several church-going Mormons, however, were quoted

in the accounts, all praising the changes.

"The general consensus is that it's a breath of fresh air," said *Dialogue* co-editor Ross Peterson, who was quoted in the A.P. story and the *New York Times*. "You don't put down other churches or imply that they are Satan's children. . . . [Now] it's not as harsh. It's more uplifting. It's softer and gentler."

Lavina Fielding Anderson, editor-elect of the *Journal of Mormon History*, "greeted the changes with a great deal of joy" and said "some portions of the temple ceremony have been painful to some women and, in some respects, still are." Declining to specify any remaining objectionable elements, she said, "I

anticipate further changes with hope and faith."

Rebecca England of the Salt Lake City-based Mormon Women's Forum agreed: "I still have concerns that haven't been addressed, but I personally find the temple endowment ceremony empowering of me as a woman, more so than demeaning. I think it also shows that the leaders have responded to concerns and acted." "I know quite a number of Mormons who stopped going to the Temple because they found it demeaning. . . . This revised ceremony addresses many of the concerns that they, and I as a feminist Mormon, have had."

The *New York Times* quoted an anonymous Mormon woman who

regarded "the whole framework of the endowment" as a nineteenth-century carryover. "The stuff about the preacher didn't trouble me so much, because I thought, well, it just reflected a past time. . . . the same with the women stuff. Like any other ritual, you make it your own."

Understandably, LDS authorities were generally unwilling to comment on the changes. An official statement the first week of May declared, "We are a church that believes in modern and continuous revelation, and the changes . . . are reflective of that process."

In the *Idaho Statesman*, Ted Johnson, LDS church public communications director for South-

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

AMERICAN ACADEMY OF RELIGION/SOCIETY OF BIBLICAL LITERATURE (AAR/SBL) Rocky Mountain-Great Plains Regional Meeting will be held at the University of Denver on 26-27 April 1991. Proposals for papers are due 12 October 1990 and should include a one-page abstract describing the nature of the presentation. Proposals are welcome in all areas of religious and biblical studies for papers and panel discussions. An award will be presented for the best graduate student paper submitted. For proposal and registration inquiries contact: Professor Gregory Allen Robbins, Department of Religious Studies, University of Denver, University Park, Denver, CO 80208.

A CELEBRATION OF MORMON WOMEN PHOTO CONTEST is sponsored by Deseret Book Company. Photographs should depict and illustrate the values, experiences, and diverse lifestyles of today's Mormon women worldwide. Photographs chosen as winners will be published by Deseret Book in a book of photos tentatively titled *A Celebration of Mormon Women*. Men and women eighteen years and above may enter. First place will receive \$200; other prizes will also be awarded. Each contestant may submit up to five photographs in color or black and white no larger than 8 x 10 inches, with the contestant's name, address, and telephone number on the back of each photograph. Slides and negatives are not accepted. Deadline: 31 December 1990. Send entries and request for complete rules to: Photo Contest, PO Box 30178, Salt Lake City, UT 84130 (801/578-3229 ext. 229).

THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNAL STUDIES ASSOCIATION (ICSA) will conduct its third triennial conference 25-28 July 1991 at the Young Center for the Study of Anabaptist and Pietist Groups at Elizabethtown College, Elizabethtown, Pennsylvania. The general theme, "Communal

Societies: Values and Structures," focuses on the purposes of past and present communal societies, their structuring to achieve these purposes and their broader implications for contemporary world-wide developments. Proposal abstracts not exceeding one page and short vitas are requested by 1 November 1990. Contact Donald Kraybill, The Young Center, Elizabethtown College, One Alpha Drive, Elizabethtown, PA 17022-2298 (Phone: 717/367-1151 ext 440; FAX: 717/367-7567).

LDS WRITERS' WORKSHOP will be held on BYU-Hawaii Campus 4-8 June 1991. Lectures and small group sessions will be given by professional writers including Orson Scott Card and Jack Weyland as well as by editors representing Church magazines and *BYU Today*, Bookcraft, Deseret Book, *Dialogue*, *Horizon*, Signature Books, *Sunstone*, and *This People*. Sessions will cover fiction, non-fiction, family history, article writing, poetry, and song writing. Workshop fee is \$200 (\$275 after 31 December 1990) and includes room and board, admission to all workshop sessions, workshop materials, and an opening session banquet. Enrollment is limited to 275 participants and BYU-Hawaii credit (English 495R) is available. Contact Chris Crow, Division of Language and Communication, BYU-Hawaii, Laie, HI 96762 (808/293-3633).

