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SUNSTONE

LINDA SILLITOE ON COVERING SONIA JOHNSON & MARK HOFMANN
HUGH NIBLEY ON PRIESTHOOD



APPEAL TO A LOWER COURT
A PLAY BY NEAL CHANDLER



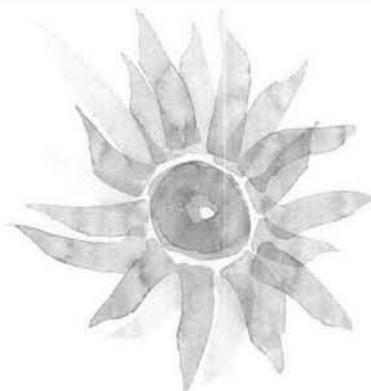
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Cover *Brant Day*

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READERS' FORUM

FITTING THE PUNISHMENT

I AM IN agreement with nearly everything Eugene England said in "Are All Alike Unto God?" (SUNSTONE 14:2) concerning prejudice against blacks and women. When we say, as a fundamental tenet, that we believe men will be punished for their own sins and not for Adam's transgression, we are surely talking of both Adam and Eve. It is equally true that women will be punished for their own sins and not for Eve's transgression.

I believe the consequences described for Eve are descriptive, not prescriptive. And even if they were prescriptive for Eve, then surely not for her daughters, who did not make Eve's choice. That women experience great sorrow in conception and that they are ruled over by the husbands has been largely true over the centuries, but that is not to say it is right. The scriptural prediction that the Jews would be a hiss and a byword (1 Nephi 19:14) does not mean that Jews ought to be scorned or made to suffer.

It is a mistake to think that whatever is, should be. The Lord can make good come out of evil, but that does not mean he desires the evil. "[I]t must needs be that offenses come; but woe to that man by whom the offence cometh" (Matthew 18:7).

England also refers to the final judgment as "essentially administered by ourselves." Dwelling in the presence of glory is painful if one is not equipped to withstand the brightness. The presence of God was intolerable to Moses in his natural state; he had to be "transfigured" to be able to survive God's glory (Moses 1:11; see also Jacob 2:6, Mormon 9:2-4, and D&C 88:32-33).

The scriptures support the idea that our place in the eternal world is largely determined by choice. There may be no need for gates to bar us from celestial glory. Unless we have fitted ourselves to tolerate the brilliance of God's presence, we'll find some other place less dazzling where our eyes are more comfortable.

EDWARD L. KIMBALL
Provo, UT

A CHEAP SHOT

I AM UPSET about the "Magnifying Their Callings" Sunspot (SUNSTONE 14:3).

Roger Porter and Brent Scowcroft are, of course, close advisors to President Bush, as well as being members of the LDS church. The clear implication of the article was that they were failing in their duties to their families because they serve very long hours in the White House. By extension, the implication was that these two are failing in their duty to God.

I am neither a Republican nor a big fan of President Bush, but I think that article is an unwarranted cheap shot. Porter and Scowcroft serve all of us by serving the elected leader of our country. They are not being paid overtime for their extraordinary loyalty. There are thousands of faithful Latter-day Saints doing likewise in less visible, yet important, government positions on the local, state, and national levels, including the armed forces. In addition, Church workers at all levels also find themselves spending less time with their families than they or their families may wish. The families of these praiseworthy individuals are due our respect, prayers, and support.

You owe Porter, Scowcroft, and their families an apology.

ROBERT L. CHARLES
Fort Meade, MA

SUNSTONE: A BROADER SPECTRUM OF MORMON THOUGHT

IN THE LATE Sixties, five of us founded *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* at Stanford University. Last year I subscribed to SUNSTONE. I have been surprised to see such a broad spectrum of Mormon readers—for example, Rebecca England, Dennis B. Horne, Samuel W. Taylor, and Ted Vaggalis all on the same page of the Readers' Forum (SUNSTONE 14:3).

But, in thinking more about it, I have concluded that the major difference between the two publications is this: *Dialogue* merges respect for Mormonism with respect for academe. SUNSTONE does this, too, but goes one step further: incorporating a respect for and commentary upon Christian ecumenism.

Perhaps all is right in Zion, so long as the hierarchy remains conservative, allowing SUNSTONE the mission of appealing to "greater

Mormonism" (that is, to a broader spectrum of Mormon thought). That way we aren't so likely to invite the schisms now attending the RLDS Church, brought on by liberal leadership (see William Russell's "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," SUNSTONE 14:3).

JOSEPH H. JEPSON
Woodside, CA

THE BLACK SIDE OF CHURCH HISTORY

I AM A member of a predominantly black branch in North Carolina. Our people are mostly new converts and have a keen interest in placing themselves in an LDS heritage that includes other black members. Of course Church history has no shortage of those with a European lineage whom we can hold up as role models. But for black members, after reading what little there is on the black pioneer Elijah Abel and our new black general authority, Helvecio Martins, we have nearly exhausted the topic.

I encourage writers to explore the subject of black Church members in the United States, particularly in the sixties and

seventies prior to the 1978 revelation. Though there seems to be plenty of new material on African Saints, I am not able to find much on African-Americans. I know publications are directed in part by market forces, but given the growth of the Church among blacks in the South as well as the large cities in the East and Midwest, there may be a fairly large interest in the appearance of any work that addresses itself to this topic.

DERL SANDERSON
Charlotte, NC

A REAL EFFECT ON THE CHURCH

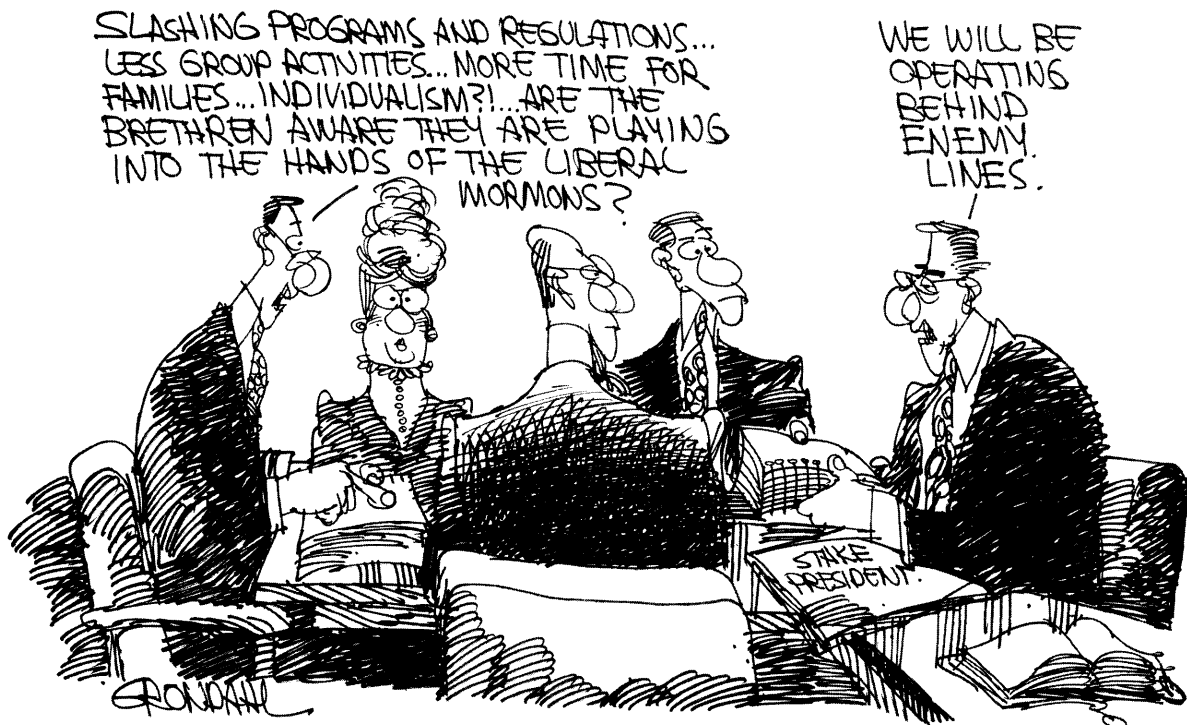
I THOUGHT THE "Form Talk for High Councilors" (SUNSTONE 14:3) was only used in my area and was surprised to learn that the same formula is apparently used all over the Church. You may not fully realize the change that will be forthcoming in all wards and branches during high council speaking engagements. What high councilor would dare use the formula after the publication of this piece?

DAVID L. ROBINS
Colorado Springs, CO

BY STUDY AND BY FAITH

FOR QUITE A long time I have been aware of how I learn. A psychologist friend once said my response to the world was first through my heart—or my gut—and then later through my head. After all, I converted to Mormonism fifteen years ago without reading the Book of Mormon or doing any real investigation. It just felt right, and I trusted that the rest would fall into place. As a dancer, I have to feel spatially where other dancers are without actually using my eyes. I have learned to rely on and value this feeling "way of knowing."

I became interested in SUNSTONE last year when I realized a need to strike a balance in my ways of knowing. The Church, after all, was the place where I had learned that "the glory of God is intelligence" (D&C 93:36). That truth empowered me as a human being (something I had missed in Catholicism), it gave permission to question and dig and pursue the truth of all things through all modes. At the same time, I was attracted to promises of James and Moroni that if you were confused, ask God (James 1:5, Moroni 10:4).



The 1989 Sunstone Symposium influenced my perception. I left the conference with a feeling that living with paradox or ambiguity *could* mean maturity. Up to that point, when I felt that there were some things relative to the Church that I couldn't embrace 100 percent, I translated that to mean that I was a hypocrite. I wasn't sure how much or how diverse I could be and still feel like I could belong. Being a convert, I wasn't used to being silent about my perceptions, be they yea or nay, yet the deeper the issue and closer to the bone the more I found myself turning inward, or talking to non-member friends, or just not talking at all.

Being involved in discussions at the conference made me see that there were throngs of people thriving in paradox. They weren't always happy about the way things happened, but here issues that for me had been off limits were being openly challenged, discussed, and wondered about. Just how much diversity was allowed in the Church? Where before I would have wondered if it was time for me to leave the Church (having some major philosophic problems with some

issues), now I saw people passionately debating and suggesting and questioning, and they seemed to feel like it was okay to stay. What made these people feel like it was okay to carry on a dialogue about things that in most Mormon circles were just not negotiable?

And then I read Armand Mauss's article, "Alternate Voices: The Calling and Its Implications" (SUNSTONE 14:2), and his comforting question, "Where do Church leaders get the ideas for the proposals that they take to the Lord in search of their revelatory confirmations?" I'm convinced that one's perception of how and under what circumstances doctrines come into being determines how much one can comfortably feel uncomfortable about. Sometimes from the lack of information that we receive about historical context in the Church, Church leaders would have us think that since this is the "Lord's church" doctrinal changes come about without reference to times and seasons and who's in charge. To be reminded of the human process involved, and that many sources can influence a general authority's decision to go to the Lord in prayer, made me

feel much better about listening to *my* heart and soul.

Now I feel the need to keep balance by enhancing my prayerful self since I've devoted a lot of time to my cognitive functions over the last year. I hope that "way of knowing" will help me figure all this out—or at least help me feel comfortable in not figuring it out.

COLLEEN CALLAHAN
Minneapolis

PROJECTING BETWEEN THE LINES

MARIE CORNWALLS "Women: Changing Ideas and New Directions" (SUNSTONE 14:3) truly did fill me with wonder.

I wonder whether she believes Church doctrine is formulated by consensus or revelation. She wistfully cites statistics that the majority of Catholics approve of ordination for women and implies that the majority of Mormons might feel the same if more of us were "college educated" and more affluent.

She laments that despite most women's agreement with feminist issues, only 33 percent identify themselves as feminists. Perhaps this is because the term "feminist," to most women, conjures up an image of women who will not be satisfied until they become men. You do not have to label yourself a feminist to believe in fairness or equality.

What filled me with the most wonder was Cornwall's references to the Church as simply another institution or organization in which power sharing is the name of the game; where enough "disaffected women... [could] create the kind of organizational pressure which produces radical change."

Is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints just another church that receives its authority and direction by the consent of the membership? And whose agenda are we supposed to be following anyway? Do the feminists in the Church pretend to know the mind and will of God better than one who is anointed to seal on earth and in heaven?

DAVID R. ROOT
Fayetteville, GA

MYTHOLOGIZING THE BOOK OF MORMON

JOHN C. KUNICH'S "Multiply Exceedingly: Book of Mormon Population Sizes" (SUNSTONE 14:3) is, perhaps, the most serious challenge to the historical accuracy of the

PEOPLE WHO SAY OUTRAGEOUS THINGS IN TESTIMONY MEETING —
— ON THE NEXT OPRAH WINFREY SHOW.



Book of Mormon since Michael Coe's "Mormons and Archeology: An Outside View" (*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 8:2, Summer 1974).

