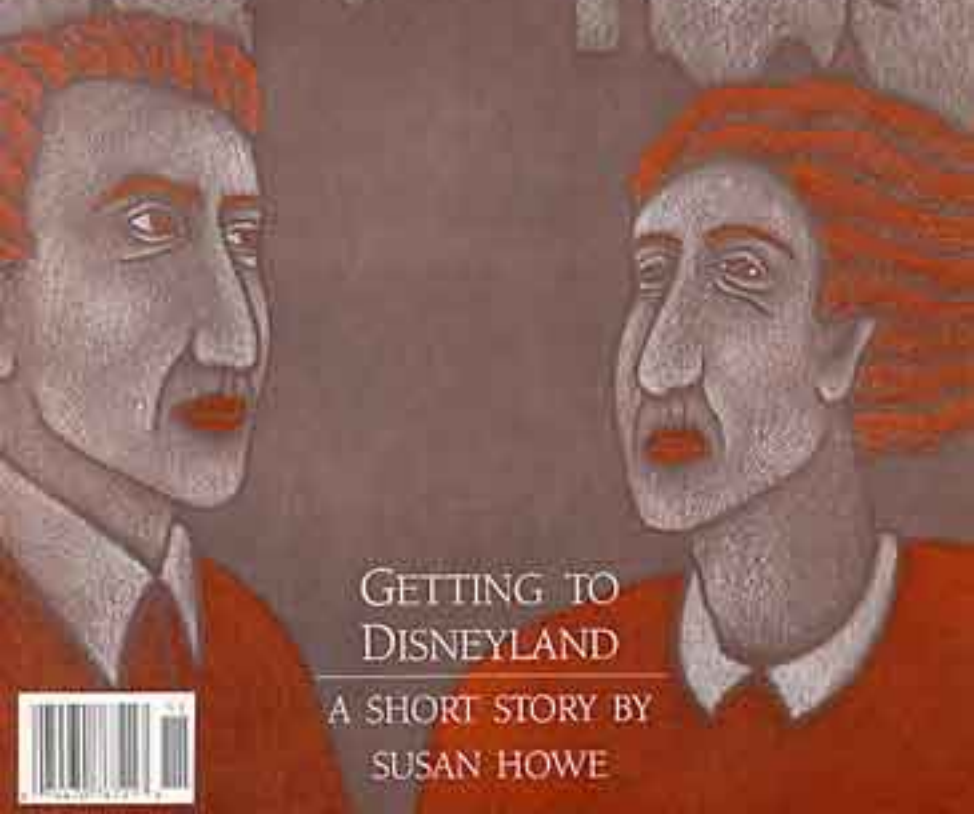


# SUNSTONE

THE JOURNAL OF THE  
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OF THE



GETTING TO  
DISNEYLAND

A SHORT STORY BY  
SUSAN HOWE



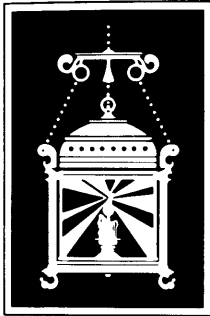
# SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, AND ART

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## READERS' FORUM

### A THOUGHT TOO BROAD?

AS MUCH AS I enjoy SUNSTONE, I view it somewhat like a friend's view of the actual sunstone on the Nauvoo Temple: it's kind of ugly. SUNSTONE looks at things within the Church which sometimes aren't very pretty. I worry about the weakening of faith of those new in the gospel or the outright rejection of the Church by those examining the faith. And yet, for those strong in the faith whose testimonies have been built upon prayer and grounded in service, SUNSTONE's explorations are healthy, thought-provoking, and interesting.

Rarely, however, is SUNSTONE faith promoting. I hope that anyone reading SUNSTONE would also subscribe to the *Ensign* and the *LDS Church News* to get a fuller picture of LDS beliefs and modern-day actions. Official Church publications provide the gospel, which is literally the good news of the kingdom of Jesus Christ.

JEFF SCHRADE  
Twin Falls, ID

### THE SUNSTONE DIALOGUE

I WAS INTRODUCED to SUNSTONE when I was seriously reevaluating everything—my church, my marriage, my heritage. A great-granddaughter of both Brigham Young and Erastus Snow, I grew up with a deep love of my heritage and the Church. Events caused me to deeply analyze the leadership and the lives of Church members and I discovered that my naiveté about certain things had been a protective shield behind which I performed all I had been taught to do. I began to seriously question many things and have walked a difficult tightrope ever since.

SUNSTONE has been a lifeline as I have raised my children in the Church, contributed to the organization, and conversed at length with my husband about things which do not belong in Christ's church. I don't always agree with what you print, but, oh, the relief to have a dialogue with those who are seeking and searching to make sense of the imperfect system in which we find ourselves. I do not

live in the comfort zone I did in the past. Sometimes, the pain is very deep when I lay to rest yet another platitude. But because of publications like SUNSTONE I have been challenged to more closely align my life with the really important challenges of living a Christ-like life. That is a painful thing for me to say, because I know this church could and should be the source of that knowledge.

SUE EMMETT PHAIR  
Salem, OR

### PICTURING POLYGAMY

I WAS DISAPPOINTED not to find a reference to the photo on the cover of your February issue ("Changed Faces: The Official LDS Position on Polygamy, 1890-1990," SUNSTONE 14:1). This photo hung in my parents' house for many years. The picture was probably taken in 1906 or 1907 in the small town of Afton, Utah. The home still stands.

VANCE C. PACE  
Fairfax, VA

*Editor's reply:*

Our oversight. The photograph is of the Alma F. Heaton family.

### ALTERNATE KORIHORS

SCOTT KENNEY'S "God's Alternate Voices" (SUNSTONE 14:2) went beyond mere faulty reasoning to the point of outright contempt for persons whom I honor and for an institution which I hold sacred.

Kenney's thesis has two elements: First, some or all of the general authorities are "modern Balaams" (11) who lack sufficient spiritual understanding to competently lead the Church. Second, as a consequence of Church leaders' inadequacy, the Church has need of "alternate voices"—like Kenney's—as a source of enlightenment: "The Church needs a loyal opposition to reexamine traditional assumptions, suggest alternate courses, provide new perspectives and creative insights" (15).

Kenney illustrates his thesis with a number of inapt spiritual analogies. He likens the relationship between Church leaders and "alternate voices" to Balaam and his ass, apostate Israel and the independent prophets, and the

Pharisee and Jesus, respectively. By these examples, he impliedly equates the presiding authorities with persons who were wicked, corrupt, and wholly without legitimate priesthood authority. This goes beyond the acceptable expression of a dissenting view: "Cursed are all those that shall lift up the heel against mine anointed . . . and cry they have sinned when they have not sinned . . . but have done that which was meet in mine eyes" (D&C 121:16).

Kenney attempts to justify his demeaning characterization of priesthood leaders by saying that even though Christ recognized the scribes and Pharisees as possessing legitimate priesthood authority, he vigorously attacked them as corrupt (12). Kenney's argument is refuted by modern revelation which confirms that the Jewish leaders of Jesus' time had for centuries lacked legitimate Melchizedek priesthood authority. Even if the scribes and Pharisees had once possessed any true priesthood authority, it had surely been withdrawn as they undertook to cover their sins, gratify their pride and vain ambitions, and exercise unrighteous control (see D&C 121:37).

According to Kenney, Church leaders should be disregarded whenever their teach-

ings conflict with one's personal vision of truth: "Acknowledge authority, but don't be intimidated. As Jesus said, we have only one master and only one teacher" (13). What Kenney disregards is Christ's own policy: "What I the Lord have spoken, I have spoken, . . . whether by mine own voice or by the voice of my servants" (D&C 1:38).

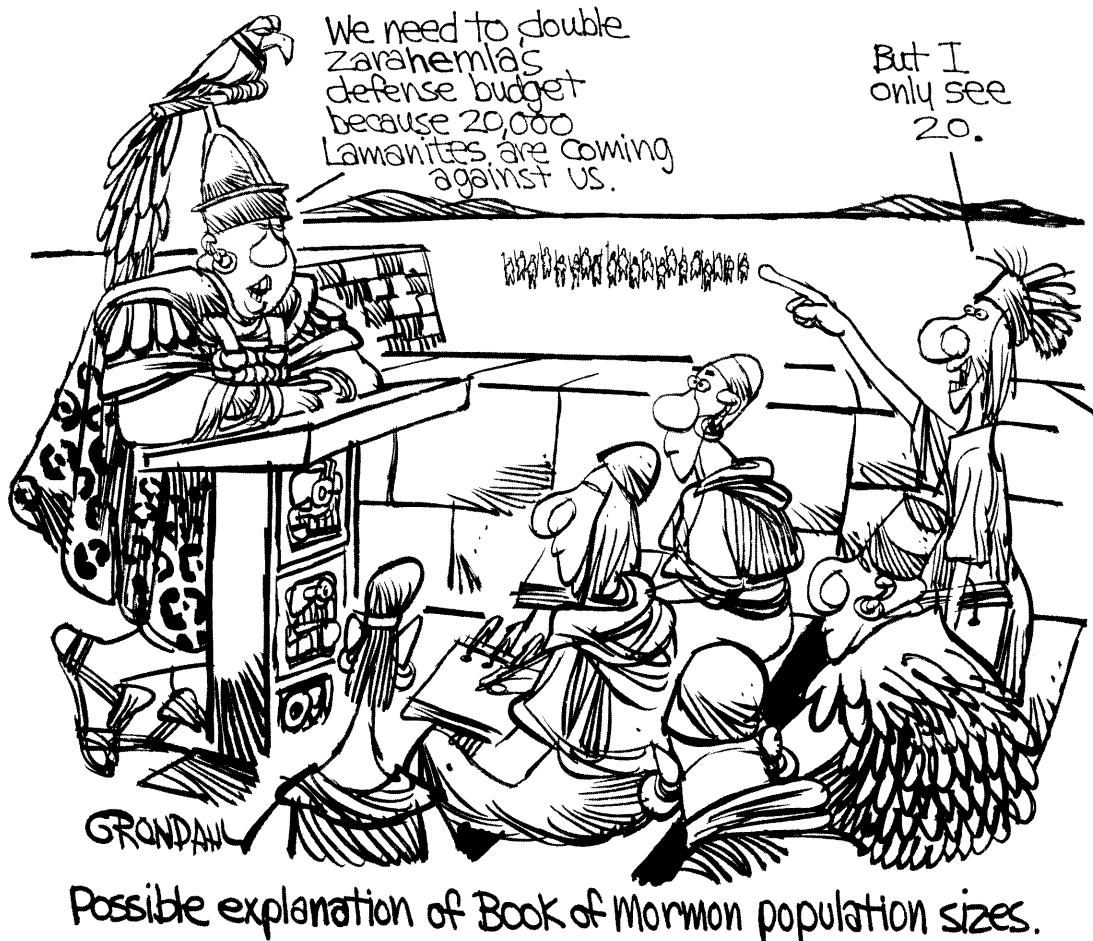
Kenney's philosophy suffers most from its failure to give proper weight to the first law of heaven: Obedience. Although he recognizes "the danger of spiritual pride and arrogance," he nevertheless advocates that aspiring alternate voices "sin bravely and leave the result to God" (14-15). His philosophy is thus at odds with a fundamental purpose of mortal life: "To see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them" (Abraham 3:25).

If Kenney is looking for some truly fitting scriptural allusions, I have a couple of suggestions. One is the story of Korihor's attack on Alma and the priesthood leaders. Korihor contended that the obligations imposed by the Church were "laid down by ancient priests, to usurp power and authority" over the people (Alma 30:23, emphasis added). He accused Church leaders of leading the people astray "according to your own desires; and ye keep

them down, even as it were in bondage" (Alma 30:27). Similarly, Kenney asserts that "nothing is more important to authorities than obedience," implying that the general authorities' primary motivation in giving spiritual instruction is purely the subjugation of Church members to their will. He accuses modern Church authorities of "whipping" Church members, who in his view possess superior spiritual abilities, "with the rod of dogma and the lash of authority" (12).

Finally, I suspect that Lucifer considered himself an "alternate course." If we give the benefit of the doubt to the one-third who chose to follow Lucifer, we can assume that they did not act out of a brazen desire to choose the wrong. I suspect, rather, that Lucifer persuaded them that his way was more enlightened; that God was "mix[ing] up ends and means" (12); that God's opposition to Lucifer's "alternate voice" was merely a symptom of the inordinate obsession with obedience which God shares with all other "authorities." He may even have urged his premortal followers to "[d]o what is right, let the brethern follow" (15).

KURTIS J. KEARL  
Petaluma, CA





## ALTERNATE BRASS

AT BEST, Scott Kenney's piece should have been chopped, pressed, and put into the Readers' Forum section. Yet SUNSTONE printed it as a full length article!

I expect more from a co-founder of SUNSTONE than the bitter, logically unsophisticated, and intellectually superficial anti-brethren tract that this article represented. While the independent magazines, journals, and symposia have affected me in many of the same positive ways that they have Kenney, there are more appropriate and thoughtful ways to discuss the relationship of so-called alternate voices to the institutional Church (see Armand Mauss's article in the same issue).

Those associated with SUNSTONE do not deserve the kind of alienation from Church authorities and members that this type of article engenders. Of course Kenney would have us believe that he is only doing that which has been done by other righteous rebel rousers. But unlike Jesus, Paul, Mary Magdalene, or Joseph, Kenney's words carry little authority; they seem to have the unmistakable clamor of sounding brass (the more faithful Jerusalem Bible reads "a gong booming").

JONATHAN THOMAS  
Chicago

## ON THE ROAD?

AS EARLY AS 1890 Church leaders taught that there was safety in following their lead. Elder Boyd K. Packer coined the oft-repeated dictum, "Follow the Brethren." This counsel has become a standard by which to judge the worthiness of the individual. Too often those who ask questions are viewed as traveling on the road to apostasy; the compliant subject (we are to believe) affirms unwavering commitment to God. But is that necessarily so? Brigham Young warned the Saints:

What a pity it would be if we were led by one man to utter destruction! . . . I am . . . afraid that this people have so much confidence in their leaders that they will not inquire for themselves of God whether they are led by Him." (*Journal of Discourses* 9:149ff.)

Are we not to support and follow the Lord's servants? Yes! I will sustain the Lord's servants, *as they serve the Lord*. But when their agenda becomes self-serving, when their teachings deviate from the standard works, or when the Spirit fails to confirm their position, I am left to recalibrate my own compass and reassess my position. An abusive father is nonetheless a father, but I need not support

him in unrighteous dominion. President Benson wisely counseled, "Sometimes one must choose to honor a Heavenly Father over a mortal father. We should give God, the Father of our spirits, an exclusive preeminence in our lives" (*Ensign*, May 1988, 5). The principle of *conditional* support applies also to the sustaining of priesthood leaders.

The scriptures affirm there is only one person I am to follow: Jesus Christ. His counsel is very clear: ameliorate the needs of the widow, the orphan, the homeless, and the oppressed (see Isaiah 1:17; 58:6-12; Jeremiah 7:5-7). I take great comfort in knowing that leaders are powerless to intervene in my personal relationship with God. Why, then, should I allow them to distract me from that which is of primary importance: repenting, forgiving, loving unconditionally, and serving?

KIM M. CLARK  
Salt Lake City

## ALL IN FAVOR . . .

SCOTT KENNEY'S entire premise that a symposium of intellectuals can generate truths from God conjures up a vision of general conference as a quasi-political-spiritual convention with delegates from SUNSTONE, *Dialogue*, polygamous Fundamentalists, and any other group from the seriously spiritual to the lunatic fringe all jockeying for votes and clamoring to be heard. The Hotel Utah might become a caucus center where support for ordaining women to the priesthood could be swapped for sanction of homosexual marriages and passing out contraceptive devices for laurels and priests.

Unless there has been an unannounced change in the Church government, I always thought this was Christ's church, directed by him through his duly ordained prophets. There is a process for evaluating prophetic counsel to personally determine truthfulness and each member has the responsibility to do just that. But this is a personal process, not a democratic consensus, and most of it takes place on our knees, not in a symposium. To suggest that anyone can speak up and give directions for the entire Church is to invite spiritual chaos.

GAIL PRATT WASDEN  
Petaluma, CA



"Now for Pete's sake don't use the absence of wine as a teaching moment for the Word of Wisdom!"

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## LIGHT MINDED

OVER THE LAST year I have read and discussed the various discourses on SUNSTONE's role as an "alternate voice." For years the magazine has chosen light as a symbol. Peggy Fletcher wrote an editorial entitled "Stretching Toward the Light" (SUNSTONE 10:1) and Elbert Peck's first editorial was "My Burden is Light" (SUNSTONE 10:12). Recently a quote caused me to rethink how and what SUNSTONE is about; it also applies to the Church and our individual selves:

You are not the oil, you are not the air—merely the point of combustion, the flash-point where the light is born.

You are merely the lens in the beam. You can only receive, give, and possess the light as a lens does.

If you seek yourself, "your rights," you prevent the oil and air from meeting in the flame, you rob the lens of its transparency. Sanctity—either to be the Light, or to be self-effaced in the Light, so that it may be born, self-effaced so that it may be focused or spread wider. (Dag Hammarskjöld, *Markings*, 155.)

We all need to be more humble in celebrating and explaining our contributions.

IAN JONES  
*Los Angeles*

## GIVE IT A REST

IN "THE HYPOCRITES of Homosexuality" (SUNSTONE 14:1), Orson Scott Card explains with what generous strictness and compassionate intolerance we must help our homosexual brothers and sisters free themselves from the tyranny of sin:

The only hope of joy that these people have is to recognize their sin and repent of it. True kindness is to be ever courteous and warm toward individuals, while confronting them always with our rejection of any arguments justifying their self-gratification.

For an ardent heterosexual this ringing summation has an especially mitigating kind of ascetic appeal, knotting beads of charity into a flagellant's scourge intended for someone else's penance. We can feel very generous in our normalcy, while aggressively defending it abroad. Yet the truth is that the tyranny of sin is not likely to yield soon or ever to the sin of tyranny. This is a very old

lesson, but mostly still unlearned.

To make way for his conclusion, Card skewers the hard won, hard fought contention that sexual orientation is genetically fixed. The matter is "laughably irrelevant," he explains, and so dismisses at a single stroke whole ranks of those agitating, once again—and even more "insidiously," it seems—to integrate the neighborhood. "We are all" of us, he continues, "genetically predisposed toward some sin or another. We are all expected to control those genetic predispositions." Some are inclined to overeat, I suppose, and some drive too fast in school zones. Some may gamble and, of course, some drink. Perhaps homosexuality is like alcoholism, a genetically predisposed pathology. Yet alcoholism causes direct, identifiable damage to body, mind, family, the physical and social environments.

It is not impossible to locate sin near the seat of such harm. But I am far from persuaded that harm is the inexorable consequence of a romantic attraction to a person of one's own sex. I do not understand such attractions, but then neither do I fathom nor much control whatever fires my own. It is, in any case, not just sex. Impatient with nuance, Card explains that fifteen-year-old boys are "genetically predisposed to copulate with anything that moves." This is already untrue on its face. Adolescent sexual urgency is at minimum highly gender specific, (that is part of the point here) and is mitigated commonly by inhibitions which may be externally imposed, yes, but may also be as complex and internal and as genetically predictable as love. (Only the purest cynicism would insist that it is the weight of cultural sanction alone that keeps Kevin Arnold from jumping Winnie Cooper's beautiful bones.) I, too, have known homosexual men whose promiscuity seemed flagrant and destructive, but I have known far more men whose predations were heterosexual. Nor is marriage any stranger to sexual harm and abuse. And studies, after all, tell us that the most nurturing and enduring sexual unions are lesbian. If there be evil here, it is surely the same evil that has long plagued relations chiefly between men and women.

It is, meanwhile, one of the chief glories of Mormon theology to have returned materialism, that is a husbanding concern for this world, this time, this flesh, to its place in the pale Pauline hierarchies of Christianity, to have freed us from paradigms that have little or nothing to do with life on earth. In fact, it little becomes a church whose early and founding history struggled long and ardently against sexual taboo and convention to slide so easily down into the oldest and easiest

kinds of visceral prejudice. Joseph Smith, at least, combed the Old Testament to find reason and precedent in securing to himself as wives women he had already taken. I find it interesting that no one much feels compelled to quote chapter and verse in order to attack homosexuality. In part, of course, this is because there is blessed little in scripture to quote, and in part because to the right minded, right hormoned, properly plumbed majority, the perfidy in question seems a perfectly self-evident matter of biological aesthetics.

Still for all such natural discomfort, it is one thing to proscribe destructive behavior and quite another to tell a human being that those things his or her nature, in common with all our human natures, most longs for—companionship, physical intimacy and intensity, and, yes, love (a word Card's appeal carefully avoids associating with homosexual desire)—are not only circumstantially wrong, not only wrong when selfish and abusing, but in and of themselves evil. Sorry. There is no tidy division here between sin and sinner. To condemn the one is in the most painfully and unavoidable human way to repudiate the other.

Card's chief justification for this unpleasantness is that it is necessary to defend religious authority and preserve the Church. I'm a little stunned and at a loss for logic or precedent to explain this assertion. The most openly homosexual culture in western history thrived and produced the very ideas which today most thoroughly inform our own Christian notions of ideal love, including sexual love. And it wasn't until Greek culture had again adopted avidly and pointedly heterosexual norms that it fell into political and military decline.

As for the appeal to contemporary authority, it is, of course, the same sort of authority which once pronounced plural marriage the path to exaltation, but then later the sure road to apostasy; once explained black people as genetically separate because spiritually inferior, then later as perhaps equal, but definitely separate, and finally and mercifully as neither. It is an authority that until recently felt altogether comfortable with the notion that men are directly answerable to God while women, on the other hand, are directly answerable to men. Now, it seems, authority is no longer so comfortable. Oh, how times and the "timeless" change. And I for one am happy for these awkward amendments to the "forever fixed, unchanging and eternal" pretensions in our rhetoric. They are our best record of a long and difficult strug-

gle, mostly with ourselves, to clothe precept and good intention in real flesh and bone. I am not, however, in a hurry to accept the latest summary pronouncements on this serious trouble as the last. I have lived long enough to see more than one final defensive line of faithfulness replaced—as a touchstone of loyalty—by the acceptance of its transgression. And surely there is in the world pain enough already without some of us standing comfortable in very high places lobbing boulders and provoking landslides. Brother Card is an eloquent showman. He does a compelling voice from out of the wilderness, but I wish sometimes he would come down from the mountain and give it a rest.

NEAL CHANDLER  
Cleveland, Ohio

## SEXISM AND HOMOSEXUALITY

ORSON SCOTT CARD would probably disagree when I say that people are not born heterosexual or homosexual. Sexual urges are inborn: *orientation* is determined by tens of thousands of events in the life of the developing child as well as the roles, values, and aesthetics of the community which rears the child. When a community says that certain behavior is “natural” for one’s gender, then when the individual fails to conform to the appropriate behavior, that individual is given every right to question whether or not he or she is really the gender they appear to be. I believe that in the future we will realize that the stronger the sexist structure is in a community (be that structure patriarchal or matriarchal) the greater the number of homosexuals will be in that community. Ideas of masculine and feminine should be restricted to the act of procreation. To label jobs, clothing, colors, roles, attitudes, etc. as masculine or feminine is to invite confusion.

Of course one sexist thing is not going to affect anyone’s sexual orientation, but when multiplied by tens of thousands of tiny events and messages the question shouldn’t be “why are there homosexuals in the Church?” but “why aren’t there more?”

ROB LAUER  
Portsmouth, VA

## HEAVY BURDENS

ORSON SCOTT CARD’S essay on homosexuality contains several debatable assertions.

First, Card assumes that gays have as their agenda simultaneous membership in the Church and membership in a monolithic, promiscuous gay community. Most gay Mormons agree that monogamy is essential; most aspire to find a lifetime mate and recreate, as faithfully as possible, a lifestyle modeled on heterosexual marriage. Card is either misinformed or unfairly generalizing when he asserts that LDS gays are seeking approval for sexual license. Moreover, if the general gay subculture has been characterized by promiscuity, it is precisely because (as Michael Foucault has noted) homosexuality was banished and driven underground by Christianity, thus prohibiting gays from elaborating a system of courtship. The promiscuity Card decries is largely attributable to the view he espouses.

Second, Card assumes challenging modern prophets who have spoken on this matter is tantamount to a denial of modern revelation. It seems to me that gays are simply wondering whether prophetic discourse has been genuine revelation or a reflection of cultural

influences. By way of analogy, is it permissible to question the Adam-God doctrine, a teaching Brigham Young declared essential to salvation? Perhaps modern prophetic teaching on homosexuality is genuine revelation, but it is mean-spirited to brand those who ask otherwise “hypocrites,” especially when so much is at stake (for them, at least; it is easy to bind heavy burdens on others).

Card should be more careful in throwing around the epithet “hypocrite.” Christ reserved the term almost exclusively for those who, at least on the basis of the letter of the law, were morally irreproachable.

MARK SIMONS  
Philadelphia, PA

## TOO MUCH TALENT TO LOSE

BISHOP STAN ROBERTS (“Pastoring the Farside: Making A Place for Believing Homosexuals,” *SUNSTONE* 14:1) is indeed a pioneer; his efforts should not go unsung. As a church, we can not afford to lose young men in time of war or peace to indifference, neglect, or through a tough, rigid stance. I know what our losses were to military service, and I see a corollary with homosexuals. There is too



Los Angeles LDS homosexuals in a Gay Pride Day parade.

much energy and talent at stake not to be using every available tool we have at our disposal to keep individuals active and productive within the Church. This must be done with a soft hand and voice, a knowledgeable spirit of understanding, and the development of positive Roberts-style leadership. Too many young men, women, and their families become victims of the prejudice of homophobia with the Church. We must overcome this through education, non-judgmental tolerance, and prayer.

LEO W. GOATES  
*Los Angeles*

## READING BETWEEN THE LINES

WHY DID YOU disclaim Wayne Schow's article ("Homosexuality, Mormon Doctrine, and Christianity: A Father's Perspective," *SUNSTONE* 14:1) with that unprecedented and patronizing introductory statement? You trust that we will read John Armstrong's description of Elder Ballard's behavior without confusing it with the ideals of Christ. You leave us to absorb Scott Card's certitude and epithets without mistaking them for theological truth. You need to respect your author enough to not tell us he probably has got it wrong. Schow's piece deserved better from you.

GIGI DOTY  
*Tucson, AZ*

### *Editor's reply:*

While not unprecedented, such a notice is very uncommon, and in this case unneeded. In my experience, our conservative readers are more likely to ascribe editorial advocacy to controversial "liberal" topics than liberals do with conservative articles. I was only trying to assure an unencumbered presentational tone for an article whose speculation that Christ approves of gay marriages might engender reader outrage that the magazine was forcing "its agenda" on them. Given the companion articles in the same issue, the distancing statement was obviously unnecessary. I am sorry for insulting our reader's judgment and intelligence; I apologize to Mr. Schow for prejudicing his excellent essay.

## FACT OR FICTION?

RAEO PASSEY'S ELOQUENT letter ("R-Rated Fiction," *SUNSTONE* 14:2) made a

strong positive impression on me. *SUNSTONE* should not publish "R-rated" fiction. In saying that, I surprise myself. I chaff at being told by the Church that I must never see an R-rated movie. Why can't I make the decision myself on a case-by-case basis? Still, if a publication is to recommend itself to the Saints, its fiction should not offend the many people who adhere to the usual Mormon standards. *SUNSTONE* does not have a good reputation among the majority of those Mormons who have heard of it; is the presence of "R-rated" fiction one of the reasons?

Should *SUNSTONE* publish fiction at all? I don't know. There is already an effectively infinite supply of excellent fiction available to me. My tentative vote is to reserve all the precious space in *SUNSTONE* for the many other valuable things the magazine is uniquely qualified to bring me.

None of the above comments are meant to imply that *SUNSTONE* should not publish a discussion of evolution (for example) that would be unacceptable to the *Ensign*. No matter what point of view an article on evolution might argue, I would simply take it to be an invitation to consider the author's viewpoint. But when reading much of *SUNSTONE*'s fiction, I feel coerced. I feel that "R-rated" passages are being forced upon me by a coalition of the author, the publisher, and the editor. Since I don't know in advance where the mischievous passages are, the only way I can avoid them is to avoid all the fiction.

RICHARD P. SMITH  
*Westfield, NJ*

## SHARP POETRY

THANKS TO Raeo Passey for introducing me to the poetry of Loretta Randall Sharp. After reading and largely agreeing with Brother Passey's articulate attack on the X-rated poetry *SUNSTONE* has published, I decided, for the first time, to read some of the poems. The voyeur in me was disappointed, the literary critic gratified. Passey had promised shockingly "degraded language" and obsessive sensuality. What I found was poetry of great insight, depth, and spirituality. Like Brother Passey, I have never used the word bullshit (until now), but as degraded language goes, it is pretty mild, and I can testify that "real Mormons" do use the word. Growing up in the Mormon community of Moreland, Idaho, I heard it often enough to know its precise definition and connotations. Sharp uses this word to great effect in "Breathings"

(*SUNSTONE* 13:3). Her character Willene is surely right when she says that it "lacks synonym." The alternative, untruth, which another character, Beth, suggested in the poem, doesn't begin to hint at the set of attitudes and powerful relations which bullshit implies so precisely. And if Brother Passey believes that real Mormon women never feel this way about patriarchal power and rhetoric, he need only read Dorice Elliott's essay in the same issue as his letter to see that they do ("Unto the Least of These"—Another Gender Gap," *SUNSTONE* 14:2). While Sister Elliott's language is more genteel and her tone more mild, her basic point is the same as Willene's.

Brother Passey makes a profound point when he says that "there is a covert, extra dimension of subliminal manipulation inherent in fiction." I share his resentment when a novel or television program manipulates me into hoping that the criminal escapes or the seducer succeeds in his seduction. He has written a fine critique of much that is bad in modern literature. However, his critique is not relevant to one of the immediate objects of his attack—Sharp's poetry. (Perhaps it is relevant to other work he attacks, the short stories of Lewis Horne and Michael Fillerup. Since I haven't yet read them, I can't say.) In the attack on the poetry, another dynamic seems to be at work. When Christ went to Matthew's house and sat among publicans and sinners, the Pharisees thought he had defiled himself. Blinded by their intense commitment to conventional morality, they could not see that here was a magnificent cleansing, not base defilement. It is true that Sharp's poem, "Watching 12N" (*SUNSTONE* 13:4), portrays a peeping Tom spying on three innocent women. (It is also true that Passey repeatedly alludes to a naked emperor, a metaphor that he would not wish us to take too literally.) But to focus on the Tom is to make the same mistake the Pharisee made. Taken whole, the poem is clearly about poetry and the profound connection it makes possible—at a price—between writer and reader. In the peeping Tom and Willene, Sharp has found a nearly perfect metaphor for reader and writer, a metaphor, by the way, that works only in the context of the moral values which are typical of Mormonism. It is taken for granted in the poem that Willene would be horrified at the thought of stripping off all her clothes before this stranger. Nothing could be more abhorrent to her. And yet, if she wants her poems, the "lines on the yellow pad," to connect with him, that is what, metaphorically, she must do. She must bare

her soul to the stranger, her reader. To do so is to make possible a kind of communication so intimate that it is almost sacred. The sexual communion a bare body implies is the only adequate metaphor for such intimate communication. This poem is ultimately about sacrificing oneself in order to connect with and serve others. What could be more Christian and, at our best, more Mormon?

I commend to Brother Passey and others who are offended by the surfaces of Sharp's poetry her poem "Doing It" (SUNSTONE 14:2). Except for the allusive title, the poem contains no offensive words or images, and it can be taken as a kind of poetic rejoinder to the letter. It shows how the least of us, a disreputable bag lady named Sharon, modern-day incarnation of Christ's publican and sinners, can expose the emptiness of merely conventional, formulaic morality in the best of us. Passey is intelligent, sincere, and passionately articulate. But because he chooses to judge Sharp's poems—"cryptic ravels" he calls them—before seeing through to their depths, these virtues don't save him from the Pharism orthodox Mormons are prone to.

VAL LARSEN  
Blacksburg, VA

## PROSTITUTING THE TEXT

I WAS AS little enthralled with Elouise Bell's review of Carol Lynn Pearson's *Mother Wove the Morning* as I was with the play itself ("A Moving, Affecting Experience," SUNSTONE 14:1). Bell's basic points are true: fabulous and important concept; incredible acting; too lengthy script; too repetitious; too little dramatic build; too little humor after the first act.

Perhaps I was jaded. I saw the play after sitting through several Sunstone Symposium West lectures on the importance of truthful (versus faith-promoting) history. No one mentioned that twisted history is despicable in defense of Mormonism but permissible in defense of Feminism.

Generally, Pearson only holds onto her Mormon roots when it serves her ill. While freely hostile toward Mormonism's sexist, biblical, and polygamous teachings, she shows herself every bit a Mormon when it comes to (a) never allowing two minutes to go by without a sermon, (b) forsaking subtle persuasion for dogmatism, (c) portraying sex only as evil, (d) relying on the King James Version of the Bible, and (e) playing loose with historical facts.

I've come to expect sex to be a big negative in orthodox sermons, but this was a "liberated" play. Thus, I assumed there would be at least one joyful, sexually-active woman in her 20,000-year history on earth—if not a simple wife, then maybe a temple-prostitute priestess, or the therapist offering some good, spicy advice and clever sarcasm. Anything. But no, even the witch was just another chained and tortured victim of cruel male suppression.

Perhaps, the fact that men are naturally horny still surprises and upsets feminists as it does many Mormons, despite the testimony of scriptures, history, psychiatry, evolution, biology, and thousands of years of common experience. More important, if horniness is evil, the play was hardest on the only thing in human history, perhaps, that has to any degree controlled that horniness (and barely at that)—strict, monotheistic religion.

This attack on Hebraic monotheism is also a central theme in Merlin Stone's *When God Was a Woman*—one of Pearson's acknowledged sources. This fascinating and groundbreaking study seems flawed in that it treats the Old Testament the way some Mormons treat Catholicism and the same way the Tanners treat Mormonism—capable of seeing only the worst. The book never mentions any tenderness in Isaiah, Job, or Genesis, but only quotes the Old Testament when the topics are murder, plunder and pillage, especially when commanded by male Jehovah against the more gentle, ancient, pagan, goddess-worshippers who once prevailed in the Near East. To Stone, the polytheistic pagans are as much the absolute heroes (and Hebrew monotheists the villains) as the reverse is true in Old Testament accounts. I was as uncomfortable with this naive praise of ancient

paganism in Pearson's play as I was in Stone's book.

This attack on Old Testament chauvinism is never more clear than in what Bell accurately identifies as the most moving moment of the play—Pearson's retelling of Judges 19. First, Pearson uses the King James Version, which says that the Levite's concubine had "played the whore." More accurate translations state she left him "in anger." Thus, Pearson has the Levite eventually chop up his raped-but-still-alive concubine as a punishment for her infidelity and for *her* sin of "getting raped." He sends her twelve body parts to the tribes as a testament against their infidelity to God. This makes a strong emotional statement against a male-dominated society that blames rape on the woman. Too bad it's just not true. Since the concubine was never unfaithful, infidelity is not the theme of the biblical text; the hideousness of rape is. Pearson merely makes the Bible say close to the exact opposite of what it actually says.

In Judges 20, one learns that the Levite found his concubine raped *and* already dead. He sent pieces of her body to the tribes as a way of enraging Israel into action against the rapists (like sending graphic photos from Dachau). The other tribes then raised an entire army (400,000) to punish the rapists in a bloody civil war.

I doubt one could find such a strong anti-rape message in all ancient literature, yet this is the story Pearson chooses to demonstrate how anti-female biblical society really was. I only wish America today took rape (and sexual fidelity) as seriously as those ancient Jehovah-worshippers did.

JON CHRISTOPHER  
Los Angeles

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### REST

Air-snapped, the thought was gone:  
empty notes descant, reaching high on air,  
  
round to an empty chorus;  
dumb chords deafening to hear, speak round  
  
and silent against the upraised baton  
of the conductor. He could call for order, and  
  
perhaps win a calmer cacophony—  
enough to work with, to mold an art from, perhaps.  
  
The too-loud chorus is my definite silence,  
stopping the single note from rising through the  
  
rest.

—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER



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## FROM THE EDITOR

# SHADES OF GRAY



by Elbert Eugene Peck

SHORTLY AFTER BECOMING editor four years ago, the Sunstone staff repainted our now former labyrinth of offices in the old Bennett Paint & Glass Building in downtown Salt Lake. It was an ambitious project and consumed much more of our time than we anticipated. Once, in the stark morning light with my feet on my desk, I kicked back and surveyed our creation, the gray walls, white trim, and off-white ceiling: it was good, the contrasting colors engendered a comfortable sense of orderliness to the old high-ceilinged room.

Sometime later, in the afternoon's golden glow, I again surveyed the fruit of our labor. This time the dance of sunlight reflecting around the room made it nearly impossible to distinguish any difference between the colors on the walls and ceiling; they were all a milky beige. In certain corners even the white-white trim blended with the adjoining gray walls. Were these really the same colors the staff had debated over in the late-night hours of painting, wondering whether the gray was too dark?

Perhaps avoiding work, I began to reflect. For the first time in years I thought of Ila West, that delightful, eccentric woman in the ward of my teenage years. She troubled the adults with the heterodox revelations she received and wrote down while soaking in the bathtub and which she regularly shared in testimony meetings. To the youth, however, she was a good friend who would engage us in very speculative gospel conversations over ice cream. Once while discussing the nature of "Truth" Ila explained to me how two enlightened individuals looking at the same truth can understand it entirely differently. To illustrate her point she noted how two can look at an object and because of the difference in the

reflection of the light will see it colored differently (with a rainbow, one may not see it at all). The understanding of truth was all a matter of perspective.

Being daily fed a diet of seminary absolutism, I disagreed. Truth was Truth; it is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow; it does not change, it is only polluted. To confirm my assessment I went to the authority in the ward, our bishop. After explaining to him our friendly disagreement and Ila's example, I remember being disturbed because he would not forthrightly reject her light metaphor, although he did encourage me to continue in my personal quest through prayer, obedience, and serious thought. What a wishy-washy defender of the gospel, I thought then.