SEATTLE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held 9-10 November 1990. For more information contact Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 (206/325-6868).

VETERANS ASSOCIATION FOR SERVICE ACTIVITIES ABROAD (VASAA) has changed its name (but still retains the same acronym) to more accurately reflect VASAA's role in humanitarian service projects and to stress the association's independence from any specific religious affiliation. For information about the organization contact Virgil N. Kovalenko, PO Box 17815, Salt Lake City, UT 84117-0815 (801/278-7674).

west Idaho, said, "I don't think there's any question that those people who have been at the temple [since the revisions] have come away with a very upbeat attitude about it."

In the *New York Times*, Beverly Campbell, East Coast director for LDS Public Communications, confirmed that "because the temple ceremony is sacred to us, we don't speak of it except in the most general of terms." But while Mormon beliefs and obligations are "timeless and binding," she said, "the ceremony itself needs to meet the needs of the people." She said the revisions are "more in keeping with the sensitivities we have as a society."

It soon became obvious that Church leaders did not welcome individual Saints commenting to the press about the temple. Reportedly the First Presidency instructed area presidents to have every known member who was quoted called in by a Church official and questioned about their comments. Many were talked to by their bishops or stake presidents, some met with general authorities. With two exceptions, all reported that their meetings were pleasant and non-threatening.

Just as the discussion of the changes was disappearing from the media, rumors of the questionings spread and eventually were reported in the press. When asked about his interview, Robert Rees told the *Los Angeles Times* that he had an "amicable conversation." "There was nothing heavy or ominous about it."

In the same story, Lavina Fielding Anderson said, "it seems to me that the temple modifications have been received among members with almost universal rejoicing as manifestation of inspiration." "I appreciated the opportunity of affirming these changes . . . rather than having reporters collect commentary exclusively from known detractors."

As word of the questioning spread, some were disturbed at

what appeared to be an inquisitorial approach by Church leaders toward well-meaning members. Others expressed dismay that members would break their temple covenants by speaking to the press. In the Church Office Building folk-stories circulated how President Benson wept when he read newspaper accounts quoting members and that President Hinckley was disheartened that his counsel was ignored.

In any event, private conversations disputed just exactly what was covenanted in the temple: whether it was simply not to reveal specific covenants or not to talk about anything in the temple ceremony.

Defending the questioning of members, Church Public Communications released this statement: "When they leave the House of the Lord they are under obligation to be true to a sacred trust not to speak of that which is holy and sanctified. . . . Therefore, it is appropriate that church leaders visit with members when comments about the temple or other sacred matters are made public and are attributed to them in the news media."

One man's experience was more than a "visit." In a meeting with all three seventies in his area presidency, Ross Peterson was questioned at length about his comments and loyalty to the Church. The presidency referred to clippings from a thick Church file which had been gathered on him since his days in college. As a result of the questioning, Peterson's temple recommend was taken and further action was intimated if he continued to speak or write on the temple. Later, after he wrote a protest and others petitioned Church leaders, his recommend was restored.

In a similar scene in Cleveland, Ohio, Keith Norman's bishop reluctantly told him that he had been instructed to deny Norman a temple recommend for one year, after which he could have a recommend if he had repented. When Norman asked of what he

needed to repent, his bishop replied, "I don't know."

Most informed observers of the visits attribute the contrast between the low-key and strong-arm disciplinary interviews to the different personalities among the area presidents as they implemented

First Presidency instructions.

In the end, many are troubled by the systematic censoring of believing members and undoubtedly this episode will be alluded to for years in discussions about the role and prerogatives of the Church and its members. ☐

CONFERENCE ON CHANGING GAY ORIENTATION STIRS CONTROVERSY

By Chris Allen

HOMOSEXUALITY AS biological destiny is an assumption most social and physical scientists are increasingly comfortable with. For example, a recent article in *Omni* magazine nearly declared proof of the biological factor in being gay, and the few academic articles published within Mormonism reach a similar conclusion.

Within the circles of mental health, trying to change a homosexual to a heterosexual is a possibility just as converting a heterosexual to a homosexual might be possible by using high-tech therapy. However,

the task force for gay and lesbian concerns of the American Psychological Association is considering a proposal that would make it unethical to attempt to change sexual orientation.

Graduate courses in psychology and medicine currently teach that it is highly unlikely that sexual orientation will change, listing therapy outcome research as proof, and citing horror stories of archaic methods of attempted change. In most schools, budding therapists are taught to focus on helping the ego become syntonic (accepting)



rather than ego-dystonic (rejecting) of homosexuality.