In a careful, scholarly manner he presents a clear and very persuasive argument that virtually eliminates the possibility that descendants of Lehi-Mulek groups could have produced the vast number of individuals necessary to carry out the massive cultural enterprise depicted in the Book of Mormon. He painstakingly goes on to pursue all conceivable ways of reconciling the story. Among many others, he raises such points as hyperbole of the authors, interaction with or conquest of indigenous native groups, divine intervention to prevent disease and famine, and the possession of twentieth century technologies. Yet for all of these possible explanations, the sheer weight of his presentation leads to the inescapable conclusion a rational and objective reader would have to, at least, consider: the creation of a religious mythology.

Kunich leaves that assumption up to his readers and he deftly avoids discussing this possibility himself. Instead, he acknowledges "I do not know the answers, but if the admonition to study the Book of Mormon is to have meaning, our study must be honest, open, and diligent, and not limited to preconceived views" (43).

Modern studies of Mesoamerica during the time frame of the Book of Mormon history (2000 B.C. to A.D. 421) have failed to confirm most of the hopes of devout believers to demonstrate a literal history of the work. Archaeologists from the Smithsonian Institution, *National Geographic*, and major universities, with the exception of Brigham Young University, have uncovered nothing that leads them away from a general skepticism, if not indifference to the book. Indeed, no evidence for wheeled chariots, the horse or other Old World domestic animals, an iron industry or cultivation of wheat or barley exists prior to the Spaniard emigrations in the early sixteenth century. There is now wide agreement that native populations found in the Americas came during the last ice age over a land bridge from Asia to Alaska in excess of 20,000 years ago. Studies of blood types show that the American Indian probably descended from Asian Stock and not Jewish heritage as has been commonly assumed by most Mormons.

The late Joseph Campbell has presented valuable insights into the "power of myth" in his acclaimed series on public television with Bill Moyers. Myths provide a cohesive and integrating force to the individual and group

psyche, reflecting the deep needs and aspirations of the human spirit. Like most religious works, the Book of Mormon has already gone through a process of "mythologizing," but here the task is more formidable. Specific claims of relatively recent history have been made and the book has been proclaimed as "the most correct of any book" by modern prophets. Yet it seems that this mythologizing process must and will go on. Already, the actual historical claims of the story are being relatively neglected in favor of stressing the moral message of the scriptures as it applies to our times.

There is an aphorism that states a myth is "something that was never true and always will be!" This, I submit, will be the fate of this fascinating Mormon scripture. It does indeed meet the spiritual, emotional, and psychological needs of a great many people who love and revere its story. They do not want to be challenged with scientific claims that erode authenticity but prefer to live with the certainty that the Book of Mormon provides to their lives. Yet others prefer to pursue their reality and open study wherever it takes them. Each of us must make the choice, but authority and dogma cannot be the ultimate reality test where free thought and open inquiry are allowed to flourish.

R. JAN STOUT
Salt Lake City

BEYOND THE MARK

JOHN KUNICH'S ARTICLE belabors to excess the point that Lehi's original small colony could not have accounted by direct biological descent for the later population sizes of the Nephites and Lamanites which are implied by the Book of Mormon text. Who, today, claims otherwise? Among modern Book of Mormon scholars, no one that I am aware of maintains that the new world was empty when Lehi arrived, or that the Nephites and Lamanites multiplied in "splendid isolation." Certainly that is not an official LDS church position.

Kunich twice refers to John Sorenson's excellent book, *An Ancient American Setting For the Book of Mormon*. He quotes, but hardly gives adequate emphasis to, this eminent scholar's strongly reasoned suggestion that "the Lamanites in the original immigrant group became dominant over a native population of folk already scattered upon the land when Lehi arrived" (146). Sorenson also suggests that these people might well be Jaredite remnants, whose

civilization (probably what most non-LDS archaeologists refer to as the Olmec civilization) had only recently collapsed. Surely it stretches credulity to believe that Ether's account of the destruction of the Jaredites to the last person comprises every member of that great people. Basic human nature tells us that some would have fled rather than perish in the civil war that



"Here's our entire harvest,
let's start canning!"

destroyed them.

Neither to be ruled out is some adherence of local, pre-existing people to Nephi and his band when they separated from Laman and Lemuel and their followers. In 2 Nephi 5:6 for example, Nephi refers not only to his own family and that of Zoram as taking their departure, but adds cryptically, "and all those who would go with me." And in verses 8 and 9 he refers to his group as "my people" and "the people of Nephi," suggesting a rather sizeable number. The entire text of 2 Nephi, chapter 5, in fact suggests that the Nephites, as well as the Lamanites, may by that time have included more than just the original colonizers. All the activities described by Nephi take place within thirty years from the time he and his family left Jerusalem, and would seem to be beyond the scope of just his own and Zoram's family and their children.

The fact that the Book of Mormon does not specifically mention initial encounters with other people is hardly conclusive, as B.H. Roberts seemed to believe. For any number of reasons, known only to him and the Lord, Nephi may have decided against being any more explicit. One cannot prove a negative.

May I also suggest another, more prosaic, explanation for the darker skin of the Lamanites: Since they evidently wore little

clothing, compared to the Nephites, their bare skins would naturally have turned much darker under the constant sun of the tropical climate. Evidently a dark skin, or tan, was not the virtue in those days that modern sun-worshippers consider it to be today!

FRANK J. JOHNSON
Potomac, MD

HETERODOXY

FIRST, Elbert Eugene Peck's "Doubting in the Context of Faith" (SUNSTONE 14:3) seems to me to be an insightful view of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes and a persuasive plea for a healthy atmosphere among Church members within which all earnest seekers can come unto Christ.

Second, in his letter "On What Authority?" (SUNSTONE 14:3) I believe Alan David Lach is making a theological error on a point which is basic to his position. God does not "create deep, permanent desire in certain human hearts," presumably toward homosexuality, any more than he creates "deep, permanent desire in certain hearts" toward improper heterosexual behavior. I suggest a prayerful reading of Alma 13:3-5 and 2 Nephi 2:26-27.

JOSEPH B. ROMNEY
Rexburg, ID

THE KINGDOM OF HELL

ALAN LACH'S LETTER concluded, "Let us hope that when Christ comes a second time, we are not surprised to find gays and lesbians entering the kingdom before we do." I would be very surprised, for to me that would be a nightmare. It sounds more like the Kingdom of Hell.

RICHARD F. MITTLEMAN
Downey, CA

A HUMAN ZOO

INASMUCH AS THERE were numerous letters and an article defending homosexuality as a genetic trait and therefore a natural and acceptable conduct (see SUNSTONE 14:2 and 14:3), I would like to toss a skunk into the happy picnic by quoting from *The Human Zoo*, by zoologist Desmond Morris (New York 1969). He says:

Under normal circumstances, in their natural habitat, wild animals do not mutilate themselves, masturbate, attack their off-spring, develop stomach ulcers, become fetishists, suffer from obesity, form homosexual pair-bonds, or commit murder. Among human city-dwellers, needless to say, all of these things occur. Does this, then, reveal a basic difference between the human species and other animals? At first glance it seems to do so. But this is deceptive. Other animals do behave in these ways under certain circumstances, namely when they are confined in the unnatural conditions of captivity. The zoo animal in a cage exhibits all these abnormalities that we know so well from our human companions. Clearly, then, the city is not a concrete jungle, it is a human zoo.

The comparison we must make is not between the city-dweller and the wild animal, but between the city-dweller and the captive animal. The modern human animal is no longer living in conditions natural for his species. Trapped, not by a zoo collector, but by his own brainy brilliance, he has set himself up in a huge, restless menagerie where he is in constant danger of cracking under the strain (ii).

So much for the fond delusion that homosexuals are born that way and can do nothing about it. They got that way from the environment, not through heredity. To claim



"Enough small talk. Let's discuss the latest Dialogue."

that they are helpless victims of their genes is complete nonsense. Instead of taking pride in their condition, they should take therapy for it.

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR
Redwood City, CA

PLOWING ZION

I WAS INTRIGUED by Robert R. Hubble's letter ("Where is Zion? A Midwest View," *SUNSTONE* 14:1). My wife and I have obtained a lovely tract of land in southwestern Wisconsin, and have a longing for Zion, as well as a desire to know how the two of them might be connected.

The Lord has given us stewardship over 116 acres of ridges and valleys, with a generous spring, woodlands, pasture, and cropland. There is a fine barn, a farmhouse, and a beautiful abandoned limestone quarry,

complete with nesting owls. As in many of our life adventures, we are daily following his lead, and as yet don't know exactly what we are to do or why.

For those who feel similarly led, land around here is very inexpensive and as beautiful as any I've ever seen. There is a community of "alternate-lifestyle" artisans and others in the area, and the people in Wisconsin are generally well educated. There is a Waldorf school with a very holistic philosophy which attracts open minds for hundreds of miles. We have a small branch here which is accepting of all types, and ready to grow. As a physician, I might be able to help form a core of a community of Saints interested in a sharing of faith, feelings, efforts, and funds. Organic farming seems to be an up and coming industry, with aggressive marketing programs starting already.

My non-member siblings have extensive

experience in sixties-type communal living arrangements, and my physician brother is currently saving money for land for starting his cooperative community in the Twin Cities area. But the experiences of these and other non-member relatives lack an understanding of what a true Zion experience would be like.

I would enjoy correspondence with any *SUNSTONE* reader who shares our longing for Zion, spiritually and temporally, or who has historical insights which would benefit modern-day pioneers. We also welcome any inquiries about this area.

DAN L. ECKLUND
Viroqua, WI

OLD TESTAMENT PATRIARCHY

IN JON CHRISTOPHER'S letter on Carol Lynn Pearson's play *Mother Wove the Morning* ("Prostituting the Text," *SUNSTONE* 14:4) he shows that: (1) he can't tell the difference between a theatrical production and a scholarly paper; (2) he can't fathom that a joyful, liberated woman may be both precisely because she chooses not to be a man's sexual servant; and (3) he reads scripture without understanding.

The third point deserves elaboration. Christopher writes that Pearson is naive in accepting the King James Version's characterization of the concubine as unfaithful (Judges 19). He says there are "more accurate translations" that suggest she left her husband for other reasons. This is immaterial: Pearson is acting, not giving a *Sunstone* Symposium paper. Her statement that rape being blamed on the woman in this patriarchal society is both relevant and true, even if Christopher is granted his point.

In a different version of the story in "Antiquities of the Jews," Flavius Josephus describes the man as being of a vulgar family and deeply in love with a woman who wants no part of him. Hence they quarrel a lot and she leaves him. Yet in Josephus's version, both of these "flawed" characters act heroically in the end. In particular, the woman, after she had been given to the crowd by her husband and had been raped all night long, returns to the home where her husband slept and she "was very sorrowful upon occasion of what she had suffered, and durst not look her husband in the face for shame, for she concluded that he would never forgive her for what she had done; so she fell down, and gave up the ghost." Josephus went on to explain she'd misjudged her husband, for he knew she wasn't a



voluntary victim. But the point is that in this version of the story, where the woman is *not* characterized as a loose woman, told by a person representing his culture in the best light possible, the woman has so thoroughly internalized the values of her patriarchal society that even after having been offered up for rape by her husband she dies of shame! Pearson could have used this very legitimate interpretation and made the same point.

Christopher takes a leap when he asserts that the story is a "strong anti-rape message" for modern America. He should read on. In Judges 21, war is made on the city of Jabesh Gilead because that city refused to take part in the vengeful massacre of Benjamites by all the other tribes. The purpose of the war? To provide wives for the 600 Benjamite men who escaped being massacred! The result is the slaying of multitudes of men, women, and children. Four hundred virgin women were found in the city and spared. These women captives were then raped as part of the ritual that made them wives. Thereafter, the remaining single Benjamite men found wives by stealing them from a maidens' dance-festival at Shiloh, an event commonly referred to as the Rape of the Shilonite Maidens.

The women taken in war were treated according to the ground-rules in Deuteronomy 20:10-20: "If you see a beautiful woman among the prisoners and find her desirable, you may make her your wife and bring her to your home" (Deuteronomy 21:11-12, Jerusalem Bible). Before this marriage is consummated, however, a month-long ritual humiliation must be carried out to help her make the transition: her head is shaved, her nails are cut off, her clothing is thrown away, and she is a prisoner in the house. Then "you may have intercourse with her, and be man and wife" (Deuteronomy 21:12-13, Revised English Bible). Her "wife" status is somewhat different from that of a wife obtained by more conventional means, however: "if you no longer find her pleasing, let her go free. You must not sell her or treat harshly, since you have had your will with her" (Deuteronomy 21:14, REB). For the same verse, the New Revised Standard Version has "You must not treat her as a slave, since you have dishonored her." These readings make clear that the sexual act that punctuates the month-long ordeal that makes her compliant is forced and part of her humiliation.

The two hundred raped maidens, who were not taken in war, fell under a different law: "If a man meets a virgin who is not betrothed and seizes her and lies with her he

must give the girl's father fifty silver shekels; she shall be his wife since he has violated her, and as long as he lives he may not repudiate her" (Deuteronomy 22:28-30, JB). Elsewhere in the Law of Moses it indicates that fathers could choose whether or not to give their daughters to their rapists in marriage after the bride price had been paid. Could modern America learn something morally significant about rape from these patriarchal Jehovah-worshippers, as Christopher asserts? No.