Now, after having lived a little more of life and after looking at the changing office walls from the same perspective but under different light, I am less indubitable on absolutes. As the reflections of light changed in that office, so now do my spiritual ruminations, the bouncings of my daily thoughts, experiences, and moods. Some days I acclaim the unique mission of the Church, but on other days the earlier distinction is blurred: though the previous feeling still resonates in me, I ecumenically embrace the fellowship with all God's good causes throughout the world. At times I testify to the prophetic vision of the Brethren, but on different occasions I focus on the incredible human overlay which filters all divine initiative. Sometimes doctrines clearly define and animate me and my world, and other times they are but rough intimations, murky shadows on the wall of Plato's cave. The scriptures alternate between being God's pure word and man's best attempt to articulate this inscrutable God in his bounded culture. At the end of an inspirational meeting I

genuinely and gustily sing anthems with the Saints, celebrating the goodness of His work and His people; yet, the next day I lament how His sheep have gone astray to the gods of materialism and ritualistic obedience. And so it goes.

Of course this acknowledgement of opposites is nothing new, both Lehi and Hegel assert their essentialness, and I am not perplexed by the simultaneous dynamic of the one and the many—the free-willed individual and the conforming community. Nevertheless, this duality of "pure intelligence" and seeing through the glass darkly, causes me to question my faithfulness. Some friends question my duplicity and chameleon manipulative tendencies (I did like Woody Allen's *Zelig*). Am I blessed by being able to embrace contraries or am I now the wishy washy one, St. James's wind-tossed wave? Or is this ambivalence merely part of maturing, the metaphorically gray walls appearing now in my graying temples?

Fortunately, in this office metaphor whether the colors are distinct or blurred, the effect is caused by the sunlight. Light is the medium by and through which we see grays and whites and all the other colors in Joseph's coat. So, too, I hope, it is the Light that animates my diverse ponderings, which at least are religious in nature.

Still, whether I respond to a gospel discussion with a celebrative "Yes!" or by concurring with the relativist Pilate's "What is truth?", over the years some absolutes have distilled on me which the Light illuminates regardless of my perspective. They are the fundamentals which increasingly animate me, at least they poke my conscience and sometimes define my life: to forgive, not to judge, to give slack, to be kind, to champion and attend to the poor and powerless in society, to live simply and for others—the virtues in the Beatitudes. I suspect I will live my life in a perpetual state of ambiguous ambivalence—I intuitively champion the "on the other hand" positions-celebrating the vacillating shades of gray, but I hope I become increasingly pure on the black and white core virtues of Christianity, which are the light which shines through any perspective.

In our "new" four-year-old offices the walls are a creamy beige and there are no windows bringing in natural sunlight. There is no variety in shadows and moods. This lessens our inclination to reflect on our work and increases the incentive to just do it so we can go out and celebrate God's creation. ☐

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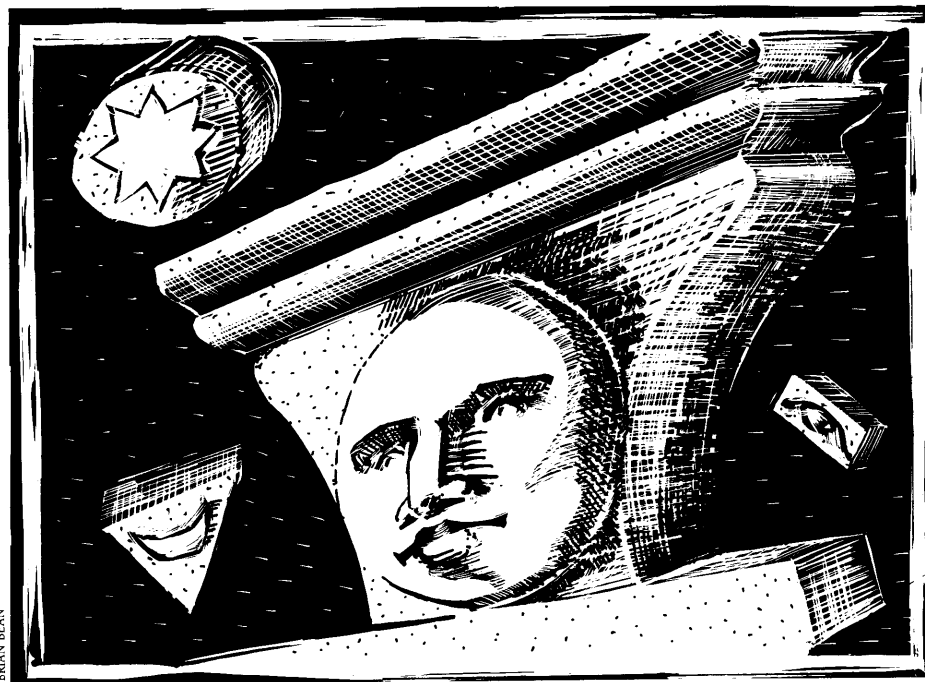
## TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

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Keith E. Norman

# A KINDER, GENTLER MORMONISM MOVING BEYOND THE VIOLENCE OF OUR PAST



FLAK HAS BEEN heavy at the front lately. Those of us waging the battle against evil and calumny in the Kirtland Ohio Stake have not fared well since the murders by the Lundgren cult have come to light. Almost everyone in the stake has a war story. A few weeks after the bodies of the murdered cult members were discovered in a barn not far from the Kirtland Temple and our stake center, my wife Kerry was innocently sitting in her speech class at Kent State when the teacher, out of the blue, related her experience of being interrupted by Mormon missionaries at her door, trying to peddle their religion. "I hope I don't offend anyone's religious sensi-

bilities," she added thoughtfully, and then went on at some length about how irritated she was by these young Mormon upstarts. "And they have the *nerve* to come around after that mess in Kirtland!" she concluded with disgust.

The fact that there is no direct connection between the Lundgren group and the LDS church seems scarcely to have registered with the general public, who have gotten the inside dope from the *Cleveland Plain Dealer*. Prophet Lundgren came out of the Reorganized LDS Church, but the RLDS seem to be notably short of skeletons in their historical closet, providing a dearth of grist for the media. It is a different story with us Brighamites. Guided by very cooperative anti-Mormon crusaders from Utah, the *Plain Dealer*

"explained" the Lundgren phenomenon in terms of its Mormon roots. In an extensive series of articles, Ohio's largest newspaper depicted our history as a long series of fanatic and murderous clashes, from the Danites and the Mountain Meadows Massacre to the LeBarons, Singers, and Mark Hofmann. Northern Ohio readers learned that the Book of Mormon is replete with divinely sanctioned violence, beginning with Nephi's slaying of Laban. The most damaging revelations, however, concerned Brigham Young's blood atonement statements and the penalties in the temple endowment. The inference that the former RLDS minister Lundgren was influenced by Brigham Young or LDS temple ceremonies has little basis in reality, but it made good copy. The fact opposes, but the media nevertheless discloses. The message came across loud and clear to the public: the Mormon church spawns violent cults.

Although the *Plain Dealer* largely ignored the indignant refutations some of us wrote to the editor, it is well within our power as a church to defuse much of the weaponry we have been providing our detractors. Denying the LDS connection with the fanatical apocalyptic groups does not work because the links are only too obvious. However dubious the assertion that the Lundgren cult is a Mormon spinoff, we have had more than our share of cancerous outgrowths. We need hardly be surprised when outsiders see the connection between them and rhetoric such as Brigham Young's on blood atonement. His statements are a matter of record.<sup>1</sup> We might debate into the Millennium about exactly what he meant by blood atonement or whether he put it into practice, but until we decidedly and officially repudiate such ideas, they will continue to haunt us.

Just in case your *Journal of Discourses* has been gathering excessive dust on your shelf recently, blood atonement, as preached from the pulpit of the Tabernacle in the nineteenth century, is the idea that certain sins are so bad as to fall outside Christ's redeeming sacrifice and require the individual sinner to atone for the sin himself by having his or her own blood shed in order to be saved. Murder, for example, is impossible to repent of fully since the murderer cannot restore the victim's life. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," as the Old Testament puts it.<sup>2</sup> Brigham Young carried it a step further. Speaking of those who violate their covenants of chastity, he warned, "The blood of Christ will never wipe that out, your own blood must atone for it. . . ."<sup>3</sup> In the same discourse, President Young asserted that any

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man who finds a brother in bed with his wife is justified in putting a javelin through both of them, and thus “they would atone for their sins, and be received into the kingdom of God. I would so at once in such a case,” he declared, “and under such circumstances, I have no wife whom I love so well that I would not put a javelin through her heart, and I would do so with clean hands.”<sup>4</sup>

Now, we all know that the Church does not now teach blood atonement. Or does it? Our unofficial fourth standard work, *Mormon Doctrine*, seems to want it both ways. Elder McConkie starts out his entry on blood atonement by denying emphatically “that any such practice either existed or was taught.” Only by tearing isolated statements from their context can “wicked” and “dishonest” persons make it appear “that Brigham Young and others taught things just the opposite of what they really believed and taught.” The “true doctrine of blood atonement,” Elder McConkie goes on to explain, is simply that “Jesus Christ worked out the infinite and eternal atonement by the shedding of his own blood.”<sup>5</sup> This is the line that Church spokespersons, official or otherwise, have taken in refuting the *Plain Dealer’s* accounts.

“But,” Elder McConkie continues, “under certain circumstances,” some serious sins mandate that the guilty “must ‘be destroyed in the flesh and delivered to the buffetings of Satan,’ ” in order to be redeemed. He is quoting Doctrine and Covenants 132:26, and cites murder as the prime example of such a sin. Actually, the text, referring to those previously sealed up unto eternal life, applies this penalty, destruction in the flesh, to any sin *except* murder. Presumably, for one who has fallen so far—from being assured of exaltation to knowingly shed innocent blood—no expiation is possible, not even blood atonement. Thus, Elder McConkie’s scriptural citation is invalid. However, he also quotes Joseph Fielding Smith’s *Doctrines of Salvation* in support of the view that a man “must make sacrifice of his own life to atone for a sin for which the blood of Christ does not avail.” McConkie concludes, “This doctrine can only be practiced in its fullness in a day when the civil and ecclesiastical laws are administered in the same hands. It was, for instance, practiced in the days of Moses, but it was not and could not be practiced in this dispensation except . . . [under] capital punishment” laws enacted by various states.<sup>6</sup>

So, where do we stand? Well, if I understand Elder McConkie, he was saying that, although earlier Church leaders never believed, preached, or practiced blood atone-

ment, we actually do believe in it and would practice it if we had the legal and political power to do so. (Even though we didn’t when Brigham Young presided over the theocratic territory of Deseret.) This is the kind of dodge that has the anti-Mormons dancing gleefully in the streets. It is also easy to see how this sort of logic could be twisted by fanatical would-be prophets into justification for violent enforcement of their apocalyptic visions.

Thankfully, *Mormon Doctrine* is not Mormon doctrine, no matter how many times it is cited in sacrament meeting. My testimony is strengthened by the realization that, if the Church weren’t true, our slavish veneration of Elder McConkie’s magnum opus would likely have ruined it thirty years ago. Official Church doctrine on the limits of ecclesiastical power is clearly set forth in section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants:

We do not believe it just to mingle religious influence with civil government. . . . We believe that all religious societies have a right to deal with their members for disorderly conduct, according to the rules and regulations of such societies; provided that such dealings be for fellowship and good standing; but we do not believe that any religious society has authority to try men on the right of property or life, to take from them this world’s goods, or to put them in jeopardy of either life or limb, or to inflict any physical punishment upon them. They can only excommunicate them from their society, and withdraw from them their fellowship.<sup>7</sup>

There is no room in that statement for blood atonement. It is a misguided theory derived from an overly literalistic reading of the Old Testament dictum about “shedding the blood” of a murderer, combined with a *mis*interpretation of the Doctrine and Covenants discourse on the need for certain apostates to be destroyed in the flesh. Whatever this latter phrase means, in light of the explicit above rejection of the right of a church to inflict physical punishment, such “destruction” should be interpreted as referring to the Lord’s prerogative, not that of the Church or some future theocracy. The Church would do itself a big favor by publicly repudiating blood atonement once and for all.

As an anachronism from the nineteenth-century Utah church under siege, blood atonement would be relatively easy for us to officially disavow—certainly a lot easier than plural marriage was. Indeed, it would already

be a dead issue except for the insistence on its continued validity by anti-Mormons, combined with our response of historical ignorance or denial rather than repudiation.

THE other legacy of violence from the nineteenth century—the penalty representations in the temple—is much more problematic. Ironically, just as I was reading this paper at the Washington D.C. Sunstone Symposium (6 April 1990), the temples were closed to make a number of changes—described as “audio-visual updating”—including the deletion of the penalties. A (temporary?) explanatory lecture preceding the endowment emphasizes the inspiration involved in the changes. Although I think these changes have been heartily welcomed by the vast majority of temple-goers, many of us have tended to view the temple ceremonies as established through direct revelation and therefore immutable. The following discussion focuses primarily on the historical and theological rationale for dropping the penalties in support of my belief that the changes constitute a needed updating and illustrate the advantages of an ecclesiastical system which is open to progressive revelation.

First, let me affirm my respect and reverence for the endowment ceremony and the covenants I have made in the temple. I have no intention of violating the vows of secrecy I made there. I am not going to get much more specific about the penalties; my point can be made just as well without being explicit on what the penalties involved.

The core of the endowment ceremony traces the plan of salvation from the council in heaven and the creation through our sojourn in a fallen world up to our intended exaltation in the celestial kingdom. It is inspiring and uplifting, motivating and committing us to achieve our full potential as children of God. The covenants we make in the temple impress upon us the importance of dedicating ourselves to building the kingdom of God through righteousness and service to others. By bringing together earth, heaven, and hell, as well as the living, the dead, and the promise of future generations in one sacred spot, the endowment teaches us who we are and how we fit into the overall scheme of the cosmos. It shows us our eternal destiny and gives us the means to achieve it. As Hugh Nibley and others have pointed out, the ritual drama and symbolism found in the temple have roots deep in antiquity and resonate in our innermost being.<sup>8</sup>

Unfortunately, until the recent change, much of the force and spiritual profundity of the endowment was lost on us, particularly when we were neophytes at the temple, due to what appeared as the mumbo-jumbo trappings of a secret society which kept interrupting the ceremony. Initially, most of us were so stunned by the signs, tokens, and penalties, so at odds with our expectations and conditioning as rational Christians, that we could scarcely absorb the actual religious content of the endowment. Now, this may seem an extreme characterization for those of us who are too old to remember or too jaded from repeated visits, but just reflect a moment. Do you know anyone who was inspired, uplifted, or edified by the grisly representations of the different ways life can be taken for revealing the secrets? Virtually everyone was put off by it, at least at first. After a time, most of us could rationalize these penalties as impressing upon us the sacredness of the covenants we made in the temple. We did not expect a literal bloody vengeance to be visited accordingly upon those who did expose the secrets. Witness the long succession of exposés which told all about the secret temple rites. As far as I know, no Danites have swooped down upon their authors. Nor do they exhibit an abnormally high rate of getting struck by lightning. In fact, the most damaging thing the exposés revealed is the penalty oaths themselves, because they were so startlingly un-religious in their impact, particularly if they were taken literally.

The recent changes have given pause to several of us who have been taught that the endowment was given to Joseph Smith by revelation. From this we tend to assume that every part of it was dictated directly by God, and we forget that the Lord's instructions need to adapt to changing circumstances. When we look at the origin of the modern endowment closely, there is ample justification for the excision of the penalties.

Recent scholarship has demonstrated that part of the temple endowment was lifted almost verbatim out of the Masonic rites with which Joseph Smith became involved in Nauvoo.<sup>9</sup> In fact, this Masonic element consists primarily of the signs, tokens, and penalties—the very items which were so disturbing to so many on receiving their endowments. The recent change supports my contention that the Masonic borrowings were peripheral and non-essential, and that their usefulness has been outgrown. It was high time they be dropped. Let us examine these propositions a little more closely.

It is no secret that Joseph Smith was

“inspired” by the Masonic ritual to restore the true order of the endowment, in much the same way that his study of the Old Testament prompted him to bring back polygamy, or the papyri containing an Egyptian breathing text was the catalyst for the Book of Abraham.<sup>10</sup> David John Buerger, in an illuminating article published in *Dialogue*, sketched the Masonic connection forthrightly.<sup>11</sup> To summarize his findings: Joseph Smith, apparently believing that Masonic affiliation and its secrecy oaths would afford protection from the Church's enemies both within and without, applied for membership in the Nauvoo Masonic Lodge at the end of 1841; and was inducted on 15 March 1842. About seven weeks later, on 4 and 5 May, he introduced the endowment ceremony to a group of trusted associates.<sup>12</sup> A comparison of the two ceremonies reveals significant differences—principally in the dramatic narratives and the covenants. Whereas the masonic rite at the Master Mason level reenacts the story of Hiram Abiff, the supposed head mason from Solomon's Temple who was murdered for refusing to disclose his trade secrets, the Mormon endowment makes no reference to any such myth. Rather, it expands on the biblical story of Adam and Eve, so that the participants identify with the primal couple in their prototypical journey through mortality. A further difference is in the Mormon covenants, which relate to the content of the gospel and LDS theology rather than to Masonic morality. Also, there is no Masonic parallel to ordinances such as washings and anointings, marriage, or baptisms for the dead.<sup>13</sup>

Nevertheless, it is apparent that Joseph incorporated (or retained) certain of the Masonic signs, tokens, and penalties almost without alteration, including the description and miming of the penalties to be suffered for violating the covenants.<sup>14</sup> The object of the penalties in both ceremonies is to reinforce the secrecy of the rites. Given the sequence of events introducing the endowment, it is hard to explain away the near-identical resemblances to the Masonic rite other than through direct dependence.

Nineteenth-century Masons were wont to trace their origins back to the Temple of Solomon, if not further.<sup>15</sup> Thus it is easy to see how Joseph Smith could come to regard the Masonic rite as genuine in origin, if corrupted in form. Historians today, however, can document Freemasonry in its current form only to the eighteenth century. Its roots are usually traced to the medieval craft guilds involved in cathedral construction, although

one recent study finds a plausible beginning in the Knights Templar organized in the twelfth century in the aftermath of the First Crusade.<sup>16</sup> The Templar order established its military headquarters on the reputed site of Solomon's Temple, from which it took its name. Under the influence of Philip IV of France, who coveted the Templar treasure, Pope Clement V placed the Templars under ban and ordered their arrest in 1307. Those who could fled to the British Isles where they developed a system of secret passwords and signs for their protection and mutual recognition. According to this theory, they remained underground for 400 years, until a group of four secret fraternities combined and announced the formation of the Grand Lodge of England in 1717. This marks the beginning of modern Freemasonry.

Some Mormon apologists, in an attempt to support the early Mormon rationale that Joseph Smith was restoring “true Masonry” rather than borrowing from contemporary rites, have given credence to the earlier Masonic claim to an origin in Solomon's Temple.<sup>17</sup> However, not even Masonic historians take this seriously any longer.<sup>18</sup> Nevertheless, the obvious influence of the Masonic rite on the endowment need not disturb us. An analogous case is the Book of Abraham. Its validity does not depend on whether or not Joseph Smith was right in his apparent belief that he had an actual manuscript of Abraham from which to work. In fact, all modern experts on Egyptian documents, whether LDS or otherwise, agree that the documents in question are rather ordinary funerary texts. But Joseph Smith's mistaken belief about their nature served as a catalyst for the Prophet in bringing forth the Book of Abraham—by inspiration, not translation, in the conventional sense of the word.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the efficacy of the endowment does not require that Joseph's beliefs about the antiquity of the Masonic rites be correct. His inspiration transcended his own understanding.

However, acknowledging the function of the Masonic rite in the genesis of the endowment does not mean that we have to keep everything Joseph retained from Freemasonry. The secrecy and threatened penalties served a useful purpose in keeping ahead of the intrigues that plagued the Church in Nauvoo, and perhaps later in solidifying the Saints under siege in the Rocky Mountains. But it is hard to discern much use for the penalties in more recent times. The temple ordinances should be kept discrete and sacred, but we hardly need to threaten bloody execution to emphasize how important our covenants are.

Furthermore, modifying the endowment is nothing new. It has been changed numerous times in the past.<sup>20</sup> First standardized under Brigham Young's direction, it took the better part of a day to perform an endowment in pioneer times. Even before the most recent update, I can think of a number of changes implemented just since I have been attending the temple: the congregation no longer sings a hymn, the reference to the devil having a black skin has been dropped, he no longer specified the amount of his salary offer to the minister, members are no longer required to wear the old style ceremonial garments in the temple, and the covenant concerning chastity has been modified to specifically rule out homosexual acts. Even more obvious innovations were introduced in the past several years: first, the changeover in most temples to the use of film in place of live reenactments by temple workers, which considerably shortened the ceremony, and second, the reintroduction of two-piece temple garments.

Perhaps the most dramatic change in content, however, came in the aftermath of the Manifesto, when congressional hearings publicized the oath of vengeance. Some variants of this oath required that participants vow to avenge the blood of Joseph the Prophet and other LDS martyrs; others, that they would pray unceasingly for the Lord to do so. This oath was deemphasized following the hearings and officially rescinded in 1927, by which time it was no longer relevant since presumably all the early persecutors had died off.<sup>21</sup> At the same time, the graphic details of the penalties were somewhat softened, so that they were less explicit than those of the Masonic rite.<sup>22</sup> In this case, however, half an oath was *not* better than none.

Echoes of the vengeance oath persisted in our hymnbook until very recently. I recall a priesthood meeting in a Cambridge student ward some years back in which the opening hymn was announced as "Up, Awake, Ye Defenders of Zion." Now, normally, this would occasion no notice on the part of the assembled brethren, since priesthood hymn singing is generally done in the spirit of a lullaby. But on this particular Sunday morning the presence of the religion editor from the *Boston Globe* had been announced, and we sang lustily, that he too might feel the Spirit. By the time we got halfway through the first verse, it was too late:

Remember the wrongs of Missouri  
 Forget not the fate of Nauvoo!  
 When the God-hating foe is before us,  
 Stand firm and be faithful and true!<sup>23</sup>  
 For the next few days we anxiously

searched the newspaper, dreading to find the headline: "Local Mormons Train Student Cadre to Conquer Missouri." But apparently not every newspaper operates with the abandon of the *Plain Dealer*; the damaging item never appeared. Actually, but for up-to-date hymnals, our choice of songs could have been worse. An earlier version of the hymn "O Ye Mountains High" was even more explicit about taking vengeance on our persecutors. It promised the Saints that they would tread on their foes' necks and plunder their riches. "Thy oppressors shall die," our grandparents used to sing, "And the Gentiles shall bow 'neath thy rod."<sup>24</sup>

However much such musical relics may be of historical interest, it is obvious that they have become outdated, especially now that Missouri has officially rescinded Governor Boggs's extermination order. Accordingly, both of these militantly vengeful hymns have been toned down for modern congregational edification. We now exhort ourselves in song to "Remember the *trials* of Missouri; Forget not the *courage* of Nauvoo."<sup>25</sup>

Of course, updating hymns is a relatively minor adjustment. Deleting the vengeance oath was much more substantial and, as it affected the content of the temple endowment, it is of particular interest in the present situation. "We had our ceremonies pretty correct," Brigham Young commented of the adjustments he made in Nauvoo after Joseph Smith's martyrdom.<sup>26</sup> Pretty near correct, perhaps, but not perfect or final. We are still tinkering with it. And that is the great strength and vitality of Mormonism, the ability to change, adapt, and grow inherent in our concept of on-going, progressive revelation.

What is valid and useful for one generation may be quite inappropriate, even harmful, for another. When the policy barring blacks from ordination was implemented, it served a useful purpose, or at least was intended to, in defusing some of the anti-Mormon sentiment among pro-slavery Missourians. Later doctrinal speculation to justify the practice perpetuated it far longer than necessary, and even fostered racist thinking among us. Why didn't the Lord act sooner to rescind it? Probably because we weren't ready to accept it. It took the civil rights movement in the sixties, which got so bad as to disrupt even the BYU sports program, to get us to realize we had a problem. Then Lester Bush's article detailing the historical genesis of the policy was published, making it a lot harder to argue that God had ordered it.<sup>27</sup> That the Lord did permit such discrimination in his church to continue shows just how

patient he can be with us. But at last, after much anguish and collective soul-searching, this time when the Prophet asked, we were ready to receive. And we didn't have to wait until the Millennium after all.

I believe the latest changes in the endowment came at a similar point of readiness with respect to institutionalized recitals of violence. After the last decade or so of shoot-outs involving Mormon break-off cults and the media circus we have endured as a consequence, we have certainly been due for a decisive shift to gentler rhetoric. Buerger's research had shown the penalty oaths for what they are—borrowings from Freemasonry. He discredited any historical reason to cling to them, and I have never heard anyone speak of any spiritual reason to do so. Rather than attributing such things to God, we would do well simply to accept the changes as further light and revelation in accordance with the Book of Mormon teaching that the Lord will give more knowledge as we are able to receive it.<sup>28</sup> The penalty oaths had long since served their purpose; they remained only as a millstone dragging us down into the appearance of evil. Hopefully, some of the same conditions which led us to drop the penalties will result in an official and explicit disavowal of blood atonement as well.

What kind of fallout can we expect from the Church thus updating its thinking and practice? Whatever the Mormon bashers may make of it, I can't think of a soul who is likely to apostatize upon experiencing the new endowment. Rather, I think we may anticipate several welcome results:

- Church public relations will be notably improved. Does anyone berate us any longer for our *past* practice of withholding the priesthood from blacks? How long did it take to become a non-issue—a year, maybe?<sup>29</sup> Repudiating these relics of violence will make that many fewer sticks for our detractors to beat us with.
- Missionary work can now go forward less hindered by the distortions of the media and Mormon bashers about our purported penchant for violence.
- We are removing any tacit encouragement or sanction to fanatic cults who practice violence.
- We will have a more spiritual, uplifting temple experience, and probably fewer dropouts from temple work. The glowing reports are already coming in.

My feeling is that dropping the penalties

has been at least as welcome to the average endowed Latter-day Saint as lifting the ban on ordination of blacks to the priesthood was twelve years ago. I remember that moment as clearly as I do the announcement that John F. Kennedy had been shot, or the voice of Neil Armstrong as he stepped out onto the moon. I was in the bursar's office at Duke University when the news announcement from Salt Lake City came over the radio. Even the local North Carolina station knew this couldn't wait until the regular news program. It was all I could do to keep from dancing a jig on the spot. No more embarrassing attempts at doctrinal rationalization to incredulous fellow students. No more aching for black Church members relegated to second class status. No more dismay over choice people of darker skin coloring who, blinded by our racism, could not see the pearl of great price we offered. In this instance, there was no general announcement of the changes in the endowment, and thus no single dramatic moment for us to remember. But the changes are none the less momentous and welcome.

As a missionary laboring under the burden of the black priesthood ban, I heard a prominent Church leader say that he was thankful the Church had such a doctrine—it separated the wishy washy from those who really had a testimony. I don't know whether the penalty oaths and blood atonement had taken on that function, but I am thankful that we have the promise of many important doctrines yet to be revealed and a prophet to receive that revelation. Disavowing past expressions of violence is not an admission of folly in our heritage, it is an affirmation and vindication of our claim as a church to be true and living. ☞

## NOTES

1. *Journal of Discourses* (hereafter *JD*) 3:246-47; 4:53-4; 4:219-20.
2. Genesis 9:6. The Law of Moses goes much further than just an eye for an eye or a tooth for a tooth, specifying the death penalty for such things as parental disrespect (Exodus 21:17), witchcraft (Exodus 22:18), and bestiality (Exodus 22:19). An ox could be stoned for unruly behavior (Exodus 21:28-32).
3. *JD* 3:247
4. *JD* 3:247 Heber C. Kimball in *JD* 4:375; 6:38; 7:20; Jedediah M. Grant in *JD* 4:49-50; and George A. Smith in *JD* 1:97.
5. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 92-3.
6. McConkie, 93; cf. Brigham Young, *JD* 4:219-20. For Joseph Fielding Smith's views, see his *Doctrines of Salvation* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1959), vol. 1, 133-36.
7. D&C 134:9,10.
8. Hugh Nibley, "What is a Temple?" *The Temple in Antiquity*, ed. by Truman G. Madsen (Provo: BYU Religious

Studies Center, 1984), 19-37; "Treasures in the Heavens," *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1978), 49-84; *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri: an Egyptian Endowment* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1975). For a non-LDS view, see Mircea Eliade, *The Myth of the Eternal Return, or, Cosmos and History*, tr. by Willard R. Trask (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971).

9. See especially David John Buerger, "The Development of the Mormon Temple Endowment Ceremony," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 20:4 (Winter 1987), 45.
10. See Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 1-3.
11. Buerger, 33-76.
12. Buerger, 43-4.
13. Buerger, 44-5. For the essentials of the Masonic rite, see John J. Robinson, *Born in Blood: The Lost Secrets of Freemasonry* (New York, 1989), 201-23, and the references in Buerger.
14. Buerger, 44-45; Robinson, 201-23. In addition, Masonic elements such as prayer circles, receiving a new name, and donning ritual clothing find an echo in the Mormon ceremony.
15. Robinson, 177-8.
16. Robinson, xiii; 116-170.
17. See Buerger, 46.
18. Robinson, 178; J. M. Robert, *The Mythology of the Secret Societies* (New York: 1972), 18-19.
19. Nibley, *The Message of the Joseph Smith Papyri*, 1-3; John A. Wilson, et al., "The Joseph Smith Egyptian Papyri:

- Translations and Interpretation," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3:2 (Summer 1968), 67-105; Klaus Baer, "The Breathing Permit of Hor, A Translation of the Apparent Source of the Book of Abraham," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 3:3 (Autumn 1968), 109-134; Edward H. Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Reappraisal," *Sunstone* 4:5/6 (December 1979), 33-48.
20. Buerger, 49-63.
  21. Buerger, 52-55.
  22. Buerger, 55.
  23. Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1948 ed.), no. 37. The third verse was in the same vein.
  24. *Deseret Sunday School Songs* (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Sunday School Union, 1909), no. 198.
  25. *Hymns* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1985 ed.), no. 248. Cf. no. 34 ("O Ye Mountains High"), which was modified in 1912.
  26. Quoted in Buerger, 47.
  27. Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8:1 (Spring 1973), 8-68.
  28. Alma 12:9-11; 29:8; 3 Nephi 26:9-10.
  29. Polygamy, by contrast, continues to be an issue, partly because we have repudiated it in practice only, not in theory—like Elder McConkie's apparent conception of blood atonement as something to be restored in the ideal future.

## PSALM

### PSALM

I awake to the songs of birds;  
the sounds of thy creatures awakeneth me.  
Thy skies are the blues of thy deepest waters;  
deep and broad are they in their invitation  
to my soul to soar.

In mine eyes are thy words;  
in my heart the songs of rejoicing in thee.

Blessed, O God, be the quiverings of life  
in the branches of trees, in my limbs;  
and holy be the sun on the leaves and needles  
and on the hair of my head and the feeling  
beneath it.

I bow to the joy of thy bounty;  
I raise up my voice to sing praises  
for the grace of thy hand in all the world.

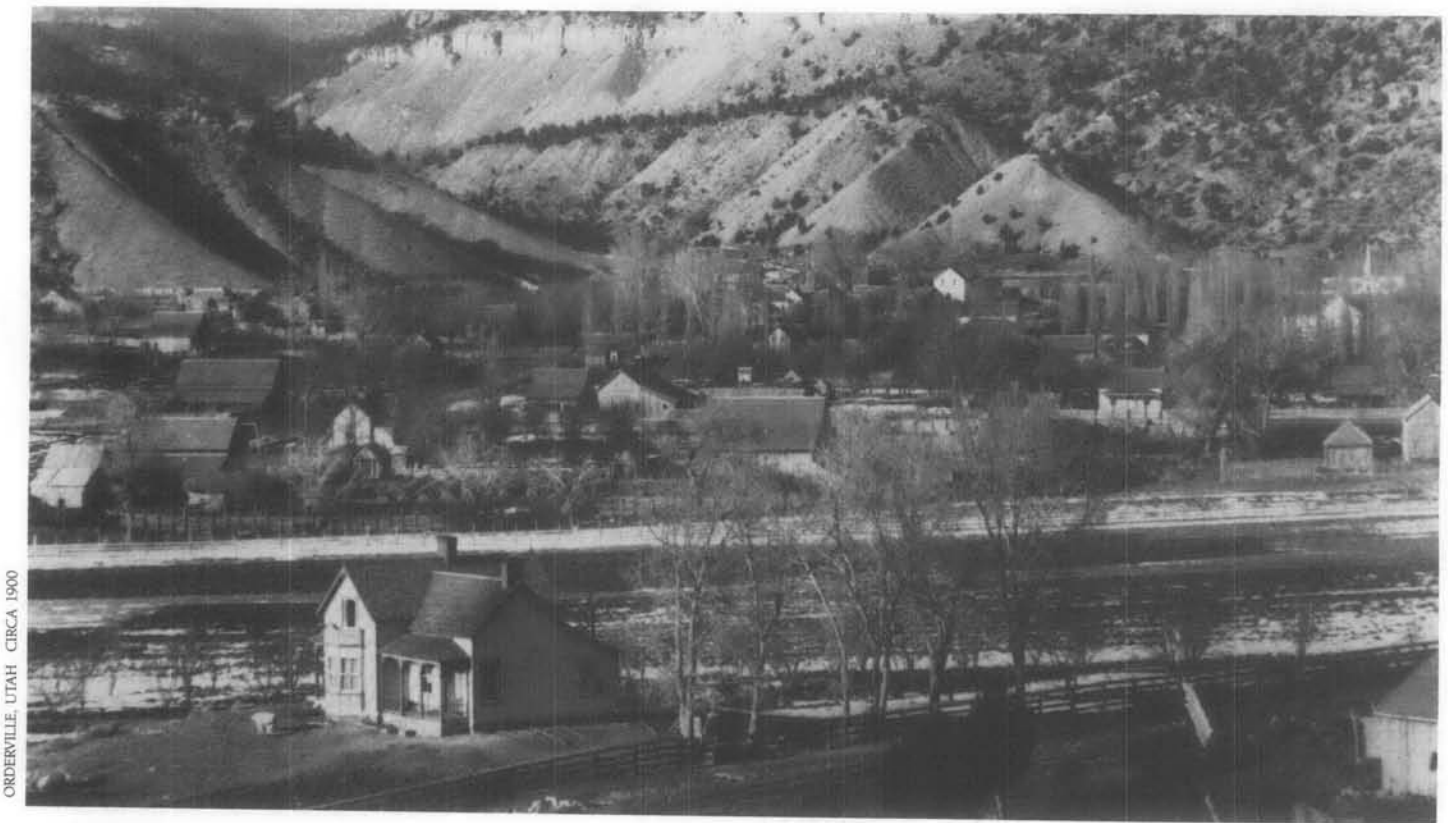
Here in the thickets of thy kindness  
and the beauty of thy hand  
thou makest me still to know  
thou are indeed God.

—EMMA LOU THAYNE

Plotting a Zion today where there is no poor

## THE ECONOMICS OF ZION

By Dean L. May



ORDERVILLE, UTAH CIRCA 1900

THIS ESSAY CONCERNS MATTERS THAT IN MY JUDGMENT are important to the future of Latter-day Saint society and perhaps to society in the West, generally. Two recent events—one parochial, the other of international significance—have enhanced the timeliness of this topic. The first was the publication in 1985 of Lyndon W. Cook's *Joseph Smith and the Law*

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of Consecration and Kent W. Huff's *Joseph Smith's United Order: A Noncommunalistic Interpretation of Early Church History and Policy*.<sup>1</sup> Both books are efforts to portray Consecration and Stewardship as fully compatible with liberal capitalism, and thus of no direct relevance to the way members of the Church conduct their lives today, except as pious abstract principles.<sup>2</sup> The second is the astonishing fragmentation of the Soviet empire, accompanied by a bitter denunciation of Marxist communism by those who lived under Soviet totalitarianism for forty years.

The first event is a local expression of the politically conservative temperament of America during the Reagan/Bush years and may represent in part the authors' desire to reinterpret

Church teachings to accord with their own political views and those of some present-day Church leaders. The second event seems at first glance to affirm the first, suggesting that Cook and Huff are right in seeing liberal capitalism as compatible with Consecration and Stewardship. After all, capitalism works, and millions in eastern Europe seem eager to follow its star rather than the one they have known. God must surely be on the side of that which has prevailed.

There is a great danger, I feel, that we may learn the wrong lessons from these events, and so it is appropriate to ask one more time: Is there an ideal economic system based on eternal principles that promises to bring us closer to a saintly society? If so what would it be like? Need we seek to emulate that system insofar as prevailing legal and political restraints permit, or should we willingly acquiesce in whatever economic beliefs and practices prevail about us? The starting point for understanding such questions is the Enoch revelation received by Joseph Smith in December of 1830. In this brief passage the glory of ancient Zion and the very reason for the designation were described:

And the Lord called his people ZION, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them. And Enoch continued his preaching in righteousness unto the people of God. And it came to pass in his days, that he built a city that was called the City of Holiness, even ZION (Moses 7:18-19).

The description is both eloquent and profound. It seems to speak to all aspects of the Restoration and the latter-day work. It is no wonder that it touched the Prophet deeply or that at times he even took upon himself the name Enoch. A truly holy, or saintly, or Zion people must seek to attain all three of these conditions: a social life where all are of one heart and one mind (unity and harmony, not uniformity); a moral and ethical personal character (righteousness); and a just economic order (no poor). The three conditions are so interrelated that it is hard to imagine one could ever be realized without the others. To be fully unified a society would have to eliminate poverty and in so doing would be motivated by moral and ethical concerns. To live righteously would surely have to include a concerted effort to alleviate the plight of the poor. To truly eliminate poverty would require a unified campaign supported by high ethical principles.