However, a few therapists, most psychodynamic in orientation (neo-Freudian groups have traditionally viewed homosexuality as an inability to identify with the same sex in normal developmental stages), continue to teach that homosexuality is not a natural development and should be corrected.

More recently, this latter perspective is being revived and used as fuel against biologists. In this context, joining with conservative movements in homosexuality such as Exodus (a national group of over 1,000 recovered gay people), Salt Lake City was the site for a controversial two-day conference entitled "You Don't Have to Be Gay: Developing A Healthy Male Identity."

The conference was independently sponsored by the Evergreen Foundation, a non-profit LDS group of recovered male homosexuals and lesbian women. Speakers included Christian activists, LDS Social Service workers, and LDS psychiatrists and psychologists. Conference attendees had a similar demographic feel, but included sixty to seventy young men, a few single women, a few bishops, a number of concerned spouses, and a significant number of wrinkle-browed couples in their fifties and sixties seemingly trying to understand their children.

The keynote presentation was given by Joe Dallas, a California counselor advocating a psycho-religious therapeutic model to help change gays that *want* to change. Jeff Konrad, another Christian activist and author of *You Don't Have to be Gay*, gave a tearful testimonial of how change was possible, and LDS Social Service workers discussed Utah programs that help gays recover, as well as hosted a session entitled "What Works."

Many recovered homosexual presenters were clearly effeminate and stated so openly, declaring it was their right to be born effeminate yet still be essentially

male and heterosexual.

A session for "Men Facing the Challenge" had about fifty men in attendance, openly talking about their sexuality and sharing stories about failed attempts to change. Only one woman was present in this particular session. Most men in this group professed a desire to change for religious and social reasons. They discussed issues such as "terminal uniqueness" and encouraged each other to stop acting out sexually the reasoning that just because they had strong feelings for men didn't entitle them to act on them any more than heterosexuals were entitled to act on strong feelings for women.

The second day of the conference was more specifically for therapists, Church leaders, gay men and women, and families. It included a session on how spouses could help their partners work through the therapy program. Conference invitations were sent to all stake presidents and bishops in Utah, however only two responded.

The conference received a fierce reaction from Salt Lake City's gay community, some of whom picketed with flyers sponsored by the "Everlavender Foundation"—a jab at the "masculinizing" part of the therapy that encourages men to join more traditionally masculine activities. Others protested that a conference like this only intensifies the self-identity problems of gays, giving false hopes to those who were vulnerable to this sort of hype.

During the conference, the Kinsey Scale (a continuum of masculinity and femininity) was often mentioned by supporters and protesters, the latter feeling that people who rated strongly masculine or feminine on the scale were the success stories, while for others the change attempts were futile.

Although the conference was billed for only those who want to change, it seemed hopeless for this conference to try to transcend the inherent message that all gay persons should change to the better (heterosexual) life. Being gay was

viewed as unnatural by God and was therefore presented as sin. However, because of the depth of the interpsychic conflict and environmental causes, becoming gay was not presented as a choice.

Although most of the audience was confused by the contradiction between homosexuality not being a choice but being a sin, the presenters were comfortable using the words sin and evil. This implied a strong and threatening bias that those who did not "evolve" out of homosexuality were in a state of sin, or at least something akin to ministering angels in terms of Mormon theology.

Evergreen presenters basically rearticulated old principles within a new paradigm of New Age Christianity, giving a feeling at times akin to a twelve-step meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous or other addiction control groups. Homosexuality was interpreted as an inappropriate solution to a lack of same-sex love. Sexual contact was explained as an attempt to attain true same-sex intimacy, yet also as an act of "cannibalism," a term coined from psychoanalysis meaning a desire to incorporate the elements of the other into the self through sexuality (i.e., the most desirable male sex partners are masculine lumberjack types because they compensate for a lack of maleness felt by the gay male).

Evergreen's change therapy was targeted only at those who wanted it. It consisted of a "radical emotional overhaul" or a simple checking under the hood (the metaphors were generally masculine) for problems in self-concept, which, they believe, are the roots of symptoms such as sexual compulsions and promiscuity, rather than biology. The most controversial aspect of the therapy is the sports program which encourages men who felt like they were usually the last picked on the team and unaccepted in male activities to participate in sports or other masculine activities from which they previously felt rejected. Otherwise the machinery of therapeutic change was no different from what might be used for clients

with depression or any number of other psychological issues.