ABRAHAM VAN LUIK
Richland, WA

THANKS FOR THE SABBATH SCHOOL MANUAL

BOTH DAVID BAILEY'S "Mediocrity, Materialism, and Mormonism" (SUNSTONE 13:5) and Eduardo Pagan's letter ("Spiriting the Intellect," SUNSTONE 14:2) deplored simplistic, mind-deadening Sunday School lessons. This was a valid gripe until two years ago. I've taught gospel doctrine classes for about fifteen years and feel that my job is to help people think about, discuss, and hopefully apply gospel principles. I always felt guilty if I didn't plan to cover the three to five pages of material in the class manual. Gener-

ally that chore could be easily accomplished in about ten minutes. Then I would ponder and pray while reading the scriptures, or commentaries, or SUNSTONE, and come up with two or three nitty-gritty questions that the adults of the New Orleans Ward needed to discuss. We would spend most of the class on those. For instance, we have used the scriptures as a springboard to talk about how to balance medical school, family, and Church work so you'd feel satisfied and also feel the Lord is pleased.

However, two years ago the curriculum committee produced a superb manual. Each page-long lesson consists mainly of questions suggested for discussion. The manual instructs the teacher to rely on the Spirit to choose which of these, if any, are appropriate for her or his class. The questions are relevant to LDS life today: "What can we do to help ourselves and others bear the pain of a loved one going astray?" "How can we get personally involved in caring for the needs of the poor and distressed?" I still feel free to develop my own questions such as, "Where does grass-roots involvement stop and ark-steadying begin?" These new manuals should improve teaching by about 1000 percent.

SUZANNE R. HAWES
New Orleans, LA

PSALM

THE LORD IS OUR LIGHT

The Lord glories over Mount Timpanogos
in the dawn;
the Lord glistens toward Utah Lake
through the dew of the morning.
East toward the peaks, God gleams.
West into the valley, the Lord God glows.

The Lord lights up Utah Valley
with the sunset—
illuminating every serviceberry bush
in ground burned holy ground,
haloing quaking aspen,
making irrigation ditches rainbow.

In darkest night
the good Lord shines His stars
over American Fork Canyon.
In star and dusk and dawn
the gracious Lord shines
in the light of this valley.

—STEVEN C. WALKER

WEeping BY THE WATERS OF ZION



By *Elbert Eugene Peck*

IN THE SUMMER of 1982 I was distressed by the religious and spiritual questions of the “intellectuals” and my mind and heart were called up to serious reflection and great uneasiness. Given the undeniable sway of culture in this very human church, what, in fact, did I now believe, and what was really true? Revisionist history, philosophy, contemporary intrigues, a totalitarian bureaucracy, dysfunctional decision-making, unaccessible leaders, policy-driven inspiration, evolving theology, unaddressed injustices, manicured appearances, and more—all of which had been building for years—wove together in my deliberations to a dramatic crescendo which caused me, reluctantly and sorrowfully, but honestly, to question the teachings, testimonies, and personal experiences of my past. Was everything so culturally conditioned that Mormonism was but a local manifestation of God working among humans? During one reflective walk I remember searching my being to answer “What do I *know* for sure?” I was relieved when I found I could not deny there was a spiritual side to life, but I was scared when I couldn’t say for sure that I believed in Christ (I do now). I could not deny or rationalize away the witnesses of my past spiritual experiences, yet I wasn’t sure my former interpretations of them were accurate. Had I simply assumed that they validated my Mormon worldview because those LDS beliefs were the only categories I possessed with which to analyze and to understand life? And if I was so dependent upon ephemeral culture to know anything, what, then, ultimately, was Truth? My spiritual center was not holding. Come the fall, would I be a Mormon? A Christian? I faced these terrifying possibilities alone, not choosing to burden, or frighten, friends and, correspondingly, I felt increasingly estranged not only from my religious tradition, friends, and personal history, but also from God and from rich attributes which I knew existed in me, and which I celebrated, but which did not animate me now.

After running an errand to BYU, I took an introspective journey around the campus, recollecting my simpler, believing college days. Although it had just been a few years since I was an undergraduate there, I felt like Gene in John Knowles’s *A Separate Peace* returning to Devon School fifteen years after World War II. Every site I glanced at reminded me of warm conversations with friends and professors, classes which had inspired and challenged me, idealistic forums and private hopes, prayers for friends and personal revelations. I recalled a late-night disordered exit from the MARB after viewing for the first time *It’s A Wonderful Life*, and then, while kneeling in a snow-covered Kiwanis Park, I prayed to be a “good person.” I relived the daily nature walks with my field botany class where I acclaimed the joy and variety of Creation. I looked up at Y Mountain and thought of the summer night when a group of friends anxiously awaited a full moon-rise. Finally, through the ever-brightening mountain halo the moon popped up, gloriously, some R.M. quoted, “The Church shall come forth out of the wilderness of darkness and shine forth as fair as the moon” (D&C 109:73). I thought about Zion putting on her fair garments. My eyes misted, and I yearned to be a part of the Latter-day pageant. I had very much lived the intended BYU experience. Now it seemed simple-minded and distant. Was this indulgent nostalgic journey an attempt to conquer my doubting side with tender memories? Many former ideals came to mind, most I still affirmed, but my commitment to them was now tentative, lacking the gospel passion which spawned them. They now seemed to float inside me, unconnected, suspended, as if their unifying string had been cut and they would soon drift randomly away with the currents of life.

Eventually I wandered into the Harris Fine Arts Center. It was almost empty on this lazy summer afternoon. I wandered through the KBYU tunnel and looked in the trash bins where Bill Silcock and I used to scrounge for discarded art objects to decorate our V-Hall

dorm room. I replayed a study group discussion with Elouise Bell on spirituality and R-rated movies. I looked at the paintings but didn’t have the interest to explore them as before. I thought of the dates I took to classical events in the deJong Concert Hall. Even these “secular passions” were dulled in the spiritual ecology of my crisis. In the Nelke Theatre I painfully rehearsed my embarrassing Mask Club performance which I had reluctantly acted in to help my home teacher’s directing project. I remembered my film classes there, too, and the ward religious Christmas program I had organized across the hall in the debate theatre. For me, everything then—all activities, joys, and sorrows—had been immersed in religion and Mormonism, and conjuring up their memories also brought twinges of angst.

Finally, I took a complicated route through a maze of secluded stairs and narrow halls to the dimly lit stage of the Pardoe Theatre where my BYU ward had met for several years. After roaming listlessly around the proscenium, eerily punctuated with the echoing clop-clop of my Weejuns on the hardwood floor, I sat on the edge and looked into the dark rows of chairs. I was tired of the day’s fruitless sentimentality. With a sigh of exhaustion, I quoted out loud a personalized revision of the opening lines of Robert Frost’s “Directive” (a poem I had memorized walking to and from classes): “Back out of all this now too much for me, / Back to a time made simple by the loss / Of detail, burned, dissolved, and broken off.” “Yes, this is all too much for me,” I uttered to myself, as if performing a dramatic soliloquy. “It was so much simpler then.” I stared again into the empty seats and thought of my former BYU ward and the joys I had in that community: our yearnings for Zion and discussions on what it meant to be pure in heart; countless cases of service and care; expressions of love and concern; dances and testimonies and parties. I then thought of the two years I served as elders quorum president in that very theatre. Looking at the empty chairs, I recalled as many men as I could and where they sat and what they were like. I remembered one experience after a sacrament meeting when a friend and I each expressed our mutual love of the gospel and of each other, and I felt that our souls had truly, if briefly, touched and become one. Then we wiped our tears so no one would see. How wonderful it had been to live and grow and serve in that community of love.

Then I began to weep, sensing how far I had journeyed from this pure religion of interconnected love and life which I had

known most of my life. My nugatory answerless doubts paled compared to the complete emotional, social, and spiritual depths I had experienced then. Sobbing and gesturing to the vacant, yet crowded theatre, I recited the last lines of the Frost poem, this time the theatrics were gone. I was bitterly and joyfully acknowledging a re-revealed truth: "Here are your waters and your watering place. / Drink and be whole again beyond confusion." As I navigated my blurry-eyed way to the visitor's parking lot, there began distilling in me a deep, calm commitment to return and drink of living waters from my watering place—my Mormon community.

My commitment to that hard-come revelation has outlasted the confused gladness of the epiphany. This episode has become a personal myth explaining to me my relationship to the Church. Regardless of my intellectual questings and journeys (a genuine spiritual part of me), I choose, at times half-heartedly and reluctantly, to explore them from within an involvement in my religious community where tradition challenges my independent thoughts and actions, where individual Saints elicit service, sacrifice, and moral choice, where I bless and am blessed, and where the real issues of life are raised and fulfilled. It is often not easy to do. I still rigorously question and challenge the customs and assumptions of my culture. I am often sad at the idiocies I see, but I am no longer in a crisis of culture. Religion is not only inescapably bound to culture, religion is culture, since culture is our social lives; it can be shaped and improved but not escaped.

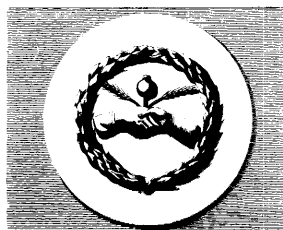
Indeed, Truth (not just religion), for me, is now primarily experiential and social. All intellectual deliberations are, at best, rough approximations, tentative formulations of those "puzzling reflections in a mirror" (1 Cor. 13:12 Revised English Bible). And while thinking and pondering are essential spiritual exercises to grow and to serve God with our minds, Truth is more; it is in being—becoming the attributes in the Sermon on the Mount and Paul's essay on charity. And those cognate "spiritual" attributes are primarily social: patience, long suffering, kindness, selflessness, gentleness, meekness, forgiving, peacemaking. It is in confronting these issues, together—in community—that we will one day be able to see God face to face.

Sometimes I speculate whether the hierarchical Church is as true as the gospel (thank you Gene England), but I believe a ward of imperfect Christians whose crazy lives demand our binding moral responses is more true than any abstract gospel principle. ☺

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Hugh W. Nibley

PRIESTHOOD



EDITOR'S NOTE: Several weeks ago, a friend gave us a copy of this piece, purportedly written by Hugh Nibley. When we read it, it had the feel of Nibley's classic social commentaries but not the look; for one thing, Nibley doesn't use multiple exclamation points. Obviously, ours was an uncorrected transcription from a clandestine recording. After a second person gave us a copy which was given to him by his BYU religion teacher, we contacted Brother Nibley. He corrected our copy and allowed us to publish an "authorized version" of what was originally part of a Sunday School lesson.

THE PRIESTHOOD CEASES to be effective when exercised "in any degree of unrighteousness" (D&C 131:37), but it operates by the spirit, and the spirit is not deceived but is exquisitely sensitive to the slightest color of fraud, pretention, self-will, ambition, cruelty, etc. "When we undertake...to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of men, in any degree of unrighteousness, behold the heavens withdraw themselves; and the Spirit of the Lord is grieved; and when it is withdrawn, Amen to the priesthood or authority of that man" (D&C 121:37). But what about the *righteous* dominion of the priesthood? That can be easily recognized, for it operates "only by persuasion, by long-suffering, by gentleness and meekness, and by love *unfeigned*; by kindness and pure knowledge, which shall greatly enlarge the souls without hypocrisy, and without guile . . . with "bowels full of charity towards all men . . ." (121:41ff). Even in the eternities the power of the priesthood flows "without compulsory means...forever and ever" (121:46).

Who can deny such a power to another? No man. Who can bestow it on another? No man. We like to think that the Church is divided into those who have it and those who

don't have it; but it is the purest folly to assume that we can tell who has it and who does not. God alone knows who is righteous and how righteous; yet "the rights of the priesthood are inseparably connected with the powers of heaven," and those "cannot be controlled nor handled only upon the principle of righteousness" (D&C 121:35ff). The result is, that if there is anyone who really holds the priesthood, no one is in a position to say who it is—only by the power to command the spirits and the elements is such a gift apparent. But as far as commanding or directing other people, there every man must decide for himself.

One valuable hint the Lord has given us, however, namely the assurance that of all those who "hold" the priesthood almost *none* really possess it. "That the rights of the priesthood . . . may be conferred upon us, it is true," making us formally priesthood holders, "but when we undertake to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men, in *any* degree of unrighteousness" the priesthood is void. And this is how it is in "*almost all*" cases in the Church: "We have learned by sad experience that it is the nature and disposition of *almost all men*, as soon as they get a little authority, as, they suppose, they will *immediately* begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. Hence many are called but few are chosen" (D&C 121:39-40).

What does one have to do to be chosen?

First, one may not set one's heart upon the things of this world (121:35)—so much for the priesthood as something to show off; then, one may not aspire to the honors of men—so much for the priesthood as something for prestige. One cannot exercise any power of the priesthood in *any* degree of unrighteousness—this in full recognition of the fact that "it is the nature of *almost all men*" to do that very thing as soon as they

think they have power and authority.