In this essay, however, I will emphasize the third quality of Zion—the elimination of poverty, the dimension of Zion that is most directly involved in our everyday economic activities. What do we know of the economics of Zion beyond the brief statement in the Book of Moses? There are four main sources

of insight into what a divinely-sanctioned economic order would be like. First there are scriptural descriptions of what ancient covenant peoples understood the economics of Zion to be. Such descriptions commonly arose from efforts of Saints at the beginning of new dispensations to live the gospel to its fullest at a time of particularly clear insight into God's purposes and strong commitment to realize them. They include the accounts of Enoch's City of Zion, of the early Christians in the New

Testament, and of the Book of Mormon. Second, there are nonscriptural historical accounts of Saints being called by prophets or Church leaders to live as a Zion people.<sup>3</sup> These include the efforts by Latter-day Saints to live the Law of Consecration and Stewardship in Ohio and Missouri between 1831 and 1838 and the United Order movement, initiated by Brigham Young in the 1870s.

Third, as we shall see, we have the shadow of the economy of Zion and, to some extent, its substance, in the way programs and policies of the Church operate today. Finally, I believe that Latter-day Saints through the gift of the Holy Ghost and all humankind through the Light of Christ understand in their better moments that the poverty and want common in most human societies, including the United States, is rooted in the fundamental processes by which we produce and exchange goods—processes that need to be founded on

ethically more humane and caring principles.

Now with all of this—the scriptures, the past experience of Saints who tried to live as they thought Zion should be, our present exercise of Zion's principles in the Church, and the Spirit's witness—one would think there would be a common understanding of what the economics of Zion should be. Yet there are widely differing views, sometimes rigidly maintained and hotly contended, on what our economy would be like if we were living in a society that fully merited the name, Zion.

The main reason for this diversity, and it is understandable, is that it is very difficult to see through the lens that the Lord has provided because of the smudges we pick up from this world. We still live, after all, in the world, and it is very difficult to keep its doctrines, traditions, and teachings from getting confused with those of God, especially in that most worldly of human pursuits—economics. A friend and devout member of the Church, who is involved, as he says it, in the "home care products business" has confided to me most earnestly his belief that God is preparing the world spiritually for the millennium through the Church and economically through Amway. He has apparently not noticed that Amway employs a marketing method that begins its pitch by asking if you would like to be rich, and promising to make you so, promising you anything in this world. This is just one example of how the world's

The poverty in most human societies, including the United States, is rooted in the fundamental processes by which we produce and exchange goods—processes that need to be founded on more ethically humane and caring principles.



philosophies can be confused with those of God. The process is usually more subtle, however, making it very difficult to disentangle the two.

LET us first, then, sketch briefly what in my judgment is central to the way scholars and observers in the past have thought about and described the economic systems that have prevailed in the West. Until the seventeenth century, scholars rarely differentiated economics as a separate science, but commonly saw it as a part of a realm of inquiry they called "moral philosophy." As the term implies, their discussions of the economic questions were grounded in a consideration of the moral implications of the point at issue. Questions of appropriate practice and policy with regard to property rights, prices, wages, or the charging of interest, were considered more on ethical than on pragmatic or practical grounds. Philosophers asked not just what is most efficient, or how does it work, but what is just: how ought it to work. Economics began to become separated from these concerns as French physician and economist Francois Quesnay and the Physiocrats<sup>4</sup> began their probing inquiry into economic activity and the power of the nation state in the eighteenth century. The most eloquent early statement is found in Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, published in 1776.<sup>5</sup> Smith's work is broad and far ranging and deserves the acclaim and renown it has gained. Together with the works of Thomas Robert Malthus, David Ricardo, and John Stuart Mill it provided the rationale for an economic system, since called classical economics, that aimed to free individuals from state controls and the science of economics from ethical concerns, relying heavily on private accumulation of wealth (capital) to drive the economic system through investment in new enterprise.<sup>6</sup> Smith's *Wealth of Nations* was a great intellectual achievement, rivaled in its impact upon our lives only by Karl Marx's *Capital* (1867), but its essential notion is clearly stated. "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker, that we expect our dinner," he wrote, "but from regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self love, and never talk to them of our own necessities but of their advantages."<sup>7</sup>

This was a perfect economic philosophy for the Age of the Enlightenment with its bitter biases against the restraints of the traditional society that lingered from the Middle Ages. The book taught that if you just free humans to fulfill their selfish, material desires, they will, driven by competition, work energetically to produce goods in ample quantity at low prices, thus bringing the greatest number of goods (that is, material goods) to the greatest number of people. In the true spirit of the new

science, Adam Smith meant not to condone or condemn the selfishness that was the driving force of liberal capitalism, but merely to describe its functioning and its consequence—an economic system that produced and distributed more material goods more cheaply. *The Wealth of Nations* thus began to bring economics out of its preoccupation with justice and social responsibility which had, prior to the eighteenth century, made it a part of more general systems of moral and social philosophy. The year 1776, I would argue, marked not only the Declaration of American Independence from the British rule, but at least as importantly, a declaration of the independence of economics as a discipline, its freedom from moral responsibility, and its focus upon material well-being as the supreme good.

Classical economics was built on this base, and much refined, qualified, and elaborated, is with us in the West to this day. Implicit in its doctrines are the following notions: (1) Private property is inviolable or very nearly so and can be freely transmitted to whomever one wishes, including heirs. (2) Free markets should determine the volume and prices of goods and services in the economy. (3) The public interest is best served through competition between economic units. (4) Governmental involvement in the economy should be kept at a minimum. (5) The primary goal of economic

systems is to produce the most goods at the least cost. There are several unintended consequences of such a system: (1) Rewards are determined by ambition and ability or prior access to opportunity or capital and not necessarily by need. That is, people attain wealth not in relation to their need for food, clothing, or other goods, but because they have the ability or opportunity to gain wealth in the free economic system. (2) There is a tendency toward extremes in wealth, because of genetic endowment, because people who come from well-educated families have superior educational opportunities, and because property is usually passed on from the parents to their heirs, thus leaving an accumulation of all these things for some groups in the society but not others. (3) Distribution of goods and services is based not upon need but upon ability to pay, minimizing the claim of the poor on the general abundance and inhibiting the elimination of poverty that was a hallmark of Enoch's society.

A number of utopian thinkers, including Karl Marx, attempted in the nineteenth century to counter what they saw to be the ills of liberal capitalism, but for the most part they substituted other materialistic philosophies, and, as it worked out in the case of those seeking to apply the principles of Marx, removed in the process even the freedom which was the all-important redeeming grace of Adam Smith's system. Others, such as the British Fabians or American progressives and New Dealers, or

Let us hope that the rising powers in Eastern Europe do not choose to be like the U.S. in all respects. We need to rethink our economic institutions and ask if they truly are compatible with those of Zion.



Scandinavian socialists, have achieved at times an improved balance between economic justice and political freedom but have by no means brought us into the promised land. If recent events suggest that communism has failed, we should not be quick to crow. Even a superficial look at any of the western capitalistic societies, and especially the United States, shows widespread poverty, extremes in distribution of wealth, inadequate social services, and worst of all, a selfish indulgence and materialism rampant in the societies that borders on hedonism, encouraged by our statesmen at the very highest levels. Indeed, it has not yet been demonstrated that a system founded on selfishness and competition (confrontational rather than cooperative) ever can achieve a high level of economic justice.<sup>8</sup>

In a highly influential article, "The End of History," state department official Francis Fukuyama argued that the triumph of liberal capitalism will result in the demise of the creative tension that competition between two great world systems has brought since 1917. Societies, East and West, will now descend into a bland, comfortable plenty, from which the probing edges of human will and creative brilliance may never again emerge.<sup>9</sup> Fukuyama's observation may appeal to those who would like to believe the West has won and that's the end of the matter, but it is based on an astonishingly limited grasp of the motive forces of history, and a minimal assessment of the needs and opportunities we face. Liberal capitalism offers freedom and abundance, but we have much to accomplish in the way of economic justice, and given the vested interests in present systems, and our willingness to see the world's systems as ordained by God, such an accomplishment will not come easily. Perhaps the time of our greatest creativity and accomplishment as a people is before us.

THIS brings us again to what for some, at least, offers a real alternative to the bankrupt idealism of the totalitarian East and the abundant self-indulgence of the West—the economics of Zion.<sup>10</sup> In all the glimpses of Zion history has recorded there has been a generous sharing to provide for the poor, a great unity of purpose, and a remarkable selflessness. I have already mentioned Enoch's city in this regard. The Book of Acts contains many references to efforts on the part of the early Christians to reorder economic activity in a way that would bring about greater justice and help in eliminating poverty. One passage seems in fact to echo ancient Zion, explaining that "the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common" (Acts 4:32). The high point in the history of the descendants of Lehi

was a period lasting some two centuries when, after Christ's personal visitation, "they had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free and partakers of the heavenly gift" (4 Nephi 1:3). Surely these accounts tell us something about the economics of Zion, even though in all but the rather special case of Enoch's city, the people eventually capitulated to worldly systems and values. They teach us that to share is better than

to possess, that amassing material wealth for one's self is not the highest purpose of life (you can buy anything you want in this world for money), that those who make it their primary purpose to find themselves—to gratify their personal desires without regard to others—will surely lose themselves. These principles are the opposite of those who assert, as some do, in words or action, that he who dies with the most toys wins. The clear vision they hold up of an organized system of sharing that eliminates poverty, and is accompanied by exceptional unity and righteousness, belies the assertions of Cook and Huff that Joseph Smith's Law of Consecration as practiced in Missouri was merely episodic and not fundamental to the gospel. Yet these former-day accounts are at best sketchy, and provide few details on how such a system might function. That is happily not the case in the experience of the Latter-day Saints.

Joseph Smith was aware of these precedents when, in February of 1831, he received Section 42 of the Doctrine and Covenants which defined Consecration and Stewardship. The Saints began immediately to try to live under this system and, in the process, created a record that is poignant, heroic, and enormously instructive in helping us to understand the economics of Zion. All serious scholars of these efforts—Mormon and non-Mormon, contemporaries and subsequent historians—with the exception of Cook and Huff, have been impressed with their communal orientation and their daring departure from capitalism and from the excessive individualism toward which liberalism in America has tended.

Indeed, the two years I spent studying Latter-day Saint efforts to create the economy of Zion while working with Leonard J. Arrington on *Building the City of God* were for me a very powerful experience—confirming my faith, rooting me more deeply in the gospel of Jesus Christ, and teaching me many lessons about the importance of Zion and its principles. The title was not trivial, but intended (if one dare be so audacious) to counter St. Augustine's teaching that the City of God is something transcendent that resides above the earth and cannot be realized upon it. In naming the book "Building the City of God" we expressed our feeling that the building of Zion is a practical, here-and-now enterprise that the Latter-day Saints should be participating in every day of their lives.

Is it possible in a largely  
secular world to keep  
levels of commitment high  
enough to provide an  
alternative to self-interest  
as the engine of our  
economic systems?

One aspect of that endeavor by the first Latter-day Saints is described in the deeds of consecration and stewardship that have survived from the Missouri period. These deeds have their origins in Bishop Edward Partridge, who was the first bishop of the Church and who prepared printed forms that were signed by the Saints who chose to consecrate as they came to Zion in Missouri, beginning in 1831.<sup>11</sup> The left side of a large printed form was the consecration agreement, and the right side the stewardship agreement. They seem to represent Bishop Partridge's honest effort to put into legal language the essentials of what was in essence a religious covenant. Thus, we do not know that every word of these is as Joseph Smith would have wished, but they do describe in some detail an economic system that represents Edward Partridge's understanding of Consecration and Stewardship in close consultation with the Prophet and one that is very much at odds with that of the world.

The documents begin by making it clear that central to the economics of Zion is the psalmist's affirmation that "the earth is the Lord's and the fullness thereof; the world, and they that dwell therein" (Psalms 24:1). That is the starting point of consecration. Men and women are but stewards over earthly possessions, and in recognition of that fact the early Saints were asked to make a legal document giving their possessions to the Church as a consecration when they came to Zion. This was a voluntary offering. No one was to be coerced, a principal that was reaffirmed time and time again in the history of the Saints. The bishop then allocated to them, in exchange for their consecration, a stewardship. An excerpt from the consecration deed of James Lee reads as follows:

Be it known that I, James Lee, of Jackson County, and state of Missouri, having become a member of the church of Christ, . . . do, of my own free will and accord having first paid my just debts grant and hereby give unto Edward Partridge, . . . a number of saddlers tools, one candlestick, & one wash bowl, valued seven dollars twenty-five cents,--also saddlers stick, trunks, and harness work valued twenty-four dollars,--also extra clothing valued three dollars.<sup>12</sup>

James Lee thus consecrated all that he had in the world, some thirty-four dollars worth of goods, giving real meaning to the "earth is the Lord's" principle. But the transaction did not end there. In the stewardship agreement—the right half of the form—the Saints were given back their personal property and an inheritance in Zion, which was a plot of land sufficient to farm if they were farmers, or perhaps in Lee's case (his stewardship agreement has not survived) sufficient land to build a saddler's shop on. This was not private property but a stewardship,

The success of Consecration and Stewardship depended greatly upon freedom of entrepreneurial activity. It seems clear that a free marketplace would have remained the main instrument for allocating goods and services within this economy.

though later, as a concession to secular law, the Prophet ordered that legal deeds be given for each stewardship.<sup>13</sup> The property could not be transferred to heirs or others at will. Saints were under sacred obligation to magnify their stewardship during the coming year, exercising their free will in entrepreneurial endeavors, doing the best they could to raise corn or make saddles. At the end of the year they were to have a meeting with the bishop, which we have called a stewardship interview. There

the bishop might say, "All right, Brother Lee, how did you do with your saddle shop?" And Brother Lee might answer, "I did splendidly and have a good surplus [profit]. My wife and I were thinking of building an addition to our house. And I'm ordering a new saddle-making machine from St. Louis." The bishop might then respond, "Now, Brother Lee, not so fast." They would then discuss the matter and try to differentiate between and evaluate the wants and the needs of the Lee family. Does the community really need a saddle-making machine? Is there justification for the addition to the house? After the discussion Lee would be asked to consecrate voluntarily to the Lord's storehouse everything above his just needs and wants.

This process limited tenure on property. The deed made it clear that when Brother Lee died his stewardship was to remain in the control of a surviving wife or, in the event of her death, surviving children, until they

became of age. It would then revert to the Lord's storehouse. The children, as they came of age, would be entitled to draw from the Lord's storehouse in order to acquire their own stewardships according to their own interests and inclinations. The system put capital investment partly under the control of Church leaders, and without the payment of interest on capital. The bishop might well have said to Lee: "You are already providing sufficient saddles for our needs. But we must have a schoolhouse. If you will consecrate the money you were going to use to buy a saddle-making machine, we will put it toward the schoolhouse."

While annual consecration depended upon one's willingness to agree with the bishop on what the surplus was, the system would tend to diminish extremes of wealth, but not redistribute to the point of absolute equality. The success of Consecration and Stewardship depended greatly upon freedom of entrepreneurial activity. Apparently, no one was looking over Brother Lee's shoulder throughout the year. Though not stated, it seems clear that a free marketplace would have remained the main instrument for allocating goods and services within this economy. The documents sketch out the rudiments of a Church-directed social welfare system. They make it clear that if Lee were called on a mission, or were incapacitated, the bishop would provide for his family out of the storehouse. The deed of consecration specifies, in fact, that a principal purpose of

consecrations was to care for the poor. Poverty, poor management, and persecution all brought an end to the effort to live Consecration and Stewardship in Missouri. By 1841 it had been replaced by tithing, which has at times been called a lesser law. In effect, the Lord is saying: "since you are unwilling to consecrate generously, I am going to tell you what a surplus is. It is ten percent. Get it?" Under consecration, a person might consecrate a surplus seventy percent if he or she were highly successful, or they might consecrate one percent, or might even have a negative consecration in hard times and draw from the Lord's storehouse. That flexibility and voluntary willingness to place no limits on what belongs to the Lord is the essence of consecration; tithing, being mechanistic and inflexible, leaving the poor less after tithing for food, clothing, and shelter than the wealthy, is a lesser law. Tithing nonetheless has the virtue of being compatible with the world's economic systems and teaching some of the principles of Consecration (self denial, sharing) until the full implementation of the economy of Zion is achieved.

In the extreme circumstances of 1838, with the Saints fleeing Missouri and the Prophet in prison, a time when the Church could not possibly organize under the economics of Zion, Joseph Smith responded to the charges of enemies of the Church that the Mormons' consecration of their families to the Lord was being interpreted as giving license to "a community of wives." In a passage clearly intended to deny those assertions while affirming the importance of Consecration, he wrote:

When we consecrate our property to the Lord it is to administer to the wants of the poor and needy for this is the law of God. . . . Now for a man to consecrate his property and his wife & children to the Lord is nothing more nor less than to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, visit the widow and the fatherless, the sick, and the afflicted, and do all he can to administer to their relief in their afflictions, and for him and his house to serve the Lord.<sup>14</sup>

Lyndon Cook understood this statement to be a final assertion by Joseph Smith that there would be no further need for a Church-sponsored communalism. But a consideration of the circumstances under which it was written would not necessarily lead to that conclusion. The Prophet, in his desire to refute scandalous charges, emphasized those aspects of Consecration that hinge on personal piety, while affirming the principle as a viable and continuing part of Latter-day Saint teachings.

Certainly for those closest to Joseph Smith, the failed effort to live under Consecration and Stewardship in Missouri was not the end of the matter. Brigham Young attempted to institute its principles in Utah in the 1870s as the United Order of Enoch.

We have the shadow of the economy of Zion in the programs of the Church today. Even if they seem at times intrusive, repetitious, and tedious, they are in essence a basic training course in communal values and practices.

The Utah United Order is hard to define because it differed from place to place and from situation to situation. It failed to divert the Saints at that time from liberal capitalism, though it has had important lingering consequences. It was not a spontaneous, haphazard experiment as some have indicated, taken on by the Saints on their own initiative. It was an integral part of the Church program, pressed as urgently on the members then as Priesthood Correlation was in the 1980s. Over two hundred United Orders were organized, in almost every ward and branch of the Church. When President Young was asked by some Salt Lake bishops in 1876 if he had instituted it on his own or if it was a revelation from God, he answered that he "had been inspired by the gift and power of God to call upon the Saints to enter into the United Order of Enoch and that now was the time, but he could not get the Saints to live it."<sup>15</sup>

IT would be reasonable to ask why an all-knowing God would have instituted at that time an economic system that he knew was going to fail. One possible answer is suggested by the work of social scientists from Harvard University's Laboratory of Social Relations as part of the famous "Comparative Study of Values in Five Cultures" project. The eminent anthropologist Clyde Kluckhohn and the sociologist Talcott Parsons were part of the project, and among the researchers were Thomas O'Dea and the young Robert N. Bellah. Their purpose was to do a comparative study of the five cultures living in close proximity in the Ramah Valley of New Mexico—Zuni, Navajo, Hispanic, Anglo-Texan, and Mormon. In one of their tests they solicited responses from residents to the question of what an ideal society would be like. The typical Texan response, as they summarized it, was "predictable ambitious and expansive":

In the new community, each family would have some ranch land, six sections for each family. And we'd take some of that Mormon irrigated land for around headquarters. That's for hay. And part of the ranches would have Mexican sheep. And we'd have quite a bit of rug weaving to sell when the highway comes through. Boy, Mama [turning to his wife], wouldn't we have a place—six sections, a few beans, and hay. Rugs like your grandmother wove, and the girls could make a little jewelry for sale. And cows on the range. The people would be Protestants, and we'd have a good school, dances and a movie house.

The typical Mormon response was remarkably different:

I've often commented to myself that I'd like a newly man-made community. I think we ought to have a big reservoir the first thing to take care of the water supply. I believe I would put it under the United Order. . . . And

then we should have some good ranches and some cattle and sheep, but they should be separated because cattle and sheep don't go together. There would be just one people, all of one belief, where they treat everybody equal, no injustice to any of them, each looking out for the other's welfare. I think that used to be done in years back. This one belief would be Mormonism, and we would have a good Church and good recreation facilities where we could take care of all that comes, because Mormon people like to dance, and that's one way we hold our young people together.<sup>16</sup>

This statement, a summary by non-Mormons of many responses made by Mormon bean farmers in New Mexico in the 1950s, is remarkable in its evocation of the economics of Zion, almost to the very words of the Enoch scripture. It sounds very similar to a statement that was written in the minute book by the secretary of the United Order of Enoch in Orderville on the occasion of its demise. He said that the decision to disband

caused many of the people of the Order to shed tears of sorrow. They felt that to turn everything they possessed into the United Order and offer themselves wholly to the service of the Lord in Temporal as well as in Spiritual things and be of one heart and one mind [the phrase comes up again] in being directed by the priesthood from the highest calling in the Church to the lowest was more than any cooperative institution in the land. . . . They felt that the property was the Lord's, that dividends belonged to the Lord for the benefit of all the people of the Order and not for individual gain and that the rich and poor should be equal in all things. . . . If one individual had more intelligence than another, that is his reward, not that he should go well dressed and fed while the one with less intelligence should go ragged and hungry.<sup>17</sup>

Such remarkably altruistic visions of the fruits of Zion's economy have become almost instinctive to Latter-day Saints—habits of our hearts—because our personal or spiritual ancestors tried to live them in the 1870s and failed. It is much easier to shove a blueprint into a drawer than it is an unfinished structure. Perhaps this is the reason the Saints were asked to live the United Order in 1874 even though the Lord knew that it would not counter the inroads already made by the world's economic system in Utah.

**H**OW can we move toward the economy of Zion in our lives today? Not, I suspect, through Amway, liberal capitalism, nor through any other economic system that exalts selfishness,

materialism, or confrontational relationships. Let us hope, as seems to be the case thus far, and as Fukuyama seems to imply, that the rising powers in Eastern Europe, do not choose to be like the United States in all respects. We need to rethink our economic institutions and the lessons our participation in them teaches us, and ask ourselves if they truly are compatible with those of Zion. If not, we need to ponder how we can help to reshape our society and our personal lives toward a realization

of those principles. In particular, we need to ask if it is possible, in a largely secular world, to keep levels of commitment high enough to provide an alternative to self-interest as the engine of our economic systems. Perhaps the Mondragons, the workers' cooperatives begun in 1956 by José Maria Arizmendi, a priest in the Basque city of Mondragon, provide instructive examples.<sup>18</sup> The nineteenth-century cooperative movements inspired by Robert Owen and by the Rochdale Pioneers, who in 1844 founded a network of consumers' cooperatives in Britain, may merit a second look to see if generally higher levels of wealth or new technologies and management skills would not make such ideas more viable. We should on our own initiative, and without waiting for counsel from above, explore and experiment with any system that shows promise of combining selflessness, commitment, justice, freedom, and material sufficiency; in

other words, that teaches us to be of one heart and one mind, to live in righteousness, and to have no poor among us.

It is at the same time possible to move more directly toward the economics of Zion in our personal lives. Some Latter-day Saints have founded family cooperatives to build and manage resources that will support mission or educational opportunities. Some have begun neighborhood associations that accomplish goals of general benefit, such as tree planting or maintaining gardens and parks. Some have jointly purchased duplexes, or larger housing complexes, sharing the costs of yard maintenance, utilities, such as washing machines and dryers, or recreational facilities that no one family can use efficiently. Some have cooperated in purchasing and maintaining summer homes. Any activity that causes us to think less about our own situations and to work together to achieve common ends is helping us to live in a manner consistent with Enoch's Zion. As Joseph A. Young, Brigham's son, expressed it to the Saints of the Richfield United Order in 1874, "The feeling of 'mine' is the greatest feeling we have to combat."<sup>19</sup>

Perhaps most importantly, we should participate fully in the programs available in each Latter-day Saint ward. In my judgment the carping one often hears against the Church as opposed to the gospel is missing a vital point. The Church programs, even if they seem at times intrusive, repetitious, and tedious, are in essence a basic training course in communal values and

Church callings are expressed in metaphors of Consecration and Stewardship. They are not a personal possession, that we can keep or turn over to whomever we wish, but a temporary grant of responsibility to perform service for Christ.

practices. They throw us into daily interaction with persons of all ages and of different social, economic, and educational backgrounds. They hound us into visiting such people and participating in programs to help them and receive help from them in a myriad of ways. They urge us out of our comfortable tendency to pursue only our own lives and in our own way. When we oppose and resist Church programs we need to ask if we are not succumbing to the siren call of the world, pulling us back into the great sin of our time where “every man walketh in his own way, and after the image of his own God, whose image is in the likeness of the world” (D&C 1:16, 17).

The Church programs are expressed in metaphors that are intricately intertwined with Consecration and Stewardship. A Church calling is referred to as a “stewardship.” We understand it thus to be not a personal possession, which we can keep for as long as we wish and turn over eventually to whomever we wish, but a temporary grant of responsibility to perform service for Christ. This is precisely the relationship we would have to private property under the Law of Consecration. The extended lesson of working in such stewardships is that we are in fact stewards over all our earthly goods, which denies absolute ownership and enjoins accountability to God, to others sharing the earth with us, and to those who shall live on the earth after us.

A Church call requires us to use our initiative without close supervision in magnifying the calling and yet to give periodic accounting to those issuing the call. As we have seen, the Saints in Missouri, after receiving their stewardship, were to exercise their entrepreneurial skills in creating an increase, reporting only annually to the bishop on their enterprise. We report annually to bishops on our temporal activities in what we now call a tithing settlement interview, a clear vestige and perhaps precursor of the annual stewardship interview. Latter-day Saints who go to the temple “consecrate” with no reservation, all their time, talents, and possessions to building up the Kingdom of God in the same way that the Saints in Missouri consecrated all their possessions to the bishop upon gathering to Zion. Thus to subscribe to the gospel and abandon the Church is to deny ourselves the opportunity of learning through experience (the best and most indelible learning) some of the gospel’s most fundamental lessons. We do not know when, or under what circumstances we might need fully to apply those principles to our economic lives, but we have the testimony and promise of President Marion G. Romney, who in 1973, said of the Church welfare program:

From the very beginning I felt that the program would eventually move into the Law of Consecration and that this is the trial pattern. Until I can pay my tithing and make liberal contributions of my money and labor . . . I will not be prepared to go into the United Order, which will require me to consecrate everything I have and thereafter give all my surplus for the benefit of the kingdom. I think the United Order will be the last principle of the gospel we will learn to live and that doing so will bring in the millennium.<sup>20</sup>

Some time ago I was asked to work in Welfare Square on a canning assignment. I was powerfully struck by what happened that day. When the shift manager called the workers together for prayer I knew this was not Del Monte. The workers were there that day not because they expected any personal gain, but out of a sense of duty (and perhaps because nudged by a Relief Society or quorum president—the Church as gospel). There was no malingering. I did not see eyes turned to the clock anticipating the next break. People working beside me were of both sexes, all ages, colors, and conditions of life, and all looked happy in their labor. When volunteers were requested for a particularly onerous task there was no lack of willing hands. And then a profound thought suddenly struck me. Sweaty and tired, splattered with tomatoes and peaches, I was feeling the same warm feelings inside that I had felt in the temple the day before. I was participating in a temporal economic task, but it had been made holy because it was being conducted in a manner consistent with the economy of Zion.

The sacrifice of tithes, fast offerings, and mission donations, as well as the sacrifice of time to welfare assignments, service projects, and the fulfilling of Church stewardships—all teach us the communal principles essential to Zion. They are part of the basic training course the Saints have been engaged in now for nearly 160 years, a course we cannot fully grasp through sermons, speeches, books, or SUNSTONE pieces, but only through experiences, and, as at Welfare Square, if we listen and try to keep the world from distorting our vision, through the spirit. ☞

## NOTES

1. Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1985); Kent W. Huff, *Joseph Smith’s United Order, Instrument of the Gathering and Forerunner of the Corporation of the President: A Noncommunalistic Interpretation of Early Church History and Policy* (n.p., 1985?). Both books dwell at length on the minor point that Joseph Smith and Brigham Young used the term “United Order” differently. It has, of course, been known for many years, that the term was used in Ohio to refer to the central management of a set of businesses and trades that were being pursued by Church leaders. Brigham Young’s term, “The United Order of Enoch,” referred to an all-encompassing program to reorient the Utah economy from a capitalistic towards a communal model. It is in this latter context that most Saints today speak of the United Order. Both authors ignore the Brigham Young United Orders in their effort to argue either that there was nothing essentially communal about the economic programs begun under Joseph Smith or that by the time of his death he had permanently and appropriately abandoned efforts to build a communal economy among his people. Brigham Young unquestionably saw the matter otherwise. See Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976).

2. In this essay “liberal capitalism” refers to the doctrine that individuals and private corporations (1) ought to be free in their economic activities, unregulated, except for normal taxing and monetary policies in behalf of stability, by any state-mandated (or in this case, church-mandated) restrictions on sanctity of private property or on wages, prices, or trade; and (2) investment capital be raised and administered by free individuals and private corporations in a free market.

3. The principal studies are: Edward J. Allen, *The Second United Order Among the Mormons* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1936); Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: An Economic History of the Latter-day Saints, 1830-1900* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1958); Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976); Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, Utah: Grandin Book Company, 1985); Mario S. DePillis, “The Development of Mormon Communitarianism, 1826-1846,” (Ph.D. dissertation, Yale University, 1960); Hamilton Gardner, “Cooperation Among the Mormons,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, 37:134-74; Joseph A. Geddes, *The United Order Among the Mormons (Missouri Phase)* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1924); Robert B. Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi*, (Urbana, Illinois: University of Illinois Press, 1965; [Dyer D. Lum], *Social Problems of Today; or, the Mormon Question in Its Economic Aspects* (Port Jervis, New York, 1886); Dean L. May, “Brigham Young and the Bishops: The United Order in the City,” *New Views of Mormon History: A Collection of Essays*, ed. Davis Bitton and Maureen Ursen-

bach Beecher (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 115-137; Arden Beal Olsen, "The History of Mormon Mercantile Cooperation in Utah," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of California, Berkeley, 1935); Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*, (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1971); Evon Z. Vogt and Ethel M. Albert, eds., *People of Rimrock: A Study of Values in Five Cultures*, (Harvard University Press, 1966); Gordon Eric Wagner, "Consecration and Stewardship: A Socially Efficient System of Justice," (Ph.D. dissertation, Cornell University, 1977).

4. Quesnay contributed to the famous masterwork of the French Enlightenment, the *Encyclopedia*. His principal work is the *Tableau Économique* (1758). The Physiocrats, the school of political economists who followed Quesnay, held that an inherent natural order properly governed society. They regarded land as the basis of wealth and taxation and advocated a laissez-faire economy.

5. The evolution from economics as a branch of moral philosophy to a science in its own right is described in the early chapters of the most erudite and thoughtful study of economic ideas in the West, Joseph A. Schumpeter's posthumously published *History of Economic Analysis* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1954).

6. Malthus's major work relevant to this essay is his *Principle of Population* (1798); Ricardo's is *Principles of Political Economy and Taxation* (1817); Mill's is *Political Economy* (1848).

7. Adam Smith, *The Nature and Causes of the Wealth of Nations*, vol. II of Dugald Smith, ed., *The Works of Adam Smith, LL.D.* (Reprint of 1811-1812, ed.; Aalen: Otto Zeller, 1963), 21-22.

8. See for example the indictment of excessive individualism in our society by Robert N. Bellah, Richard Madsen, William M. Sullivan, Ann Swidler, and Steven M. Tipton, *Habits of the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1985). I see an economically just system as one in which need determines income, rather than parental or personal education, wealth, or political power; and one that minimizes extremes of wealth.

9. Francis Fukuyama, "The End of History?" *The National Interest* 16(Summer, 1989):3-18.

10. The argument for Consecration and Stewardship as a viable middle way is especially

well made in Gordon Eric Wagner, "Consecration and Stewardship." Wagner not only studies Consecration and Stewardship, but has for years persistently and effectively used its principles in raising living standards in impoverished portions of Africa.

11. Most of the extant deeds were saved, incidentally, because Bishop Partridge, like all bishops, was very frugal and wrote letters to this wife on the back of those he didn't finish. His wife saved some of those letters and workers in the Church Historical Department one day found that on the back side of them were the printed deeds of consecration and stewardship. Several are reprinted in *Building the City of God*, 365-372.

12. *Building the City of God*, 367.

13. The documentation makes it clear that this was a concession to civil law and not an amendment to the original principles of consecration and stewardship. See Cook, *Law of Consecration*, 34.

14. Joseph Smith to "The Church in Caldwell County," December 16, 1838, printed in Dean C. Jesse, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1984), 379. Lyndon Cook, in printing the passage in his study of consecration, left out, without ellipses, the words "his property and his wife & children to the Lord," thus obscuring the intent of the prophet to refute the charge that consecration involved a granting of sexual license, as well as his affirmation that consecration of property remained a viable principle in the Church. See Cook, *Law of Consecration*, 82.

15. Presiding Bishopric, Bishops' Meeting Minutes, 1862-1879, 21 September 1876, LDS Church Archives.

16. Vogt, et al., *People of Rimrock*, 27-28.

17. Francis Porter to James G. Bleak, August 9, 1904, James G. Bleak Manuscripts, the Henry E. Huntington Library, San Marino, California. Cited in *Building the City of God*, 468.

18. See Keith Bradley and Alan Gelb, *Cooperation at Work: The Mondragon Experience* (London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1983).

19. Sevier Stake United Order Record Book, September 7, 1874, LDS Church Archives.

20. Oral interview, 4 January 1973, LDS Church Archives. See also *Ensign*, 5(November 1975): 127.

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## BLOOD POEM

Each month she tries to write a blood poem,  
Living with two women in a cramped apartment  
should help. After all, three weeks  
of each month, a face pales in letting go.  
But when the lines won't come, Willene speaks,  
"You lose a week every month, give or take.  
Three months a year. A woman bleeds twelve  
in fifty years. Women should outlive men;  
it's only fair."

The other two make no complaint. It's the clean  
week, and besides Beth's too pleased. For the first  
time in her life, her blood count's high enough  
to give to the Red Cross. The Red Cross? Cross  
Christ? Or why would we give blood every month?  
Why call menses the blessing, call its loss the curse?

Willene swallows calcium by the handful; the other  
two tough out the cramping that is woman's lot.  
Beth just bought each of them three packages  
of tampons on sale. Designed by a woman doctor,  
the ad claims. Another Madison Avenue lie by men  
trying to plug up women. Making the "tidies"  
a lifelong affliction: Beth watches lest someone  
taste food with a spoon and then stir with it.  
Elise won't soak her clothes in a sink  
where dishes are washed. Willene cannot stand  
hair in the bathtub drain.

And blood smells salty and so does the fish market  
across the street and the subway in August. Three  
weeks of each month someone is sick in this apartment,

the other two hovering with concern and sure knowledge  
their turn is coming. Then one day Elise wears her  
white dress with blue flowers to work, someone tells her  
she's come through. Beth lies on the floormat, pale  
in garment and white slip. Willene and Elise look  
away when blood dots the white nylon. And every month  
Willene flushes clot after clot, fists clenched at  
cramps and the thought of being strapped, spreadeagled,  
for a D&C and some doctor talking of golf scores.

And trying to write a blood poem, she remembers  
her first period. They'd gone to Wyoming  
for Christmas, and coming back, sitting between  
her uncle and brother, she felt herself get wet.  
Four hours in the car, and then her mother gave  
her a yellowed belt, pin, a pad of soft cloth.  
And looked away, saying she'd screamed her first  
time. Thought she was dying.

Willene knew even then that schoolroom  
whispers and crisp words in health texts  
had nothing to do with that thick thing  
between her legs. She'd learned that blood-  
stained pants must be soaked cold. Hot water  
sets blood. Napkins. Tampons. Cold water  
so blood won't set. How can poems come when  
so much time is spent tidying up? How much  
of themselves must women plug, how much  
must they flush, and do the sewers run red,  
do oceans begin and end in the blood drained  
from women, pale at each letting go?

—LORETTA RANDALL SHARP

The Living World is Our Temple

## A MORMON EVOLUTIONIST AND THE WILD GOD'S GRACE

By Levi S. Peterson



BRANT DAY

I OFTEN REMEMBER, WHILE PARTAKING OF THE BREAD AND water of the sacrament, that this rite celebrates the bloody sacrifice of an anthropomorphic deity. I admit to having formerly doubted whether a civilized religion should rely on such a

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primitive ceremony. Now I rejoice in the wild and uncivilized quality that adheres to the Lord's Last Supper. The longer I live the more convinced I am of something ineradicably wild within the human spirit which is both alleviated and abetted by the violence of the Crucifixion.

In my essay "A Christian by Yearning" (SUNSTONE 12:5), I spoke of my hope that Christ will raise me up from my mortality. Here I wish to speak of my hope that he will raise me up from my guilt. I am a wild and fallen creature. I have fallen



thousands of times. I continue to fall every day. I am arraigned before the judge and jury of my own conscience, and I look about for an advocate who will plead the extenuating circumstances of my sins.

Almost immediately after my arrival in the French mission in 1954, I became an unbeliever. I was twenty-one years old and had spent three years at BYU. These years at a Mormon university were the seedbed of my doubt. I had met the world in my text books and it had shaken me. For example, I encountered Bertrand Russell and his essay "A Free Man's Worship" in my freshman English anthology. With a somber eloquence that venerable atheist described a blank and indifferent universe where "all the labours of the ages, all the devotion, all the inspiration, all the noonday brightness of human genius, are destined to extinction."<sup>1</sup> On a geology field trip into Rock Canyon I saw a fossil snail shell embedded in a limestone cliff. That fossil spoke with its own kind of somber eloquence, assuring me of the unfathomable antiquity of life upon this earth. I wavered, I equivocated, I temporized. I read Joseph Fielding Smith's *Man: His Origin and Destiny* and temporarily fought down the conviction that the biblical account of Adam and Eve in Eden is no more than a splendid myth. During the early weeks of my mission my doubts culminated. In retrospect, I see a predetermined motive behind my disbelief. I desired to banish from my universe the God who demanded an impossible perfection of human beings. I sought to escape God's call to sainthood. I sought to escape my overweening conscience. In short, I hoped to ameliorate my mortal condition by redefining it as not fallen but natural.