Measurements of successful treatment included increased affective coloring, personality cohesion (the heterosexual world still has not agreed on this term which means a balanced personality), and stability of recovery. Involvement in heterosexual relationships was also viewed as evidence of recovery (this has been a point of contention for feminists who do not want to be used to prove a man's recovery). In the workshops it was not uncommon for a presenter to admit to still having some cravings for male sexuality, yet also enjoying female sexuality within a marriage with children.

Some testimonials, especially by the younger men, had a sad confessional feel to them, almost exhibitionistic, as if telling the sin to the crowd was necessary to bring penance. One had to wonder if this type of image-maintaining confession pattern hadn't been repeated many times before, only to give way later to deeper level needs.

In conversations with conference participants, some hoped to change, some found a renewal hope, and some doubted they had what it took to change. Similar to handicapped people who do not want to have to live up to the hero status of Helen Keller, some participants felt it was asking too much for them to change.

One clear message from all participants was that it was a tremendous struggle to like yourself as gay within Mormonism. Challengers of the conference felt it was an impossible task to like yourself until you had quit trying to change yourself. Proponents felt you would like yourself when you were more congruent with your Creator's intentions, which were also your best intentions.

One other clear message of the conference was that it was not entirely clear to gay people whether homosexuals can and should change. Although self-acceptance within ambiguous societal attitudes is difficult, that is the task gay people are currently left with. ☐

ONE FOLD

Compiled by Hand Carré

MORE AMERICANS TALK RELIGION THAN ACT

POLLSTER George Gallup says his data suggest there is little difference in the way those who profess religious commitments act in daily life compared to those who do not. Speaking to the national convention of the U.S. Evangelical Press Association, Gallup said the faith of most Americans is very private and unrelated to regular church attendance (though about 40 percent of Americans attend worship any given week). He also characterized most Americans as "biblical illiterates" who revere but don't read the Bible. Half of those who say they are Christian, he said, do not know that Jesus delivered the Sermon on the Mount. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

TWO CHURCH GROUPS DEFY "CORRELATION"

CLAIMING THAT official publications are inadequate, groups in two of the largest U.S. denominations are offering their own educational materials. The Southern Baptist Alliance, part of the Southern Baptist Convention, has produced alternatives to the SBC Sunday School Board's material, which it says is too restrictive in its approach to biblical inerrancy and insufficiently ecumenical. Similarly, in the United Methodist Church, the Good News movement is offering alternatives which it calls "educational" and "Wesleyan" (after the founders of modern Methodism John and Charles Wesley). (*Ecumenical Press Service*).

MINOR MORALS

A RECENT poll of 5,000 young people indicates a "moral division" among youth in several social factors, especially "underlying ethical assumptions." The survey, commissioned by the Girl Scouts of America, divided the respondents into five distinct groups based on different "moral compasses" utilized in making decisions: "theists" (16 percent of the sample) tend to base their judgments on religious beliefs and authorities; "civic humanists" (25 percent) seek to serve what is regarded as the common good; "conventionalists" (20 percent) do what is accepted in a community; "expressivists" (18 percent) act according to feelings and psychological needs; while "Utilitarians" (10 percent) act based on what will get them ahead. Black and poor children were found to be more likely to make their decisions from a theistic perspective (29 percent did so). When asked whether they would put aside their plans to help an injured classmate, more members of the theistic group would (49 percent) than any other group. The survey also found 70 percent of junior and senior high school students felt a girl should have the final say over an abortion, 65 percent of high school students would cheat on a test, and 34 percent of all respondents said they had a "religious experience that has changed the direction" of their lives. (*Religion Watch*)

"THERE SHE IS . . ."

THE CURRENT Miss America, Debbye Turner, has been asked to refrain from using songs with a Christian message in her presentations at public schools. Miss America Pageant chief executive officer Loenard Horn made the request after a complaint from a Jewish group. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

MORMON HISTORY AWARDS

ANNOUNCED AT THE 1990 ANNUAL MEETING
OF THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION

William Grover and Winnifred Foster Reese Award
for distinguished dissertation or thesis
GRANT UNDERWOOD

"The Millennial World of Early Mormonism"
(Ph.D. dissertation, UCLA)
Grace Fort Arrington Award
for outstanding contributions to the cause of Mormon history
THOMAS G. ALEXANDER

Director, Charles Redd Center for Western Studies

JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY AWARDS

Special Citation
DESERET BOOK
for contributing to the design, typesetting, pagination, editing, and
production of the journal
Best Manuscript Article
GLEN LEONARD

"Remembering Nauvoo: Historiographical Contributions"
(*Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 16, 1990)

MHA AWARDS

Special Citation
SUSAN FAYLES
For exceptional service rendered to the Mormon History Association as executive secretary.