This leaves a few humble, unpretentious, and unworldly people as the sole holders of a valid priesthood. It is the “few humble followers of Christ” who are the strength of the Church throughout much of the Book of Mormon history.

What irony. As far as the whole world is concerned, the priesthood is a thing of value which is cruel to withhold from anyone, because it enhances one’s status and dignity among his fellows, whether inside the Church or outside. And yet the one thing that renders that priesthood completely null and void is to treat it as something to aspire to among one’s fellows. Priesthood is strictly an arrangement between the individual priesthood holder and his brethren in the eternal worlds, as personal and private as anything can be.

We might as well recognize the fact that whatever we say and do in righteousness is going to be misinterpreted. The only way we can make things easier for ourselves in the world is to go the way of the world. It would be hard to deny that the peace and prosperity of the Church in the past years has been largely the fruit of willingness to go the way the world goes.

Where all truth is encompassed in one great whole to raise one question is to raise many others, and any issue relevant to the gospel inevitably leads to a discussion of the whole thing.

Is not the priesthood everything? Not on this earth. On this earth it is nothing, and as soon as we try to use it for any kind of status, power, rule, or authority, it automatically cancels out.

TO repeat, as we are prone to do for lack of wit, for those who hold the priesthood on this earth, it is, the Prophet Joseph said, “an onerous burden,” not a prize. One cannot give orders to another by the priesthood. One cannot use it to acquire prestige, fame or wealth. Far from impressing one’s fellow men, it is held in derision by them. The moment one tries to make honor or glory or exercise dominion by the priesthood “amen to the priesthood of that man”—it automatically becomes null and void. What good is it then? Over whom does it exercise dominion? Over the spirits and over the elements—but not over one’s fellow-men, who cannot under any circumstances be deprived of their complete free agency.

Though some may find it hard to believe, I find no cause for boasting in my priesthood—nothing is easier than confer-

ring it upon one, but that is only the beginning; for it to be a real power requires a degree of concentration, dedication, and self-discipline which few ever attain to, and for the rest priesthood is not a blessing but a terrible risk. The priesthood is not a badge of office to be worn as a feather in a cap.

Do we really believe the First Vision? Thousands of Latter-day Saints attest to it every Fast Sunday; but when the earliest, fullest, and best account of the First Vision, dictated by the Prophet at the age of 26 to Frederick G. Williams, was discovered and published in 1968 it caused not the slightest ripple of interest in the Church. It is enough, apparently, to know that God has spoken again from the heavens—never mind what he said.

The most useful lesson is the silence of heaven on this particular issue in the light of our own woeful ignorance. There is a connection between the two. Where the people do not seek for wisdom and knowledge, God will not give it to them, and so they remain in ignorance, and may not ask for help from above.

Nothing pleases God more than to have his children “seek greater light and knowledge”—it was for that that Adam, Abraham, Enoch, Moses, and Joseph Smith were rewarded with the richest blessings. Nothing displeases him more than to have them “seek for power, and authority, and riches” (3 Nephi 6:15). Through the years the Latter-day Saints have consistently sought not for the former but for the latter. It is only right and proper that we should stew in our own juice for a while.

“I sought for the blessings of the fathers . . . desiring also to be one who possessed greater *knowledge*, and to be a greater follower of righteousness, and to possess *greater knowledge* . . .”(Abraham 1:2).

Twice he repeats it—he wants knowledge. Up to the last, even after he had learned all the doctrines of salvation, Adam still “seeks for greater light and knowledge” and for such knowledge we should seek eternally. But what do we hear? A former president of the BYU pompously announced at a convention of educators that we at the BYU are *not* seeking for truth, because we have the truth! This is where we stand today. It is common at the BYU for students to protest against being taught anything they did not know before: “Wherefore murmur ye, because that ye shall receive more of my word? . . . And because that I have spoken one word he need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be unto the end of man . . . (2 Nephi 29:8-9).

The fact is that the Latter-day Saints “will not search knowledge, nor understand great knowledge, when it is given unto them in plainness, even as plain as word can be” (2 Nephi 32:7). They simply are just not interested. How little we know about things. How little we want to know. The information is there, far more abundant than we have been willing to realize, if we will only reach out for it. To wait for a revelation on the subject is foolish until we have exhausted all the resources already placed at our disposal.

The strong prejudice has long been extended to the Indians by many Mormons in high position, yet the Mormons alone of all the people in the world believe the Indians to be the true blood of Israel, no less.

Such attitudes are strengthened by the snobbery of American suburbia; the Mormons like to think of themselves as WASPS—yet it was the rural, white, Christian, Protestant Americans upon whom the Lord with his own lips excoriated to the youthful prophet; they are *all* hypocrites, said he: “They were *all* wrong . . . *all* their creeds were an abomination in his sight . . . those professors were *all* corrupt: ‘They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far from me . . . having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.’” (Joseph Smith-History 1:19).

There are those in the Church who would identify Zion with “Executive Meadows, the Exclusive Condominium for the Right People.”

REPEAT of repeat: Over whom does it exercise power, then? Over the spirits and over the elements—never over one’s fellow men, whose free agency is absolute and inalienable.

Christ commanded the spirits, and they obeyed him; he commanded the elements and they obeyed him, but men he would not command, and rebuked the apostles at Capernaum for suggesting it. “how often would I have gathered you together . . . and ye would not!”

What, then is the priesthood on this earth? It is what Brigham Young and the Twelve wrote in the *Times and Seasons* in 1839, they called the priesthood an “onerous duty,” a load to be borne. Very few men on earth, including those in the Church are really qualified. In terms of prestige, status, power, influence, pleasure, privilege, “power, and authority, and riches” (3 Nephi 6:37), the priesthood has absolutely nothing to offer. The world laughs at it, the Latter-day Saints abuse or ignore it, those who take it seriously do so in “fear and trembling.” ☞

I've come to drop off this baggage of Sonia Johnson and Mark Hofmann
I've carried so long, packed too tightly with too many heavy items.

OFF THE RECORD: TELLING THE REST OF THE TRUTH

By Linda Sillitoe

FOR A LONG TIME MY FAVORITE credential—as announced at a Sunstone Symposium—was as the author of investigative poems. Recently a second favorite was added—the author of an award-winning nonfiction novel—and this by a corporation that teaches writing and editing! Then there's my least favorite identification—"the little girl who wrote *Salamander*." I wonder if Allen Roberts has ever been called "the little boy who wrote *Salamander*?"¹

These first two capsulizations may be my favorites not only because of their paradoxical nature but because they describe my tendency to cross genres—from poetry to fiction to journalism and back again. Sometimes the truth can be best told in journalism, but sometimes a deeper, subtler truth can be told in fiction. A poem is a lie that tells the truth. All writing takes a point of view, for there is no such thing in history or journalism as true objectivity—we aim for fairness and accuracy. Of course I cannot tell "the rest of the truth" in one evening about my career in journalism or even about my two most challenging stories. But I can come closest by crossing the lines of journalism into other genres, and by presenting a personal as well as professional view.

My initial reaction when I was invited to speak tonight was



LINDA SILLITOE

This talk is a symbolic act I need to perform. For in picking up the torch you also have claimed the baggage, even though you may not recognize it or understand why it's so heavy.

LINDA SILLITOE authored several stories covering the excommunication of Sonia Johnson and co-authored *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders with Allen Roberts*. This paper was presented in Salt Lake City at the Mormon Women's Forum on 7 September 1990.

to run several cosmic subjects through my mind, discard them all for lack of expertise, and conclude that I really had nothing to say to this group. But then that parent who lurks within each of us interrupted my thoughts, saying, "What do you mean you don't have anything to say? You do have things to say and this is the group to which you need to say them." You see, I knew I needed to do this as a part of my own healing; but I also hope that this evening will contain some communal healing as well—a laser procedure hopefully, healing with light.

Now why did that internal parent identify this group? A few weeks ago at the Sunstone Symposium many of us heard a paper by Mormon Women's Forum founder Kelli Frame. The most memorable moment for me came when Kelli said, "Sonia Johnson was excommunicated so that the rest of us would not be." As Kelli spoke those words, the world stilled for a second, for I realized I was hearing—ten years after the fact—the truth. Later on I heard someone comment that Kelli's paper had been angry. Angry? That, too, was familiar; angry was what people always said about Sonia. Yes, Kelli had said she was angry and she had said why. But in so saying she had been funny, rueful, dignified, generous, and uncontrolling—and so had Sonia. But who ever said, "Sonia's funny"? Who said, "Kelli was generous and uncontrolling"? Neither had *ranted*—as, on occasion, I have seen patriarchs rant (when moved upon by the Spirit, of course). Neither had defamed or attacked. Each had opened herself to her audience, whether critics or friends.

The subject of anger, the "A" word, came up again as I discussed this talk with forum leaders. "I think I've said all this

before," I worried. "But we hear all the time, 'I can't look at these things, listen to these subjects, talk about them, because I get too angry,'" one forum leader told me. That clicked. Several times at the symposium I was told of women who were no longer dealing with issues but with relationships. Now my life is blessedly rich with relationships, but I've never experienced one that didn't have its issues. Nor have I ever known an issue that did not involve relationships.

I am going to tell you the two most powerful, censoring, guilt-triggering, silencing statements in Mormon culture. The first is, "You-she-he sound angry." Oh, no, not that, you think I'm angry? The second is like unto it: "You-she-he are really bitter." A cultural mortal blow. Better one should be a Son of Perdition—daughters aren't macho enough to qualify—than be detected as angry or bitter. Better to divert anger, as basic to human nature as hunger or sleep, into depression or some other illness before it is even felt, let alone expressed. Then every calm individual can help shovel any collective instance of anger, piling it in that invisible community silo that occasionally reaches meltdown—to everyone's astonishment—since we serenely forget the silo exists.

We should not be angry; we should be calm even when derided by outsiders, as was Mark Hofmann, for instance, on his mission. We should be pleasant and friendly, as was Mark Hofmann discussing and selling historical documents. Very few people ever heard Mark express anger once he became an adult. He was so calm he carried fully-armed bombs to their destinations. Yet bombs are rage, explosives contained, nicely-packaged, carefully-wired, and devastatingly deadly. Of course even as wood, plaster, concrete, clothing, blood, and flesh flew, Mark Hofmann was not angry, he didn't get spattered. He stayed on the calm, sanitary side of murder. And there are those who have rather admired that.

Again, why unburden to this group? About ten years ago, after Sonia Johnson had been excommunicated, after Reaganism had settled into the Capital and my eastern friends were assuring me that Washington, D.C., was "just like Utah," after it became clear that the women's movement would be lucky to hold ground in the 1980s let alone win much, I had a conversation with Sonia. In that particular conversation, Sonia was despairing, for although she had come very close to rolling the

Equal Rights Amendment on a reinvented wheel into acceptance, at that moment progress for women's rights seemed unlikely. Had everything been in vain?

In that conversation I shared with Sonia the image, vivid in my mind then, of a wave that had crested and crashed upon the beach, reaching farther than any previous wave; and then, as waves always do, receded. I reminded her that even as one wave receded another was building, and that some water seeped forward even as the momentum rushed back, that sometime there would be another wave and the next would reach farther as the inevitable tide of human evolution rolled in. Sonia didn't like my image—how long would such a wave take to build? How much would be lost in the meantime? Instead of waves she wanted ongoing transformation: I agreed with her wish, but all I had was my image.

Since then water has crept toward shore, nationally, locally, and within the LDS church. Yet last year when the Mormon Women's Forum asked me to read poetry at its open house, I pulled out some poems I wrote eight to ten years ago and found they shocked some and electrified others. I might have written them the morning of the reading, so little had changed. If little has changed for women nationally since 1980, even

less has changed in Utah where women remain vastly under-represented in the higher echelons of government, education, the judiciary, the arts, religion, and business. Those positions are overwhelmingly occupied not only by men, but by bishops and stake presidents—Church leaders.

We are a community that thrives on issues. A few of you have personally dealt with the things I will discuss; more of you were not present for them. That doesn't matter because this talk is essentially a symbolic act I need to perform, which is appropriate to such a community. For in picking up the torch you also have claimed the baggage, even though you may not recognize it or understand why it's so heavy. The title of this talk came first and apparently is more titillating than I anticipated. "Off the record" means material I will not associate with my source's name. Often such information is critical to a story and feels dangerous to the source and sometimes to the messenger. Almost without exception everything I received off the record, that was in fact important, I wrote. That doesn't mean it was absorbed. It may sound as new as my poems did.



SONIA JOHNSON

**I had gone to Virginia not as a witness for
Sonia Johnson but as a witness for the community
that wanted to know; I had seen,
I had absorbed, and I couldn't forget what no
one any longer wanted to hear.**

Every story also has a context and a subtext, some of which I will try to leave with you tonight. Occasionally promises of confidentiality or the laws of libel and slander draw additional lines in disclosing information. I am not here to break promises or laws, but nevertheless to be as honest as possible with you, a community that has urged me out on some very shaky limbs.