My effort to evade self sacrifice was only partially successful. When I was made a senior companion and transferred from Switzerland to Belgium, I encountered the urban poor. Whether by fate or unconscious choice I proselyted among coal miners, factory workers, and welfare recipients. The doors my companion and I knocked upon opened into cramped, ancient quarters without bathrooms or central heating. Furniture was soiled and worn; toilets stood in hallways. For breakfast and lunch the most prosperous inhabitants had bread and coffee; for dinner, potatoes, leeks, and a chop. The aged and disabled were often in evident want, having exhausted their food and fuel days before their next welfare check was due. I remember a retired coal miner who had been mistakenly given a caustic to drink at a company infirmary; he had spit out pieces of his own esophagus and the cords which attached his heart to his chest had disintegrated. He made me feel his heart thumping in the middle of his abdomen. He showed me the large narcotic pills which he took to quell the pain.

I remembered the admonition of the God whom I sought to escape that I must lose myself in service to his suffering, desperate children. Measuring the overwhelming dimensions of human need, I despaired of being a saint. Though I gave

a part of my monthly stipend to the poor and offered verbal comfort where I could, I knew my efforts were neither heroic nor efficacious. Possessed by the rule-keeping syndrome of most Latter-day Saint youth, I spent my hours performing the vacuous duty of a missionary: knocking on doors, giving an occasional lesson, and helping convert, during a period of two-and-a-half years, some twelve or fifteen persons, most of whom afterward fell away. I am sorry to make this judgment upon the Latter-day Saint missionary effort: proselytism is the least in rank among the categories of Christian service. If Mormons want to be the truest of Christians, let their missionaries serve the needy without regard to their faith or virtue.

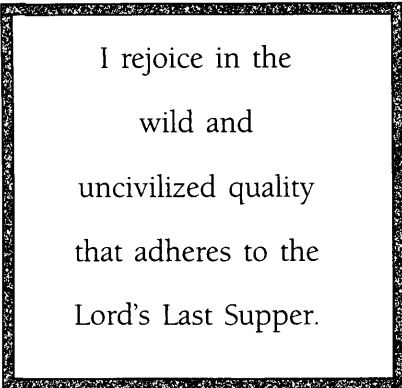
While I was a missionary I experimented with another kind of sainthood. Though I lived in outward conformity to the missionary rules, I nourished myself on the writings of Albert Schweitzer, whom I came upon quite accidentally. I now recognize Schweitzer as a respectable minor author in religion and ethics. When I first read him,

he loomed as a mentor and intellectual father. I recommend three of his books: *The Quest of the Historical Jesus*, a summary of higher criticism of the Bible up to 1911; *Ethics and Civilization*, an attempt to found the principle of Reverence for Life upon elemental reasoning; and *My Life & Thought*, his autobiography. Schweitzer taught me to trust reason—my reason—as the primary source of truth. He also offered me a pattern of sainthood, for at thirty Schweitzer renounced a promising academic career in theology and music, took a medical degree, and went to Africa as a medical missionary. Most important, he articulated a principle that extends the ethic of Christian service from humanity alone to all living things. He taught me that Christ, when he spoke of God's children, meant not only human beings but all living things.

I find it appropriate that Schweitzer came upon his unifying principle in the African wilderness. It came to him, he writes in his autobiography, while he traveled a tropical river in order to visit a patient.

Slowly we crept upstream, laboriously feeling—it was the dry season—for the channels between the sandbanks. Lost in thought I sat on the deck of the barge, struggling to find the elementary and universal conception of the ethical which I had not discovered in any philosophy. Sheet after sheet I covered with disconnected sentences, merely to keep myself concentrated on the problem. Late on the third day, at the very moment when, at sunset, we were making our way through a herd of hippopotamuses, there flashed upon my mind, unforeseen and unsought, the phrase, 'Reverence for Life.' The iron door had yielded: the path in the thicket had become visible.<sup>2</sup>

I will liken Schweitzer's discovery of a superlative abstraction in a muddy pool of spouting hippopotamuses to Samson's



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discovery of a honeycomb in the carcass of a lion: "Out of the eater came forth meat, and out of the strong came forth sweetness" (Judges 14:14). May that rational species, *Homo sapiens*, long continue to think its profound thoughts in proximity to its kindred of the wild.

As I returned from my mission in the spring of 1957, I was convinced that I should scrupulously practice Reverence for Life. Accordingly I renounced deer hunting and fishing. I respected the groves of scrub oak along the foothills of the Wasatch as if they were crowds of human beings. I carried spiders from my apartment rather than kill them. I gave up plucking and chewing stems of grass while seated on a lawn. I broke the viewfinder of my camera to release a gnat mysteriously incarcerated therein. I found of course that almost all to whom I explained my expanded ethical concern considered it to be fanatic. Sensing their doubt as to my sanity, I quickly learned to keep my practice of Reverence for Life to myself. In the end I failed the fervor of a true saint not only because Schweitzer's principle was socially unpopular but also because it was inconvenient. I am not a person who can tolerate much inconvenience.

On a rainy day in Provo I saw earthworms upon the sidewalks where they had taken refuge from sodden lawns. I knew that when the rain stopped and the sidewalks dried, most of the worms would desiccate and die rather than wriggle their way back to the safety of the lawns. It occurred to me that I could be of immense service to a number of my small friends of the class *Oligochaeta*, genus *Lumbricus*, if I were to stride the walks of Provo just at the moment the rain stopped and furiously sweep them onto the adjacent grass, where they could soon return to their burrows. It was the futility of the deed as much as the social incongruity of it that broke my will to practice a sainthood based upon Reverence for Life. What impact could one puny man, equipped with one small broom, have upon the general welfare of the earthworm race? And what were the lives of a handful of worms against my imperative appetite for knowledge and status and wealth? On that rainy day in Provo I insisted that I had more selfish things to do with my time than to serve suffering life forms, human or otherwise. Like the creationist I had once been, the evolutionist I now was turned away from the prospect of sainthood and set himself upon the track of a conventional professional life. The next fall I went deer hunting, and I'm sorry to report that to this day I use earthworms for fishbait.

**D**URING the more than thirty years that have intervened since I returned from my mission, I married, entered graduate school, had a daughter, took a faculty position, and bought a house. My wife and I have acquired what seems an innumerable quantity of things: clothes, an automobile, a dishwasher, a television set, a VCR, a computer, and so on. I read a good deal, serve on boards, and keep memberships in scholarly organizations. I spend many happy hours in conversation with friends and relatives. I ski, hike, and backpack

with my wife, and we take many drives for pleasure. I devote time and money to good causes, but not enough to inconvenience myself. I will describe myself as a responsible employee, good citizen, and decent neighbor in the most unexceptional sense of those terms.

For these three decades I have loitered among the Mormons, half alienated yet unable to make a clean break from the faith of my childhood. As I grow older my compulsion to harmonize myself with my fellow Latter-day Saints grows stronger. I am comforted to attend meetings, to imbibe of their optimism and confidence, to engage empathetically in their worship, and, yes, to doze peacefully while they preach their simple, repetitious sermons.

During my mission and for some years following, I debated with myself the question whether one who does not believe in a personal and in some manner anthropomorphic god is an atheist. I wondered whether I was a prisoner of my senses. I cannot conceive of the intangible, at least not in a compelling manner. I am not a disbeliever in an unperceived dimension of reality. I intuit or infer a cause where I see an object, and the diversity and flux I see in the world persuade me that there are unseen determinants of the objects presented to my senses. I am perplexed to know whether those unperceived determinants are in any sense personal. I cannot affirm that justice, mercy, and wisdom reside in them. Yet the wild visible world they have produced compels my worship. I have come finally to insist that religion is not the monopoly of those who interpret God anthropomorphically. I choose not to be intellectually rigorous about God. He is free and unpreempted. Religion does not have to depend upon God's possessing a particular character. I revere the visible world; by that simple inward act I define God and declare his existence.

On a spring day not long ago my wife and I rode with my brother and sister-in-law to Dinosaur National Monument in eastern Utah. A fierce wind blew through the Uinta Basin, and white clouds made a solemn progress across a limitless sky. Our destination was a dinosaur quarry, a low sandstone cliff over which the National Park Service has built a metal and glass shelter. Hundreds of fossil dinosaur bones, partially excavated, project from the cliff. Among them are vertebrae, femurs, scapulae, and ribs of gigantic proportions. There are leg bones as high as my waist and almost as thick. These bones bear a remarkable testimony. Over 150 million years ago this part of Utah was a coastal plain vegetated by lush tropical forests and inhabited by an uncounted variety of reptile species. Some of them belonged to that astonishing group called the dinosaurs. Though they existed in many sizes, we remember best the giants, great lumbering herbivores two or three stories high and as long as half a football field or fierce bipedal carnivores whose teeth were as large as railroad spikes. A river once ran through the site of the quarry. The current carried the carcasses of dead dinosaurs to a sharp bend, where it dropped them and they sank to the bottom. Sand quickly covered them, and the process of petrification began. The stratum within which they were interred became covered by other strata. In time continental

plates ground against one another, and the Rocky Mountains rose. Water and wind sculpted the mountains, and at last those bones came again into daylight where I saw them. In those resurrected bones I detected God. Viewing them, I was stifled by the ages, by my own brevity and vulnerability; but I was exalted, too, by my intimate recognition of the creative force of Nature. I could not fail to worship. I do not know God's personality, but I know God's face. I see it in the wild and ancient world.

After we left the quarry we drove by a colony of prairie dogs. Prairie dogs are rodents which live in burrows. In prehistoric America their subterranean dwellings covered hundreds of square miles of grassy plains. At present they are vastly diminished, though I am happy to say they are now protected and are beginning to recover. We got out of our car and observed twenty or thirty of these sleek-headed, small-eared ground squirrels sitting upright on the edge of their burrows, their hand-like front paws held against their chests. Viewing them, I thought of the birds to whom St. Francis of Assisi preached, for these prairie dogs seemed like a congregation of worshippers—curious, attentive, and devout. When St. Francis exhorted the birds to praise the God who gave them daily food and the liberty of wings, the birds craned their necks and chirped their Christian assent. So I called upon the prairie dogs along the road to receive the gift of life with gratitude and reverence, and by a nervous twitching of their paws and an occasional high pitched bark they made manifest their approval. I join St. Francis in declaring the plants and animals of the earth to be my Christian brothers and sisters. As a violated environment closes in upon an extravagant and oblivious human kind, I recognize that in the salvation of the prairie dogs lies my own security.

SOME will say I'm a pantheist and not a Christian. I say I am a Christian because I define myself as one. I see no reason why I have to believe in a God modeled on an Assyrian king, a jealous God who relishes flattery and status and punishes blasphemy and insubordination, in order to be a Christian. If I do not know God's personality, I will at least imagine it. I rely on my mute intuitions to inform me that the impulse to live I find everywhere on this fecund earth, in grasses and algae and pine trees as well as in prairie dogs and human beings, is godly. This inorganic planet of magma, rock, water, and air, is divine; but even more divine is the life that has occupied it and made it home. I do not doubt life is God's crowning achievement. I love the wild world because it is so replete with an unapologetic impulse to live. The plants and animals claim their birthright. They do not agonize over duty; they listen to an inner commandment and strive to exist. And in their presence I worship, for God has spoken them, they are his Word.

Yet this living portion of the world that I especially revere and worship exists in desperation. God allowed, or could not forestall, a damning canker in the root of life. The instability, the fated flux, of the inorganic world extends to the living world. The gift of life is a sentence to death. Death is an ancient fact. In the very start, God planted the clock of aging into the primordial protoplasm from which all later living things have evolved. In the beginning, perhaps more than two billion years ago, simple organisms already flourished, aged, and died. Manifesting that Promethean will which has ever since characterized their diverse progeny, they sought and achieved a kind of immortality through replication. The earliest organisms probably reproduced simply by dividing, as single-celled organisms still do. Later, many-celled organisms evolved partitioned into male and female sexes, upon whose union the regeneration of their race depended.

One conjectures that the earliest organisms ingested dissolved nutrients from the sea about them, or from the primitive atmosphere, or from rock to which they had attached themselves. In time some of them learned to ingest the detritus from their own dead kin, a richer, fatter nutrition by far than that drawn directly from the inorganic world. And at a certain fateful moment some of them discovered how to ingest their living comrades. The predation which dawned at that moment continues greatly amplified. Today the vast majority of plants and animals feed upon organic material. Many feed upon life forms that are already dead; many others—plants as well as animals—kill the living things which they ingest.

Herein lie the Fall and Original Sin, concepts as valid for the evolutionist as for any other Christian. Life fell in the instant of its first creation. The Fall occurred at that early moment when the first living thing, the androgynous protoplasm, the unified father and mother, the Adam and Eve of all succeeding forms of life, came forth in a mortal condition. Some will protest this cannot be so. According to a widespread interpretation of Genesis, Adam and Eve were the first human beings and were commanded not to eat of a fruit. Perversely, they ate and fell and all living things became mortal and the human race became perpetually sinful. For the evolutionist, this account is a venerable fable, true only in a metaphorical sense. It is not essential to an enduring Christianity.

Nor is it essential to an enduring Christianity to restrict the possibility of doing evil to rational agents possessed of free will. For untold generations Christians have made a scapegoat of the human species in order to exonerate their God from complicity in the existence of evil. Among the fathers of the early church the most notable accuser of humankind was Saint Augustine, upon whose reasoning even the Latter-day Saints of today commonly depend. In his treatise *On Free Choice of the Will* Augustine emphatically declares God can do no evil and his creation is fundamentally good. For Augustine, authentic

Among creatures

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evil occurs only in the perverse choice of a rational agent. "Therefore, a wicked will is the cause of all evil. If the will were in accord with its nature, it would surely maintain that nature, not harm it; and therefore, it would not be wicked. . . . Sin cannot rightly be imputed to anyone but the sinner, nor can it rightly be imputed to him unless he wills it."<sup>3</sup> As might be expected, Augustine does not consider physical suffering a significant evil. When it happens to human beings, they deserve it because of their sins. When it happens to dumb brutes, it redounds to the growth of their soul, which for Augustine is something akin to the human soul. Suffering allows animals to demonstrate the admirable propensity of the soul, animal and human alike, for seeking unity in diversity and continuance amidst corruption and flux. "What else is this pain except a sense of resistance to division or corruption?" he argues. "Thus it is clearer than daylight how eager the soul is for unity, and how firmly it holds to unity in the completeness of the body."<sup>4</sup>

Saint Augustine notwithstanding, evil is not to be defined in an ancient and wild world only by the will of rational agents. Evil devolves from the fact that living things can die, do die, and, indeed, must die. On the one hand, life is good, and I and every other living thing experience good as we live most completely. Furthermore, we perform good as we enable life to flourish, whether our own or that of other things. To live, therefore, is to possess the good concretely; to contribute to the welfare of living things is to be good in a moral sense. On the other hand, death is evil, and I and every other living thing experience evil as we atrophy, suffer pain and debility, and sooner or later die. Furthermore, I and every other living thing perform evil as we hinder life from flourishing, as we obstruct, mutilate, and kill. To die, therefore, is to suffer evil concretely; to cause others to suffer and die is to be evil in a moral sense. In the name of God, the infamous Lafferty brothers, now in the Utah penitentiary, slashed the throats of their sister-in-law and little niece, an undeniable evil which we call murder. I find a similar evil in a case involving wild jackals in Africa. It is reported that dominant female jackals killed the pups of an inferior female belonging to the same pack, presumably to enhance the chances of survival for their own pups. Only a narrow anthropocentrism would claim the human victims of the Lafferty brothers suffered a greater evil than the slaughtered jackal pups. Humans and jackals alike died at the hands or teeth of their own kind on whom, as social animals, they had thought to rely.

I do not limit culpability among animals to the carnivores, for herbivores are guilty of maiming and killing plant life. For that matter, plants too participate in evil as they ingest, inhibit, and kill other plants or animals. Herein lies Original Sin. Original Sin is much more than a genetic propensity for evil in human beings. It is the inborn curse of the mortal order whereby all living things are under the grim necessity of devouring other life. To achieve the goodness of developing my own life and the lives of other human beings and the lives of the plants and animals I choose to favor, I must sacrifice innumerable other

plants and animals. To do good I must inevitably do evil.

I do not try to clear God of complicity in this tragic state of affairs. It was God who ordained that the original protoplasm from which life has evolved should be mortal. I cannot accept a God who would be so pusillanimous, so petty and mean-spirited, as to conveniently shunt all blame for evil to beings lesser than himself. So on Judgment Day, if there is to be a Judgment Day, God will stand indicted under a law of his own devising. On that day I will be ready to forgive God as I hope he will forgive me. I will forgive him because I do not believe he can intervene in the natural order he has established. My only certitude regarding God is this: he is the creative force of the cosmos which expresses itself in natural law. But of course I am pleased to imagine, to hope, he is much more as well. I hope God is the guarantor of certain outrageous miracles, one of which is the immortality of individual human beings. I hope he is also a miraculous meta-law riding above and transcending Nature, mysteriously nudging it toward ends which may yet prove grand and moral. I hope he is the supernatural destiny toward which consciousness and spirit in the natural world are tending.

I rely upon Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, a Jesuit paleontologist, for this concept of a divine magnetism pulling humanity toward a distant spiritual consummation. Teilhard is justly famous for his courageous attempt to reconcile evolution and Christianity. Among his half dozen books on evolution and Christianity the most frequently cited is *The Phenomenon of Man*. This book appeared in 1955, the year of his death, and others were published soon thereafter, for his ecclesiastical superiors had refused him permission to publish on the subject of evolution and theology while he lived. According to Teilhard, God operates through evolution. Imperfect from its inception, the entire Creation, inorganic and organic alike, is infused with an impulse to evolve into something more orderly, complex, and divine. Evil is therefore simply the imperfection of a progressive Creation. "Physical and moral disorder, of one sort or another," Teilhard writes, "must necessarily be produced spontaneously in a system which is developing its organic character, so long as the system is incompletely organized."<sup>5</sup>

According to Teilhard, evolution ceased to be merely corporeal and became spiritual as well with the appearance of the human brain. In his ultimate identity God is the transcendent center toward which humanity, if it so chooses, will spiritually evolve. God has made the divine potential of human nature particularly manifest through the incarnation of Jesus Christ, in whose historic person Teilhard devoutly believes. The function of Christ is not to redeem humanity from the sin of Adam, since in an evolutionary world there could have been no Adam; rather, the function of Christ is to inspire and draw an evolving humanity toward its spiritual destiny. "Since Jesus was born, and grew to his full stature, and died," Teilhard writes, "everything has continued to move forward because *Christ is not yet fully formed*: he has not yet gathered about him the last folds of his robe of flesh and of love which is made up of his

faithful followers. . . . Christ is the end-point of the evolution, even the *natural* evolution, of all beings; and therefore evolution is holy."<sup>6</sup>

After reading Teilhard, I have no illusions that reinterpreting Christianity in light of modern science is an easy affair. I know I am not the one to attempt to do for Mormonism what Teilhard has done for Catholicism. The task demands a writer not only versed in science and Mormon theology but illumined by a fervent piety as well. Nonetheless, Teilhard, like Schweitzer, encourages me to find solace in Christ. I have spoken elsewhere of my hope that Christ will redeem me from death. Here now I will speak of my hope that the pattern of his crucifixion will assist in my redemption from guilt.

I RECOGNIZE that among creatures human beings stand in a special relationship to evil. If long ago I thought to escape guilt and overweening conscience by becoming a disbeliever, I was sorely mistaken. A contemplation of the wild world has led me back to Original Sin. Although it is the inheritance of all living things, my species alone is cognizant of this dark legacy. My species alone, of all the myriads of species now and formerly extant, has partaken of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil.

I will therefore confess my sins. The first sin I wish to confess is that I continue to eat to sustain my body and gratify my appetite. Though my diet largely consists of skim milk, non-fat yogurt, bread, tuna, chicken, oranges, apples, bananas, potatoes, cauliflower, celery, carrots, and broccoli, I admit to the occasional intemperance of butter, beefsteak, hamburgers, French fries, pizza, cola, pie, cake, and ice cream. It is not the deleterious effect of my diet upon my body for which I feel guilt but for its effect upon those plants and animals which compose it.

In my time I have practiced bloody predation. As a boy I killed and gutted both domestic and wild rabbits for the family frying pan. When my wife and I were in graduate school, I added to our impecunious economy by hunting deer. I loved a Utah deer hunt passionately. It was a massive public event, a universal ritual of return to primitive origins. At dawn on opening day close to 200,000 hunters were dispersed across the face of the Utah wilderness, and the mountains reverberated with the crash and roar of the great rifles. A deer was more than food or unpreempted wealth. In killing a deer, I annexed its vital energy and siphoned it into my own inadequate supply. Rarely did anything charge me with such intense triumph, with so much incredulous pleasure, as firing the shot that killed a deer.

I no longer hunt deer, and during hard winters when the snow is deep I cheerfully resign my decorative shrubs to foraging does and fawns. Such gestures and sentiments do little to assuage my guilt. There is no question human beings are foremost among

the predators of the world. The fact that a couple feeding upon lobster in a luxurious restaurant are elegantly attired does not diminish their complicity in the web of predation and death. So I too am an accessory to the general predation of the human species upon the plants and animals of the world, both domestic and wild. I assent to the daily slaughter of cows, pigs, lambs, chickens, and turkeys. I assent to the daily grinding of kernels of wheat and oats, which are after all living seeds having, each one, the astonishing capacity to create a blade of living green. Merely by insisting upon holding my position as professor of English year after year I deny it to a languishing young Ph.D. The fuel I cause to be burned in the engines of the airplane which transports me to a symposium is fuel a later generation can't use because it is irreplaceable. The plants and animals of the wild world do not fret over the fact they must live upon other life forms; if anything, those of them that are sentient delight in the fact. But I, because my kind has eaten of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, must live in a condition of perpetual guilt.

In the opening paragraph of this essay I said I rejoice in the wild and uncivilized quality that adheres to the sacrament of the Lord's Last Supper. When I contemplate the fated violence by which all things exist, I affirm the propriety of a symbolic crucifixion as the paramount rite of the Christian church. It is said Jesus was born into the household of Mary and Joseph of Nazareth. He became an adult, went into the desert, and, when he reappeared, he began to preach and perform miracles. He preached the imminence of the Kingdom of God, and he declared himself to be a miraculous manifestation of deity in human form. So radical were his doctrines that Jewish leaders persuaded the Roman governor to order his death by crucifixion. Within three days he rose, appeared before his disciples, and ascended into heaven, promising to return. We still await his return. In his day and before, human beings sacrificed plants and animals and even other human beings as a means of propitiating wrathful gods. From the crucifixion of Christ the nascent Christian church inferred an end to bloody sacrifice. Through the communion of the Lord's Last Supper, Christians celebrate the final grand sacrifice by which the scapegoat Christ atoned the guilt of all succeeding generations.

During his early ministry, Jesus went onto a mountain and preached, saying, "Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away" (Matthew 5:36-42). Those words, and others, I have heard, loved, and

We are asked by Christ to  
be eco-saints, to engage  
ourselves in behalf of  
snails, leeks, meadowlarks,  
kelp, moths,  
and earthworms, too.

made my own, and by them I have convicted myself, for I do not have the strength to measure up to them.

Each Sunday as I partake of the sacrament, I devote a portion of my meditation to a prayer for pardon. I do not ask Christ to forgive me, because I do not believe he has ever condemned me. I have condemned myself. I depend on his crucifixion, with its pattern of a universal expiation, for the motive and nerve to forgive myself. For me every day is Judgment Day. Every day I stand in the meticulous scrutiny of my own conscience. So during a portion of my sacramental meditation I pray for no more than the ability to be reconciled to my fated sin.

I must forgive myself over and over for failing to be a saint. It is not a matter which can be laid definitively to rest, for I have heard in the wind, from childhood forward, Christ's incessant call. I see earthworms on rainy sidewalks fifteen or twenty times a year. I do nothing for them. I am afraid of what other people would think; I am too busy with my own affairs. I do not doubt Christ would have me help them. I affirm that the best and purest expression of God in this wide universe is in the imperative of the human conscience toward self sacrifice in behalf of others. "If any man will come after me," said Jesus, "let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me. For whosoever will save his life shall lose it: and whosoever will lose his life for my sake shall find it" (Matthew 16:24-25). The cross of our new ecologically oriented age is vaster, weightier, more hopeless of being borne than the old cross of earlier ages. We are asked by Christ to be eco-saints. Though

our duty to our own kind is in nothing diminished, we are now asked to love and cherish the wild world as well. We are asked to covenant ourselves to the cause of clean air, pure water, and natural soil. We are asked to engage ourselves in behalf of snails, leeks, meadowlarks, kelp, moths, and earthworms, too. The living world is our temple and we are asked to keep it holy. ☸

## NOTES

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# GETTING TO DISNEYLAND

By Susan Howe

AS SHE PULLED THE LAST WEEDS FROM THE PETUNIAS, Ethel hummed the tune that had awakened her two hours earlier, Jimminy Cricket's song in *Pinocchio*, "When You Wish Upon a Star." Even half asleep, Ethel had listened carefully to the lyrics: *Anything your heart desires can come to you*. She thought maybe the words were a sign, and this was the day to ask Earl about the vacation. She was so excited that she couldn't go back to sleep, and when Earl and Russ went off to band practice, she had come out to work in the yard.

Actually, Russell was supposed to take care of the yard, but he wouldn't trim or edge, he wasn't careful enough at weeding, and he absolutely refused to polish the mushrooms. And anyway, what kind of an example would it be for the band director's own son to miss practice? Well, the two of them would be home in one hour and fifteen minutes, and by then, Ethel would be ready. In the bright, pearl-lighted morning she had planned exactly how she would ask Earl and what she would say.

After she finished with the petunias and polished the mushrooms, Ethel was going to turn on the lawn sprinkler, go inside, take a shower, and fix Earl his favorite breakfast—whole wheat waffles with maple syrup, fried eggs, bacon, milk, and orange juice. When he and Russ came through the door, she would call Sherri up from her room and take them to the table. They would have morning prayers, and while Earl was eating, pleased and soothed by the waffles, she would say, "Earl, why don't we *all* go to California this year when it's time to get the pottery? You know, if we want a family vacation, this is our last chance."

Russ would be a senior at Hazel Oaks High next year, and then he'd probably go away to college till he left on his mission. Sherri was just in the tenth grade, but she had that new job at Reams, and Ethel hardly saw her daughter any more. If they could just have one family vacation to bring them close, one beautiful memory before they all went their separate ways.

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SUSAN HOWE, a former editor of *Exponent II*, received her Ph.D in English and creative writing from the University of Denver.

She had tried to ask Earl this morning, first thing, while she was still in bed and he was getting dressed. "Doesn't summer make you want to get out and do things?" she said, working toward the subject.

"I need a new pair of pants," Earl answered, pulling on the green knit slacks he wore with his Hawaiian shirt to band practice. "Sitting on the bleachers has wrecked these."

"There'll be a sale at the end of the month," Ethel said, deciding to wait till there was time to get Earl's attention.

ETHEL had never said this to anyone, but she thought her family wasn't as close as the other good Mormon families in town. Sometimes sitting in the kitchen or the den with her children and her husband, she had the sensation that they didn't even see her, that they had gone so far away she'd never reach them. She worried about this, particularly each Sunday at church. Russ and Sherri were always there, but they sat with their friends, and Earl had Sunday school business until right before the meeting started. "I always come in late. I can't traipse up to the front," Earl said once when Ethel told him she could save him a seat on the aisle.

Ethel was most discouraged when the sacrament meeting talks were about celestial families, united by love, worthy to go to the Celestial Kingdom and live again with God. During these speeches Ethel, sitting alone, nervously drummed her fingers on the hard wooden bench. She supposed the Celestial Kingdom to be some *place*, some bright planet or star, and while all the other families were there and happy, she and Earl and Russ and Sherri would be lost in space, like they were lost in the congregation—each alone, floating in a black void. Of course that wasn't so—they'd be in one of the other kingdoms—but Ethel couldn't shake the image from her mind. She had her heart set on a family vacation because they might become a closer family as they travelled off together to new, exciting places.

The petunias looked lovely, lavender and pink, the dark soil under them fresh and moist. Ethel looked at her watch. Good. Plenty of time. Still twenty minutes to finish the mushrooms before she needed to go inside, get cleaned up, and start break-



fast. She swept the weeds into a green plastic bag and deposited them in the trash can, took off her gardening gloves as she went into the garage for the hose and a polishing rag.

Ethel sometimes said they had a little bit of Mexico stored in their garage. She had to walk carefully among the ceramic planters, birdbaths, jars, flower pots, and statues on the floor. There was still a lot of pottery, even though they hadn't brought up this year's load. She picked up the coiled hose from among the smaller pots on the shelves. The jars were shaped like giant beads. She turned around to reach into the rag bin, and all the gaudy, carefree colors—bright red and aqua and green and yellow—popped in her eyes. Taken by this phenomenon, she whirled around, a complete circle. The garage became a huge kaleidoscope, and Ethel glimpsed a land where people were more emotional, loved more easily and showed what they felt, where singing and brilliant color were a part of life. She was moved by these possibilities, and even though she felt a little silly, she whirled around again. The pottery was so vibrant, so bright.

It had been Earl's idea to start going to Tijuana to buy the ceramics—no one in Utah could get authentic Mexican pottery—and to set up a stand by the freeway exit in American Fork to sell the pottery during the summer months. They had done it for the past two years and made quite a bit of money. Living on a teacher's salary, they really needed the extra two thousand dollars. Ethel was proud of Earl for coming up with the idea, and she didn't mind too much that now they had to park the van in the driveway and could only get the Dodge into the garage. She thought of those bright pots as savings—stored hopes. There were so many things that they could do with the extra money. This summer, it had to go for the family vacation.

Ethel connected the hose and dragged it around to the front yard. She began with the two brown mushrooms, the first ones Earl had brought her from Mexico. They had decided to put the three-foot-high mushrooms on either side of the front walk just below the porch. Ethel doused her rag under the hose and began rubbing the tops. The shiny brown glaze seemed to be wearing; complex networks of tiny black cracks were developing in a few places, making the tops look a little dull. Well, they were two years old now. She couldn't imagine how to fix the glaze, so she just polished harder. The moist surface of the mushrooms dried quickly in the morning sun, the glaze smelling like metal mixed with clay. This odor and the smell of the fresh lawn were among the most pleasant in her life. She loved the yard and her mushrooms.

She didn't know what had given Earl the idea to bring her the mushrooms when he came back with the rest of the pottery that first year. "Good advertising," he had said. "Why should anybody buy our product if we don't display it ourselves?" But Ethel knew the ceramic mushrooms were really a present for her, that Earl was being thoughtful because she had been so disappointed when she didn't get to go on the trip. He had decided to take Russ because the two of them could sleep in the van.

"I can sleep in the van," Ethel had said when he told her. "Ethel, frankly I'm worried about how safe it is in Mexico," he answered. "I don't want to worry about your safety. Besides, next year will be more fun. I'll know more about Tijuana then and can show you a better time. This isn't going to be much of a trip—we're only going to be gone three days."

They had been gone four. Ethel still sometimes wondered what they had done on the extra day. Once she asked Russ about it. "What did you and your father do in Tijuana, Russ?"

"Went around the city and bought pottery."

"But what about the extra day?"

"What extra day?"

"You were gone four days."

"That's how long it took."

That was all she could get out of Russ.

As Ethel rubbed the brown mushrooms dry, she watched the morning sunlight as it reached the other mushrooms, so beautiful in their setting at the side of the yard just in front of the weeping birch tree. They were her favorites. Earl had brought them back from Mexico last year. Last year Ethel didn't ask about going because she thought Earl would bring it up. After all, he had said this was the year. But he didn't mention it, and he and Russ went as they had the year before, not even suggesting that she go along. Ethel thought maybe Earl didn't understand how very much she wanted to be down there with him, to see the excitement of Tijuana and California, and even just to go through Las Vegas and maybe stop and put a few nickels into a slot machine. That would be thrilling for her, something she had never done. In 1982 she had gone with Earl to a two-day band teachers' convention in Idaho Falls, but he left her alone in the motel room both days while he went off to the meetings. Though she had thought of going out to the pool, there were too many rowdy teenagers splashing and running around, and she didn't think sitting with the teenagers would be very much fun. So instead she stayed in the room for two days and watched programs on television like *The Young and the Restless* and *Days of Our Lives*. She could have done that at home.

She had forgotten her disappointment at missing the second Mexico trip when Earl brought her this last group of mushrooms. They were a work of art. Whoever made them had used a delicate fluorescent glaze that changed color depending on the light. When she looked at them in the late afternoon and they were shaded by the fence and the birch tree, they were a deep mauve, lavender, and a shimmering cobalt blue. But now, under the first light of the sun, they were like opals, shining with a barely perceptible gold or yellow light. She thought that she had never seen anything so lovely as these mushrooms. She loved to polish them, to see them warm under her hands, glowing in so many different shades as the light moved across them.

Ethel knew it would sound strange to say so, but these mushrooms had brought a lot of happiness to her life. They let her know how much Earl loved her, even if he didn't show it in conventional ways, and then they were such a hit with the town. When she and Earl had put in the first mushrooms,

there must have been fifteen ladies in Relief Society who told her, "They look so nice! Not another home in town with mushrooms." The photographer from the *Hazel Oaks Voice*, the town newspaper that was published every Thursday, took pictures, and when they came out in the paper Ethel began to garden seriously. Last year, after the five fluorescent mushrooms were in place, Ethel was elated that Carol Simms herself, president of the Garden Club, came to ask if Ethel wanted to join and if they could put the Dahlquists's home on the summer tour.

So Ethel supposed it was all right that Earl didn't take her last year. Particularly because it turned out to be such a difficult trip. Earl called from San Diego to say the transmission had gone out on the van and they would have to wait until the mechanic could put in a new one. They were away a whole week, and it didn't sound like much fun. And then Ethel supposed she understood why Earl decided to use the summer money to buy himself and Russ new rifles. He must have thought they had earned the reward, with all of the trouble about the transmission. But this year, she didn't see any reason why all the family couldn't go.

JUST as Ethel was finishing the brown mushrooms, she heard a series of pops that could only be the van backfiring in second gear, even though Earl always said you had to be careful in second. What in the world? Earl wasn't supposed to be back for another fifty minutes. The popping ended, which meant that the van had been shifted into high, and then it screeched around the corner and came to a stop by the curb. It annoyed Ethel for Earl to leave the van there because nobody could see the yard. She had asked him fifty times to park in the driveway. But this morning Ethel could see that something was wrong. Earl kicked the door open so hard that the hinge broke again, and the door flew all the way around in front of the van and hit the headlight. Russell, sitting in the front seat next to his father, didn't move. Then, muttering "Damn kids," under his breath, Earl got out, hurled the door closed, and charged by Ethel and into the house.

"What's the matter?" Ethel called after him. "Earl?" The door slammed behind him.

Russ suddenly got out of the car and whizzed up the walk. "Russ, what's your father so angry about?" Ethel asked as he went by. Ethel had noticed that when Russ didn't want to talk to her, he hurried so he could pretend not to hear what she asked him. This time, she didn't let him get away. Ethel raised her voice. "Russell Earl Dahlquist, stop this minute. I asked you what is the matter with your father."

Just before he reached the porch, Russ turned around and began digging the toe of his shoe into the stem of one of the brown mushrooms. "Half of the kids didn't get to practice till almost eight o'clock," Russ said. "Then Charlie Simms got everybody talked into pulling a trick on Dad. Some of the kids keep asking to play some new music, but Dad always says there's no money in the budget to buy it. So this morning when Dad said to play 'Stars and Stripes Forever,' we all sort of impro-

vised this song by Chicago. I never saw Dad get that mad. He lost it. He said we could all get out and he didn't care anymore if Hazel Oaks didn't have a decent band."

"I see," Ethel said. "Don't kick the mushroom. And I suppose you just went along with Charlie Simms? You didn't stand up for your father?"

Russ looked at the mushroom and muttered something. Ethel wasn't sure what he said, but she thought it was something like, "Ah, what do you know?" She was just about certain that was what he said.

"What was that, young man?" she asked him sharply.

"Nothing," he said, turning and going up the porch steps towards the house.

"Russell," Ethel called to his retreating back.

"What," Russ answered without turning around.

"I'll go in and see if I can talk to your father. You move the van into the driveway so it doesn't block the view of the yard."

When Ethel got into the house, Earl was already in the shower. Ethel decided that maybe the best thing she could do was get the breakfast ready. That might make him feel better. She could polish the fluorescent mushrooms tomorrow.

Ethel would have liked a shower herself, but Earl was already in their bathroom, and she could hear Sherri downstairs—the stereo was on—so Sherri must already be in the bathroom down there. She hoped that Earl wouldn't run out of hot water. That wouldn't help things any. She wanted him to calm down again before she asked him about the family vacation.

Ethel looked at herself in the mirror of the vanity. She decided that if she just put on a little of her blue eyeshadow and combed her hair, she would look all right for breakfast. Now that she had such a curly perm, her hair didn't look much different whether she washed it or not. When she had come home from Pearl's Beauty Shop the first time with the permanent, Earl looked at her and said "*Eth-el*, you look pre-*pos*-terous." Ethel went into the bedroom and cried. But after an hour or so, she decided that she didn't look preposterous: She looked fashionable. It was her hair, and she could wear it any way she liked. Well, she still had a tight perm. Earl had never mentioned it again. Neither had she.

Ethel hurried into the kitchen, pulled the big ceramic mixing bowl down from the cupboard over the stove, and got out the whole wheat flour. Sherri came up from downstairs.

"Mom, can somebody take me to work?" she asked.

"What about breakfast?" Ethel asked her. "Here I'm fixing waffles and eggs."

"Mom, you know I never eat breakfast," Sherri said. "And I'm going to be late. I need you to take me *right now*. Or do you want me to take the car?"

"No, we need the car. Tell Russ that I said to take you," Ethel said, and Sherri turned back around and went down to Russ's room to get him. Of course Russ protested, but he finally came up the stairs with her and they went out and got into the van in the driveway. Then Ethel ran through the garage and called, "Russ, leave the van in front and take the Dodge. Your father might want to go on down to the freeway before you get back."