T. Edgar Lyon Article Awards

Historical Theology
GRANT UNDERWOOD
"The New England Origins of Mormonism Revisited"
(*Journal of Mormon History*, Volume 15, 1989)

Interdisciplinary
STAN ALBRECHT

"The Consequential Dimension of Mormon Religiosity"
(*BYU Studies* 29:2, Spring 1989)

19th Century History

EDWARD LEO LYMAN

"The Rise and Decline of Mormon San Bernardino"
(*BYU Studies* 29:4, Fall 1989)

20th Century History

HENRY WARNER BOWDEN

From the Age of Science to an Age of Uncertainty: History and
Mormon Studies in the Twentieth Century"
(*Journal of Mormon History* Volume 15, 1989)

BYU Women's Research Institute Award

Women's Studies

Sherilyn Cox Bennion

"The Salt Lake Sanitarian: Medical Adviser to the Saints"
(*Utah Historical Quarterly* 57:2, Spring 1989)

Best Book Awards

Francis M. and Emily Chipman Award for Best First Book
MICHAEL HICKS

Mormonism and Music: A History
(University of Illinois Press, 1989)

Steven F. Christensen Award for Best Documentary Tool
DEAN C. JESSEE, editor

The Papers of Joseph Smith, Volume 1
(Deseret Book, 1989)

Best Book in Mormon History

MARVIN S. HILL

Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism
(Signature Books, 1989)



PHOTO: MICHELE SHUPE

A SCOOP TO EXCEED YOUR GRASP

LAST MARCH Brigham Young University set yet another culinary world record, this time for the most scoops on an ice cream cone. BYU Home Evening groups from the Glenwood and Riviera apartments topped by two the old Guinness record of 22 scoops, continuing a university tradition of food-oriented records. Last year a record was set for the biggest cheesecake.

MAGNIFYING THEIR APPOINTMENTS

"THE MOST important work you will ever do is within the four walls of your own home," said LDS President Harold B. Lee; but recently two Utahns stood out for spending all their time in the White House.

In an informal survey of White House staff last spring, Provo's Roger Porter and Odgen's Brent Scowcroft were voted the two officials, next to President Bush, who put in the longest hours in a place where fifteen- to twenty-hour workdays are commonplace.

A *Washington Post* poll said Porter, an active Mormon and Bush's economic and domestic policy adviser, put in the longest hours of all White House staff. "I'd put Roger Porter in the vampire category," said Andy Card, deputy White House chief of staff. "I don't

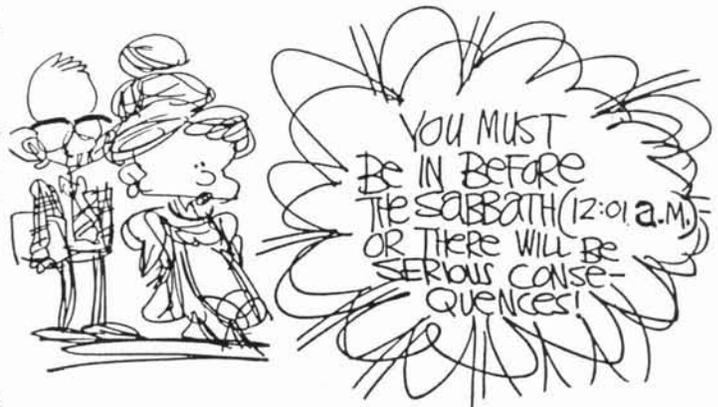
think he ever sees daylight."

National Security Advisor Scowcroft also works long hours. "This is a man who jogs at midnight," said one official.

... IMPRISONED AND YE ASKED ME TO SPEAK

SEVERAL YEARS ago when U.S. Senator Orrin Hatch (R-Utah) discovered he had a gender gap among his voters, he began sponsoring his annual Utah women's conference in Salt Lake City. This year he has inaugurated a senior's conference, keynoted by flag-waving all-American, former Reagan White House national security adviser Oliver North. In responding to complaints about the Iranamok-convicted felon being invited to speak on ethics and values, Hatch said, "Jesus Christ was a convicted felon."

OUR STORY... CINDY'S FAIRY VISITING TEACHER HAS CHANGED A RAT INTO AN ESCORT FOR THE STAKE GOLD AND GREEN BALL...



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