INITIATION OF A JOURNALIST

BECOMING a journalist undoubtedly revolutionized my life more than any other act. Like most of you, I learned in childhood not to point at people or things that made me curious, not to say what wasn't nice to hear, simply to shun anything different. But I was also a cop's kid during my formative years and the child of natural storytellers. I learned in Sunday School and Primary as probably you did to tell the truth, let the consequence follow (and it will). My parents urged and inspired a sense of integrity in all their children, seven-eighths of whom remain stalwart in Mormonism. Contradictions? Yes. Because in becoming a journalist I learned skills I still have to practice: to look straight on, to ask questions, to speak up, to confront in ways that poetry and fiction don't necessarily do. But then neither does journalism necessarily, certainly not in Utah where many questions are never asked, many powerful people are never interviewed by people they do not employ, and certain stories can find no home.

Looking at things head-on is not always pretty. Within the last month journalism has exposed me to the following subjects: financial and personal fraud, armed robbery, a lethal betrayal between husband and wife, child molestation, the torture and abuse of children in the desert, the enraged slaughter of pets, the enraged slaughter of children, and capital punishment. In each instance I did not initiate the contact: I received a telephone call, I was asked to read a manuscript, or I checked out a wobbly story. But in every instance, I admit, I went farther than I had to: I read more of the manuscript than necessary, I asked more questions than required, I found more than was expected. Whether I blame my low threshold of boredom or siren-chasing in my formative years, I do acknowledge my own choice in getting in deep, sometimes too deep, and in having to find my way through.

I am confessing here that I am better at digging in than letting go, but letting go is what I am trying to do tonight, and this is not my first attempt. Last year I gave my most superficial files from *Salamander* to Special Collections at the University of Utah and this spring gave them all the rest—my co-author, Allen Roberts, did likewise. Only then did it occur to me that I still had files ten and twelve years old from writing my baptism-by-fire story on the International Women's Year meet-

ing at the Salt Palace, writing an undercover series on the Freeman Institute, and writing a series of stories on Church politics around the Equal Rights Amendment, which culminated in stories on the excommunication of Sonia Johnson.

"What does it mean," I asked myself, "that I have held on to these files for so long?" Was I still hearing warnings, "Don't use my name," or "Don't write about this"? Did I still expect someone to knock on my door and ask to see the letter signed by then Apostle Ezra Taft Benson instructing bishops to send ten women from every ward in Utah to the



LINDA SILLITOE

I had a recurring dream: I was in a house I had lived in as a child but was discovering rooms I had never known, sometimes whole wings. Why do I keep dreaming this? "There's more room in the house than you think."

IWY meeting? Or the brochures and petitions placed in Virginia ward lobbies, linking Phyllis Schlafly's Eagle Forum with the LDS Virginia Citizens Coalition in fighting the Equal Rights Amendment? Would someone want to see the newsletter of the McLean Virginia Stake announcing that President Spencer W. Kimball had enlisted the membership to fight the ERA? Or copies of Sonia Johnson's speeches to be sure she never asked for the priesthood nor applied the term "savage misogyny" to Mormon church leaders? Who had ever asked to see evidence that funds raised by Virginia bishops were laundered by a pseudo-account called FACT (Families are Concerned Today), that warehouses and church meetings were used in Florida to lobby legislators, that Church Boy Scout troops passed out anti-ERA literature to ward members in Arizona, that anti-ERA leaders were set apart in Missouri where Relief Society sisters were bused (wearing dresses and carrying sack lunches, as instructed) from stake centers to the state legislature? Who even now would want evidence that the national LDS anti-ERA movement was run by top Church leaders through the general authority special affairs committee in Salt Lake City?

I wrote all this information in articles published in *Utah Holiday* and later *Sunstone* in 1979 and 1980.² But for a long time after those stories on ERA politics were published, I entertained the fantasy that my parents and siblings, the

members of my ward, friends, or erstwhile friends, would come to me and say, "All right, Linda. Show us everything that caused you to write the articles you wrote. Show us why you changed." Of course, it never happened. Students and researchers examined the duplicate papers I placed in special collections and sometimes they called me to discuss the contents. Even if important people in my personal life *had* come to see my files, they would have found answers to only the tangible question of why I wrote what I did, not the question of what had happened to me, the journalist, or more accurately, the journey-ist. So let me tell a bit of the story behind the story.

THE TRIALS OF SONIA JOHNSON

MY first awareness of Sonia Johnson came over the car radio; she had testified before a House Subcommittee on the Equal Rights Amendment and sparked a confrontation with Utah Senator Orrin Hatch. I was a nontraditional University of Utah student that summer of 1978 and in the throes of a full-fledged identity crisis. I was beginning to write fiction and Elder Boyd Packer had recently defined the arts as faith-promoting illustration of gospel principles. The article I had written the summer before about the IWY meeting had introduced me to notoriety and the realization that, while poets might be underexposed, they also enjoy peace and privacy, which still seemed valuable. So when I heard what Sonia Johnson had done, I was astonished: "Who," I wondered, "would ever willingly subject her life to such chaos?"

Six months later in early 1979 the Mormon anti-ERA campaign in Virginia became my story, one that mushroomed. Rather late in the process, I called Sonia Johnson, then spokesperson for Mormons for ERA, which had a membership of four. Sonia's musical voice and quotability had not made her spokesperson, rather she was chosen for her orthodoxy. Between stories early and late in 1979, I learned that Sonia and I had much in common. We were both gospel doctrine teachers, though she also was ward organist and taught in Relief Society; we were both married; she had four children, I had three of similar ages; we both had temple recommends but she had a two-year supply of food in her basement. Sonia was nothing if not committed: A devout if questioning Mormon, a staunch Republican, and a new convert to the Equal Rights Amend-

ment, which she had first heard about at an anti-ERA meeting in church. I had a journalist's strength but a citizen's weakness of seeing both sides of issues: I was a less active Democrat, a quizzical but intense Mormon, and comfortably undecided when it came to the Equal Rights Amendment. I was also poetry editor for *Exponent II* and published a few of Sonia's poems with lines like these:

Welcome to the race
daughters of Sarah,
human and to the
finish.³

Within the last year I have had calls from two men unknown to me who were faced with excommunication. One, a married priesthood holder with children, had fathered an illegitimate child, refused to abandon it or its mother, and in frustration had shot up a Mormon warehouse; the other had amassed and publicized alleged "proof" of the homosexuality and immorality of a high Church leader. I had no interest in nor outlet for their stories; what astonished me was how much they had done to provoke

excommunication and how much consideration they received from their brethren.

When Sonia Johnson was called into a bishop's court, she had spoken publicly only a few times and she had picketed her stake conference. Yet she had mobilized many Mormon women—and some men—throughout the country, for their own reasons both personal and political. While organizing my papers I recently came across the list of women attending one meeting in Salt Lake City; it reads like a *Who's Who* of accomplished women. I wonder if you would take a moment to close your eyes and picture about two dozen of the most influential women you know of locally—in government, education, the judiciary, in the "helping professions," on Church general boards, in history, literature, and the arts. Add to their ranks similar but fewer prominent men; now add a variety of Church employees, grassroots Church leaders, family members of general authorities. Double or triple these ranks, to take in the national network.

Hold that mental picture of Sonia's supporters and ask yourselves what might have happened if at the time of her excommunication all those people unitedly had said privately and publicly, "We will not allow this to happen. Regardless of our feelings about the Equal Rights Amendment, we disagree



TWELVE-YEAR-OLD HOFMANN (CENTER) AND BOY SCOUT TROUP

At the center of this tragedy is a child—a child who learned young that the best survival skill is to be bad but to appear good. If Sonia Johnson grew up believing too much in principle and not enough in compromise, Mark Hofmann took "the truth" another way.

with using the LDS church for covert political actions, and we support freedom of speech for Church members." Imagine the impact on the media, the Church, the community. And imagine the impact on those individual lives; most of that initial group I asked you to picture are more prominent today than they were then—but most were never publicly linked with Sonia Johnson or the Equal Rights Amendment.

Sonia once explained to me that the Mormons-for-ERA strategy was styled after the tactics of Gandhi and later Martin Luther King. You position yourselves against the patriarchy in such a way that the smiling, blue-suited, army-uniformed, or white-sheeted good-old-boys are forced to bring out the clubs, the dogs, the fire-hoses for all the world to witness. Patriarchy's brutality becomes unbearable to the givers and the onlookers as well as to the receivers, and change occurs. One of the most painful of all movie scenes to me is the scene in *Gandhi* when the Indians form ranks outside the salt mill and march into the rows of soldiers and their clubs. Row after row of Indians are beaten down and are carried away, but still they come, fear and courage in their eyes, still they come until the imperialist government falls.

Walking into the sticks is how it felt supporting the Equal Rights Amendment as a Mormon or even supporting free speech during that time. The crux comes when it occurs to the people approaching the carnage that maybe it's okay if the empire continues to make salt. Maybe the losses in Birmingham aren't worth risking again. If we march into the sticks it's going to really mess up our careers, our families, our plans for the future, our religious assumptions, our business prospects. And when the march stops, the sticks win. They may be a bit dented, they may negotiate; but they will negotiate from a position of increased power.

During the year preceding the excommunication, I was present at VIP gatherings and privy to VIP telephone conversations on condition that I protect those credible names. During that time my telephone was hyperactive with calls from Boston, California, Arizona, Missouri, Washington, D.C. Repeatedly I heard "When you talk to Sonia, please tell her..." what? To be careful. That we agree with her. That we don't support the amendment but we admire her. Not to go too far.

Not to make the brethren angry because we have our own projects to protect. Most often they said, "Give Sonia our love and support." If I was a reluctant and occasional journalist, our worn-out telephone that year and my recurring laryngitis bore witness that it is more efficient to write a story than to communicate with one person at a time. Sonia Johnson, her copy of *Rules for Radicals* beside her, would answer my litany of messages with, "Tell those women in Utah they are safer than

they've ever been. They are going to appear eminently credible and the men in power will love them in comparison to those of us on the front lines." She knew that few would join the ranks behind her once the sticks were raised, and she was right.

Many of you know that Sonia Johnson derailed one excommunication proceeding only to face another, this one on 1 December 1979. I went to Virginia mainly to see for myself, to judge for myself what came over the phone. I knew before I left that the Johnson marriage was in trouble. Sonia didn't know I knew. Church Public Communications knew also, presumably from another



MARK HOFMANN SHOWING ANTHON TRANSCRIPT
TO N. ELDON TANNER, SPENCER W. KIMBALL, MARION G. ROMNEY,
BOYD K. PACKER, AND GORDON B. HINCKLEY.

Mark Hofmann wasn't nice, but he seemed nice. Among the orthodox he appeared orthodox; among the liberal he appeared liberal; among the curious he dropped tidbits; among the anti-Mormon, he told tales. He used everyone and everyone used his documents.

source; during one conversation with Church Public Communications Director Jerry Cahill (who again protested to me that he only knew what he read in the papers regarding what went on in Virginia since all this was a local matter), he dropped the bombshell that someone had called his office with the rumor that Sonia's husband was having an affair. "Of course we don't deal with things like that," he said righteously. Of course not, except that he had just told one reporter covering the excommunication story, and possibly others. In fact, Rick Johnson was involved in a relationship but technically not an affair. Did he love Sonia? Yes, I believe he did. Did he support her cause? Yes, before, during, and after her excommunication and the divorce. Did he, in my observation, behave like a flake, considering the circumstances? Yes. Did Sonia love him? Absolutely. Would she deflect media and public interest in the Equal Rights Amendment via her threatened Church membership in order to concentrate on her personal crisis? Not a chance.

Visiting the Johnson home in Sterling, Virginia, I was struck by their commitment to principle. The Johnsons had spent time in third-world countries which was one reason they lived frugally, even austerely. Utah had not yet turned down its

thermostats during winter, and I shivered all the time I was in their home. The day of Sonia's trial every adult in the family fasted, despite the fact Ida Harris—Sonia's mother imported from Logan—was roasting a turkey for Sunday dinner. People who can fast all day while a turkey roasts are, in my book, devout in the extreme. Their youngest son, Noel, was a little younger than my middle child, Robbie, and like Rob used to, Noel dashed around in a Superman cape, making me suddenly homesick. As the day wore on, the national media arrived and I left. The evening before had been quieter. I sat in Sonia's study—her telephone rang twice as much as mine did—and had an eerie sensation of suspended time, of history. Later I wrote:

NOVEMBER'S END, 1979

Five women talking
church and politics
(religious politics)
in a room lit yellow
in a Virginia woods.