She knew this would make Russ angry, but there wasn't anything else she could do. He and Sherri finally went off in the Dodge, Russ squealing the tires as he turned into the street.

Well, Ethel thought, maybe it will be better if I talk to Earl alone. She was pretty sure that Russ would say the vacation was a dumb idea, and she didn't even know if Sherri would be on her side. Yesterday when she picked Sherri up from work, she mentioned the vacation, and all Sherri had to say was, "I don't think they'll give me a whole week off."

**N**O indeed, they were not a celestial family. They were not doing very well. They didn't have a family home evening each week, and it seemed to Ethel that they didn't talk to each other any more. Not even at dinner. They usually just got their plates of whatever Ethel had cooked and went down to watch television in the den. And when they did eat a meal together, like Sunday dinner, almost no one said anything. Ethel knew that if she didn't talk, there was most often silence. Of course, she knew that as kids become teenagers, they naturally grow away, get their own interests, but still she wanted them to talk to her now and then, tell her how they *felt* about things. Sometimes she wanted to tell them how she felt, too. That's why she wanted them all to go on this family vacation. It would give them a whole week of time to get acquainted again, open up to each other. They needed a family vacation this year. Somehow, it was urgent.

Ethel had even gone to the Clark Travel Agency in Provo to ask for information about vacations in Southern California. They had given her a brochure entitled "Disneyland Vacations, Including San Diego." On the front was a picture of Mickey Mouse, Donald Duck, and Goofy standing at the Disneyland Railroad station welcoming people to Disneyland. In the foreground, in front of a low hedge, was a design of Mickey's head made from shrubs and flowers. Ethel wanted to see that. She wanted to walk through the Magic Kingdom and go on the Riverboat ride. She wanted to shop in the stores. Maybe there were ceramic figures of the Disney characters they could get for the back yard.

Inside the brochure, Ethel saw pictures of Shamu the Whale at Sea World and flamingos and koalas at the San Diego Zoo. She had never seen a whale, a flamingo, or a koala in her life. She had studied the brochure very carefully. If they stayed at a Category Y motel, they could afford to stay four nights for the same amount of money that it cost for Earl's and Russ's rifles. She hoped Earl would agree that this year they could go. On the back of the brochure was a picture of Mickey and Minnie Mouse with their arms around each other. The caption said, "We make Disneyland dreams come true." That was exactly what she wanted.

Earl came into the kitchen just as she was taking the first waffle out of the waffle iron. She put it on his plate.

"Russ told me about what happened at school," she said. "I don't wonder that you were upset."

"I tell you, Ethel," Earl answered, "For two cents I'd quit that

high school. Those kids just aren't worth it."

He had said this before, and Ethel knew, by now, better than to panic about it. He wouldn't quit. They had the house to pay for, and next year Russ would be in college and the year after that on his mission, and then Sherri would be starting college, too. She knew she shouldn't say anything now, just wait till he went on.

"You try to help those kids put together a good band, and what is the thanks you get? They don't come to practice on time and when they do come, they won't work. I'm used to that. But when it comes to practical jokes on me, that's it. That's where I draw the line."

"You're right, Earl. You shouldn't have to put up with that." Ethel poured his orange juice and put the eggs and bacon next to the waffle on his plate. She took out the next waffle for herself.

"I made Russ tell me who started it," Earl said. "That good for nothing Charlie Simms. He's out of the band as of right now."

"Charlie Simms?" Ethel asked. "Isn't that Carol Simms's son?"

"He hasn't been on time to practice once this summer, and during school he missed class half the time for basketball. Well, he can play basketball all he wants now."

"Earl, he's Carol Simms's son. You know, the president of the Garden Club. Why don't you let me talk to her about it?"

"There's no need to talk. I just want him out of the band."

"Earl, she's thinking of asking me to be in charge of the flower show, and she won't do it if you kick her son out of the band. Let me explain it to her, have her get Charlie to apologize."

"Ethel, you let it alone. I can handle it myself."

Ethel didn't say any more, but she certainly was going to talk to Carol Simms. "It's your band, Earl," she said, placating him. "I just want to help whenever I can." Ethel had cut up her whole waffle into little pieces, but she was too tense to eat any of it. She began cutting her bacon, too.

"Earl," she said. "The pottery's getting low. It will be time to go down to Mexico again to get some more soon."

"We've still got a pretty good stock." Earl sounded annoyed with her. "I'll get around to it sometime this month. And why do you have to bring that up now? Today I just don't need you harping about that."

This hurt Ethel's feelings, because she didn't think that she had been harping.

"No, Earl, you don't understand. This year why don't we all go down to Mexico together? The whole family. Sherri and I could help you and Russ with the pottery, and then we'd have a chance for a vacation. Maybe stay a few days in California. We've never taken a real family vacation, Earl. We need to."

Earl groaned. "Ethel, I don't have time for that kind of nonsense. I have eight parades this summer. I have to get those worthless kids ready for the Strawberry Days parade in three weeks. I'll be lucky to get down to Mexico to buy the damn pots before July. I don't have time for any family trips."

"You don't have to swear." Sometimes Ethel thought that Earl just did it because he knew it bothered her. None of her friends' husbands swore.

"No, I don't. But if I do, you're sure to criticize me, aren't

you? Maybe I'm a little upset this morning, Ethel. But you wouldn't notice that. You don't give a damn about how anybody else feels. All that concerns you is your yard and your damn mushrooms."

Earl had only spoken to her like that one other time in their entire marriage. It was the night before he and Russ left for Mexico the first year. She had been in the kitchen fixing dinner, and Earl was out building the new shelves in the garage. Russ came back from taking the van to the Gas 'n Go, and Earl asked him, "Did you fill it up?"

Russ answered, "Yup. With ethyl." That was what Earl called premium gasoline—ethyl. Ethel knew that he did it to tease her when she was in the car with him at the service station. But this time she was in the kitchen and they didn't know that she was listening to them.

"Ethyl, huh," Earl said. "Well, that's sure to make *anything* want to go." And then they had laughed together, hooted, Russ and Earl, the best joke in the world.

Ethel had wanted to go out to tell them something. That she had been listening . . . that they had no right. But when she got to the garage, she couldn't think of how to tell them. Or what to say. She could only think of questions. First she looked at Russ, trying to think of how to defend herself, laugh this off, make it all right. But after Russ looked into her eyes, he hung his head and went into the house and down to his room. Earl just turned back to the shelves. Ethel stood there for a long time trying to think of what to say.

Finally he hit his thumb with a hammer. He said, "Shit." That was the first time Ethel had ever heard him swear. Then with his back to her, still holding his hurt thumb, he said, "Damn it, Ethel. What's the matter with you? It was only a joke. Are you going to stand there and make me feel guilty all night?"

She had turned around and walked into the house, through the kitchen and living room, and into the bathroom. She had locked the door, stood in front of the mirror, and looked at herself. She wondered, for the first time, what they thought of her. She was starting to get wrinkles and her stomach had a bit of a paunch. But she was still herself inside, a person. She didn't deserve to be thought of as a joke.

Now she remembered that incident. She was still a person. There were things she wanted. For all of them—for the family—not just for herself. She got the vacation brochure from the top of the refrigerator, took it over to the table, and set it in front of Earl. She tried not to be upset, just to tell him what she wanted.

"Look at this," was all that came out of her. "We could go to the San Diego Zoo. Think what it might mean to our family to go to the San Diego Zoo. And Sea World. They've got a trained whale at Sea World, Earl. A trained whale."

"Ethel, last year when we were stuck in San Diego, Russ and I went to both those places," Earl said. "Not much to them. They're not worth the trouble."

It took a while for Ethel to understand that Earl and Russ had already seen the San Diego Zoo. And Sea World.

"Disneyland, Earl. We could go to Disneyland."

"Disneyland's just a big tourist trap," Earl answered. "Nothing but a place to waste money."

Ethel began to realize it was no use. "Did you go to Disneyland, too?" she asked.

"Look, I have to get down to the freeway and start selling. We can't go to Mexico this year, but I promise you we'll go next summer. After the parades are over. Just before Russ starts to college in the fall. Good breakfast, Ethel. See you tonight."

SHE listened to him cross the kitchen floor. She listened to the slam of the screen as he walked out into the garage and then down the driveway to where the van was parked. She sat at the table and listened as he backed the van into the driveway, loaded it with pottery, and drove away.

Then Ethel went out to the garage, too. She wanted to see how many of the pots and figures he had left. She stood in the middle of the cement floor and looked around. Not many. Most of the stuff was gone. Mexico. This wasn't a little bit of Mexico; this was their garage, a garage full of silly pottery that belonged far away. Ethel felt absurd. Everyone in Hazel Oaks must be laughing at them, the family with Mexican pottery stuffed in their garage. Maybe they thought it was all ugly, garish, crude. Even Ethel, sometimes. . . . A blue and orange birdbath Earl had dumped in the center of the floor hurt her like a bruise. Why did Earl choose such a hideous blue and orange monstrosity? Didn't he even know she hated blue and orange? He never could tell when something was important.

Something was wrong. Something was breaking and she wanted to see the pieces. Maybe if she looked at the pieces, she'd understand. The axe that they used to chop wood for their fireplace was in the corner, leaning against the edge of the shelves. Ethel walked over and lifted it, to see what it felt like in her hands. She didn't remember ever before lifting an axe. It was heavy, substantial. She held the axe up, exactly over the center of the birdbath, and then she let it go. The axe fell, again and again, and the birdbath cracked apart. There were several pieces of many different sizes on the floor, and they did explain things. Ethel didn't have to make things all the time. She could break them, too.

Earl had also forgotten a huge red jar with a design of orange flowers around the bottom and the top. They could have sold it for seventy-five dollars, but it was orange and red, colors that had no business being together on the same pot. Ethel hit it several times with the axe, and there were more pieces on the floor. However colorful the outsides, the pieces had white edges. The pottery was really white under the paint, finally would be nothing more than so much white dust. Ethel noticed some of the small jars still on the shelves and put down the axe to get them, one by one, and drop them into the pile. The pieces became flashy colored confetti waiting for a celebration when it could be thrown into the sky and come floating down. But this pottery was heavy. It wouldn't float, it would streak down like the truth. Then she realized what she was watching. Gravity. Gravity did its work. And she helped. She didn't remember

enjoying anything so much.

When all of the jars were gone, Ethel walked out into the front yard. There were the mushrooms, the petunias, the birch tree, and the lawn. It was a lovely summer day. But Ethel was still thinking about gravity, and how, though Earl didn't understand many things, maybe he was onto that. Maybe they all knew that you had to stick with gravity; everything else was something in the sky you couldn't reach and couldn't hold onto.

She went back to get the axe and walked up to the fat, aging mushrooms squatting by the front porch. I can't fix the cracks in the glaze, Ethel thought, something's wrong and I can't fix it. And the axe fell on the tops of the mushrooms, making big gaping holes. And then Ethel said to herself, hah! now I don't have to. When the mushrooms were nothing but stems, she pushed them over and let the axe fall on them, too.

Then she looked at the fluorescent mushrooms, the ones she had liked so much. Something had gone wrong with them. They had gotten out of control. The light in them was gone, and now they were gray, the gray of sickly things that always absorb but don't give out any light. They were dangerous, a fungus; she wanted them destroyed.

There was only one ugly gray mushroom left when the van drove up. Earl had forgotten something again. He honked from the driver's seat. "Ethel, bring me my lunch," he called.

I ought to go inside and get it, she thought. "I'll be right with you," Ethel said. "I just want to take care of this mushroom." As she raised the axe, she heard Earl running up behind her. He was going to try to touch her, and she couldn't have that. She turned just in time and twisted out of his grasp. "Ethel, what in the world?" he said.

"Get away from me," she screamed at him. "Go back to Mexico. Go to Sea World." She held the axe in front of Earl's face, high. She was first, then the axe, then Earl. Head-axe-head. There was a straight line arranging them. And she knew that all that had held them together for eighteen years was there in that

line, and that it was about to break. Gravity and the axe would help it fall.

"Ethel? Honey?" Earl said. "What's wrong?" He was trying to look in her eyes, but she kept the head of the axe between them. His cheeks were white, and there was a red splotch spreading on his neck. "Give me the axe, okay?" "You bastard," Ethel cried, "go to Mexico."

Head-axe-head. The axe was beginning to sway in her hands, and if she moved it towards one of the heads, the symmetry would rearrange itself into something else. It didn't matter which head the axe finally came to. The axe suddenly became too heavy and lunged at Earl, but Ethel jerked it back before it fell into his face, and the iron slab hit her squarely on the forehead. She was confused, dazed, she couldn't see from the blood running down her temple. The axe weighed so much that it dropped to her side. Then Earl was there, his arm around her, tenderly, gently taking it from her hand. Because Earl's touch was the most loving she had felt from him in years, she started to cry. "Earl," she said, "I want to go to Disneyland."

"I do, too, Ethel. Really," Earl said. "I want to go with you."

Ethel thought this was something different, that maybe they weren't going to break, and she watched Earl drop the axe, whap, on its side on the lawn. Maybe they were going to hold together after all, but she couldn't tell, and just now she couldn't talk any more. She gasped, faster and faster, trying to get enough oxygen.

"Earl, you know," she managed to say before there wasn't any more air, "I don't approve of swearing." And then she suddenly realized that she ought to go unconscious. It was time. She was a little surprised but not dismayed, accepting her temporary oblivion with a vague, passionate bliss. Soon the ambulance would come, siren howling, to take her away. While she was in the hospital, Earl would bring Russ and Sherri to visit, and they could all be together. It would be a family vacation. A nice, long rest. ☺

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#### DRAWN

Of those who would bring doves or mild tethered  
calves to places of uncut stone, I am not  
one—so peculiarly precise, feathered  
innocence for fallen steps, justice bought  
by hot, salty blood and dense animal  
flesh. And so, the turning earth keeps its track:  
orbit unhinged by (was it sin?) sensible  
now of the reckoned price paid shudders back  
into a carefully ordered grace. If  
mind, or hands, could yield these my darkening thoughts  
and doubtful acts to such atonement, shrift—  
sweet, swift, calculable—come. Had law brought  
life by death (debt: equation) the axis  
of my heart need not be trued by blood wrought  
as persuasion.

—DIAN SADERUP

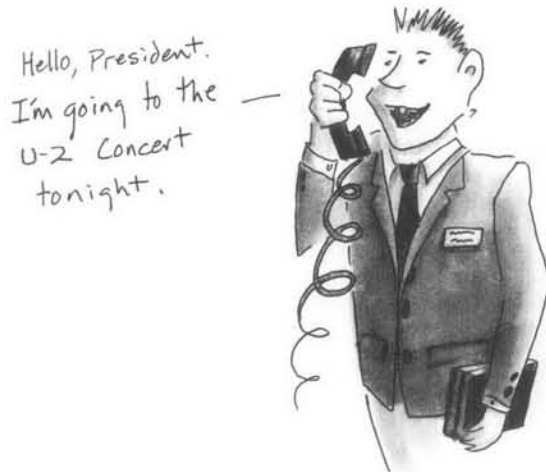
SECRETS OF MORMONISM



ANYBODY CAN PASS THE SACRAMENT.



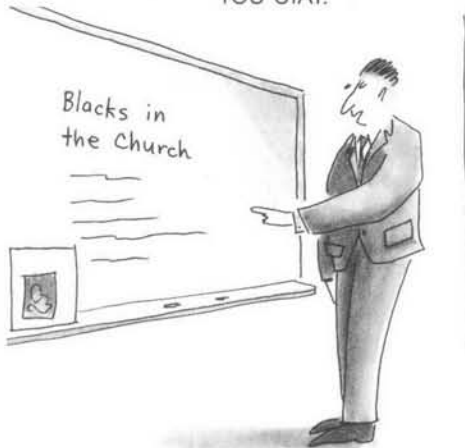
WHETHER YOU TITHE ON NET OR GROSS IS UP TO YOU.



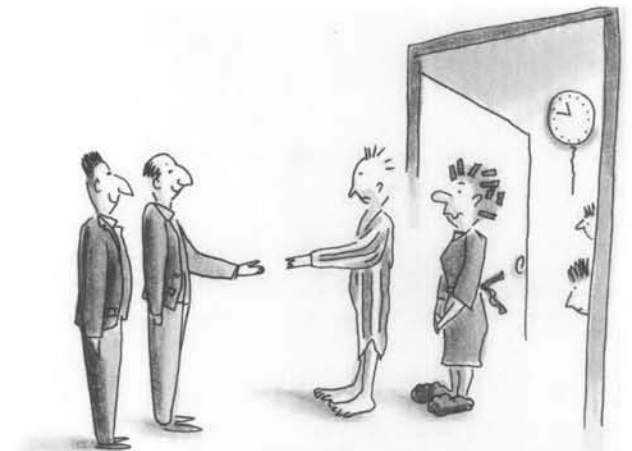
EXCEPT FOR SEX, THEY RARELY SEND YOU HOME FROM YOUR MISSION, AND TRY TO MAKE YOU STAY.



CONFESS LONG AFTER THE EVENT AND AFTER YOU'VE QUIT AND REPENTED.



WHEN TEACHING CHANGES OR THE EVOLUTION IN DOCTRINES SAY "AS OUR UNDERSTANDING GREW. . ."



IF YOU START HOME TEACHING AT 11:45 PM. ON THE 31st, IT COUNTS FOR TWO MONTHS.



An Exegesis on Suffering, Endurance, and Revelation

## WHY LATTER-DAY SAINTS SHOULD READ JOB

By John S. Tanner

I. HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JOB?

A FEW YEARS ago, I sat next to a prominent LDS writer during the annual BYU fall conference. As we talked, I mentioned that I had just written an article on the Book of Job.<sup>1</sup> He responded by telling me of a quip a Church leader once made privately to him about Job. "Well," drawled the Church leader as the Book of Job was mentioned, "I suppose it's all right to read Job if you must, but why bother?"

This slighting reference to Job stung me then and still hurts to recall it now because Job is such an important text in my gospel understanding. In fact, I used to secretly wish that there were a book like Job in the Book of Mormon so as to set the problem of evil squarely into LDS religious consciousness. Yes, there are a few passages on the suffering of innocents, as when Amulek cries out to Alma about the pain of the women and children martyrs who are being burned before their eyes (Alma 14:9-10); but I wanted something more. I wanted something



Thus did Job continually.

Job is a unique book—uniquely disturbing and also uniquely empowered to deepen our faith. Both its answers *and* its questions help clarify gospel truths and are themselves illuminated by the restored gospel's light. Well should Latter-day Saints consider the Lord's servant Job—consider him often and well.

If you are like me, you can scarcely keep your mind off Job. His trials come to my mind almost daily as I read or hear or experience fresh instances of unaccountable misery—especially the suffering of innocent victims. The Book of Job is as timely as today's headlines telling of children starving in the Sudan, beaten in Beijing, murdered in Midvale; and as timeless as every spoken or silent complaint lifted to God from the dawn of time. Into the vortex of this text flow all human tears; in its whirlwind echoes every unanswered question "why"

equivalent to Joseph Smith's Liberty Jail questions in Doctrine and Covenants 121 and 122, or to Enoch's dialogue with God in Moses 7, or to the Gospel of John. I wonder if belief that hasn't looked unblinkingly into the questions raised by Job is fully worthy of the name faith.

"Hast thou considered my servant Job, that there is none like him?" the Lord asks Satan. The same question might well be rephrased to us, as a people: "Have you considered the Book of Job? There is none like it." None indeed.

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## OUTLINE FOR THE BOOK OF JOB

- I. The Prologue: ch. 1-2 [prose]
- II. The Dialogues with the Comforters: Ch. 30-37 [poetry]
  - A. First Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 3-14)
    1. Job's Complaint (Ch. 3)
    2. Dialogue with Eliphaz (Ch. 4-7)
      - a. Eliphaz (Ch. 4-5)
      - b. Job (Ch. 6-7)
    3. Dialogue with Bildad (Ch. 8-10)
      - a. Bildad (Ch. 8)
      - b. Job (Ch. 9-10)
    4. Dialogue with Zophar (Ch. 11-14)
      - a. Zophar (Ch. 11)
      - b. Job (Ch. 12-14)
  - B. Second Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 15-21)
    1. Dialogue with Eliphaz
      - a. Eliphaz (Ch. 15)
      - b. Job (Ch. 16-17)
    2. Dialogue with Bildad (Ch. 18-19)
      - a. Bildad (Ch. 18)
      - b. Job (Ch. 19)
    3. Dialogue with Zophar (Ch. 20-21)
      - a. Zophar (Ch. 20)
      - b. Job (Ch. 21)
  - C. Third Cycle of Speeches (Ch. 22-32)
    1. Dialogue with Eliphaz (Ch. 22-24)
      - a. Eliphaz (Ch. 22)
      - b. Job (Ch. 23-24)
    2. Dialogue with Bildad (Ch. 25-27)
      - a. Bildad (Ch. 25)
      - b. Job (Ch. 26-27)
    3. Hymn to Wisdom (Ch. 28)
    4. Job's Survey of his Case (Ch. 29-31)
  - D. Speeches of Elihu (Ch. 32-37)
- III. The Theophany (Ch. 38-42:6) [poetry]
  - A. The First Exchange (Ch. 38-40:5)
    1. The Lord's Challenge (Ch. 38-40:2)
    2. Job's Response (Ch. 40: 3-5)
  - B. The Second Exchange (Ch. 40:6-42:6)
    1. The Lord's Challenge (Ch. 40:6-41:34)
    2. Job's Response (Ch. 42:1-6)
- IV. Epilogue (Ch. 42:7-17) [prose]
  - A. The Lord Rebukes the Comforters (Ch. 42:7-9)
  - B. The Lord Blesses Job (Ch. 42:10-17)

hurled at heaven out of deep human distress.

When my widowed friend recounted how his wife's beautiful voice was silenced by death, leaving behind not only a lonely husband but several sons who still clearly needed her—I remembered Job. When a young mother shared her feelings as she learned that she was carrying her second spinal bifida baby—I remembered Job. When another young mother told me about how her children had for years been sexually abused by her husband and other adults—I remembered Job. When I walked through the Jerusalem memorial to the children who died in the Holocaust, listening to each child's name being read and looking at myriad points of light, symbolizing all the lost children, reflected endlessly in a darkened hall of mirrors—I again remembered Job. Indeed, whenever life forces me "to feel what wretches feel,"<sup>2</sup> the Book of Job recommends itself as a powerful scriptural referent for my anguish and my answers.

What is true for me personally is equally true for Judeo-Christian culture generally: Job's agony focuses our collective *agon* (struggle) with our God. His pain stands for all inexplicable human suffering and his outcries give eloquent voice to our most searching questions. In this way, Job is our servant no less than he was the Lord's, for he ministers to our need to confront God in times of sharp distress. Our wrestle with Job, like Jacob's wrestle with the angel, can leave us immeasurably blessed. The Book of Job can enlarge our sense of the scope of biblical faith, showing us that faith can encompass mystery, uncertainty, questions, and even doubt. Job can also prepare us for other scriptures about righteous sufferers, such as the suffering servant in Isaiah and, most significantly, Christ in the New Testament, who shares Job's fate as a blameless man unjustly accused by the Lord's pious would-be defenders. And Job can blessedly teach us how to wrestle with our own spiritual crises or (using the comforters as a negative example) those of others. This may be the most important reason to read Job. Though it does not answer the question of *why* God permits suffering, the Book of Job can teach us *how* to "suffer suffering"—our own or other's.<sup>3</sup>

## II. IS JOB HISTORY OR STORY?

ONE question—and to my mind by far the least important—that many readers seize upon as they wrestle with the text, is "Is Job historical?" Personally, I am not persuaded that the answer to this question makes much difference for the interpretation of the text. Further, I think it receives far too much attention in most Sunday School classes while weightier matters go unattended. My own way of dealing with the question, however, is to adopt a compromise position. In the absence of clear pronouncements by scripture or Church leaders to the contrary, I accept the fact of Job's historical existence. At the same time, I acknowledge that the text bears evident marks of literary fashioning. (See outline.) It has, for instance, a definite three part structure consisting of a prose prologue, poetic dialogues, prose epilogue. That is, it consists of a prose frame enclosing poetic dialogues. These central

poetic dialogues, moreover, are further divided into three cycles of speeches, alternating between Job and each of his three comforters. I cannot conceive of these long, formal passages of poetry being transcribed *verbatim* from actual conversations. They are clearly literary constructions.

This does not mean, however, that Job is pure fabrication. Both the prose narrative frames and the poetic dialogues may be based on the actual experiences of a real man—a good man who lost

everything, was pressured to confess to hidden sins but maintained his integrity, implored God for answers and vindication, and finally received revelation and renewed prosperity. I personally think of the book as mixing both fact and fable. Some elements seem fabulous to me (e.g., the wager between God and Satan, the neatly symmetrical doubling of Job's wealth at the end).<sup>4</sup> But elements of fable do not prove that the entire text is fictional, any more than the existence of an actual king named Macbeth is disproved by the supernatural features of Shakespeare's play. There may be much more fact behind even patently literary texts than moderns sometimes suppose. For many years scholars thought the city of Troy to be a fiction and ridiculed Schliemann when he went to dig for Homer's "fabled" Troy—until he found it.<sup>5</sup> As modern readers, we need to be skeptical first and foremost of our own modern skepticism.

Nevertheless, the Book of Job does not make a strong claim to historicity as do most Biblical texts. All we learn of Job's background is that he hails from the land of Uz—a region of uncertain identification and no geo-political consequence in the narrative. Apparently not an Israelite but a foreigner, Job is not given a genealogy, causing the Babylonian Talmud and later Maimonides to speculate that Job is a parable.<sup>6</sup> The tradition appears uncertain as to Job's relation to historical books; this is indicated in the way it has been grouped at different times with various different Old Testament books. The Book of Job has, however, always been accepted in the canon.<sup>7</sup> Modern scholars classify the Book of Job as wisdom literature (or *hokmah*), in concert with Proverbs and Ecclesiastes in the Bible, and with Ecclesiasticus (a.k.a. the Wisdom of Jesus Ben Sirach) in the Apocrypha.<sup>8</sup> Unlike



And I only am escaped alone to tell thee.

prophetic and historical biblical texts, wisdom texts are less concerned with the unfolding history of a covenant people through time than they are with the timeless truths of the individual's relationship to moral and religious principles. Wisdom literature, moreover, belongs to an international movement; Egyptian and Babylonian sages also composed prudential maxims (such as Proverbs) and skeptical reflections on life (such as Ecclesiastes). There also exist Babylonian and Egyptian

dialogues about suicide and divine justice similar to those in the Book of Job.<sup>9</sup> In short, Job seems not to lay the same claim to historicity as do, for example, the great patriarchs or Israel's kings and prophets, and the text bears the marks of an a-historical genre or literary type known as wisdom literature.

Conceding all these reasons to be cautious about Job's historicity, we still ought not dismiss him out of hand as fictional. For we recall that Job is referred to three times in other scriptures: first in the Old Testament (Ezekiel 14), then in the New Testament (James 5), and last in the Doctrine and Covenants (Section 121). (No mention of Job is made in either the Book of Mormon or the Pearl of Great Price.) These references underscore the following specific details from the text: that Job was righteous (Ezekiel 14); that Job was "patient" (which might better be translated "steadfast" [James 5:11]); and that Job suffered and was accused by his friends of evil (D&C 121:10). None of these allusions absolutely guarantees either the historicity of all the text's details (none, for example, makes reference to a wager with the adversary) nor even the fact of Job's existence. In principle it is possible to allude to the patience or sufferings of Job *without* his being a real character (as we might to the beauty of Adonis or the folly of King Lear).<sup>10</sup> Still, these extra-textual references to Job ought to make Latter-day Saints hesitant to simply dismiss the notion of an historical Job. They lend additional credibility to Job's existence and to essential facts of his story.

So, too, do most allusions to Job by LDS Church leaders, according to Keith H. Meservy, who concludes that "The Brethren, also, when they have referred to Job, have regarded him as a real person."<sup>11</sup> Granting this, however, still an element of cautious restraint is called for in extending this

conclusion to the entire Book of Job. Allusions to Job by the Brethren do not necessarily mean that every aspect of the text must be taken as literally historical.

The LDS Bible Dictionary seems to me to provide the right focus on the Book of Job. It remains silent about historical questions; it ignores the prose prologue and epilogue altogether; and it concentrates on the profound questions raised and the answers provided in the central poetic dialogues. Perhaps the Dictionary should guide our attention now back to the larger question of meaning.

### III. WHAT DOES JOB SAY ABOUT THE DOCTRINE OF RETRIBUTION?

THE Bible Dictionary states, simply, that the Book of Job "narrates the afflictions that befell a righteous man, and discusses the moral problems such sufferings present." Whether Job is a particular man or an Everyman, whether the Book of Job is history or, simply, "his story," the text still raises the same searching questions about "the moral problems . . . sufferings present." Further, no one can doubt that Job's essential story is true, painfully true, for Job's predicament has been repeated daily in events all too monstrously real. Good people have suffered, do suffer, and this for no clearly discernible reason. Through the Book of Job, we can explore our faith in a universe that operates under a system of rewards and punishments—a notion sometimes called the doctrine of retribution.

Many commentators detect in the Book of Job an implied challenge to the doctrine of retribution. We see this doctrine debated many times between Job and his interlocutors, as in chapters 20 and 21 where Zophar asserts the standard line that the "triumphing of the wicked is short" and Job answers that wicked often enjoy long life, "spend their days in wealth, and in a moment go down to the grave" (Job 20:5; 21:13). This searching examination of rewards and punishments in Job is usually contrasted to Israel's prophets' and historians' unshakable faith in a manifest system of retributive justice. To



And smote Job with sore boils.

read the oracles of doom pronounced by Isaiah, Jeremiah, Hosea, Amos, and like prophets is to encounter absolute confidence in retribution. Likewise to read the Pentateuch is to feel the heavy presence of the doctrine of retribution applied to history. Consider this typical statement from Deuteronomy 11:

26. Behold, I set before you this day a blessing and a curse;  
27. A blessing, if ye obey the commandments of the Lord your

God, which I command you this day:

28. And a curse, if ye will not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside out of the way which I command you this day, to go after other gods, which ye have not known.

In LDS scripture we see this same historical thesis repeatedly insisted upon in the Book of Mormon. I call it Lehi's theme because Lehi first receives the covenant (2 Nephi 1:5-10), though the promise is reiterated by his sons Nephi and Jacob and remains the primary thesis of the entire narrative history. In this sense, one might say that Book of Mormon history is covenant history *par excellence*. It insists that the history of the promised land is balanced on a fulcrum of divine punishments and rewards according to the obedience or rebellion of the people.

Modern revelation also confirms a correlation between blessings and obedience, punishment and transgression. For example, "I, the Lord am bound when ye do what I say" (D&C 82:10), and "There is a law, irrevocably decreed in heaven . . . upon which all blessings are predicated" (D&C 130:20). These and similar modern oracles provide the basis for our belief that God today still enters into covenants, as he did with Abraham. They lend further weight to faith in divine rewards and punishments.

How can we understand the Book of Job in connection with the doctrine of retribution? Is there simply flat contradiction between Job's message and that of the prophets? Or can Job help us understand the true nature of our belief about the correlation between suffering and sin? I believe it can.



Consider these few points:

1. First and foremost, the Book of Job makes clear that suffering is not necessarily a sign of punishment. To assume that suffering is always God's punishment for sin is a common misunderstanding. Jesus had to combat this error among the pious in his day (cf. Luke 13:1-5; John 9:1-3); Joseph Smith had to warn the saints against such presumptions in ours.<sup>12</sup> As the LDS Bible Dictionary states, though Job "does not entirely answer the question of why Job (or any human)



Let the day perish wherein I was born.

might suffer pain and the loss of his goods, it does make clear that affliction is not necessarily evidence that one has sinned." This is a great comfort, for many people blame themselves when tragedy befalls them. When a child is accidentally killed, when cancer strikes, when a job is lost—our immediate response often is, "what have I done to deserve this punishment." Job implies that there can be "no-fault" tragedy.

2. Second, Job warns us against trying to reason backward from people's external circumstances to the condition of their souls. To do so traps us in a logical fallacy of "if/then" argument called "affirming the consequent." If/then sequences are not reversible: If A then B does not permit the reverse conclusion B therefore A. If a man is a millionaire then he may buy a BMW, but if he buys a BMW he is not necessarily a millionaire. Or, to apply the same principles to Job, if a man is wicked then he may suffer, but if he suffers he is not necessarily wicked. Sinfulness may (and will) result in suffering but suffering does not necessarily imply sinfulness. The same holds true for the corollary: virtue may result in prosperity but prosperity does not necessarily imply virtue. You cannot reason backward from the fact of prosperity or suffering to the state of the soul, as Job's comforters try to do. "[A]ffliction is not necessarily evidence that one has sinned" (LDS Bible Dictionary).

3. Third, Job implies that neither prosperity nor suffering can be easily or routinely interpreted. In fact, it may be that *suffering* is the blessing and *prosperity* the trial. From personal experience no less than from scripture, we know that prosperity may test our faith while suffering may ready us for salvation. As Francis Bacon said, "Prosperity is the blessing of

the Old Testament; Adversity is the blessing of the New."<sup>13</sup>

4. And fourth, Job's example should caution us not to extrapolate from covenants made to whole peoples, automatic guarantees of individual prosperity or "success." Individuals often live out personal tragedies quite apart from the general prosperity and happiness of their larger communities. Job tells of the plight of a particular individual, not an entire covenant people. This is significant. The Old Testament and Book of Mormon

promises cited above, on the other hand, pertain to entire covenant communities. So, it seems, does the Doctrine and Covenant promise that the Lord is bound which refers specifically to the plural "ye." At any rate, we should not speak glibly of our individual acts "binding the Lord," nor ever presume that we hold the Lord of the universe in our hip pocket, like a genie to do our bidding. The nature of a covenant is that the Lord binds himself; he not we, sets the terms, and he fulfills them in his own due time and way. If we look carefully at the Bible or the Book of Mormon or modern Church history, we can find many instances of good individuals who, like Job, suffer. To cite a few Book of Mormon examples, think of the martyred women and children who are burned before the eyes of Alma and Amulek, or of the wives and children of Moroni's day who were forced to feed upon the flesh of their husbands and fathers (Alma 14:7-11; Moroni 9:7-8). Complicating the comforter's simplistic view of retribution is the fact that sometimes "the Lord suffereth the righteous to be slain that his justice and judgment may come upon the wicked" (Alma 60:13; see also Alma 14:11).

Righteousness does not insulate us from suffering or assure us of material rewards. As Christians, we need not look only to Job to confirm this fact. The supreme proof of this is Christ, who suffered more than has any man. The mortal Messiah intimately knew poverty, pain, hunger, thirst, fatigue, betrayal, and agonizing death (see Mosiah 3:7). If the Lord who was perfect had to endure affliction, should we who are imperfect expect to be spared from it? As the Lord reminded the Prophet Joseph in a passage that links the suffering of Job and Christ,

"The Son of Man hath descended below them all. Art thou greater than he?" (D&C 122:8). The only reward for righteousness that the Lord holds out unfailingly to individuals is "peace in this world and eternal life in the world to come" (D&C 59:23)—and even this peace must be found *amid* persecutions, not in their *absence* (see John 14:27; 15:20).

Perhaps a quote from Joseph Smith provides an apt summary of the lessons that are also found in Job regarding the doctrine of retribution.

At a meeting held in his home on Sunday, 29 September 1839, the Prophet Joseph Smith taught the saints:

it is a false idea that the Saints will escape all the judgments, whilst the wicked suffer; for all flesh is subject to suffer, and "the righteous shall hardly escape;" still many of the Saints will escape, for the just shall live by faith; yet many of the righteous shall fall prey to disease, to pestilence, etc., by reason of the weakness of the flesh, and yet be saved in the Kingdom of God. So that it is an unhallowed principle to say that such and such have transgressed because they have been preyed upon by disease or death, for all flesh is subject to death; and the Savior said, "Judge not, lest ye be judged."<sup>14</sup>

#### IV. WHAT DOES JOB SAY ABOUT MAN'S RELATIONSHIP TO GOD?

THESE and other insights into the problems of evil are to be drawn from Job. In my opinion, however, the book is not primarily a repository of philosophical or theological answers as to why God permits suffering, even though the text is often discussed in the same breath as philosophical and theological attempts to reconcile the goodness and omnipotence of God with the existence of human suffering. The book is not a rational "theodicy" (a term coined by the German Enlightenment philosopher Leibniz) nor does it pretend to be.<sup>15</sup> I'm convinced that strictly speaking the Book of Job's central concern lies not with the philosophical problem of evil but with the personal problem of despair; not with God's relationship to evil but with



The just upright man is laughed to scorn.

man's relationship to God out of the midst of "evil." Job's sense of god-forsakenness is the real problem he must endure and overcome. I cannot overstress this point. To put the matter succinctly: the problem Job treats involves *relationship*, the answer it provides entails *revelation*. The text teaches us how to endure suffering, not the reason for it.

Let me explain. If we look at the text, we observe that Job is never told the reason for his afflictions. We also note that the text devotes but a few brief (albeit vivid) verses to the description of Job's physical

pain. To be sure, Job's boils are deeply etched upon our memories but they are not the main source of his suffering. In fact, Job endures physical pain in silence. When he finally cries out, after abiding seven days and seven nights in complete silence, Job complains not of boils but of betrayal: "Wherefore is light given to him that is in misery, and life unto the bitter in soul" (Job 3:20). It is as if Job's cancerous skin disease eats its way inward during his long week of brooding, ulcerating his spirit until he becomes "bitter in soul." However difficult to bear, Job's physical pain is most embittering for what it seems to him to betoken: a violated relationship.

Job's relationship to God remains the focus throughout the dialogues. Physical affliction forms but the occasion rather than the main topic of the ensuing dialogues, which make no further reference to Job's specific personal losses or boils. Instead, Job's friends come with glib explanations about why Job suffers. Their pious advice—accept your suffering, Job, as punishment for your sins—not only provides him cold comfort but, if accepted, would pervert Job's absolutely honest relationship with the Almighty. To follow their counsel would force Job to live a lie by confessing to the Lord that he felt he deserved his affliction—which he does not, and *should not* feel. Such "comfort" exonerates God by charging man with depravity, so that no matter what happens to man, the pious religionist can always say, "God exacteth of thee less than thine iniquity deserveth" (Job 11:6). (One sees why defenders of original sin have found so much fodder in the speeches of Job's self-righteous friends.)<sup>16</sup> Such easy explanations for suffering have continued to be foisted on believers by overly simplistic



doctrines of retributive justice and depravity. In consequence, many innocent victims have been pressured to confess to the lie that they merit their misfortune—that whatever evil befalls them is less punishment than they deserve. The Book of Job provides a classic instance of what we now call “blaming the victim.”<sup>17</sup> But Job refuses such false wisdom and stoutly maintains that even weighed in the balance-scales of ordinary justice—one of his favorite



The Lord answered Job out of the whirlwind.

his suffering is disproportionate to any sin that could be laid to his charge. Repeatedly, Job cries out for an encounter with the Lord in order to bring God into the dock and prove his own innocence: “O that one might plead for a man with God, as a man pleadeth for his neighbor” (16:21); “Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat! I would order my cause before him, and fill my mouth with arguments” (23:3-4); “Oh that one would hear me! behold, my desire is, that the Almighty would answer me” (31:35). Though Heaven kill him for so doing, Job vows to entrust his life in the hands of the Lord (who prefers honesty to hypocrisy) while maintaining the injustice of his suffering before God’s very face: “Wherefore do I take my flesh in my teeth, and put my life in mine hand? Though he slay me, yet will I trust him: but I will maintain mine own ways before him. He also shall be my salvation: for an hypocrite shall not come before him” (13:14-16). Such is Job’s shocking blend of effrontery and faith. He knows that God does not want us to come before Him as hypocrites, feigning to comprehend suffering that we cannot begin to fathom.

In such speeches as these, we glimpse a man whose relationship with the Lord is as powerfully felt as it is powerfully tested—and, to repeat, the text’s deepest concern lies in this relationship. The text propounds few, if any, theoretical reasons for suffering (though the comforters advocate many). Rather, it offers a memorable example of how to suffer suffering. Recognizing that the human relationship to deity is central, we can better sense why Job stands both condemned *and* approved by the Lord in the final chapters, while the comforters stand merely condemned. Out of the

Lord’s mouth, Job is described as both one who “darkeneth counsel by words without knowledge” (38:2; see also 40:2-8), and also one who has “spoken of me the thing that is right.” By contrast, of Eliphaz and the other two dogmatic friends, so smugly doctrinaire, the Lord says only: “My wrath is kindled against thee, and against thy two friends: for ye have not spoken of me the thing that is right” (42:7). Thus the text reminds us that one can say something that is formally wrong but personally right (as does Job), and

something formally correct but personally wrong (as do the comforters). The *relationship* of the speaker to the speech matters utterly.

#### V. WHAT DOES JOB SAY ABOUT THE NEED FOR REVELATION?

WE can learn much from Job’s “friends” about how to comfort those suffering tragedy-induced crises of faith. We learn that it is not enough to have all the “right” answers. We must also speak the truth in love.<sup>18</sup> We learn that we risk divine condemnation when we cease to comfort and start to accuse. Joseph Smith taught that those who accuse place “themselves in the seat of Satan.”<sup>19</sup> Truly, the very word “devil” derives from “diabolos” meaning “accuser, calumniator, slanderer, traducer.”<sup>20</sup> Further, we learn that the only abiding comfort must come from the Comforter. The solution to a sense of godforsakenness is, obviously, the revelation that God has not forsaken us. Again, the problem in the Book of Job is one of relation; the answer is one of revelation. Job is a wisdom text about the limits of human wisdom and the need for divine revelation.

The comforters’ failure to reason Job out of his anguish provides a striking illustration of the impotence of human wisdom alone to solve a Job-like crisis. The advice of Job’s first comforter, Eliphaz the Temanite, typifies the posture they all adopt. You were ready, Eliphaz reminds Job, to encourage others in their suffering: “Now it is come upon thee, and thou

faintest; it toucheth thee and thou art troubled" (4:5). Suffering is not arbitrary, this dogmatic friend continues, but constitutes a sure sign of divine judgment upon sin, for "who ever perished, being innocent? or where were the righteous cut off?" (4:7). Further, if suffering is divine correction, Eliphaz reasons, then "happy is the man whom God correcteth; therefore despise not thou the chastening of the Almighty" (5:17).

The Temanite momentarily entertains the possibility that the Lord's judgment may not be so easy to read, for the Lord "doeth great things and unsearchable" (5:9). In general, however, he remains certain that if you live righteously, the Lord will deliver you from famine, war and destruction, and you will die peaceably of old age: "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in his season" (5:26).

All these points may have elements of truth but they are also untrue. Why? First, they are uttered without compassion. "To him that is afflicted pity should be shewed from his friend," Job protests (6:14; cf. 19:21). Next, they are glib: The man who suffers is *not* happy—at least not until he has been allowed to be unhappy first. And last, they are counsels based on human reason about suffering in general—upon hearsay, as it were, not on revelation about Job's particular predicament. Eliphaz proudly discloses the source of his knowledge as he concludes his counsel, seeming to speak for all the comforters: "Lo this, we have searched it, so it is; hear it, and know thou it for thy good" (5:27).

Such smugness is roundly condemned. All of us who are called upon to be comforters to those working through their personal Job-like trials should take note of both the comforters' failure to solve Job's problem and of the Lord's divine displeasure with them. Even Elihu, the fourth and final comforter, whose speeches echo those issuing from the whirlwind, has no impact on Job and, in my opinion, stands under the same divine disapproval as the other comforters.<sup>21</sup> For reason alone cannot solve Job's crisis, which is a crisis in his relationship with God. Job makes no reply to Elihu, but well might he have responded to the arrogant young man in the language of a character in a novel by Charles Williams:



So the Lord blessed the latter end of Job more than the beginning.

Job, the voice from the whirlwind has authority and meaning that no mere human voice can match. Apart from *what* the Lord says, simply the fact *that* he speaks at all, and speaks directly to Job, relieves the man of Uz's deepest need—his hunger for reassurance that God has not forsaken him. Intellectual answers can never provide this knowledge. Kenneth Surin recently observed that "for those who experience godforsakenness there can be no answer except the stammeringly uttered truth that God himself keeps company with those who are oppressed."<sup>23</sup> This is very wise for us to remember as comforters, but it does not go quite far enough. To our witness that God keeps company with the afflicted must be added the witness of the Spirit. We can testify to the truth that the Lord loves and pities his children in the midst of our sharpest sorrows; we can offer scriptural insights about the various purposes served by suffering; but only the Lord can confirm his continuing love through the voice of the only unfailing comforter, His Comforter. This revelation is, ultimately, the *sine qua non* for resolving a Joban crisis. It is the essential comfort every Job requires. Not reason, not philosophical theodicies; just a revealed reassurance that the Lord's just and loving relationship with man is not violated however obscure it may seem in our distress.

The Book of Job, then, is at bottom about the need for revelation. Revelation is the key to human crises of faith brought on by suffering. This interpretation, little recognized in Biblical scholarship, fits our theology which stresses the need for both general and personal revelation. Again, the new LDS Bible Dictionary touches upon this distinctively LDS interpretation of the Book of Job: "there is a mystery in the incidence of suffering that only a fresh revelation can solve."

As a mere argument there's something lacking perhaps in saying to a man who's lost his money and his house and his family and is sitting on the dustbin, all over boils, "Look at the hippopotamus."<sup>23</sup>

The point is that Elihu's answer remains "mere argument"; the Lord's is a revelation.

As a personal revelation from the Lord to the long-suffering, steadfast

## VI. WHAT DOES JOB IMPLY ABOUT GOD'S EQUITY AND LOVE?

THE mystery of the Lord's ways—this is what overwhelms Job and us in the theophany rather than clear answers as to why Job or any of us suffer. Behind the mystery, however, Latter-day Saint readers must affirm the continuing presence of justice and love. For over-emphasis upon the Lord's transcendence and sovereignty can sever Him from the concept of equity. A good instance of this misreading may be seen in an article by Matitihu Tsevat. Tsevat draws the figure of a triangle, labelling the three corners for God (G), Job (J), and R (Retribution). Job's dilemma, argues Tsevat, stems from his inability to reconcile G and R; the theophany overcomes the impasse by eliminating R: "he who speaks to man . . . is neither just or unjust, but God."<sup>24</sup> Others have made similar unwarranted claims. For example, the eminent authority on wisdom literature, James Crenshaw, writes of the theophany that "the putative principle of order collapsed before divine freedom."<sup>25</sup> In the same spirit but more colloquially, Robert Frost portrays a droll character of God returning to thank Job for "releasing me from moral bondage to the human race. . . . I had to prosper good and punish evil. You [Job] changed all that. You set me free to reign."<sup>26</sup> But does the theophany in Job in fact reveal a God cut loose from justice, order, or morality? Our theology, certainly, does not endorse such absolute sovereignty—which from a human vantage appears indistinguishable from caprice—nor does the theophany require the collapse of divine justice so God may reign sovereign. We believe that the Almighty himself subscribes to law (Alma 42:22). Our innate demand for fairness, order, law, and justice doubtless is a legacy from our divine parentage. In the words of the eminent Jewish scholar Abraham Heschel, "even the cry of despair—There is no justice in heaven!—is a cry in the name of justice that cannot come out of us and be still missing in the source of ourselves."<sup>27</sup> Traces of divine law—higher perhaps than human wisdom can reach but still within divine control—are everywhere inscribed in the revelation Job receives from the whirlwind. The theophany's imagery recalls that of Genesis when the Lord imbues form and light upon that which was "without form and void" and dark (Genesis 1:2). The very first question the Lord asks Job requires both him and us (as readers) to remember that God is the great Artificer of all earthly and cosmic order: "Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? . . . When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?" (38:4,7). This is the God of creation, not the voice of a Being who rejects the "putative principle of order."

Nor is it the voice of one detached from justice. As we have seen, the Lord's equity reaches so deep that it penetrates beneath the superficial morality of the comforters and the sometimes reckless cynicism of Job to honor the one who is most truly faithful. This is the voice of one who "looketh not on the outward appearance, but . . . on the heart" (1 Samuel 16:7).

It is, furthermore, the voice of a Being who clearly continues

to care about human suffering. That the Lord responds at all assures us that he is not a *deus absconditus*, as Job fears (Job 23:1-9), but a God who condescends to reveal himself to us in our darkest hours of need. As the great Job scholar Samuel Terrien so eloquently phrases it:

A God who concerns himself for man is a God who loves. There is not love without sharing and a God who loves is a God who suffers. Underneath the high notes a *De Profundis* of God's own agonies is audible.<sup>28</sup>

Here Terrien adumbrates what is also a distinctively LDS view regarding the Lord's outlook on the "problem of evil": namely, that evil is a problem for Him, too. In any world of both natural law (where apples *and* parachutists fall according to the same law of gravity) and of agency (where people are free to do good *and* evil), suffering will occur. But on the whole, God neither wants nor wills suffering. In fact, He grieves over it: the Heavens thunder and they weep in emotional solidarity with the saints (Moses 7:29-40). Enoch wonders how this can be so: "How is it that the heavens weep?" (Moses 7:28). But he finally comes to share the Lord's view of human misery: "wherefore Enoch . . . looked upon their wickedness, and their misery, and wept and stretched forth his arms, and his heart swelled wide as eternity; and his bowels yearned; and all eternity shook" (Moses 7:41).<sup>29</sup>

Surely, as we respond to the invitation to consider Job, this is our faith about God's nature. Job is a provocative and profoundly rewarding book. It is a book that refuses to offer us ready answers to the so-called problem of evil, for it acknowledges how inexplicably cruel life can be. At the same time it points to a way of enduring. In Samuel Terrien's fine phrases, the Book of Job proposes "not a speculative answer . . . but a way of consecrated living"; it does not render the world fully intelligible, "but through his vision all things are livable."<sup>30</sup> Or, in Paul Ricoeur's language, it teaches us "how to endure suffering, how to suffer suffering," disclosing "the possibility of hope in spite of. . ."<sup>31</sup> And Job teaches even more. It says something unforgettable about honesty in our relationship with God, something about compassion in comforting those in spiritual distress, something about tentativeness in offering them ready explanations. Finally it says something about the absolute need for revelation to solve the problem of faith that encompasses the problem of understanding. As Latter-day Saints, we should welcome a text that finally throws us back, just as it does Job, upon the necessity of seeking understanding through personal revelation from an often inscrutable but nevertheless living and loving God. ☪

### NOTES

1. John L. Tanner, "Job and the Prophets," *Cithara* 26.1 (1986): 23-35.
2. William Shakespeare, *King Lear* 3.3.34
3. Paul Ricoeur, *Essays on Biblical Interpretation*, ed. Lewis S. Mudge (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1980), 30.
4. Even these aspects of the story might well reflect truths. The wager in heaven is not unlike the council in heaven, where God determined to give Satan leave to tempt and try us. The doubling of blessings reminds us that God does love to bless his faithful servants, and that he can do it in this life.
5. For a highly readable, popular account of Schliemann's biography, see C. W. Ceram's *Gods, Graves, and Scholars*, trans. E. B. Garside and Sophie Wilkins, rev. 2nd ed. (New York: Bantam Books, 1967), 30-67.

6. E. Dhorme, *A Commentary on the Book of Job*, Trans. Harold Knight, (London: Thomas Nelson & Sons, 1926; Trans. & Rpt. 1967), xv.

7. Dhorme, vii-xii.

8. Bernhard W. Anderson, *Understanding the Old Testament*, 4th. ed. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1986), 570, 588-603.

9. See, for example, "Dispute over Suicide" [Egyptian], and "I Will Praise the Lord of Wisdom" and "A Dialogue about Human Misery" [Babylonian] in J. B. Pritchard's standard collection, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts Relating to the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1955).

10. I disagree with Keith Meservy that an allusion by the Lord to a fictional Job would constitute a cruel mockery of Joseph's non-fictional suffering. The Lord's purpose here is simply to remind Joseph that things could be worse, not to verify Job's existence. See Keith Meservy, "Job: 'Yet Will I Trust in Him,'" Sixth Annual Sperry Symposium, January 1978; rpt. *Old Testament: 1 Kings-Malachi* (Religion 302 Student Manual), (Salt Lake City: Church Educational System), 29.

11. Meservy, 29.

12. *Documentary History of the Church* (DHC) 4:11

13. "Of Adversity," *The Essayes in Francis Bacon: A Selection of His Works*, ed. Sidney Warhaft (New York: Odyssey, 1965), 57.

14. DHC 4:11; *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, comp. Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1938) (TPJS) 162-63

15. Immanuel Kant recognized this and therefore excepted the Book of Job in his 1791 essay "On the Failure of All Attempted Philosophical Theodicies" (Trans. Michel Despland, Montreal: McGill-Queens University Press, 1973: 283-97). The Book of Job does not fail, Kant claims, because it does not approach the question of evil philosophically but puts the whole discussion on an entirely different plane.

16. We should remember that the dark vision of depravity the friends sometimes unfold, such as that in 11:6 or in 15:14-16, form planks in arguments framed with the intent to prove all men sinners (and hence worthy of punishment). They do *not* represent the Biblical view of human depravity.

17. For the seminal treatment of this phenomenon, see William T. Ryan, *Blaming the Victim* (New York: Random House/Vintage Book, 1972).

18. See Russell M. Nelson, "Truth and More," *On the Lord's Errand*, address given at the Annual University Conference, 27 August 1985, Brigham Young University.

19. TPJS, 212. See also Hugh Nibley's discussion of accusing in "Brigham Young and the Enemy" (1972; Provo: F.A.R.M.S. Rpt. n.d.) 12.

20. Oxford English Dictionary.

21. The young man Elihu is not mentioned until late in the drama (chapter 32), and no one responds to him. His speeches about God's wonderful works

and unfathomable ways in some respects anticipate the theophany. For these reasons, most commentators see his discourse as a later interpolation in the text, a later scribe's effort to give Job a proper answer from a human companion.

22. From *War in Heaven*, quoted by Samuel Terrien in *Job: Poet of Existence*, (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1958) 238.

23. "Theodicy?" *Harvard Theological Review* 76:2 (1985): 246. Surin argues that the problem of evil must locate itself in the victim's "space," and not presume to answer the question from a purely "cosmic" vantage. I concur with Surin that the Book of Job takes the side of the sufferer. The sympathy the text displays for Job—evidenced by God's commendation—is also asserted in a fine recent essay by Rene' Girard, who argues that in casting Job as scapegoat his comforters take a satanic stance, while the scripture sides with the victim, Job. (See "Job et le Bouc Emissaire," *Bulletin du Centre Protestant D'Etudes*, 6 [1983]: 3-33.)

24. Matitiah Tsevat, "The Meaning of the Book of Job," in *Studies in Ancient Israelite Wisdom: The Library of Biblical Studies*, ed. James L. Crenshaw, (New York: KTAV Publishing House, 1976), 373.

25. James Crenshaw, *Old Testament Wisdom Literature: An Introduction*, (Atlanta: John Knox Press, 1981), 125.

26. Robert Frost, *A Masque of Reason*, lines 69-70, 76-77, in *The Poetry of Robert Frost*, ed. by Edward Connery Lathem, (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1969) 475-476, rpt. in *The Voice out of the Whirlwind: The Book of Job*, ed. Ralph E. Hone, rev. ed. (San Francisco: Chandler Publishing, 1972), 261.

27. Quoted in Crenshaw, "Popular Questioning of the Justice of God in Ancient Israel," *Studies*, 303n.

28. Samuel Terrien, *Poet of Existence*, 241. On the whole issue of the Old Testament image of a suffering God, see Terrence E. Fretheim's *The Suffering of God* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1984), and also Kazoh Kitamori, *Theology of the Pain of God*, trans. M. E. Brachten (Richmond: John Knox Press, 1965).

29. Largely because of this, I find the wager story problematic; it verges on trivializing the Lord's relationship to his children, human and devil. It may be, however, that the first chapter of Job is not literally but symbolically true of the actual nature of mortality. That is, it describes this life as a period of testing, a time when the Lord concedes to put all of us, like Job, temporarily in Satan's power (see Job 1:12). It may be, indeed, that the agreement of the Lord not to intervene in Job's test obliquely reflects agreements made in premortal councils. Moreover, if Job, too, agreed to such conditions, then he could be seen as more of a party and less of a pawn in the wager.

30. Samuel Terrien, "Introduction and Exegesis to Job," *Interpreter's Bible* vol. 3 (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1954), 902; *Poet of Existence*, 248.

31. Ricoeur, 86-87.





## One Fold

# THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC CHURCH SINCE VATICAN COUNCIL II

By Thomas S. Scharbach

*I attended Christmas midnight mass with Tom Scharbach, a Roman Catholic friend, and found it much less formal and ritualistic than other masses I attended some years ago. Tom explained to me that the changes I observed flowed from the ecumenical council called Vatican II, held 25 years ago, from 1962 to 1965. Of 2900 bishops invited, more than 2500 participated in at least some of the sessions. It was the first such council held since Vatican I (1869-70). Resulting modifications in the mass and in other church practices produced varying reactions. For some Catholics the changes seemed a betrayal of age-old and valuable traditions; for others the changes infused Catholicism with new vitality.*

*In any event, the shift is irreversible. John Dietzen says:*

*In April, 1947, explorer Thor Heyerdahl set sail from the west coast of Peru to begin what was to be one of history's most famous voyages. Hoping to explain the puzzling presence of apparent South-American cultures in the distant south Pacific, he and his companions struggled to bring their tiny balsa raft, Kon-Tiki, into the offshore Humboldt Current. Their theory, which proved correct, was that once they entered the current there would be no turning back. It would carry them irrevocably thousands of miles across the*

*Pacific to the islands of Polynesia. This now-famous migration is an appropriate image of the Catholic Church and much of the rest of Christianity since Vatican Council II.*

*—"The New Question Box: Catholic Life for the Nineties," Peoria, Ill.: Guildhall 1988)*

*Tom followed upon our brief discussion of that Christmas Eve with a letter.*

Edward L. Kimball

March 14, 1990

Dear Ed:

I enjoyed being with you on Christmas Eve. It is fun to have non-Catholic friends at "feast" masses—it heightens my awareness of the liturgy<sup>1</sup> and my enjoyment of the celebration.<sup>2</sup>

I've thought more about your questions concerning changes in the mass and will try to give you better perspective on what you saw and what it means to me.<sup>3</sup>

Catholics have been in the midst of major cultural change since 1965, and there has been a lot of pain, turmoil, and questioning because of the changes.

The changes are confusing to many, particularly American

1. When I go to mass with non-Catholic friends, I tend to be more aware of and involved in what is happening within the worshipping community than I am normally. When I go to mass by myself, I tend to drift quickly into my inner self and pay less attention to my surroundings.

I remember an Easter Vigil I went to three years ago with your son, Chris. Our "traditional" liturgy gang and our "folk" liturgy gang teamed up to combine both styles of liturgy in a single service—the result was one of the funniest things I have ever seen. A Gregorian chant with full "high church" trappings (processions, robes, candles, bowing) followed immediately with "Happy are they who live in the Lord!", a lilting folk hymn accompanied by guitars and bass. This switching back and forth between liturgical styles went on for the duration of the service.

Without Chris present I would have missed many of the anomalies in liturgy as theater.

2. Catholic "feast" masses (in particular the Midnight Mass on Christmas Eve and the Easter Vigil Mass on Holy Saturday night) are always part worship service and part party in our tradition.

We go to these "high" masses both to worship and to celebrate (the masses are intended to be joyous celebrations following periods of penance and somber reflection during Advent and Lent respectively). As a result, we enjoy pulling out as many of the "high church" stops as we can manage, depleting the world supply of oil, beeswax, incense, and holy water to the best of our ability.

Our daily and normal Sunday masses are spartan by contrast (even though I imagine our *normal* masses would seem ornate and overly liturgical to most Protestants).

3. I am a relatively typical American Catholic for my age (early forties). I am not affiliated with any of the "lay movements" of "right" or "left," like Opus Dei or Call to Action, within the Church. My spiritual life is centered, as is the spiritual life of most Catholics, in my parish. I like to go to mass daily (as do about 10 percent of American Catholics). I get to mass on Sunday, although I don't fret about it if I cannot. I have difficulty with some Church teachings, but luckily none are fundamental. I am largely uninterested in "burning issues" such as women priests, married priests, lay control of parish finances, and the like. The talk in militantly liberal and conservative circles of eventual "schism" with Rome leaves me cold.

The only unusual thing about me, perhaps, is that I have a background in the Protestant tradition and live in a wildly ecumenical environment. My immediate family includes Jews, Greek Orthodox, and "mainline" Protestant Christians, and, as in all families these days, agnostics. My closest friend is a Mormon. My neighborhood in Chicago is the type of community where a young Presbyterian friend was recently "called" to and ordained (as a Presbyterian minister) in a Baptist Church by twenty or so "mainline" Protestant ministers of various denominations. None of this ecumenical commotion make Catholicism less important to me (probably the opposite) but it does mean that I

Catholics who grew up before 1960 and were taught that the then-existing Catholic practices were ancient, universal, and irrevocable.<sup>4</sup>

Before Vatican II, Catholics “heard” (that is watched) the mass, but did not take an active part.<sup>5</sup> It was not unusual for laymen to receive communion only a few times per year.<sup>6</sup> Catholic lay religious life centered around paraliturgical and ethnic devotions outside the mass—the Rosary, the litany of the Sacred Heart, Corpus Christi celebrations, novenas (prayer vigils), May crownings (Mary as “Queen of the Church”) and

the like.

With Vatican II all this changed.<sup>7</sup>

Vatican II focused Catholic religious life squarely on the eucharist as the central expression of Catholic worship, putting the mass in the vernacular<sup>8</sup> and involving lay people (hymns,<sup>9</sup> lay readers, lay eucharistic servers, lay writing of the “prayers of the people”<sup>10</sup> and so on). Vatican II also encouraged an emphasis on the “Word” (by integration of the biblical readings and sermons heard each Sunday)<sup>11</sup> during the mass and gave Catholics a view of the laity (as well, of course,

hear and respect the views of non-Catholics concerning the Church.

4. One reason for this emphasis was that Church practices were “frozen” for about 100 years prior to Vatican II as a result of the Church’s fear of “modernism.” Several conservative (reactionary would probably be closer to the truth) Popes put a halt to explorations of and accommodations with the modern world on a number of fronts (science, literature, biblical exploration, and so on) during that period.

A second reason for this emphasis was the cultural dominance of Irish Catholic clerics in the American church. These clerics fought to create a common religious practice in the United States, stamping out the cultural practices of other immigrants who arrived during the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

The reality is that Catholic religious practices have varied widely during the Church’s long history, and continued to vary during the “immutable” period of American Catholicism, but this fact did not seem to penetrate the monolith of “certainty” that “old” Church Catholics were taught.

5. Few Catholics were conversant with Latin in any real sense. Many Catholics, for want of a way to participate in the liturgy, prayed the Rosary or other devotions during the mass. Others just watched. Teenage boys skulked on the side and watched the girls, no doubt speculating about the things teenage boys speculate about. Lay people were, for all practical purposes, spectators rather than participants in the liturgy.

6. Catholics are required to confess and receive communion only once per year, during the Easter season, although Catholics are required to attend mass on Sunday, absent an impediment. Catholics may take communion at any mass unless they are conscious of grave, unabsolved, sin.

Years ago, due to a faulty understanding of the eucharist, many Catholics considered themselves “unworthy” of frequent communion, feeling that even the most minor of sins separated them from the communion table. Vatican II changed this perception. As this perception changed, American Catholics began to confess less (and hopefully, more productively) and take communion more often.

But the perceived “American norm” of weekly Saturday confession and Sunday communion as an “obligation” (see, for example, any number of Bing Crosby movies from the 1940s and early 1950s) was largely an Irish cultural practice implanted in the United States. The practices of other cultural groups differed. The religious life of Hispanic Catholics centered on “feast” day celebrations rather than Sunday mass. Other European Catholics generally received the eucharist with less frequency. For example, many Eastern European Catholics (like many in the Eastern Orthodox tradition) received communion only during the Easter season.

Since Vatican II the Church has focused on the eucharist as the central event of Catholic religious life and has encouraged all Catholics to take communion often. Most American Catholics now take communion whenever they attend mass.

7. Vatican II was a monumental rethinking of the Church and her role in the modern world. Religious practice was not the only thing that changed. Vatican II opened the doors to a pent up change in theology, as well.

Since Vatican II, “modernism” has been generally embraced. The Church has authorized several new translations of the Bible since Vatican II. Catholic biblical scholars now use modern Bible analysis techniques, and Catholics openly speak of inconsistencies in the texts. Catholics used to be the worst of fundamentalists. Lay Catholics have been encouraged to read the Bible and think about it for the first time in many, many years (the Protestant insistence during the Reformation on “scripture alone” as the basis of teaching authority led to a heightened sense of the Church’s “tradition” as a source of teaching authority, almost to the exclusion of scripture), and Catholics in large numbers are actively reading and reflecting on scripture (large numbers of our parish

adults attend weekly Bible study sessions).

The Church has embraced the ecumenical movement since Vatican II, and is seeking peace, if not necessarily unity, with our Protestant sister communities. Protestants are no longer the anathema they once were to Catholics. Years ago Catholics were not supposed to worship in Protestant churches. That is no longer the case.

Catholics now recognize the validity of baptisms performed by most Protestant churches (and, accordingly, no longer “conditionally baptize” Protestants seeking to enter the Church). Some individual Catholics and Protestants occasionally cross-commune in practice (that is, receive communion outside their own church, usually at weddings or funerals of close friends or relatives from other Christian denominations) on the basis of individual conscience, even though the practice is not, except in very extraordinary cases, officially permitted by the Church or condoned by most Protestant denominations.

In these, and in many other ways, Catholics are more open to the salvation experience of other Christian traditions than was the case before Vatican II and are finding that we have much in common with our Protestant sisters and brothers.

The Church, in a nutshell, lives in a new world since Vatican II. Where it will all end only God knows, and that is the best thing about it.

8. The earliest American vernacular mass was something less than a liturgical triumph. The mass was translated directly from the Latin without much sensitivity to English speech patterns. Some Catholics call this early mass the “Yoo-hoo” mass since it translated the “Agnus Dei” into “Lamb of God, You who take away the sins of the world. . . .” Better vernacular masses (which are often rooted in forms which predate the Latin “Tridentine” mass) were quickly developed and the American church now regularly uses about a dozen versions, several of them quite lyrical.

Many older Catholics miss the dignity of the Latin mass, however, and I admit to feeling a twinge when I watch a movie like “Becket” or “The Name of the Rose.” Latin is a timeless and soaring language which served the Church well for more than a millennium.

9. A significant number of older Catholics still don’t sing at mass, and even younger Catholics don’t seem to be able to build up the steam that Baptists, for example, manage with ease.

As was the case with the vernacular mass, it took the Church a while to develop a respectable body of hymns for vernacular use. The early English hymns used in the United States had little of the power and dignity of the best hymns found in Protestant hymnals. The Church eventually worked out translations of the better Latin chants, like “Ubi Caritas” and adopted many “Protestant” hymns, like “Alleluia, Sing to Jesus!” The hymnal used by our parish, *Worship II*, has not one but two versions of the great hymn of the Reformation, “A Mighty Fortress is Our God.” Of course, we think that “this world’s tyrant . . . our old satanic foe” refers to Lucifer himself, a slight variation on the original intent, perhaps. And we have many lovely hymns of our own, such as “Sing of Mary, Pure and Lowly.” We now have songs worth singing, and we will eventually learn how.

10. This can lead to unintended results, even though priests “vet” the prayers before they are used. The prayers of the people often unwittingly speak from one viewpoint or another regarding practices and theological understandings. The prayers, accordingly, are sometimes an unconscious battleground between various camps, much like, I suppose, the prayers which would have been set loose by partisans in the early Church during the battle between Saints Peter and Paul over whether Gentiles had to observe Jewish dietary practices. These subtleties would not be obvious to a non-Catholic ear.

11. Before Vatican II, sermons followed a set series of topics often unrelated to the biblical readings for the week. Sermons now flow directly from the



as the religious and the clergy) as “the people of God”<sup>12</sup> rather than servants of the Church.<sup>13</sup>

As part of the shift in practice, Catholic vocabulary changed (for example, the two parts of the mass, formerly called the “Mass of the Catechumens” and the “Mass of the Faithful” are now known as the “Liturgy of the Word” and the “Liturgy of the Eucharist,” respectively) and many pre-Vatican practices (Friday fasts, scapulars, paraliturgical devotions, weekly confession, and so on) disappeared or became less central to lay religious life.<sup>14</sup>

All of this has taken place against a background of short-term decisions, disagreements, and dislocations within the Church, such the closing of ethnic parishes in large cities (it is common in Chicago to have Polish, German, Irish, and

biblical readings.

12. The “people of God” is a term which embraces more than just members of the Catholic Church. The term encompasses all who recognize, receive, and respond to God’s unconditional love. A more accurate use of the phrase might be that members of the Church are “among” the people of God. Roman Catholic theology does *not* exclude non-Catholics from being “among” the people of God as well.

13. This may be the most telling shift in the Church which resulted from Vatican II.

The Church is moving from clerical domination to lay domination. Our priests and bishops (including the Pope) are now seen as “Servants of the People of God” rather than their masters.

This change in view culturally inverts the Church. Before, the Church was a strong hierarchy, with the Pope being almost a “demi-God,” the bishops “princes of the Church,” the priests the rulers of the lives of the lay people in each parish, and the people expected to “pray, pay, and obey.” Now, there is an understanding that the Church is the laity, first and foremost, and the clerics and religious work *for* us as well as *on* us. In my view, this inversion is a sea change. It is the reason that lay Catholics listen to (and respect) the clergy but do not necessarily follow the clergy’s lead on practical applications of faith to life when individual experience and individual conscience direct otherwise.

The demolition of the monarchical Church will echo into the next century. Nobody has a clue about how to run a billion-member multinational institution, much less a religious institution of those proportions, in the modern world. The Church faces national and cultural issues by the bucketful (can the Church remain “Roman”—in the sense that many of its religious practices are historically and culturally tied to specific Western European understandings and viewpoints—and still be “catholic” in the modern world?).

In addition to the internal issues, the Church grapples with a fundamental change in human imagination resulting from the psychological impact of the “Earthrise” photograph from the Apollo program. The picture visually demolished the structured order of a hierarchical heaven and earth, the terms in which traditional theology speaks more often than not, just as completely as Vatican II demolished the hierarchical Church.

Catholics may be better equipped to deal with this in the long run than most Protestants. The Church’s strength has always been that it has dealt well with the mystical, emotional, and irrational side of man’s religious nature in a way that the Protestant communities, which emphasize the rational, cannot. The Catholic religious imagination, by removing Mary bodily to heaven in the 1950s (however Medieval the actual terms of the removal dogma), symbolically reunited heaven and earth, preparing Catholics psychologically for the space age breakdown of the boundaries between “down here” and “up there.” Carl Jung may well have been right when he referred to the Assumption as the most important religious event of this century.

14. Paraliturgical practices are beginning to make something of a comeback. Our parish has revived “Corpus Christi” vigils on First Fridays, Marian masses on First Saturdays, and a few other traditional devotions, which get fair attendance (50-100 people out of a parish of 1200).

Individual confession (now called “Reconciliation”), while offered weekly, is now celebrated as part of a general service of Bible reading and reflections on God’s healing and mercy, at least in our parish, and most people confess individually about once per quarter (as opposed to once a week). I am told that the nature of confessions has changed, as well, with less emphasis on reciting a list

Italian parish churches cheek and jowl in the middle of an Hispanic neighborhood, with only enough people between them to support one or two parishes) and the current schizophrenia over sexual practices (John Paul II speaks and writes about the need for unhindered sexual passion in marriage<sup>15</sup> as a reflection of God’s passionate love for us, but at the same time fights mechanical birth control methods, which make *unworried* sexual passion, at least for those of us with numerous children, possible).

And we have changed from a people governed by endless black and white rules<sup>16</sup> to a people encouraged to exercise individual conscience and individual decision-making in everything except central matters of faith and morals.<sup>17</sup>

This has led to disagreements within the Catholic

of lesser imperfections (yelling at the kids, minor sexual transgressions, and so on) and more emphasis on fundamental sin (an inordinate hunger for material security, success and status, or whatever else it is that keeps us from putting God at the center of our lives).

15. Catholics view marriage as one of the sacramental nexus points between God and humankind. Accordingly, the love between married Catholics, and the sexual manifestation of that love, is seen as a reflection of God’s love. Despite Catholic “uptightness” about sexual practices, sexual passion in marriage is encouraged.

16. I have a psychiatrist friend of many years who says that whenever he gets an older Catholic patient he gets a compulsive—older Catholics go nuts in a variety of ways, but are *always* compulsives.

Whether he is right or wrong, many older Catholics have a lot of trouble with the fact that the old rules, comforting in the sense that they provided an easily understood “solution” to almost any practical problem, have “disappeared.” Older Catholics were taught the rules and not the reasons, largely traditions without biblical foundation, for the rules. Educated Catholics (for example, those who attended Catholic colleges) went beyond the rules and searched out the reasons behind them, often finding the expressed reasons inadequate to say the least. Most older Catholics, however, did not have this experience.

Some older Catholics lack the educational background to discern which pre-Vatican religious practices were important and which were not. As a result, some Catholics tend to see the changes in the Church since Vatican II as virtually incomprehensible.

The “old” Church’s failure to differentiate between the critical and the unimportant (and the corresponding education of the individual conscience) has been a point of criticism of the Church by Protestants, and sadly, it is just criticism. Whenever I think of the “old” Church, I cannot help but think of Jesus bawling out the Pharisees for observing the law but ignoring the reason for the law. The “old” Church fostered an “obey the law as an end in itself” mindset, and many Catholics suffered twisted spiritual lives as a result.

17. Even here, the Church is in tension on many fronts. Lay Catholics openly argue about whether the changes have gone too far, or not far enough, what is central and what is not, and how the Church should be structured. Many faithful Catholics see some of the Vatican’s current positions as arbitrary, reactionary, and unreasoned.

The best example is probably the issue of birth control. Pope Paul VI ignored the clear recommendation of the Papal Commission he appointed in issuing *Humane Vitae*, and Pope John Paul II has virtually made adherence to the Church’s birth control position a litmus test of Catholic faith (in contrast to *Humane Vitae*’s author, Paul VI, who approved a number of pastoral statements from bishops of various countries giving considerable room for individual conscience). The faithful, and most of the clergy, have not bought the litmus test. Better than 75 percent of married Catholics who regularly attend Mass practice birth control, and see nothing (much) wrong with it. What happened? There is no easy answer, but my own view is that many Catholic lay men and women simply think that the Pope is dead wrong.

Another telling example of the tension is the question of women priests and deacons. While few Catholics are ready to hit the barricades over this issue, an immense amount of anger developed in the weeks after Pope John Paul’s pastoral letter on the subject in the fall of 1988. Again, the issue is complicated, but I suspect that many lay Catholics think that the Pope failed to address the issue. The Pope used the fact that Jesus did not select women as disciples as the reason

community.<sup>18</sup> Many thoughtful Catholics have reservations, doubts or difficulties of one sort or another with various aspects of the Church's "magisterium" or "teaching authority."<sup>19</sup> The magisterium is highly developed, but little of it is "essential" (in the sense that central beliefs like belief in Christ's resurrection are) to Catholic religious truth. Much of the magisterium reflects the experience of other times<sup>20</sup> and needs continual reinterpretation as the Church continues its pilgrimage in history.

In short, Catholics are in the midst of a somewhat turbulent

renewal, trying to identify, retain, and encourage what is essential to the Church while shedding the extraneous, and most of all, trying to reach consensus on which is which.