We laughed at the disaster
that hadn't happened
yet and held our breaths.
Suddenly through the window
a vast current of dark

swept in on us, a flood
of event dry as dark air.
I floated out on that tide
and peered back from miles out.
I saw us there, all of us,

women in a yellow room,
and me seeing not the future
but us where we were,
a vast current of dark
like dew on a slick leaf
in the murmurous night.⁴

I have never, and may never, see anything as archetypal as that weekend in Virginia or anyone as fitted to an event as Sonia Johnson was during those months I observed her before, during, and after her excommunication. Her courage, fully aware of pain and cost, was amazing. I heard her agonize over what was coming; I heard her describe the collision course she was on and I heard her hope aloud, many times, that she wouldn't collide; I heard her grieve for her children who would grow up outside the Church. For weeks after her excommunication she would attend sacrament meeting and, on Saturdays, slip into the chapel to play hymns alone on the organ.

In her mind, though, the battle lines were drawn. The Church was fighting the ERA covertly and effectively; she knew it, she had exposed it, she had them by the short hairs, and she wouldn't let go. They could back down, simply admit they were fighting the ERA just as the Catholics fought abortion, lobby openly, and Mormons for ERA would deflate. But they wouldn't. And could she be deterred? No. Did she know

what she was doing? Yes. Did she love being at the center of a groundswell of women whose voices reached her in letters, over the telephone, in person? Yes—and she loved those women. Was she angry—yes, mostly outraged. Was she crazy? No. Was she out of control? Yes, men's control. Was she a radical? Not yet.

Sonia Johnson did not do the things she was excommunicated for—saying Church leaders were savage misogynists, disrupting Church programs including food storage and family home evening, telling people not to obey the prophet—except through “if the shoe fits” implications. But she did far worse. She and her fellow Mormons for ERA via the media exposed the highly organized anti-ERA campaign which the Church claimed was only the independent effort of concerned citizens who happened to be Mormon. For days her excommunication story was reported nationally just behind updates on the hostages in Iran. The scrutiny her excommunication focused on Mormonism unleashed a prolonged flood of investigative reporting on the Church's politics and its treatment of women. Worse still, Sonia challenged priesthood authority, from her own anti-ERA-fund-soliciting bishop to an ailing Church president, and she played political hardball, not a “girl's” sport.

Sonia Johnson didn't break the rules in the handbook so much as the unspoken taboos. She wasn't nice. She didn't conform. She didn't obey. She laundered the Church's dirty linen in public. By all rights Sonia Johnson should have died simply from taboo-breaking but she wouldn't, and so they held a witchburning. And then the witch, like some uppity phoenix, rose from the flames as Sonia broke the last taboo—the rule of martyrdom.

A MONTH or so after I returned from Virginia, I was driving my children home from school when again I heard a news report about Sonia over the car radio. I don't recall the story, only my irritation. Enough was enough. In reporting the excommunication and particularly in reporting the Church's anti-ERA politics, I had broken many taboos, too, and the person I had been was dying. *Utah Holiday* had run my story⁵ only because editor Paul Swenson joined me as a co-author. That issue of *Utah Holiday* sold out, but ZCMI withdrew its advertising—a real blow to the magazine. SUNSTONE had asked for a story, which I provided and they ran;⁶ later I was told the editors had pained deliberations about publishing on such a controversial event. As Sonia became a national celebrity, the Church launched its own publicity blitz nationally and locally. The polarity so familiar from the IWY meetings gathered strength; ranks formed, loyalty oaths were affirmed. Meanwhile Sonia Johnson was secretly waiting for reporters to go away so she could privately mourn her ruined marriage. Could she send them away? No. She had infused the Equal Rights Amendment with new energy, and her story was the fuel it ran on.

I already knew something about inner and outer chaos. While I wrote those two stories, our family blessing on the food extended to include the request, “Please help Mom to

finish the article.” A cat moved in while I was preoccupied and ate half of one final draft. Our nine-year-old wrote to President Kimball informing him he would not get away with the excommunication. Our five-year-old took a copy of *Utah Holiday* to kindergarten show-and-tell in a grocery bag, but returned from Junior Sunday School saying, “Mom, you are going to get excommunicated.” Our two-year-old expressed her anxiety by sitting on my lap as I typed or telephoned, and by staying awake nights. My brother who works for the Church wrote a letter to Sunstone defending the Church’s stand, certainly his right. My husband fortunately was no longer employed by the Church History Department, but still found himself frequently defending my honor, then Sonia’s honor, then the Equal Rights Amendment—which he had supported for years.

So why was I irritated that day to hear about Sonia on the news? Because I was exhausted. Because for months I had been informally interviewed every place I went. Because every relationship in my life had been wrenched. Because I had flashbacks of the candle-bearing priests, women clergy, legislators, government officials (including Congresswoman Pat Schroeder and Utah’s own Esther Peterson, then a member of President Jimmy Carter’s cabinet), Sonia’s children, and ordinary people who had gathered around an unlit, guarded stake center one frigid night in Virginia. Because I felt and understood the outrage of Sonia’s ward members, invaded by reporters and other gentiles. Because every time I walked into my chapel I had flashbacks of Sonia Johnson at the organ the morning after her trial, pumping confident strains into a room ugly with tension. Because the gospel doctrine class I taught was boycotted, until the deserting members found the *other* gospel doctrine class so boring they were forced to return. Because the arthritis that had dogged me for a couple of years moved into my jaws on Sundays until, by afternoon, I literally couldn’t open my mouth. Even I understood that metaphor. Once everything calmed down, I stopped teaching. And attending.

At that point Sonia Johnson, for me, was frozen in her poem that *Dialogue* would publish:

WRITTEN IN CHURCH

The church of my childhood
was red brick, too.
Small and warm inside, I’d
watch the snow battling the windows
or one cold star low in the cold sky
and rejoice at being inside with Mama
and the choir
hymning the wintry day to its close.

In blue by the covered wagon,
the pioneer woman poised above us
on choir breath
whispered, “Fear not.”
God-wrapped in that singing room,
what was there to fear?
Tonight in maturity’s church

good-bye, goodbye who I was in the
warm silent service with snow fighting
to break through the windows of my youth
and ghost voices forever echoing
down the dusk and farewell of the wintry day.

Hello at last, cold star and blowing snow,
and you, my pioneer sister
with your grave and steady eyes
who knew so well what there was to fear
and feared not.⁷

What happened to Sonia Johnson echoed in the excommunications, disfellowshipments, releases from Church jobs, revoked temple recommends, voiced fears, hurt, and despair of scores if not hundreds of women, one of whom took her own life. Within months the burgeoning Mormons for ERA split in Virginia and splintered in Utah as fear and frustration ran rampant within the groups that could not affect the institution and could only self-destruct. Everybody I heard from seemed to be either blissfully oblivious or in pain. For years afterward individuals and groups turned inward, seeking solace and healing, not revolution. But Sonia didn’t even have the decency to stay dead.

I knew about martyrs, especially women martyrs; several years earlier I had written a paper on heroines in Mormon fiction and learned that on the last page they were, almost without exception, faithful but dead—right in line with the beautiful-but-dead heroines in American literature.⁸ Sonia was not a good martyr. Thus the culture had to kill her again and again with rumors of the worst possible curses: she had gained sixty pounds, all her sons were gay, and she was bitter and miserable. “How is Sonia now?” people would ask me months later, years later. “She’s great,” I would say and watch their faces fall. Not only did she keep living, but she changed and kept changing, moving through causes and parties on her own radical trajectory as we fought to maintain our status; she became more outrageous as we became more cautious. We could not forgive her for that—but it made her easier to dismiss.

Survival is a strong instinct and we survived. Gradually the controversy joined into a refrain, eventually rising from pro and anti, orthodox and heretical, conservative and liberal. Those women launching banner-tows over general conference, saying things like “Patriarchy is Malarky” and “Mother in Heaven Loves Mormons for ERA,” were clearly crazy. Besides, as history became reshaped, only local Church leaders had been involved in anti-ERA politics and in the excommunication. The excommunication had been sad—poor Sonia—but it had nothing to do with any of us. Why progress was being made: statues in long skirts were being dedicated in a Nauvoo garden; auxiliary presidents were joining male authorities on the stand in general conference where the television cameras panned; women’s conferences were held at BYU, and in workshops lines were drawn, erased, reworked, avoided, redrawn; women were praying in sacrament meetings; in some wards mothers were asked to stand before handing over their new-

borns for naming. Many women and some men met privately to discuss their spiritual, emotional, and political lives. The culture was chewing up and digesting what had happened.

My problem was I had gone to Virginia not as a witness for Sonia Johnson but as a witness for the community that wanted to know; I had seen, I had absorbed, and I couldn't forget what no one any longer wanted to hear. I couldn't adjust enough to make many other people or myself comfortable. For a long time I felt the tension barometer rise every time I entered a room. Later, writing about Vietnam veterans, I realized what had happened. For many months I was under so much pressure so publicly that I had done, to a lesser degree, what soldiers do in combat: I froze my emotions in order to think and act more effectively. Now I had a good case of post-traumatic stress syndrome. "How do you feel?" people asked all through that time. How did I feel? Did I feel? Something hurtful or offensive would happen to me and then my husband, John, would blow up. I wouldn't feel a thing. Finally one summer day I said to myself, Okay, it's over. How do you feel? I didn't feel. But gradually I began to feel, and then I felt like a nuclear bomb; one jostle and I would explode the world.

I wrote:

oh how to be the wind
blustering dust down chimneys
sailing roofs like paper airplanes
postponing airplanes in fine air spinning
the world clean the world crazy the world gone

But here we hang by stems
in our navels side by side
here it comes and we wave
like small anonymous hands⁹

and:

asking why
and from here you can see
the rows of women
whose lowered veils round
their heads like mushrooms
paying homage to the god
who has always been
their enemy

During the aftermath I was excommunicated-by-rumor several times, and I began to dream of excommunication. One night I dreamed I was ascending through the floors of a large house in a throng of people, accompanied by my mother and sisters. The mood was sorrowful, even oppressed, and, as we inched upward through the rooms, I realized that this sorrow had to do with my own fate as it had with others' earlier fates. When we reached the top floor, I divined I was going to be plummeted down a long plastic tube and I was not expected to survive—they were putting me down the tube, quite literally. In the dream I protested this discovery to my patient-but-unmoved loved ones. It dawned on me that they were already

looking beyond this unhappy moment to the feast after the funeral, the dawn after the dark; yes, it was too bad about Linda going down the tube but it was a correct principle, after all, and life would go on. I found this fate unacceptable, and I escaped the only way I could—by waking up.

If the person I had been was dying, someone new was being born, and various friends helped with the birthing. During the first decades of my life, I had loved the Church and disliked God, who seemed to me an arbitrary and judgmental chessman. He was judgmental, but what I realized was that I had mistaken him for God. I remember one transcendent moment that came in the chaos of writing the excommunication stories. I was lying in bed in the dark, reliving the events in Virginia and in Salt Lake City. Suddenly I had another feeling of suspended time, an image of Sonia Johnson and her bishop, Jeff Willis, playing their roles in a drama that was at once archetypal and human. I saw myself, too, reflected in the window by my desk, typing there between the lamp and the darkness outside. In that moment, everything within me shone; I saw the play, the dance, we were all involved in, and I wasn't sorry to have a part.

Also that first year, I remember telling Sonia Johnson that Linda Wilcox had given a Sunstone paper on Mother in Heaven—a first—and that Grethe Peterson had responded to a hushed, large audience.¹⁰ Also that summer Sonia called me because Hugh Hefner had offered her a First Amendment award, given to the likes of Martin Luther King, and it included a large cash prize (which she needed). But how could she accept *Playboy's* tainted dollars? "Thank him for the honor," I advised, "and turn down the money." She did just that, saying to Hefner, "I'll bet you'd like to excommunicate me, too." The story played small in Utah.

Around that time, I had a recurring dream. I was always in a house I had lived in as a child but I was discovering rooms I had never known, sometimes whole wings. As I awoke I would mentally reconstruct the house, establishing walls and dimensions. Then I went with my husband to the Mormon History Association meeting in Rexburg, Idaho, felt the tension barometer rise as usual when we walked in, had our familiar discussion over dinner about whether to leave Utah, the Church, or both, and then that night had the dream again. This time not only were there extra rooms, but also racks of costumes and clothing that I examined with amazement and delight. As I woke, instead of reconstructing the literal walls, I asked myself, what does this mean? Why do I keep dreaming this? In a moment a little answer teletyped itself like a fortune cookie message in my mind: "There's more room in the house than you think." More room in what house? The house I grew up in, the Church, the Mormon culture? How much room did I think there was? Absolutely none; I had acute cultural claustrophobia. But there were costumes in my dream. Did that mean there were other roles I could play? "There is more room in the house than you think," the message plinked. I decided to stay.

Late in 1980 while researching stories on the Freeman Institute for *Utah Holiday*¹¹, a funny and fortuitous thing

happened: I was recruited and hired by the *Deseret News* to the surprise of many and the dismay of certain people “across the street” from the newspaper in the Church Administration Building. I took the job determined not only to survive but to succeed. My time at the newspaper is a story by itself. Suffice it to say that while Sonia Johnson nearly starved to death in Illinois as the Legislature considered the ERA, some kind but anonymous soul printed out the wire stories the newspaper did not run and dropped them on my typewriter. After Sonia survived her fast she waltzed into the newsroom and we went, appropriately enough, to lunch. Though the revitalization Sonia Johnson brought to the Equal Rights Amendment gave it a great surge forward, the Church’s campaigns in critical states and the ruling by yet another Mormon, Judge Marion Callister, defeated the amendment in a victory the Church didn’t dare claim. The day the amendment died, I was on the telephone getting reactions for a story due right before the annual Christmas lunch with the general authorities on the *Deseret News* board. Somehow my appetite wasn’t sufficient for the occasion.

Also around that time, President Kimball hovered near death. The *News* has its front pages for such occasions prepared years before the event, and one afternoon in the newsroom, it looked as if they would be needed. I remember sitting at my typewriter experiencing one emotion after another. Many Mormons like to think of the Church as a huge bureaucracy run by “middle level management,” which continually thwarts or deflects or perverts the loving intentions and edicts of the Church leaders, much as Americans like to think intriguing exploits emanating from the White House are run at arm’s length from the president. I knew from my journalistic experiences before and after coming to the *Deseret News* how intimately involved the top Church leadership is in public issues, dissent issues, and in media issues. During the years of the Equal Rights Amendment, a number of women had tried earnestly to reach President Kimball, believing he would support their cause if only he could hear their viewpoint. They were rebuffed by male secretaries. I had communicated with an immediate Kimball family member before and after Sonia’s excommunication. I had heard that Kimball wept while watching Sonia on the Donahue program. I also knew that he was firmly against the Equal Rights Amendment, apparently because he feared homosexual rights would follow. Whatever the reason, he would not hear women as he had loved Indians or prayed in behalf of black men. He would not act and no one more sympathetic waited in the wings. Now he was close to death. There in the newsroom, I typed:

an early elegy in lower case

i pay my respects by saying what’s true
in love and anger

you served us crumbs, you see, and we hungered
for our own bowls
of bread and milk

love your silvery chains, my sisters
we did we do
for they are your redemption
oh it is not so simple says my brain
he let sisters too
gowned in white into those clean chambers
american brothers too are yoked unequally
but it is too late now for anything
but the oversimplification from my heart
in this lush room where we keep prophet ghosts
i want to fold you in
like a child too sleepy to trust in slumber
but say instead goodbye hopeflicker goodbye
for my brothers’ sake i weep at your death
for my sisters i keep my seat as you pass¹²

MARK HOFMANN

DURING my five years at the *Deseret News* I began writing about other cultures—a restful change and an immense challenge. As my cultural blindness cracked, as my head spun 180 degrees back and forth from one world view to another, I gradually began to understand my own culture and religion in new ways. I knew from teaching Church history with a feminist bent to my gospel doctrine class that I wouldn’t have had an easy time in Nauvoo. Now I began to suspect that I’d have a tough time as a Hopi, maybe as a Navajo, both communal cultures even more focused on group behavior than Mormonism, though less repressed. I began to understand why the Utes were known as a warrior nation. I listened to Mexican immigrants describe crossing the border under the back seat of a car, of standing in an assembly line until their legs or backs or kidneys would give out, of sending all their earnings home to their children, of hiding from Immigration Services.

This new perspective was enlightening and fortunate, for too soon I would come full circle. The events of 15 and 16 October 1985 hurled me into a murder mystery on the Church’s doorstep, and I was writing it for *The Deseret News*. Even for my life, this was strange. *The Deseret News* had never viewed as positive my connections with Mormon history, literature, and publications but suddenly they needed me for this, the most controversial story yet juggled. The new publisher would stop by my desk in the morning, teeter back and forth nervously while asking me what I was finding out. My usual response was to invite him to ask *his* sources and get back to me. In early 1986, I left the newspaper to write *Salamander*.

Researching that story, Allen Roberts and I came to feel it contained everything related to Mormon culture: gold plates, polygamy, puppets for Primary. But it was a long time before I saw the connection between the Mark Hofmann years and the Sonia Johnson story.

In April 1980 the Church celebrated its sesquicentennial. The sixteen-volume sesquicentennial history had been abandoned by conservative Church leaders, and Leonard Arrington's professional History Department had been dismantled. The Church was reeling from the excommunication and demanding that the media provide "good press." Spring conference that year was broadcast in part from the restored Peter Whitmer farmhouse. Feebly, President Kimball prayed from teleprompters, First Counselor Gordon B. Hinckley conducted, and mission president Elder Hugh Pinnock, who had raised the money for the restoration, played host. The next day Elder Hinckley appeared on NBC's "The Today Show," denying that the Church had bused Relief Society sisters to legislatures in Missouri and Illinois.

Usually the Church does not advertise May's annual meeting of the Mormon History Association, but in 1980 Church Public Communications sent out a press release. The media was recruited en masse to hear discus-

sion of a brittle old paper found in a Smith family Bible. The paper contained hieroglyphs ostensibly copied by founding prophet Joseph Smith directly from the gold plates that Smith claimed to use in producing the Book of Mormon. This amazing artifact verifying Smith's translation story had been brought to the Church by a pre-medical student. This young husband was a returned missionary and priesthood holder, softspoken, deferential, not female or strident. He was susceptible to the Church leaders' suggestions and amenable to publicity. He was about to change Mormon history in more ways than one. Seven years later, he would not be excommunicated for more than six months after he pleaded guilty to killing two people. In fact, in writing the afterword for the paperback edition of *Salamander*, I was able to get Church Public Communications to confirm that excommunication only by reminding them that a general authority, who just happened to be Navajo, had been excommunicated publicly. Certainly the Church wouldn't want the public to think Hofmann, whose name had remained on the records so long, was still a member in good standing.

Mark Hofmann wasn't nice, but he seemed nice. Among the orthodox he appeared orthodox; among the liberal he appeared liberal; among the curious he dropped tidbits; among the anti-Mormon, he told tales. He used everyone and everyone used his documents—in glossy photographs in Church

magazines, in firesides and Church classes, in scholarly papers and journals, in attacks on Church history. He was not disillusioned by his dealings with Church leaders, as he implied to some; he was gratified to find he could fool them. He had been a counterfeiter before he became a missionary, a forger before he married in the temple. He "forged for a living" but it was also a creative process.

During my years at *The Deseret News* I had realized certain

major crimes spoke loudly and graphically about Mormon culture in ways we did not seem to decipher fully. Joseph Paul Franklin could and did gun down blacks associating with whites anywhere, just as he did in Salt Lake City. But Arthur Gary Bishop and Ron and Dan Lafferty were homegrown. What did their crimes mean culturally? Nothing, people said; they were fringy, excommunicated, perverse, crazy people. They had nothing to do with us.

I took on the project that later became *Salamander* because I felt deeply—and Allen Roberts did

too—that this was one tragedy we needed to understand. Mark Hofmann was one of us, someone we could not disown. A few weeks ago I spent a session of the Sunstone Symposium sitting alone in the hotel lobby watching conference-goers and thinking. Only five years before, the symposium had been dubbed "the salamander symposium." In numerous sessions and hallway debates historians and history enthusiasts took on Mark Hofmann's discoveries; and Hofmann, who attended only those sessions and the banquet, was the elusive darling of the document drama. Steve Christensen, who sometimes underwrote the symposium, had told his bishop jokes that year, already deeply involved in the secret McLellin transaction that had floundered once or twice but had not yet turned ugly. This year on the eve of the symposium, Mark Hofmann overdosed on a drug but again failed to end his life. The only regret I heard expressed at the symposium was that he had not succeeded, and I understood that sentiment from his victims. But sitting there I marveled at how quickly people can vanish who had once been admired—Sonia Johnson, George Lee, Steve Christensen, Mark Hofmann—even though their friends and family members, and, in Mark's case, victims, still circulate in the lobby. Down the tube, but life goes on. Did we even understand our fascination with Mark Hofmann and his documents? Or had we simply as a culture come to our familiar unspoken consensus: He had nothing to do with us.



DALLIN H. OAKS, GORDON B. HINCKLEY, AND HUGH PINNOCK
AT PRESS CONFERENCE.

Did we even understand our fascination with Mark Hofmann and his documents? Or had we simply as a culture come to our familiar unspoken consensus: He had nothing to do with us.

TOM SMART, DESERET NEWS

What was his genius? Here's part of it. Mormon culture unlike many cultures had never had a trickster, just the good and the wicked—insufferable Lamans and Lemuels, self-righteous Nephis and Sams. In one of his most ingenious forgeries, Mark Hofmann created a trickster, a cunning white salamander that captured the imagination of a community squirming beneath authoritarianism and overdosed with conformity. No one knew that the salamander was not only impudent but deadly, that when it is threatened a salamander exudes poison, and few wanted to believe it. No one knew that Hofmann had created this trickster in his own image, that he was the trickster, a deadly one, and that he would eventually come to resemble his creation.

On 16 October 1985, when Hofmann became a bomb victim, a whole community panicked. Why? Because he was one of us. We identified with him, the intrepid document scout. The night he turned from victim to suspect, I and other reporters on the story heard the word forgery from a variety of sources, but the suspicion was just as quickly denied. Mark Hofmann was a very unpopular suspect. Gary Sheets was nominated; the mafia was nominated; fundamentalists were nominated; Church Security was nominated. Why? That depended. Because Hofmann's documents were the "sexiest" to stimulate the new Mormon history. Because he hobnobbed with the general authorities. Because he supposedly knew what was in the Church's safes. Whatever, he could not be a killer. And then as evidence mounted, the defensiveness shifted in a most interesting way: well, maybe he was a killer, but not a forger! Anyone could kill given bad enough circumstances but the documents, goshdarn it, were genuine. Interesting priorities.

Throughout the years this story dominated our lives, it had two halves: the document story and the murder story. The document story was fascinating, appalling, scandalous, intriguing, damning, intricate. In fact sometimes the people entranced with the paper chase brought out my ornery streak; mid-discussion I was likely to mention that Steve's necktie was found down the hall or that his heel stayed in his shoe. Why? Because I was offended by those priorities. Because I lived with the murder story every day; I saw photographs of the victims, I visited their homes, I talked with the people they loved and the investigators who tried to vindicate them. Because for more than a year after the bombings with no one in jail, I, among others involved with the case, looked over my shoulder and warned my children about picking up packages. Because I sat for five weeks in a room with the Christensens, the Sheetses, the Hofmanns, and the officers of the court. Everyone was nice. The tension and grief were palpable. During a break in the preliminary hearing, I wrote:

DURING RECESS

Spring sneaked into town while court convened.
One noon, I walk from my office to my
old neighborhood and find it well-kept.
The ditch I'd hurtle galloping home
from school has been curbed and guttered.

Jack's shop is owned and run by Asians now
who mop, exchanging Vietnamese. I buy candy
from the uncrowded shelves and return to work
tracing my old route to junior high, now a shell.
Behind me, my grade school hollers its recess.

Listening back, I hear my own voice, my own
shoes on the hopscotch, swiftly recalling how
to ignore the bell until the line forms,
then beat the blood in my face to the door
where I assume that Miss Blunt still waits.

No one supposes I am walking back to my ugly notes
on a double murder, a naturalist losing spring
to unearth a spider web. Extricated, it must gleam
geometrically, word by word. Sunstreams, continue your
hard green in the surprised leaves; give me, unjustified,
what killing cost; more sky, more time.¹³

MIXED MEMORIES

THE plea bargain was in the works almost as soon as the preliminary hearing ended. Defense attorney Ron Yengich called an old friend and mentor, a former officer of the federal court, not a Mormon, and made a request. "The state is going to do a psychological evaluation of Mark Hofmann when this plea bargain comes down," Yengich said in effect, "and we want to have an independent evaluation prepared to counteract it." The friend agreed to meet with Hofmann at Yengich's office. "Hofmann was cold," he told me later with obvious distaste. "I said to him, 'I guess I've heard everything bad about you. What can you tell me about yourself that's good?' Hofmann said, 'Well, I'm a Mormon.' After talking to him about ten minutes I left and told Ron, 'I'm not interested in writing your evaluation.'"

Ironically the state's evaluation was performed by a psychologist at BYU who saw Hofmann in a far more favorable light: he was incensed that Hofmann was being labeled a sociopath or psychopath, nor, he told me, was Mark psychotic. "He's confessed to blowing up two people," I reasoned, trying to find a way into an interview, and trying to prevent the downfall of yet another expert. "What's left?" "I won't talk to you without Mark's permission," he said stiffly. That night, rechecking what I already knew, I learned of a murder Hofmann had planned and discussed in 1977 but had not committed—who to kill, why, and how to get away with it.

When the plea bargain came and Hofmann the forger made a deal that benefitted Hofmann the murderer, it made perfect sense to many in Utah. The 400-page discussion of paper and ink he gave to the prosecutors pleased those interested in the forgeries. However, Hofmann lied and stonewalled when it came to the murders, adding insult to injury for those people who never understood reducing his sentence based on his agreement to talk. Partly because prosecutors would sit and discuss the forgeries for hours on end, rather than marching in, demanding a complete list of forgeries, and grilling Hofmann on the murders as the defense expected them to do,

the defense attorneys concluded that the Church was behind the whole deal. In fact, those Mormon prosecutors were fascinated with Mark's creative process in forging the documents and appalled by their damage to the Church.