A "problem" with reaching consensus is that the Church has a long and sacred tradition that the Church is, always has been, and must continue to be "catholic" in the sense that it is diverse (at once mystic and pragmatic, hermetic and communal, monastic and worldly, liberal and conservative, open and closed<sup>21</sup>) and should provide a meaningful devotional life for all Catholics, of whatever culture,<sup>22</sup> intelligence or education.<sup>23</sup>

why ordination must be limited to men. The Pope, however, did not even ask the obviously relevant question of whether Jesus, were he to select disciples in a modern society, as the Church is asked to do, would have chosen women as well as men as disciples, let alone try to answer the question. I think most Catholics recognize the complexity (and the strong arguments on both sides) of the issue, and were disappointed with the Pope's failure to deal with the issue in all of its complexity.

In some senses, the "institutional" Church is in a period of reaction, or at least holding fast, at the current time, and will be for the immediate future. This is a good thing, or bad, I suppose, depending on your viewpoint, but Catholics need time to absorb what has changed already and reach consensus before a new round of major change.

18. The fact that many Catholics respectfully disagree with the "institutional" Church on peripheral issues is a sign of maturity in the American church. The Catholic tradition has always emphasized individual responsibility for moral behavior. The Church worked hard at educating the children of older, largely uneducated immigrants within this framework, and the numbers of well educated Catholics who are currently exercising that responsibility is a sign of the success of the effort. It is inevitable that individuals exercising that responsibility within the context of their own life experiences and religious consciences will, from time to time, be "out of synch" with each other.

The Catholics who disagree with the "institutional" Church on one or another issue tend to think of the disagreement in terms of the "institutional" Church not understanding the life experience of the laity (as in "The Pope wouldn't say that if he had five kids!"). Many faithful Catholics are choosing, in the end, to follow the lessons of their own experience and conscience while hoping that the "institutional" Church will see the light sooner or later. "Dissident" Catholics, by and large, are loyal, active members of the Church.

I think that the Church's internal problems are the subject of such vigorous debate because the issue of lay "obedience" is a hot issue for many of our clerics (most of our clergy were trained in the "old" Church when "obedience" was the fabric of clergy/lay relations). The pressures in this area will lessen considerably as the concept of the Church as the "People of God" gains ground.

The "divisions" are exaggerated by secular newspapers and periodicals. American Catholics speak plainly and loudly and make good press as a result. The press has treated us to very entertaining reports recently concerning one Catholic bishop (at the extreme end of the Catholic spectrum on abortion) saying that Mario Cuomo should be worried about going to Hell. The press, however, is not reporting with similar vigor the extremely thoughtful (whether right or wrong) views of Cuomo and the more moderate views of a large number (probably the majority) of Catholic bishops on the issue.

19. "Magisterium" is a non-infallible, authoritative teaching of the Church. While Catholics accept these teachings as "presumptively true," Catholics are not required to blindly accept them or the precise form in which they are stated.

"Magisterium" teachings are distinguished from "dogma," or infallible teachings of the Church. Infallible teachings must meet three conditions, according to Vatican I and II: (1) the teaching must be a collegial act concerning faith or morals; (2) the teaching must contain an explicit call for assent on the part of all of the "people of God"; and (3) the teaching, as pronounced, must be the unanimous teaching of all the bishops of the Church. Infallible teachings express truth which does not change, but since the precise formulation of the teachings are limited to particular words, concepts and historical viewpoints, the formulations change from time to time as times and cultures change.

20. Church teaching about "limbo" (a place not Heaven, exactly, but "with God," reserved for unbaptized innocents—read "babies" for the most part) is a great example of a doctrine from another time and place.

Plenty of Catholics—and even more Protestants, I suspect—believe that limbo is something Catholics must believe in. However, the only authoritative

Church teaching on the subject is a 1794 papal pronouncement that it is *not heresy to believe in limbo*.

Limbo appears to have been "created" to provide a pastoral solution to the logical problem of positing that only the baptized could be saved. The concept arose during a period when the Church, like the rest of Western civilization, insisted that everything be both explained and logical.

Limbo is not in any sense an important Church teaching, even though there is plenty of writing on the subject. Most educated Catholics don't give it a second thought, dismissing it as the logic trap it is (that is not to say that the teaching does not point at a truth accepted by all Catholics—God does not abandon blameless innocents on the basis of a formal act like baptism—but only that the formulation of the truth is inadequate).

The Church deals with the "magisterium" on a basis somewhat like the "stare decisis" principle in American law—a "magisterium" is "reformulated" rather than "replaced" or "overruled." *Humane Vitae*, for example, will probably never be directly overruled. If the Church changes its position on birth control, refinements of the Church's current teaching (such as a formulation requiring that the "marriage as a whole" rather than each so-called "marital act" be open to conception) will be the way in which it is accomplished. This means of dealing with teaching authority is one of the Church's strengths; the accumulated spiritual wisdom of the Church *should* be protected by an innate conservatism.

21. I recently looked at a very interesting book, the name of which I forget, by a Catholic woman theologian, which posited that the essential tension in the Church is one between the Church as "mother" and the Church as "mistress." According to this theologian, the two must coexist for the Church to be successful in its mission. I wonder what some of the more conservative members of the Curia would think about *that* formulation?

22. The common picture of the Church as a monolith is simply false, at least when it comes to religious practices.

Different ethnic groups celebrate the lives of different saints, observe different feast days, and so on. I call this the "Our Lady of the Whatever" syndrome, because Marian devotions seem to be the best illustration. There are roughly 10,738,376,214 versions of the "Our Lady of the \_\_\_\_\_" held dear by various Catholic groups, all of whom would fight mightily to retain Mary's special role as *their* protector. I suppose Mary got into this mess by being human; Jesus was just too sacred in Catholic thought to personify in this way.

Whatever the underlying causes, the American church is an "ethnic" church, and stubbornly, if not perversely, remains so despite the emergence of the "Homogenized American Mass" in most parishes. The sense of being "ethnic" (German, Polish, Italian, Irish, whatever) is pervasive and subtle, in the sense that Catholics have not identified with American values as fully as most Protestants. I wonder how much of the nostalgia for the "traditional" Church is really nostalgia for ethnic practices?

23. One of the most powerful spiritual lessons of my life came from watching a charwoman at daily mass over the course of several months while I lived in Toronto. During the first few weeks I was in contact with this woman (her missal cluttered with "holy cards" and clippings, her beads clicking as she muttered private devotions before mass) I was annoyed—"Oh God, another one of those ignorant, superstitious Catholics!" As time went on, I realized that I should be ashamed of my educated scorn for her faith, however it was expressed in action.

Her image stayed with me for several years, and finally led me to a collision with God and a renewal of my own faith. I recount this simply to point out that faith is a gift given freely by God to those who will (or can) receive it, and the Church needs to nurture the spiritual needs of a wide variety of people. There is no "one way" appropriate to Catholicism.

24. An interesting part of this renewal is a return to the roots of the early Church on many fronts.

As a result, the Church has to tread carefully in change.<sup>24</sup>

It is not an easy task and it has been hard on Catholics. Many have drifted away from the Church<sup>25</sup> and most of us who remain have frayed nerves from time to time. We tend, more often than not, to focus on our disagreements and to complain because our glass is half empty rather than rejoice in our common faith and in the gift of our glass being half full.

The American church is working hard to reconcile the departed faithful. Our parish, for example, is beginning a “re-membering” program to bring lapsed Catholics back into active membership.<sup>26</sup>

I do not agree with those who see the “division” between the “institutional” Church (that is, the Pope, the bishops, and the

clergy) and individual lay Catholics on issues such as birth control, the role of women in the Church and other peripheral issues as a sign that the Church is breaking up. The overwhelming evidence is that American Catholics remain loyal to the Church in vast numbers despite the “division” and very few have any intention of ever leaving the Church over these or any other issues.<sup>27</sup>

The stress of change, however visible and grating it may be, is only a small part of the story. We remain Catholic because we love the Church despite (because of?) all of her defects and we celebrate her importance in our lives.<sup>28</sup> We fight so hard with one another because we want the Church to be a perfect expression of God’s presence in the world, however impossible

The Church’s “RCIA” (Rites of Christian Initiation for Adults) program (the process through which adult “converts” are brought into the Church) is a good example. Individuals spend anywhere from six months to several years in the process, depending on individual needs (a person with a strong Christian background and some experience with Catholic traditions will normally move more quickly than one without).

Our parish forms groups of adults interested in becoming Catholic (several RCIA groups, at different points in the process, are normally going at once). Each group begins at the inquiry stage, discussing basic Christian concepts (grace, salvation, and so on) and the Catholic approach to those concepts.

Each year on the feast of Christ the King in late fall, some members of the inquiry group become “catechumens” (unbaptized) or “candidates” (baptized Christians, usually Protestants, who have not been confirmed in the Church) and move to a more advanced (that is, less general and more “Catholic”) stage of study. Each catechumen and candidate is given a “sponsor” from the parish, a “resource” and brother or sister in the faith. The two “journey” together as long as the catechumen or candidate remains in the RCIA process.

At the beginning of Lent, some of the catechumens and candidates become “elect” and are eligible to be received into the Church at Easter. Following a period of final preparation during Lent, the “elect” are baptized (if unbaptized), confirmed into the Church, and receive the eucharist at the Easter Vigil Mass.

The newly confirmed continue study during a “mystagogia” period (a period of deepening conversion) following confirmation. In one sense, the “mystagogia” period never ends—Catholics believe that life is a process of continuing spiritual awakening and conversion. We are not “born again” so much as “born again and again and again,” to paraphrase FDR.

The RCIA process harkens back to the early Church (before A.D. 300) when new members were carefully prepared for baptism and confirmation in a similar way. The early practice of long and careful preparation was overwhelmed by sheer numbers after Constantine “converted” the entire Roman Empire by fiat, and people were brought into the Church by a variety of methods after that period. RCIA was developed as direct “byproduct” of Vatican II and became the only method for adults to enter the Church a few years ago.

25. “How many?” is an interesting question. Weekly Mass attendance dropped from 70-80 percent in the 1950s to 50-55 percent today. According to several studies, Mass attendance is beginning to rise again.

There is a high correlation between the changes in Mass attendance and the demographics of the Catholic population. Because we brought a whole lot of healthy men back from World War II and have always encouraged large families, we have “baby boomers” in spades. The attendance dropoff and resurgence dovetails nicely with the periods in which the “baby boomers” moved from their twenties to their forties, a period of lessened religious interest in most people. As the “baby boomers” move into their middle years, they seem to be returning to the Church. Andrew Greeley published a series of statistical charts in either *Commonweal* or *The Tablet* last year demonstrating this correlation.

Despite the demographic dip, however, there has been an actual dropoff, even if it is hard to quantify. There is strong sociological evidence that *Humane Vitae* is the root cause of the dropoff for American Catholics. Other possible explanations are the Church’s rather inflexible stand on divorce, a general feeling that the Church is not addressing “real world” issues, the change since Vatican II itself, which left many Catholics feeling adrift, and the lack of change, which left others disappointed. The explanation which I think is *least* persuasive is the one most commonly cited by “conservative” Catholics—the changes in Church practice have somehow removed the “discipline” and “mystery” of the Church,

making it somehow “Protestant” rather than “Catholic.”

While the dropoff is causing alarm in some circles (the secular press and most conservative Catholic groups, for example) and concern among all thoughtful Catholics, Catholic attendance figures remain significantly higher than those of most Protestant denominations. Catholics, by and large, are loyal to the Church and continue to support it despite the pain and dislocation of change.

26. The priest working with our parish “re-membering” program mentioned that the central complaints of the people he is working with are that the Church “seemed not to care” about their individual problems and that “nobody knew my name.”

If that is the case, it indicates both a breakdown of the Catholic tradition of “community” and a real failure on the part of the Church to minister to the faithful.

Catholics, like Orthodox Christians, have a long tradition of Christian “community” as the basic building block of the Church and religious life (unlike Protestants, who place more emphasis on individual faith and “fellowship” of individuals). Catholics tend to see themselves as existing in a matrix of family, parish, and neighborhood. Until recently, it was not at all unusual for Catholics (the late Mayor Daley of Chicago comes to mind as an example) to be baptized, confirmed, married, and buried in the same parish. Catholics, as a result, had strong ties to a particular parish and neighborhood.

In our modern, peripatetic society, this stability of “community” is breaking down, as nuclear (rather than extended) families become the rule and most Americans move about once every seven years. How can the Church keep the sense of “community” which is so central to Catholic religious life?

Our parish (located in a university neighborhood where people come and go with dazzling frequency) is working on a number of fronts to build a sense of “community” within the parish. We include recognition of arriving and departing parish members in our masses from time to time. We try to involve people with one another (for example, we were asked to spend a few minutes getting to know the person in the pew behind us during the “peace” at a recent mass). We have developed informal “faith communities” within “lay ministry” groups to ensure that every Catholic has the opportunity to play an important role within the parish community (for example, our homebound are invited to become part of a “ministry of prayer” community, praying for the needs of the Church, the parish, and individuals). Our anointings of the sick are included within the mass whenever possible. We bring the whole community together several times a year for Reconciliation. We try to ensure that every parish activity or group is open to new parishioners, in spirit and practice as well as theory. In short, we try to provide a “community” within the parish for every member and a sense of “community” within the parish as a whole.

27. I have seen any number of simpleminded explanations for this—religious inertia, “cultural Catholicism,” and so on.

I think that the real reason is that the Catholic religious imagination, which David Tracy (a Catholic theologian teaching at the University of Chicago) calls “analogic,” provides deep waters for Catholics. We are a people encouraged to see God in everyday events and things, reasoning from the world we live in to God, even while understanding that God is unknowable. As a result, we are a “sacramental” people, seeing in our everyday experiences the nexus between God and humankind. This is tremendously nourishing spiritual food.

28. I like to call the Church the “Holy Mother Catastrophe” in my irreverent moments, which come often. But the Church is, happily, human in all of its defects. Better sins of spiritual passion and excess than sins of spiritual

that may be.

I think that it is important to remember that major changes in the Church have typically taken a century to settle down into a new consensus, and we are only twenty-five years along the path since Vatican II. We seem to many to be in a period of renewed concern with orthodoxy (largely as a result of the concerns of John Paul II) but my guess is that the Holy Spirit is giving us a breather for a few years while we learn to live with, and assimilate, the changes which have already swept through the Church.<sup>29</sup> Movement continues on the parish level,<sup>30</sup> and, of course, the Church will, in due time, find itself under the guidance of a new Pope who may have a different view of the Church.<sup>31</sup>

If you are interested in reformulations in Catholic belief since Vatican II, I suggest Richard McBrien's *Catholicism* (a rather dry, but complete and systematic, text for Catholic religious instruction used at Notre Dame and several other Catholic universities) and Andrew Greeley's *The Bottom Line Catechism* (an unconventional catechism for lay people stressing the central

theological themes of the Church at the expense of the Church's highly developed teaching magisterium).

All in all, I see the changes of the last quarter century, despite all the pain and dislocation, as a good thing, and most Catholics agree with that view. The Church is in a vibrant renewal of faith. While the future will continue to be turbulent, and the precise nature of the future Church uncertain, the outcome will be a strengthened Church better equipped to carry on its mission.

I note in closing that I look upon all of this with bemused affection, much as I look at the temporary vocabulary and antics of my children, but it does not have much to do with my spiritual life. My spiritual life is centered in my parish and is more concerned with the central mystery of Christ and my relationship to God than it is with "church" issues. In that journey, I am lucky to have the rich and diverse spiritual life and experience of Catholicism available to me.

Sincerely,  
Tom



indifference and parsimony.

In this regard, it is easy for non-Catholics to miss the emotional and religious importance of being part of a church 2,000 years old and with a billion, give or take a few, living members.

Like most Catholics, I take comfort in the fact that I am part of the Church's mission and history (its "pilgrimage" in modern terms). My spiritual journey is the same journey taken by millions of others in different cultures and times. My successes are small in themselves, but like drops of water in the ocean, contribute to a powerful missionary pilgrimage which will continue until the end of time. My failures, which are legion, are the failures of much of humankind, including many of the saints. The Church sustains me in dealing with this. Most Catholics seem to feel this way, sustaining and sustained by the Church.

When thinking about what it means to be "Catholic" in this context, I think it is important to differentiate between the "institutional" Church (the Pope, the bishops, and clergy) and the "individual" Church (the people and their pastors). Many Catholics do not primarily relate to the "institutional" Church, but rather lead happy, faithful, and rewarding lives as Catholics in the "individual" Church at the parish level—without much concern for what happens in Rome. The waters of the Church run deep in the lives of Catholics, and much of the hoopla about the Church, as it is reported in the press, concerns only the top few inches of water. The question for most Catholics is not "What has Rome pronounced today?" but rather "How does my life today relate to God?" This is healthy even if it drives some Catholics—who put all their eggs in the "institutional" Church basket—bananas.

Indifference to the "institutional" Church is nothing new (of necessity, in earlier times, communication delays brought independence at the local level). Modern communications have accentuated tension in the Church because the rough edges of various Catholic communities grate against one another, but the tension has probably been there since Pentecost.

At any rate, I would bet that most American Catholics, asked to define themselves, would place "Catholic" very high on the list of defining traits. Catholics think of themselves as Catholics. I wonder how many "mainline" Protestants feel this way about their own denominational identities?

29. All of this is to get around to telling you that I am sending you a book by John Dietzen, *The New Question Box*, which reflects, in the questions of ordinary lay people and the answers of a parish priest, what has been going on since Vatican II. It reflects, in an unsystematic and non-intellectual but intelligent way, the scope of change, the reasons behind the change, and the confusion and pain the changes since Vatican II have caused in the Catholic community.

If you are wondering how Vatican II (which seems so remarkable to most non-Catholics, who have bought into the notion of the Catholic Church as unchangeable even more than conservative Catholics) came about, you might want to take a look at Eugene Kennedy's *The Now and Future Church*. Kennedy treats Vatican II as a visible turning point in a larger transition—the change from a monarchical Church dominated by clerics to a collegial Church dominated by

the laity. Kennedy is a former priest who teaches at Loyola University of Chicago. I think that Kennedy has captured, if not stated absolutely correctly, an important perspective on the Church in transition.

30. The parish level is where the "individual" Church exists, and it is alive and well. People are quietly putting Vatican II to work at the parish level, and most of the changes are not controversial.

This is very much in line with the Vatican II view of the Church as the "people of God" moving as the Holy Spirit directs. In this context, the renewed concern with orthodoxy can perhaps best be seen as the "institutional" Church worrying about channelling and controlling the renewal process to keep it from getting "out of hand."

A few Catholics believe that the current orthodoxy is discouraging experiments with change at a time when the Church most needs to be experimenting. From this viewpoint, Catholics are not being properly prepared for the day, coming relatively soon, when the Church will have few priests in proportion to the number of parishes and the laity will have to step into leadership positions within lay "faith communities."

There is some truth to this, I suppose. The current orthodoxy encourages a continuance of the "Father, this . . . Father, that . . ." attitude among Catholics that developed during the first fifty years of this century when there was a surplus of priests (the priesthood was a source of upward mobility for many children of immigrants). Some Catholics may not be "weaned" of this attitude by the time the priest "shortage" comes.

But the American church was short of priests for most of its history, and I think that the American laity, as a whole, is preparing for the future rather well. I suspect that the American laity is well ahead of the "institutional" Church in this regard. For that reason, the concern is misplaced, in my view. And I sense a subterranean but bothersome "Father, this . . . Father, that . . ." dependency underlying the concern itself.

32. Catholics believe that the Holy Spirit guides the selection of the Pope, assuming, of course, that the College of Cardinals listens. The Popes of my lifetime (Pius XII, John XXIII, Paul VI, John Paul I, and John Paul II) each played a critical role in bringing the Church to where it now stands, even if each did so imperfectly within the human limitations that bound them. Each Pope seems to have moved the Church along in ways which the former could not. Pius was a diplomat and administrator, John a cheerful and robust prophet, Paul a careful man who solidified what John started without letting the lid blow off the Church, John Paul I a "holy man with a smile" who brought life back into the Church following the final, grey years of Paul, and John Paul II a tough, realistic manager.

John Paul II is a remarkable man, and the Church, on the whole, has grown tremendously under his guidance. But he has his blind spots and shortcomings, largely because of his background in an embattled Polish church, which needed tremendous discipline and solidarity to survive. John Paul places a much stronger emphasis on central, "institutional" rule than many Catholics believe necessary or desirable. Our next Pope may be more willing (or able) to let the Church develop in a more decentralized way.

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## REVIEWS

# THE MYTH OF OBJECTIVITY: SOME LESSONS FOR LATTER-DAY SAINTS

THAT NOBLE DREAM: THE "OBJECTIVITY QUESTION" AND THE AMERICAN HISTORICAL PROFESSION

by Peter Novick

Cambridge University Press, 1988, 648 pages, \$15.95



*Reviewed by Louis Midgley*

PETER NOVICK HAS written an engrossing, richly detailed history of the American history profession. *That Noble Dream* is thoroughly researched and carefully reasoned; no brief summary can convey the clarity, scope, and erudition to be found therein. Novick examines the theoretical quandaries that confront historians, something that even the best of earlier histories of history<sup>1</sup> have not managed. By focusing on historical objectivity, he has been able to scrutinize the controlling assumptions upon which the American historical profession was founded and upon which it continues to be dependent. Novick does not strive to show how the history profession got to be so wonderful. Unlike earlier historiographical surveys, he relates his main theme to the contextually relevant details—to movements and cross currents within and outside professional history. He skillfully examines the texture and contours of the myth behind the work of professional historians, including a rich array of related peripheral matters.

But why should those concerned with the Mormon past be interested in the history of the American history profession? We need not look far for a compelling answer. Mormon history began to move from cottage to aca-

demic industry soon after World War II. The story begins with those who focused on the Mormon past and who had obtained graduate degrees in history or related fields. The key was the formation of the Mormon History Association in 1965, which eventually led to conferences, the socializing of neophytes, the sharing of sources with a "Mormon underground" enthralled by documents, and also the publication of newsletters, journals, and books. As Mormon historians became more sophisticated, they patterned their activities on the American history profession, imitating its virtues and vices. Mormon history has become a growth industry, replete with status arrangements, systems of rewards, honors, and deference. The Mormon history profession has been fraught with religious tensions and personal or professional intrigues—even crime, as the Hofmann Affair demonstrated. One insider has recently ardently described an "old boys' club" as the "network on which MHA is built."<sup>2</sup> Mormon historians have been shaped into what has recently been called a "club" or "fraternity."<sup>3</sup> And apologists now munificently celebrate "the professionalization of Mormon history."<sup>4</sup>

Novick's book, resting on an intensive examination of the archival record of major figures in the American history profession, provides a worthwhile pattern and necessary bench mark for the critical study of profes-

sional Mormon history. Some sobering comparisons can thus be made between Novick's account of the American historical profession and treatments of Mormon-style professional history. In a recent zealous account of the professionalization of Mormon history, Davis Bitton, and Leonard J. Arrington rhapsodize over the "thrust of energy that propelled Mormon history from the launching pad through lift-off and into orbit" after World War II. This development is seen by these authors as rooted in the indoctrination that goes on in secular graduate schools (126-127). They endorse the myth that historians, anxious to know "what really happened" and "willing to face the truth unflinchingly," (124) are capable of an approximation to objectivity.

Recent studies of the professionalization of Mormon history illustrate what Novick describes as the typical history of history. For example, Bitton and Arrington enthusiastically endorse the present. They offer an essentially personal or biographical treatment of Mormon historiography whose tone is what Novick calls "celebratory" and whose function is essentially apologetic. Certain historians are lionized, sometimes with a dash of nostalgia for their days in Camelot. The only problems seen facing the Mormon history profession are access to materials housed in Church achieves, and carping by those who raise questions about the Mormon history done in naturalistic terms. These authors assure their readers that "there is little reason for apprehension or alarm at the appearance of histories that do not fit the expected mold," for, they counsel, "we can vastly overestimate the extent to which people are motivated by such things as history, and we can easily underestimate their capacity for adjustment." They also assert that Mormon history "is too appetizing and, for some, too nourishing to lay aside" (168-169). From their perspective, either people will not care about what is being said about the Mormon past, or they will make the necessary adaptations as professionals sort things out.

Those who sense the importance of either the historical content or the historical grounding of the Mormon faith, including those whose passion for detachment, balance, or objectivity is linked to naturalistic explanations, will find in Novick's book a thoroughgoing demythologization of what he describes as the "sprawling collection of assumptions, attitudes, aspirations, and antipathies" constituting the myth of historical objectivity (1). Novick provides a lavishly illustrated, thoroughly documented account of the intellectual collapse of the variants of the

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vaunted mythology of objectivity upon which the American history profession rests, which can still be seen at work in the Mormon history profession. In the larger profession, there has been a general shaking of the original foundations. Novick describes the manifestations of the controlling ideology—the myth of professionally detached, neutral, objective history (and hence also of presumably objective historians)—upon which American historians have both grounded and warranted their endeavors. By providing a careful look at the founding myth of the American historical profession, Novick has written a book that should interest thoughtful consumers of Mormon history, and to those who may wonder about the intellectual foundations of the history they are asked to consume; it will also be of value to historians who care about the foundations of their craft.

But it is not clear how historians will respond to *That Noble Dream*. In spite of a clear introduction, some may misunderstand Novick's argument. Why is that so? As Novick shows, historians tend to parry criticisms of the myth of objectivity by appropriating portions of the critique, after which they continue to advance thin versions of the dogma. Historians may say that they realize that it is difficult to avoid bias and thereby achieve total detachment or balance, but that every effort should be made to approximate objectivity because it remains a worthy ideal, Mormon historians sometimes adopt such tactics. Novick shows that such maneuvers fail because the controlling myth is composed of a loosely-knit collection of related though also contradictory ideas that are both individually and collectively incoherent and vacuous. He traces the history of the ploys used to shield objectivity from criticism. He shows that it is impossible to save elements of the myth by incorporating portions of the critique. Because it may be troubling to discover that the ground upon which one has built a career, and the devices one has employed to defend the creed that provides that ground, are muddled, resistance may be anticipated against the argument set forth in *That Noble Dream*.

By defending a version of objectivity, Mormon historians tend to ignore the issues currently being raised about the intellectual foundations of the so-called "New Mormon History." Novick accounts for such antics. "On one level," he argues:

what is at stake in the objectivity question is a philosophical issue: a technical problem in epistemology. Very few historians have any philosophical training. . . . Though all

historians have had views on the objectivity question, these views have rarely been fully articulated; even more rarely have they been the fruit of systematic thought. The historical profession does not monitor the philosophical rigor of what historians have to say on the question, and no historian suffers professionally as a result of demonstrated philosophical incompetence. All of which is to say that historians' reflections on objectivity, unlike their substantive historical work, have none of those positive attributes which privilege it as 'rational' in the sense of discourse entitled to 'professional courtesy' (11).

For reasons that Novick sets forth in detail, "working historians" tend not to take seriously the intellectual issues raised by the assumptions upon which the writing of history rests. Novick, though a proper blue-collar "working historian," has chosen to confront the philosophical issues surrounding the objectivity question, though he does this indirectly by telling a story about the way the American history profession has struggled over its founding myth. That makes his treatment accessible to philosophically naive "working historians."

IN the Mormon historical community there has recently been a continual spate of complaints against those who ostensibly work from utilitarian considerations and hence from their biases to the evidence—instead of the other way around, which the objectivist mythology demands. Those so charged are labeled "apologists," and denigrated for letting their faith and hopes control the "evidence." Behind these complaints is the notion that "apologists," unlike presumably objective, detached historians, begin with presuppositions, and hence end up merely picking and choosing items to support preconceived notions, while ignoring what does not fit, in an effort to defend Joseph Smith or the Church. What galls these critics of what is often derisively labeled "faith-promoting history" is what they consider incorrigibility in the way "apologists" read texts and set forth historical explanations. Novick's book uncovers the underlying confusion that stands behind these complaints about apologetic, faith-promoting history, even though he does not deal with religious or church history since he centers on the mainstream of the history profession. My own effort to survey the programmatic statements

of those involved in writing American religious or church history indicates a pattern similar to that set forth in *That Noble Dream*. The one difference is that those who write religious history, situated in low prestige places such as seminaries, divinity schools, and on the fringes of history departments, might be even more prone to credential their work by appeals to the myth of objectivity and to reject history that does not give the appearance of detachment or objectivity.

Some Mormon historians still seem charmed by the vacuous, confused, and naive notion of unbiased, detached, objective observers allowing "the evidence" to speak its truth without theory, bias, or presuppositions getting in the way. But all historical scholarship necessarily involves assumptions and selection among alternatives, and must necessarily include presuppositions brought to texts, and biases, and so forth. For the historian to jettison one set of biases or presuppositions, for example, those grounded in their own deepest commitments or faith, merely necessitates and even facilitates the appropriation of others not as easily recognized as such. The common complaints against the methods of those denigrated as "apologists" or "faith-promoting historians" are naive, badly formulated, and incoherent. Drawing a picture of the past is possible only by puzzling over the meaning of what can only be found in texts.

Mormon historians may still wish to deny that they approach the crucial texts with presuppositions. Running directly in the face of the best thinking on such matters, some may still hold that, as they approach texts that provide the window to the past, a presuppositionless exegesis is both necessary and possible. But what constitutes "evidence" is theory related and perhaps even theory determined, for nothing much is evident without presuppositions and theories that make it so. Furthermore, without what is now being called a preunderstanding, which consists of both the linguistic horizon we bring to a text, and also the formal or informal theories and explanations we choose to employ, nothing would be evident when we read texts.

The mythology of historical objectivism, though both professionally and politically useful, is fraudulent and corrupting, and especially so for those who attempt to provide accounts of the Mormon past. The regnant objectivist myth is routinely linked with the insistence that Mormon history can and must be done in naturalistic terms (or with humanistic presuppositions). But it turns out



that naturalistic explanations logically preclude the possibility that the claims upon which the Mormon faith rests are true, and hence are question-begging.

The programmatic statements flowing from the ideological leaders of the Mormon history establishment illustrate why we can profit from a careful consideration of Novick's work. Following the founding of the Mormon History Association, for example, Leonard Arrington called "for detached examination and clarification" of "Mormon religion and its history," which he insisted can and must "be studied in human or naturalistic terms."<sup>5</sup> He provided clues about what constitute naturalistic explanations by contrasting the history "done in 'secular' graduate schools which insist upon naturalistic or humanistic description and analysis" with "faith promoting" histories, which form a "pietistic, missionary, and apologetic literature." So-called "apologetic" or "faith promoting" history was contrasted with "objective" history, which was deemed difficult for the Saints to produce because believers have difficulty overcoming biases, sentiments, and the influence of the times.<sup>6</sup> He lumped "objective" history with "scholarly" and "systematic" work, which he saw as a result of professional training. Unfortunately, in nothing that has been written since 1965 has anyone attempted to explain why naturalistic accounts are preferable to non-naturalistic ones, or what exactly constitutes objectivity in dealing with prophetic claims. Much of what goes on in the Mormon history profession seems to have been made to rest on formulations whose political function is to disassemble a host of unexamined or contested issues central to the entire enterprise, or to facilitate the seemingly equitable distribution of awards and punishments, in which history written in naturalistic terms and with a seemingly straightforward, impartial style is venerated and acclaimed.

In some forms of the myth of objectivity, the quest for the truth about the past is held to be possible through the open, rigorous criticism of historical accounts or explanations. But it is precisely the demand imposed upon historians by a professional setting requiring comity rather than criticism that vitiates that form of the myth. What happens, according to Novick, is that professionalization guarantees that incompetence will often not be defrocked and that fads and fashions will prosper because there is no way a club (or fraternity or old-boy network) can function without comity, deference, and the rather strict avoidance of internal criticism, especially for those who have paid their dues and are

now esteemed as opinion leaders. Novick shows that, under the rule of comity and gentility that must operate within a club, professionalization ensures the generation, protection, and promotion of incompetence and uncritically accepted views. Such norms work against criticism especially between those of different views. Much of the discourse of historians, as can be seen in the programmatic statements of opinion leaders among Mormon historians, obfuscates through paraphrastic opining. A moment's reflection on professional life in virtually any area will provide the basic outlines of an explanation for such behavior. Following studies of professions generally, Novick argues that it is difficult for professions to encourage or manage the kind of criticism that would identify and weed out incompetence, or that would assist in the quest for truth. He notes that "professionalization, in some respects, brought [to the study of the past] a decline in rigorous criticism and fruitful controversy" (59). The entire professional enterprise works "to bring about the sacrifice of criticism to comity." This was especially so when "the profession was so small that practically everyone knew everyone else, and was related to them by ties of friendship, patronage, or sycophancy" (58). He insists that "the norm of ruthlessness toward errant brethren, and no-holds-barred exposure of error, is at contradiction to equally important professional values: mutual respect and deference, preservation of the public fiction of the competence of all certified practitioners" (57). And why should it be different with Mormon historians, since the norms of tolerance and civility operating in the community of the Saints easily get carried over into professional life?

There is currently introspective reflection on the state of scholarly professions. David Ricci's detailed historical-theoretical examination of the fads, fashions, and foibles of professional political scientists provides a fine example.<sup>7</sup> Some scholars, of course, will not like having their mythology exposed. When personal identity and sense of purpose are linked to professional conceits, the tendency may be to ignore or resist such studies. The more important professional matters are for scholars, the more likely they will be to brush aside the implications of such work. *That Noble Dream* is a sobering tale. It has set the stage for an honest examination of the issues facing those who deal with Mormon history. Perhaps we can now begin to move beyond the unfortunate "political" uses of the myth of objectivity to a more modest, better grounded, and more competent understanding of the

quandaries facing all those concerned with the Mormon past. ☐

## NOTES

1. John Higham, *History: Professional Scholarship in America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University, 1983).
2. Maureen Beecher, "Entre Nous: An Intimate History of MHA," *Journal of Mormon History* 12 (1985): 45.
3. Davis Bitton and Leonard J. Arrington, *Mormons and Their Historians* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah, 1988), 133, 163.
4. *Mormons and Their Historians*, 126-146.
5. Leonard Arrington, "Scholarly Studies of Mormonism in the Twentieth Century," *Dialogue* 1 (Spring 1966): 28.
6. Arrington, 16-18, i.e. including no. 12.
7. David Ricci, *The Tragedy of Political Science* (New Haven: Yale University, 1986).

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## A GRAIN OF SAND

In the ocean between us,  
a million filaments of glass:  
where voices travel

through the dark,  
salt and water  
cannot touch.

In Victorian times,  
calling cards left  
on silver trays

lingered like the last drag  
of a cigarette.  
Your voice is that smoke.

It has hazed my vision,  
choked my breath  
for years. No sky,  
no mountain could hold  
the air I've needed  
to renew the world.

You simply packed  
and took your journey  
and the only pearl

I ever found  
between the flesh of oysters  
we smoked by the Cove.

That evening, you pierced  
your ear at the market,  
set the pearl in gold,

and left.  
I cradle the phone  
to my ear tonight,

searching the ocean's deep  
silence  
for what you carried away.

-TIMOTHY LIU

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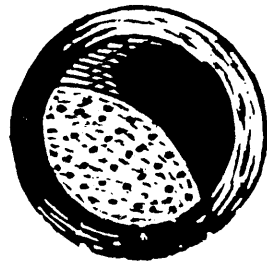
# MORMONS AND MUSIC: THE TIMELESS AND THE HOPELESS

MORMONISM AND MUSIC, A HISTORY

by Michael Hicks

University of Illinois Press, 1989

230 pages, \$24.95



Reviewed by Thomas L. Durham

LIKE MANY MUSICIANS, I probably whine too much about today's Mormon music. The "new" hymnal (now five years old) retracts from the aesthetic aims of its predecessors. Congregational singing lacks conviction and sounds tired. Most choristers do not know a metronomic marking from a compound meter. How many organists play the pedals anymore? Ward choirs suffer from underfunding, hollow ecclesiastical support, and block schedules. Special musical numbers performed in worship services sound trivial and belong elsewhere—like on an easy-listening FM channel. Populist demands of the marketplace increasingly control the content of Mormon Tabernacle Choir broadcasts.

What happened here? Did we go astray? Where did we go wrong? Where is LDS music headed? Partial answers to these questions emerge after a reading of *Mormonism and Music* by Michael Hicks. At the very least, it helps me cope.

The best histories educate, helping us to

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grasp the present through exploring the past. In this regard Hicks has authored an educational *tour de force* by recapturing the past and giving the reader insight to the present, and in so doing helps us to reconcile contradictions. *Mormonism and Music* focuses on three that eternally afflict LDS music: progression versus preservation, beauty versus practicality, and outsiders versus insiders.

These contrasting forces have shaped LDS hymn collections. Hicks devotes one third of the book to the history of Mormon hymnody. The command to Emma Smith in Doctrine and Covenants Section 25 allowed her to choose hymns written by outsiders. But the insider William W. Phelps "corrected" her selection by composing his own hymns and altering others, conforming them to the spirit and verve of the newly-restored church. Less than ten years later, the 1841 Nauvoo hymnal reversed Phelps's progressive changes, seeking to preserve the revivalist and grace-oriented tones found in Emma's original collection. Near the end of the nineteenth century the Church used two songbooks simultaneously. The *Psalmody* relied on the

beauty and sophistication of choir singing. Conversely, the *Deseret Sunday School Union Music Book* boasted of its practicality because it "included such a varied mix of styles that virtually everyone, regardless of taste, could find something useful in it" (121). The popularity of the Sunday School book easily dominated LDS music for decades despite the efforts of musical luminaries such as Evan Stephens and George Careless who tried to elevate and refine aesthetic tastes in the Church.

In 1920 Heber J. Grant empowered the newly-formed Church music committee to prepare a new hymnal, and to "regulate musical affairs in the church, institute, technical training for musicians in local congregations, [and] foster greater knowledge of music" (130). Such strong support from the prophet energized Church music and catalyzed the committee's work on *Latter-day Saint Hymns* published in 1927. With this collection, Stephens, Careless, and other musicians scored a triumph unequalled in modern times. The 1927 hymnal expelled bad music, streamlined texts, and bounced old formats in favor of more progressive ones. Contributing composers received a fee for each hymn—a strategy designed to entice more insiders to write new music. LDS composers now donate their hymns and release copyrights to the Church.

The author shows how the 1948 hymnal achieved mixed results. While the Church music committee hoped to bathe the collection in high musical ideals, a new executive committee of four apostles restrained their efforts, reversing some of the musical gains of the 1927 version. Still, the committee held enough sway to exclude a prize-winning hymn of Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith because it simply was not good enough.

Contrast that with the recent case of "How Great Thou Art," a popular gospel song commonly sung on evangelical television. The committee blackballed it in the 1960s due to its style. Yet it now appears in the 1985 hymnal because an apostle recommended its inclusion. Congregations love it.

With correlation in full bloom, the First Presidency asked the 1985 hymnbook committee "to put aside their musical training [in] matters of taste . . . [and to] discern what the masses in the Church need and want. . . . Indeed one of the committee's advisers said that the committee had 'only one disability: they knew too much about music'" (144). Contradictions abound in the 1985 hymnal. The seldom-used indexes may qualify as progressive, but the hymn selections do not. A

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few of the new hymns sound beautiful, but most are merely practical. The committee added and subtracted hymns from both insiders and outsiders. As a result, this songbook met the demands of a worldwide congregation by including more accessible material and backing away from the aesthetic objectives championed by former Church music committees. The 1985 hymnal *includes such a varied mix of styles that virtually everyone, regardless of taste, can find something useful in it.*

Hicks's entertaining history of dance in Mormonism provides historians with its first scholarly treatment. I could not help but smile when I read how Joseph and Emma jostled over holding weekly dances at the Mansion House. As proprietor, Emma understood the competition for the entertainment dollar in Nauvoo. But Joseph, while never publicly denouncing the dances, would sit upstairs in his room rather than participate.

What did Brigham Young think of dancing? Well, his views were a little like the weather in his native New England. Between 1846 and 1856, he changed his mind at least five times. In the last days of Nauvoo he encouraged dancing in the temple. Within the week he prohibited it. During the westward trek, he received a revelation that formally sanctioned dancing (D&C 136:28). Two months later Brigham ordered his leadership to stop dancing and start praying. In 1852 he reconsidered and spoke fondly of it but tried to ban all dancing parties in the territory four years later.

This vacillating view of dancing continued throughout Mormon history, with official denouncements and subsequent endorsements or tolerances of the waltz, polka, jitterbug, twist, etc. In retrospect, the rule works this way: If it's new then it's bad, if it's at least twenty years old, then it might already be approved. Lambada is out—for now, at least.

This rule applies to popular music also. Official warnings against it take on an eternal quality because they seem to apply to the younger generation's music at any given time: "insinuating sounds of a license-loving age"; "moorings of our moral safety"; "baser imaginations"; "degenerate character"; "digression from the correct"; "perverted sensuality"; "lowest immorality" (191 & 194). These verbal volleys were not aimed at rock music, as one might imagine, but toward jazz (now considered a museum piece by musicologists) between 1918 and 1946. The older one gets, the more timeless the warnings.

In his chapter on the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, Hicks peeks at the relationship between this home-grown group of singers and

the media on which it performs. During its early years on NBC radio, he notes that "although the network pressure to include popular music in Tabernacle Choir broadcasts undoubtedly troubled some Church leaders and musicians, the Saints' intense need to maintain their airtime persuaded them to mingle sacred, secular, popular, and classical" (159).

One need only tune in to a recent broadcast to see what form this pressure presently takes. Broadcasts now open with fifteen-second "grabbers" that are loud and powerful enough to catch the attention of motorists punching AM presets. Only a few months ago the choir began programming numbers like "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and "Lida Rose" as part of a weekly segment called "Memory Lane," obviously targeting the more sedate and less adventuresome audience that tends to tune in on Sunday mornings. And in order to save television time, the venerable "God Be With You" has been truncated because nobody watches closing credits. Such musical capitulations originate in board rooms, not rehearsal halls.

*Mormonism and Music* scans other topics, but I found an unexpected bonus in the middle of the book. The photos and illustrations selected by the author really bring the text to life. I hope they will provoke bookstore browsers into buying this worthwhile work. My favorite is a photo of Jimmy Carter, President Kimball, and nine Osmonds. As the entertainers gush in the presence of the prophet, the chief executive looks like a neglected Baptist.

I found very little to criticize. Perhaps Hicks speculates needlessly on Lucy Mack Smith's membership in a Presbyterian choir, or about congregational singing in Fayette on 6 April 1830. In a later chapter he mercifully relegates technical pitch information to a foot-

note (23) but omits this courtesy seven pages later, leaving the reader excessively informed about the tonal content of melodies in an early hymnal. The "Mormon Classics" section overlooks Robert Cundick's oratorio "The Redeemer," a work equally estimable as some of the others included. And the Tabernacle organ, that redoubtable Mormon icon, gets slighted. But why strain at gnats?

I do, however, strain at the Davis Bitton quote on the dust jacket. He implies that Hicks wrote this history by "using the work of previous scholars." A jaunt through the 837 footnotes belies Bitton's assertion. One soon discovers from these multitudinous citations pertaining to journals, manuscripts, minutes, interviews, and archival materials that the author relied much more on primary sources than on borrowed scholarship.

Michael Hicks's training as a composer uniquely qualified him to write this study. Musical axioms such as thematic development, foreshadowing, transitions, and cadencing all flow into his prose. Writing with a lean and direct style, he demonstrates his impeccable ear for the rhythm of words. Already, the book has won recognition from the Association of Mormon Letters and the Mormon History Association. In the meantime more people need to read it. Hicks writes to all Mormons, historians, and anyone interested in early American religion and music. He does not write for musicians only—after all the title is not *Music and Mormonism*, but the reverse.

Returning to the questions I posed at first: What has happened to Mormon music? Many of the things that have happened before. Have we gone astray? I think a little bit. Where did we go wrong? That's another book. Where is LDS music headed? Good question. I can either hope or cope.

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#### BIRTH WISH

It begins as a long teasing dimple  
of pressure, barely enough to wake me  
from kneading more flour  
into the tacky dough.

For an impatient mortal eternity  
a yeast has been rising, gradually  
twisting smaller, more vital  
parts of me into unnatural  
places inside, contorting.  
I ache to be delivered in the oven's  
blast, dreading it, yet anticipating  
the deliciousness and warmth.

—JANICE REISEWITZ ANDERSON

## NEWS

# DESCENDANTS DEDICATE NEW MOUNTAIN MEADOWS MEMORIAL

OVER ONE hundred descendants of the victims and perpetrators of the Mountain Meadows Massacre gathered at the site and in Cedar City on 15-16 September 1990 to dedicate a new memorial to the victims. President Gordon B. Hinckley, representing the LDS church, recalled the anguish of the families of the Arkansas party but reminded the audience that the Lee family and the entire church also carried a burden of shame. He then said, "A bridge has been built across a chasm of cankering bitterness. We walk across that bridge and greet one another with a spirit of love, forgiveness, and with hope that there will never be a repetition of anything of the kind."

Attending the dedication were at least sixty direct descendants of John D. Lee, forty descendants of the victims, representatives from the LDS church and the Paiute Nation, and local citizens.

On 11 September 1857 Iron County Militia, local Mormons, and Paiutes attacked the Fancher-Baker party of 120 emigrants killing all but eighteen young children. Juanita Brooks, whose book *The Mountain Meadows Massacre* disclosed for the first time the full details and history leading up to the massacre, wrote that the perpetrators acted for a variety of reasons: fear of war, revenge for the death of Joseph Smith, indignation raised through inflammatory Church speeches, and a critical military order for each man to do his duty.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, the participants took vows of silence never to discuss the matter again. As news of the atrocity leaked out, John D. Lee was the only participant ever named, and there was a concerted effort to

mask the involvement of other Church authorities in the massacre. Eventually Lee assumed the entire burden of blame. Twenty years after the massacre, he was taken back to Mountain Meadows and executed for the crime.

In 1988, several members of the Lee family conceived the idea of erecting a more accurate plaque commemorating the tragedy which would reflect the events in a straightforward manner, and one which would honor the victims. They and other concerned citizens, political and Church leaders, and local historians initiated a steering committee to rededicate the site. The old plaque labeled Lee as the confessed militia leader, misnamed emigrant party leader Alexander Fancher as Charles, and misrepresented the number of dead.

Many of the victims' descendants traveled from all parts of the United States to attend the dedication. Judge Roger V. Logan of the 17th Judicial District in Harrison, Arkansas, a member of the steering committee, initially had reservations about becoming involved in the project. But after meeting with Ron Loving, a Fancher descendant, and Verne Lee, a John D. Lee descendant, Logan decided they had the right intentions. He was pleased that the names of the victims were included on the new plaque. The victims were just nameless emigrants to the public, but to him they were good people, respected by their neighbors. At the ceremony, Logan read the names of the victims and asked the descendants to stand as the names of their ancestors were read.

All of the speakers paid honor to the dead and urged forgiveness.



PHOTO: DESERET NEWS

J. E. Dunlap, publisher of the *Harrison Daily Times* and descendant of victim Jesse Dunlap, gave the invocation. He expressed hope that those gathered would learn from past mistakes so they wouldn't be repeated. J. K. Fancher, a Harrison pharmacist and freelance writer, read from Ecclesiastes and said it was time for people on both sides of the tragedy to come together and heal old wounds and dedicate a memorial. Fancher also honored his own father who dreamed that all sides would one day come together and make a statement that represents the feelings of all concerned. "The most difficult words for men to utter is, 'I'm sorry and I forgive you.'" He added, "We can't change the past. We can change the present, and we will change the future."

President Gordon B. Hinckley said he represented "a people who have suffered much because of the tragedy." He praised the "courageous men and women who opened a dialogue that has led to this historic day." Before offering the dedicatory prayer, he said, "We hope that there shall never again sprout from this soil seeds of hate or malevolence, but, rather, that we and those of future generations will walk together in the sunlight of goodwill."

BYU President Rex Lee, a descendant of John D. Lee, encouraged a turning away from the past toward the future. At his

challenge, the descendants of both the victims and perpetrators joined arms on the stage and in the audience, some embracing each other. Lee expressed the hope that while Mountain Meadows will always have a secondary meaning associated with the massacre, he hoped it would now signify a memorial to the victims, human dignity and understanding as well as healing and not looking back.

The new memorial says simply: "In Memoriam—In the valley below, between September 7 and 11, 1857, a company of more than 120 Arkansas emigrants led by Captain John T. Baker and Captain Alexander Fancher was attacked while en route to California. This event is known in history as the Mountain Meadows Massacre." The marker lists the known names of all of the victims as well as the seventeen children who survived and were eventually returned to their relatives in Arkansas. It also notes that one other child stayed in Utah. It concludes: "This memorial erected September 1990 by the State of Utah and the families and friends of those involved and those who died."

At the dedication, Verne Lee, said there would be nothing in the exercises to satisfy or appeal to morbid curiosity, nor excuses made for participants of the event. But it is curious that in honoring the victims and relieving Lee of the

entire blame, the language on the memorial completely masks any identity of the massacre's participants. While not making excuses, perhaps the descendants of the Utah participants are still fundamentally unable to come to terms with the incident. The memorial's passive voice transfers the emphasis of the tragedy to the victims and away from the agents: "the company . . . was attacked," and "the families and friends of those involved . . ." Several of the speakers at the dedicatory services also employed the same language in their addresses. Verne Lee said the reason he initiated the new memorial was to "mend fences and build new bridges with new friends . . . who are descendants

of those people who were so unfortunate to have been killed here."

Juanita Brooks wrote, "with the perspective of time, with the old antagonisms gone, we should be able to view this tragedy objectively and dispassionately, and to see it in its proper setting as a study of social psychology as well as of history" (xix). The efforts of the Lee family indicate that the Mormon people want to put the Mountain Meadows tragedy behind them and look forward to the future. But they seem unable to place the massacre in a perspective which allows them to confront the past with its troubling implications and causes. ☐



*"You see, having her jump without being able to see me will teach her faith in a God she can't see."*

## ONE FOLD

### *BLACK WOMEN OPPOSE WOMEN MINISTERS*

WHILE WOMEN make up the backbone of black congregational churches in the U.S., those wishing to become ministers find formidable opposition. Black churches have been traditionally the primary vehicle for black men to exercise both political and religious power. Surprisingly, however, much of the opposition has come from female members who are accustomed to a male presence at the pulpit. "The feminist stance does not turn off the men, it turns off the women," says one black pastor. Women ministers have more success gaining pulpits in hierarchial bodies, such as the Episcopal church, where they are appointed to parishes, as compared to congregational churches, such as the Baptists, where each parish chooses its own minister. (*New York Times*)

### *CHURCH-STATE ISSUES RISE IN EASTERN EUROPE*

THE SOVIET UNION and Eastern Europe are confronting church/state issues as Western-like conflicts develop over the relationships of churches to public schools. The Russian Orthodox Church opposed the USSR government's plan to legislate an American-style separation of church and state, saying the law would "deprive the church of the possibility" of organizing religion classes in public schools. In Poland, a proposal by the Catholic Church to reintroduce religious education into the public schools may be rejected by the government due to strong public opposition, including criticism by Protestant churches. (*Religion Watch*)

### *WESTERN MUSLIMS CONDEMN PLURALISM*

ISLAMIC MILITANCY continues to grow in Europe and Northern Africa. A new document published by the fundamentalist Muslim Institute in London condemns pluralism and extols Islamic activism in the West. It says that the integration of Muslims into Western society must be rejected and that the traditional injunction of "jihad" (holy war) applies to Western Muslims as they fight for Islam worldwide. Many believe this "Teheran-inspired" radical thinking is gaining support in Western Islamic communities. Islam observer Martin McCauley predicts that militant Muslims in Europe will continue to withdraw from Western influences by establishing enclaves in their adopted countries where they will impose Islamic law. (*Jerusalem Post International Edition*)

### *COUNSEL US NOT INTO TEMPTATION*

ONE IN TEN ministers reports having an affair with a parishioner, according to a recently completed four-year study. Researcher Karen Lebacqz, a professor of Christian ethics and a minister in the United Church of Christ, said many of the ministers reported that the sexual relationships arose out of the intimacy of counselling situations. Virtually every minister surveyed said they had at least once been sexually attracted to someone in their congregation. Lebacqz suggested that the temptations for sexual involvement could be lessened by making counselling short-term, involving another family member, and holding counselling sessions during the day, in an office. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)



## PRESBYTERIAN STUDY CONCLUDES LDS ARE NOT CHRISTIANS

THIS SUMMER, the annual General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) convened in Salt Lake City and approved for in-church educational purposes a document which compares LDS and Presbyterian beliefs. The document was not a policy statement of the church.

"Presbyterians and Mormons: A Study in Contrasts" by Boise Pastor Allan Swan was commissioned several years ago and by coincidence was presented at the Salt Lake conference. The study is very respectful of the LDS church, its members and beliefs, and uses only LDS materials in its discussion. Members of BYU's religion faculty helped correct earlier drafts, and several Church historians said they found the document to be the fairest explanation of Mormonism's beliefs written by another church.

The document accurately presented an overview of Mormon history and practices, including temple ordinances, celestial marriage, and the three missions of the Church. It summarized LDS beliefs on the nature of the Church, the progressive nature of salvation (becoming Gods through works), the Godhead, and continuing revelation and compared them to traditional and Reformed Christian theology. For example, concerning revelation and an open canon, LDS belief seeks for new revelation rather than new ways to teach and understand the received canon.

Acknowledging a genuine belief in Christ and true spirituality among Latter-day Saints, because of the LDS belief in the plurality of gods (instead of the one supreme Lord God) and the belief that God was once a man and that humans can eventually become Gods, the report nevertheless concluded that Mormons are not part of the "catholic" Christian church, but in fact worship a very different

God, even though the terminology is similar. Borrowing Jan Shipp's phrase, it concluded that Mormonism is another and a "new religious tradition."

Hence, although Presbyterians accept all Christian baptisms, pastors were instructed that LDS rites are not recognized. The report encouraged the Presbyterian Church to undertake interfaith, bridge-building endeavors as it does with other religious traditions, such as with Hindu and Muslim believers. It counseled Presbyterians in predominantly Mormon areas to engage in an ongoing respectful dialogue not "based on easy similarities nor on acceptance of beliefs and lifestyle of the other." Members were told "to clearly express their sense of non-acceptance" as a minority and to raise the issues of civil rights and the economic and social pressures of religious minorities in Mormon areas.

The document counseled pastors to avoid "adversarial point making" at Mormon-Presbyterian funerals and to teach spouses in interfaith marriages to avoid struggles over religious issues but to give "special attention on what a lived-faith entails, since this is a prominent feature of Mormonism."

In the committee hearings which discussed and approved the document before it went to the General Assembly, three individuals testified of the need for the document. Lynne Griggs explained her experience of living and rearing a family in Salt Lake City. Salt Lake Presbyterian Pastor H. Jeffrey Silliman told about the unique challenges working in Utah. He said many Presbyterians in Utah come back to the church with renewed strength.

Neal Humphery, a former sixth-generation, returned-missionary Mormon, now studying for the Presbyterian ministry,

attested to the accuracy of the document then criticized the Church for its "secret" temple rituals. Individuals in the audience became agitated about the secret doings but were soon calmed by Swan and Silliman who explained that the temple rites were sacred

not secret. "I respect their attempt to create sacred space," said Silliman.

In the end the committee unanimously approved the document, and a few days later it was approved by the entire assembly.

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## SUNSTONE CALENDAR

**PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY** has received a grant from the Pew Charitable Trusts to host a conference on 6-9 June 1990 entitled "Christian Primitivism and Modernization: Coming to Terms With Our Age." The conference will attempt to understand what happens to denominations in the context of modernization when their historic identity is bound up with primitivist ideals. Beyond this, the conference hopes to identify how these groups can interact constructively with modernization processes while retaining their historic sense of identity and mission. Primitivist traditions invited to participate include the Holiness traditions, Pentecostal traditions, the Campbell-Stone Restoration tradition, Latter-day Saints, and the Mennonites. Contact: Lori Glen, Dept. of Religion, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 90263 (213/456-4000).

**THE OLD TESTAMENT LECTURE SERIES**, sponsored by the Sunstone Foundation, will host BYU archivist David Whittaker on "Early Mormon Use of the Book of Daniel." The lecture will be held on Tuesday, 13 November, at 7:30 PM in room 102 of the James Fletcher Building at the University of Utah. The 11 December lecture will feature Stephen D. Ricks speaking on Deuteronomy. Two dollar donation.

**PROGRESS: AN ASSOCIATION OF LDS DEMOCRATS** is dedicated to resurrecting the two-party system in the Mormon community: "We feel that the lack of political dialogue is unhealthy and that the Democratic Party's emphasis on issues such as the environment, human rights, poverty, and consumer/worker protection are especially harmonious with our religion." Contact: Progress, 2455 Calle Roble, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360 (805/497-4950).

**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).

**THE UTAH HISTORICAL SOCIETY**, the Washington County Historical Society, and Dixie College are sponsoring a People's History Conference in St. George, Utah, on 16-18 February 1990. The conference will feature papers by amateur historians and writers on a variety of subjects on personal, family, local, Utah, and nationwide events. The conference is intended to appeal to those writing personal or family histories. Topics might include transportation, the military, agriculture, mining, labor, governments, politics, settlement, industrial development, groups, recreation, entertainment, literature, archaeology, and education. In addition to papers, the conference will host workshops on researching, writing, and publishing histories. The deadline for paper proposals is 1 December 1990. Contact: Bart Anderson, People's History Conference Chair, 425 East 900 South #493, St. George, UT 84770.

**WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM** will be held on 19-20 April 1990 at the American University Campus. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Contact: symposium chair Donald Gustavson, 413 Clearfield Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

*The Sunstone Calendar reports events and notices of Mormon-related organizations. Submissions are requested.*

## "LIVING THE PRINCIPLE" —THEN AND NOW

By E. Jay Bell

ON 16 May 1990, the B.H. Roberts Society hosted a century-old "hot" topic—plural marriage after Wilford Woodruff's 1890 Manifesto. The previous evening, PBS TV station KUED aired the program "A Matter of Principle" which gave an overview of LDS and Fundamentalist feelings about the continued underground practice. This year is the centennial anniversary of the September official declaration. There are more people living in polygamy today than in 1890.

Two well qualified persons presented papers at the University of Utah's Behavioral Sciences Auditorium. The first speaker, Ogden Kraut, is an author, a fundamentalist, and practicing polygamist who is not associated with the LDS church. The second speaker, LDS scholar and former BYU history professor D. Michael Quinn, has written numerous articles and a book on early Mormon history. Quinn is working on an exhaustive study on Mormons and polygamy.

Kraut gave a defense of plural marriage, or the Principle, that Orson Pratt would have applauded. Kraut preached the standard pre-1890 LDS defense that the Principle was not for the lusts of men, has Biblical sanction, emancipates women, and does away with prostitution. He traced the history of the practice from the ancient Israelites to modern day Moslems. Kraut pointed out that in a sense Roman Catholic nuns who marry Christ practice plural marriage, and the reformer Martian Luther defended the practice.

After rehearsing the history of the restoration of the Principle, Kraut gave the Fundamentalist view of its development in the latter 1800's emphasizing the alleged 1889 revelation to John Taylor, and said the 1890 Manifesto is evidence

that the Church caved into Federal Government demands.

Continuing the history of the modern day Fundamentalists, Kraut emphasized how the LDS church worked with law enforcement in an attempt to curb the practice. According to Kraut, it was general authorities J. Reuben Clark, Hugh B. Brown, and Mark E. Peterson, along with a son of B.H. Roberts, who spear-headed the legal assault on modern-day Fundamentalists.

Kraut explained the reversal of roles between the LDS and RLDS churches. For example, in African countries where polygamy is legal, RLDS members may keep their plural wives while LDS members cannot.

In closing Kraut said that it has taken the LDS church fifty years to live the Manifesto, and plural marriage is like a Phoenix rising from

the ashes.

The main thrust of Quinn's remarks was that between 1890 and the early 1900s the LDS church provided the environment that made the current underground practice of plural marriage possible.

Among other things, Quinn mentioned that President Wilford Woodruff authorized a plural marriage in Mexico the day the Manifesto was sustained in general conference. He also expanded the evidence in his *Dialogue* article about President Woodruff's 1897 marriage to Lynda Mountford. In 1920, with the knowledge of general authorities, solemnization of this marriage by proxy occurred in the LDS temple.

Quinn went through all the general authorities between 1890 and about 1905 showing that an overwhelming number of them shifted their theology toward the individual, and not the general membership, practicing plural marriage. Most the general authorities, including presidents of the Church, had children from plural wives during this period. Even Lorenzo Snow who tried to limit post-

Manifesto plural marriages, cohabited with a plural wife in Canada.

Quinn felt that if polygamy had stopped cold in 1890, the practice would have died a natural death without creating an underground Fundamentalist movement.

Quinn shed some light on Church court action on several individuals during the early to mid-1900s for practicing the Principle in secret. Among other things he said he believed that Mathias F. Cowley's disfellowshipment for practicing plural marriage did not occur. Quinn also revealed that the excommunication of an LDS apostle for immorality was in reality for plural marriage. Richard R. Lyman secretly "married" a plural wife in 1925, and in 1943 it caught up with him resulting in his excommunication for "the violation of the Christian Law of Chastity." Quinn also went over the cases of other less notable members resulting in excommunication or protection for practicing the Principle after President Joseph F. Smith's manifesto of 1904. ☐



"Oh, excuse me. You look like someone I know."



## UPDATE

### *WOMEN TO EDIT MORMON ENCYCLOPEDIA*

THREE NEW members, including the first two women, were added to the editorial board of the forthcoming *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* this summer, the multi-volume BYU-produced survey of the LDS religion commissioned by Macmillan Publishing Co. Editor-in-chief Daniel Ludlow insists the new assignments are unconnected with a petition to modify the previously all-male board. Well-placed confidential sources, however, say the wide-spread criticism of the lack of women editors was in fact a major reason for the appointments.

Ludlow says Provo attorney Jeane Bryan Inouye, University of Utah department of educational psychology chair Addie Fuhrmann, and BYU family science department chair Terrance Olsen were added to offset a heavy workload on the original editors. Both women said they accepted the assignments before learning of a petition, circulated by Mormon feminist Lorie Winder Stromberg, asking for women's appointments. But Fuhrmann added, "I also understand that part of the reason is that I am a woman."

Ludlow, former director of LDS Correlation Review, said he did not know why the original board lacked women. But Lavina Fielding Anderson, who with other Mormon activist women submitted a list of topics and issues to the board, speculated that Mormon women may at first glance have seemed to lack an academic "track record." "Women have been involved in scholarly pursuits only recently . . . that is a sociological, if unfortunate, reality," she said. "I don't think [the exclusion of women] is sinister, I think it was insensitive."

Elly Dickinson of Macmillan said the publishing firm originally wanted "to have women, at least one woman. The Church chose not to do it, and we dropped it."

### *CHURCH REFUNDS TITHING*

MORE THAN \$244,000 in tithing paid by former administrators on money they embezzled from the Timpanogos Community Mental Health Center has been returned to the facility by the LDS church. The center's officials are hoping the Internal Revenue Service will follow suit and return at least some of the \$500,000 paid in back taxes by former Timp official Craig R. Stephens.

The center has now collected about \$800,000 in restitution for the nearly \$3.5 million stolen by Stephens, Glen R. Brown, and Carl V. Smith between 1985 and 1987. The three have now paid back about \$600,000 collectively and are serving up to five years each at the Utah State Prison.

### *CHURCH MUST SHINE ITS OWN LIGHT*

THE U.S. Supreme Court on 23 April let stand an appellate-court ruling that the Utah city of St. George may not pay for the external lighting of the LDS Temple there. The suit was filed by Philip Foremaster in 1985, challenging the constitutionality of the city paying for the overnight lighting of the temple and also of the temple's depiction in the St. George logo.

The LDS church was not a party to the lawsuit, but BYU President Rex Lee was a consultant in the case and may have represented St. George if the case had gone before the Court.

The approximately \$180 a month city subsidy dated from 1942 when, according to a LDS church spokesperson, St. George officials "graciously offered" to light the temple. "We argued the LDS temple is a tourist attraction," Mayor Karl Brooks said.

## MORMON MEDIA IMAGE

### *ESQUIRE FICTION FEATURES MORMONS*

For the second July in a row, *Esquire* magazine's "Summer Reading Bash" features a Mormon-related short story by author Walter Kim.

In "Keeping Donna Faithful," Kim's most recent *Esquire* story, Karl, a high school student has pretended to be a girl's boyfriend out of necessity, "to keep the non-Mormon boys from bothering Donna while she had been writing to Timothy," a missionary who returns from Korea hooked on cigarettes and enamored with Buddhist meditation. Upon his return, Timothy's rejection of Donna and the Church changes and disillusiones Karl, and the story ends with Karl and Donna driving to a motel to spend the night.

Kim's previous story, "Yellow Stars of Utah," concerned a teenage boy whose basketball coach, acting as the newly appointed bishop, confronts him and the other players about the habit of masturbation. For each transgression, each boy must mark an X on their own sheet of paper with ink which can only be seen under a black light. At a special team meeting in the Church locker room, to help the boys "see yourselves the way God sees you," everyone's blank paper was taped to the wall and the bishop turned on only the black light showing a galaxy of glowing Xs.

Kim, *Esquire* notes, was raised on a Shafer, Minnesota, farm. His first collection of short stories will be published by Knopf later this year.

### *SOVIET JOURNALIST REPORTS ON MORMONS*

ONE OF the Soviet Union's most popular journalists, Vladimir Mukosev, was in Salt Lake in July to film a documentary examining the Church and its people. He wanted to do the story because of an interest in the Church's growth and popularity, he said. He feels religion is needed in the Soviet Union; however, he thought Soviets would be slow to accept a religion like Mormonism because of the limits it puts on one's freedoms. "I am 39 years old and all my life I have felt limited in freedom. Inside, I feel Christian principles are important, but I do not want to go to church because it is too limiting in freedom," he said. He noted his attitude, which is shared by many Soviets, may change over time as people are exposed to different religious lifestyles.

**CALL FOR PAPERS**

## **SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM WEST**

**EARLY MARCH 1991**

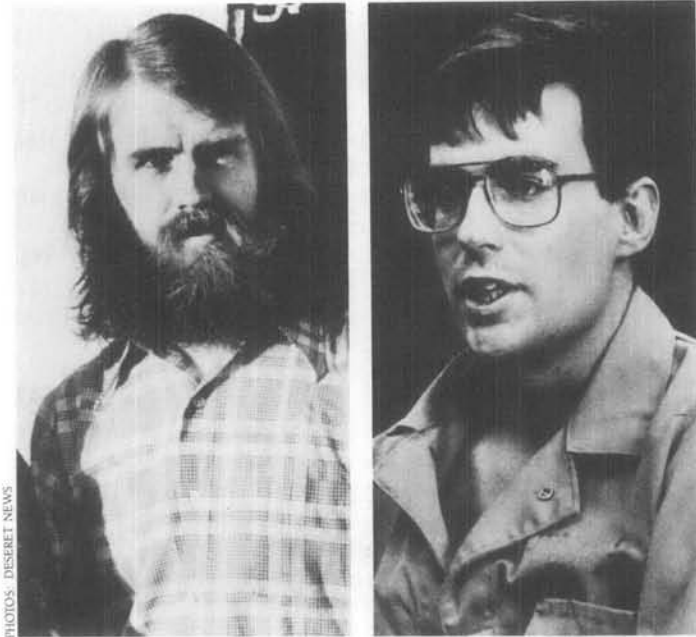
**CONTACT**

**STEVE ECCLES**

**1482 WINSTON COURT**

**UPLAND, CA 91786**

**714/982-4752**



PHOTOS: DESIRET NEWS

**A MARRIAGE MADE IN HELL**

THIS AUGUST, when reporting Mark Hofmann's second suicide attempt, Salt Lake newspapers revealed that Hofmann had been sharing a cell with convicted murderer Dan Lafferty. Lafferty claims he killed his sister-in-law and her baby daughter in 1984 in order to fulfill a revelation he had received from God. Imagine the supply-demand symbiotic relationship of these two mates: Hofmann produces revelations which Lafferty craves.

**RESEARCH REQUESTS**

**MARY L. BRADFORD** is looking for material on Lowell L. Bennion. She is interested in memories and documents from former students, colleagues, friends, and critics relating to his years at the Salt Lake City LDS Institute of Religion (1934-1962), the Tucson Institute (1937-39), the University of Utah Institute (1962-1972), and the Salt Lake Community Services Council (1971-1989). She would also like memories of his wife Merle Colton Bennion and his colleague T. Edgar Lyon. She is seeking contact with family friends and those who have served on various boards with Bennion. Contact: Mary L. Bradford, 4012 N. 27th Street, Arlington, VA 22207 (703/524-4453).

**WILL BAGLEY** is researching a book on frontiersman Abner Blackburn (1827-1904), a Utah pioneer of 1847. As part of the 1897 Jubilee he gave the state of Utah a pistol and a portrait of himself "taken near Prairie DuChene in the year 1845 by a frenchman Du Chong, not a very good likeness. It has been rolled up most of the time." These items were collected to be used in a state museum. Anyone with knowledge of these relics or any information about Blackburn is invited to contact Mr. Bagley at 1451 Kensington Avenue, Salt Lake City, UT 84105.



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| _____001 | Tightening our Belts and Streamlining Our Programs: Implications of the Church's Recent "Course Corrections." <i>Panel</i>   | _____061  | Abortion: Toward a Middle Ground. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____003 | Myth and Reality: What Mormons Should Know About the Constitution. <i>Eugene Shoemaker</i>   | _____062  | Explorations of Mental Health and Mormon Women. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____004 | "A Threat to Society": LDS Single Men Around the Turn of the Century. <i>Jeffrey O. Johnson</i>  | _____063  | Daily Meditation as a Supplemental Mormon Religious Practice. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____005 | Early Mormon Visions And Near Death Experiences Today. <i>Robert Fillerup</i>  | _____067  | Changing Realities in South Africa: The Church as an Agent for Change. <i>Brian Sellers-Peterson</i>                                       |
| _____006 | From 19th Century Foundations and Progressions Through 20th Century Digressions Toward 21st Century Relief Society Restoration. <i>Yvonne Wright</i>                                     | _____068  | The Mormon Family and Class Mobility: Nineteenth-Century Victorian Ideology in a Twentieth-Century Church. <i>Dorice Williams Elliott</i>  |
| _____007 | Compass, Square, Line and Level: Temple Symbols of Ancient China. <i>Mark Riddle</i>   | _____069  | Rudger Clawson: A Prisoner of Polygamy Before and After the Manifesto. <i>Stan Larson</i>  |
| _____010 | The Field is White: Missionary Letters Home. <i>Gary Bergera</i>   | _____070  | Seeing But Not Believing: Evidence and the Substance of Religious Claims. <i>Mark Gustavson</i>  |
| _____012 | Pierced With Deep Wounds: Healing the Effects of Patriarchy. <i>Kelli Frame</i>  | _____071  | Book of Mormon Conversion Narratives, or Why We Should Stop Doing Theology and Tell Each Other Stories. <i>Eugene England</i>              |
| _____013 | Joseph Smith and the Documentary Hypothesis. <i>Dennis Clark</i>   | _____072  | Secularism, Neutrality, and the Supreme Court: Invisible Religion in the Public Schools. <i>Paul James Toscano</i>                         |
| _____014 | The Mormon Church Lady: Tacky Special Testimonies. <i>Rebecca Lindford</i>   | _____075  | Biblical Roots for Environmental Ethics. <i>Richard Cartwright Austin</i>  |
| _____015 | Philo T. Farnsworth: Mormon Visionary. <i>Elma G. Farnsworth</i>   | _____076  | Maps and Blueprints: A Feminist Look at the Patriarchal Language Practices. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____016 | Escaping the Embrace: Idealization and the Hyper-sacred in Mormon Discourse and Practice. <i>Brian Kubarycz</i>  | _____077  | Interfaith Approaches to the Environment. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____017 | The Centennial of the Manifesto. <i>Carmon Hardy and Edward Leo Lyman</i>  | _____078  | Coming Attractions I: Readings from Mormon Culture. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____018 | A Second Look at the Everyday: Toward a Theology of the Home. <i>Panel</i>   | _____079  | Religious Repression: The Evolution of a Sex Addict. <i>Panel</i>  |
| _____020 | You May Prosper in the Land: Mormons and Environment. <i>Panel</i>   | _____081  | Neal Maxwell, Richard Scott, Dallin Oaks, and the Modern Philosophies of Being. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____021 | The Self-Proclaimed Prophet: Jeff Lundgren. <i>William D. Russell</i> Guilt by Association or Innocence by Proclamation: In the Churning Wake of a Media Crisis. <i>Rebecca Chandler</i> | _____085A | 085B (2 tapes) How the Manifesto Changed the Church. <i>Panel</i>  |
| _____022 | Women and Authority. <i>Panel</i>  | _____087  | Book of Mormon Stories That My Teacher Kept from Me. <i>Neal Chandler</i>  |
| _____023 | Things Taking Place: Readings From May Swenson's Poetry. <i>Paul Swenson</i>   | _____088  | Sexuality and the Mormon Family: Just Procreation or Pro-Fun Too? <i>Rommel W. Mackelprang</i>   |
| _____025 | May in October: Life and Death as Existential Riddles in May Swenson's Poetry. <i>Paul Swenson</i>   | _____089  | The God of Abraham, Isaac, and William James. <i>David Paulsen</i>   |
| _____026 | Warehousing the Saints: The Cody Metaphor for the Contemporary Church. <i>Ron Molen</i>  | _____090  | Ecclesiastical Implications of Race: A Personal Essay. <i>Erin Silva</i>   |
| _____027 | Priesthood and Salvation: Is D&C 84 A Revelation for Women Too? <i>Kathryn Shirts</i>  | _____091  | The Changing Economic Environment: Impacts on Gender Roles and Labor Force Participation. <i>Jeff Waddoups</i>                             |
| _____028 | Bishop John Koyle's Dream Mine: A Monument of Mystery. <i>Ogden Kraut</i>  | _____093  | Forgiving the Church and Loving the Saints: The Kohlberg Perspective as a Paradigm for Christian Behavior. <i>Robert Rees</i>              |
| _____029 | Latter-day Myths about Counseling and Psychotherapy. <i>Mark Koltko</i>  | _____094  | Patriarchal Blessings: Changes in Trends. <i>Irene Bates</i>   |
| _____030 | Book of Mormon Christology—Trinitarian Interrogative. <i>Clyde Forsberg</i>  | _____095  | The Mormon Institution and the Homosexual. <i>Brent Corcoran</i>   |
| _____033 | Trends in Feminist Theology. <i>Sheila Davaney</i>   | _____097  | Neo-Orthodox Mormonism, Progressive Mormonism, and the Personality of God. <i>J. Frederic Voros</i>  |
| _____035 | The Utah Catholic Community's Response to the California Bishop's Letter on Pro-selytism. <i>Panel</i>   | _____098  | Organizational Growth in the Church: Will It Overcome the Crisis of Red Tape. <i>John Tarjan</i>   |
| _____036 | Planting the Seeds of the Gospel in the International Church: A Rich Background of Diversity. <i>Panel</i>   | _____099  | Sexual Hegemony and Liberated Mormon Women: Seeing Ourselves in the Barbara (African) Mirror. <i>Kathryn Lindquist</i>                     |
| _____037 | Myth Makers and Myth Breakers: Gender and Theology in Paul and Margaret Toscano's <i>Strangers in Paradox</i> . <i>Panel</i>   | _____102  | My Missionary Experience: The View From Thirty-Something. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____038 | The New Hymn Book—Five Years Later. <i>Thomas L. Durham</i> In Hims of Praise: The Songs of Zion. <i>Jean Anne Waterstradt</i>   | _____103  | The Persisting Significance of Race: American Indians and Mormonism. <i>Panel</i>  |
| _____040 | A Time To Kill: LDS Veterans. <i>Panel</i>   | _____104  | Writing Mormon Plays. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____042 | Pillars of My Faith. <i>Panel</i>  | _____106  | Animal Rights and Mormon Obligations. <i>Panel</i>   |
| _____044 | The Book of Abraham—A Grammatological Analysis. <i>Machiko Takayama</i>  | _____107  | "What Do You Women Want?": Answers From Mormon Feminists. <i>Panel</i>   |
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