But blowing people up is so messy. Why not forget the tragic deaths and concentrate on the fascinating forgeries? Because denial hurts. Let me share a few memories: One of Kathy Sheets's daughters is holding the program for the popular 1987 symposium at BYU on Hofmann's forgeries, which played to overflow crowds. She scans the sessions again then says in a voice somewhere between puzzlement and pain: "What I can't understand is that there isn't anything on the program about us." (Allen Roberts had been asked to give the luncheon address; after I told Allen of that incident, he made sure there was something about the murder victims on the program.)

Later I'm at George Washington University being interviewed by a black broadcaster for a radio audience. He has described *Salamander* and asked me questions, then he takes calls. One black caller begins talking about executions in South Africa; it takes me a minute to connect his comment with Hofmann's plea bargain, but what he is saying makes sense: "One of us could not have made such a deal." He is right.

Six of Hofmann's cousins are talking with me the evening after the plea bargain. They discuss the forgeries and the murders; they talk about Mark's wife and children. Then one by one they say he should have gotten the death penalty for two reasons—for his own good and because he deserves it.

I am sitting beside Allen facing the Board of Pardons, listening to Mark Hofmann discuss his murders. He has just referred for the third time to the Sheets bomb as a diversion, a game. For a moment the Sheets family is present in my mind, hearing his clipped description; simultaneously I am back on the walkway where Kathy died—and it was only a game. The room turns airless. Allen glances at me curiously as my hand stops taking notes.

Another memory—Jess Groesbeck, a psychiatrist, is reading a paper on blood atonement at a Sunstone Symposium; like many scholars, he had used Hofmann documents in his own research. Not only had he thought they were for real, he confessed, but he had wanted them to be real. Hearing that is a first.

Later I introduced myself to Jess and thanked him for his

honesty. I told him how many people privately confessed guilt during interviews and how Allen and I struggled to give absolution. No one could have changed what happened by a different comment or an unwritten letter. Yet that feeling of complicity, communal guilt, persists in the silence that now surrounds the subject. Jess said, "It's too bad we're too sophisticated to sacrifice a lamb and atone. We need a ritual cleansing."



MARK HOFMANN BEFORE BOARD OF PARDONS

Very few people ever heard Mark Hofmann express anger. He was so calm he carried fully-armed bombs to their destinations.

said. That they chose to pick up boxes labeled with their names had little to do with him.

You see, at the center of this tragedy is a child, a child who learned young that the best survival skill is to be bad but to appear good. If Sonia Johnson grew up believing too much in principle and not enough in compromise, Mark Hofmann took "the truth" another way. In his home, everything was black and white, truth or error, gospel or damnation. For Mark, truth became knowing the trick, not being tricked; truth became knowing science, not being illusioned by religion; truth was reciting the scriptures one day and torturing cats the next; truth was saying, "I didn't do it," and being believed.

If the Church could ask his family to bury the facts about his grandparents' polygamous marriage, and excommunicate a relative who talked, then Mark could turn truth on paper back against the Church. Truth was selling a document containing history the way Mark thought it happened to a Church

For months after the preliminary hearing some Mormon historians continued to maintain that Hofmann's documents were genuine; that's understandable, he also fooled the FBI, the Library of Congress, and a few prophets, seers, and revelators. But with acceptance of the forgeries came only a new form of denial, not only among historians but generally. "This tragedy has nothing to do with us. Hofmann's documents didn't really affect Mormon history except maybe to spur more interest. The forgeries didn't hurt Mormon historians. The deaths were tragic—poor Steve and Kathy—but they could have happened anywhere. People get killed every day. Besides, who knows what Steve Christensen was up to." Look away from what isn't nice; don't talk about it; it has nothing to do with us.

Chillingly, Mark Hofmann echoed the extreme of that sentiment at his Board of Pardons hearing. His bomb-setting meant nothing really: his victims might have died that same day anyway, from a heart attack or in a car accident, he

TIM KELLY: SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

leader who would hide it; truth was promising him no copies existed, then leaking it to collectors and historians. That locked the truth in and let the truth out, and turned a profit that could be passed on as long as no one found the truth was forged. Later truth was saying, "I did it," and making a good deal. Truth was manipulating appearance in order to control reality. Truth was fashioning a humble mask that could protect a narcissistic personality that did not fully mature. Very young, Mark learned to deny his pranks, his feelings, later his opinions, his beliefs, still later, his crimes. He learned to protect his damaged inner self by fashioning an outer self that he thought would appeal to others.

He became, and is about as dangerous as a human being can be to others and to himself. But he is no stranger to us. We were taken in by him because we understand him better than we are comfortable admitting. Allen and I went through many phases regarding Mark Hofmann, often depending on who we were interviewing at the time and the various aspects of the story. I didn't personally come to terms with Mark until after *Salamander* had been published. Returning from Navajo country the summer of 1988, I wrote a poem that represented a personal breakthrough:

KILLER

Sometime before it became too late,
you should have been brought here
and doused in red and blue
(some green)
until your inky caverns emptied
poison on the red clay
and left you whole.

poison to be powdered
like burned bone
under the Navajo sun
then swept on a long tangent
by the dark wind.

nor could you approach
this land unrecognized: here

a sane man lives by his heart.
a crazy man lives in his head.¹⁴

For several years when Allen and I spoke about *Salamander*, we looked into the faces of document collectors, historians, Kathy Sheets's friends, Steve Christensen's friends, Mark Hofmann's aunts or cousins, police officers, attorneys, book collectors, members of the Board of Pardons, the loan officer at First Interstate Bank, Church employees, but once, just once, I wanted to have everyone together in the same room. My fantasy was to introduce everyone to each other—all the people who, after interviews, asked questions or sent messages through me to one another. I wanted to give the Hofmann relatives, the scholars, the Church employees, all of us who ever laughed at a salamander joke, or argued about a document, or defended Mark, the opportunity to say, "I didn't know, I had no idea, but I'm so sorry." Of course that never

happened.

So why talk about these things now? Talking won't erase my mental pictures of Sonia at the organ, Steve dead on the floor, Mark beside me in the elevator, Bill Hofmann listening to his son plead guilty, Kathy's daughters ducking to miss seeing pictures of their mother's death, Brent Ashworth explaining how his son died from injuries received in the aftermath of the bombings. Why talk about them? Because you wanted to know. I wanted to find out. Because we are all related by blood, by culture, by homeland. Because denial is one of the primary survival skills in this culture; as Sonia Johnson once put it, our innocence is reborn every morning.

All the unsavory subjects I mentioned earlier took place also in a Mormon context: from fraud, so common in Utah that the economy is damaged, to child abuse, so common in Utah that the prognosis for the future is frightening. Denial is key in the flourishing of both problems. Looking away has its costs; denial protects the more secure and exposes the more vulnerable.

For instance, recently I discovered that social service reports in Utah rarely mention race or ethnicity as if color or minority cultures are defects, deformities. Elsewhere in the country programs are funded for Cuban Females of Hispanic Heritage and are culturally specific. In Utah our reports don't discuss why drunk driving ratios soar near reservations, for instance (that wouldn't be nice). Thus minority programs have a hard time proving need, getting funded, or becoming culturally relevant. As the dominant culture, we think that we are universal; thus what works for us works for everyone. Sending a Native American to a "generic" health agency in Utah is the equivalent of sending a Mormon businessman having anxiety attacks to a peyote meeting on a reservation. To extend our crosscultural perspective, E.T., the extraterrestrial, informed us that the first step to healing is saying, "Ouch." Saying "we don't hurt" only embeds our pain.

Benjy, one of my myriad nephews and nieces, recently had a bout with an anemia that required blood tests every other day. As children we learn early to "be brave," to suppress our pain; sometimes we even tell children that the needle doesn't hurt. Ben is a baby who at two-and-a-half can articulate almost anything that enters his head. One day as the needle plunged into his vein, Ben shrieked, "This is tew-wible! This is tew-wible! This is tew-wible!" His protest was a healthy and justified reaction, something we all probably need to do when similarly wounded. However Ben goes daily to child care and on Sunday to church and is quickly learning the mores of the society. He recovered his health quickly and the next time I saw him, he had a new saying. Any time someone did or said something he didn't approve of, he chirped, "Be noi-mal! Be noi-mal!"

Anger is normal and if it is expressed it soon becomes something else: validation, energy, insight, growth. Within the last decade Mormon culture has learned, as perhaps Ben has not yet, that the range of normality is wide: there is more room in the house than we think. Within the last decade diversity has become acknowledged, symposia have become en-

trenched, spiritual power has become decentralized. Through large and small encounters like this one, we are learning to see ourselves, know ourselves, enjoy ourselves. We understand better the forces in this world and the ways around them.

A few weeks ago as I skimmed through the notebooks I wrote in Virginia, preparing to give them away, the telephone rang and a voice said, "Hello, Linda? This is Sonia." "This call is my fault," I told her. "I'm finally giving away the files on your story and I've conjured you up." She had not called me from out of state for years—maybe five or six. As if we had talked only a week before, she explained that she wanted my opinion regarding a bad situation she and a friend were facing that could be confronted legally or through the media. After we talked for a while, I suggested she simply walk away from the problem, though it seemed odd for Linda Sillitoe to be saying that to Sonia Johnson. I added, "I have a feeling I'm not telling you anything you don't already know." "You're not," she said in that voice that was once so familiar, "I just needed to hear it."

Things change; people change; times change. Confronting the issues in our lives frees us to move on, to take new journeys. In fact it leads us to journeys, as Robert Frost wrote in "The Road Not Taken": "Oh, I kept the first for another day! Yet knowing how way leads on to way, I doubted that if I should ever come back."¹⁵

For the last ten years during the question-answer period following a talk, people have asked, "What has covering this story done to you?" Arms and legs crossed in front of their bodies, they often were speaking their fear: "If I did what she has done, I'd lose my job, my husband, my testimony, my family." So I'd hedge in order to bolster their courage; or because I was tired of streaking naked among clothed strangers; or because I didn't know myself what the story had done to me. For once let me try to answer that question honestly.

Writing the excommunication stories bent the world out of shape for me and my family. It also freed me to write because I knew I had committed the ultimate sin and would not likely equal it. Writing that story, I paid my dues as a journalist. That story also displaced my spiritual center from activity in the Church to the silent sense of a caring God who was indifferent

to guilt, fertility, and hangups, but who occasionally let me glimpse the silver thread weaving through the dense fabric of my life and let me know I was still on its trail.

I have nearly recovered from writing *Salamander*. It challenged me on every level and taught me a great deal; it was the adrenaline-high of my life. It cost like hell. It stretched my capacity to intuit, to understand, to analyze, to doubt, to interpret experience and personality. It confirmed my unhealthy ability to sit in front of a computer fourteen hours a day seven days a week. It made me a better writer. It taught me the reality of evil. It confronted me with myself at every turn. It improved my ability to spot predators. Ultimately it led me to seek the sources of spiritual power that people then turn toward good or evil.

One Sunday night, after working on this talk, I dreamed I was in a car with a friend when we noticed a helicopter nearby that seemed to be in trouble. It dipped toward the earth but was unable to land; it rose again but was unable to really fly. Huge handles

extended on either end as if it should be attached to some cosmic amusement park ride, but was not. My youngest child had joined the crowd watching the struggling helicopter, I noticed, and I got out of the car to call her name and get her inside beside me, out of danger. Obviously there could be casualties inside the helicopter and on the ground if the thing crashed.

Then the helicopter began traveling and now with my family I followed it in the car. We found it had landed outside my home ward. Passing it slowly, we spotted my brother and his children seated on the lawn beside the helicopter and realized some of them were probably even riding inside. Yet they smiled and waved cheerfully, as if nothing was wrong. We circled around and stopped at my folks' house. My mother was preparing a family dinner and I told her what I had seen, how we had worried about a crash or that someone might get hurt. As I talked, I realized her attention was only polite. My brother and his family had been around all day; clearly no one else shared our concern about the floundering helicopter. And my alarm and precautions had accomplished no purpose except to engage my afternoon.

Waking up, I considered this dream and again asked myself what it meant. Again came the fortune cookie message by



LINDA SILLITOE AT SALAMANDER BOOK SIGNING

Why talk about these things? Because we are all related by blood, by culture, by homeland. Because denial is one of the primary survival skills in this culture. Anger is normal, and if it is expressed it soon becomes something else—validation, energy, insight, growth.

teletype. It read: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free."

Free for what? Free to leave alone a helicopter I can't save, influence, or applaud. Free for more journeys, maybe lighter luggage. But first I've come tonight to drop off this baggage I carried so long, packed too tightly with too many heavy items; now others can unpack it if they wish to, sort it out, put it away.

Many of you sitting before me have been a part of this journey; while I can't mention all of you, those who have been close to me during the time of the excommunication or writing *Salamander* know there is one person I really must thank—my husband, John. Throughout both challenges and in between he has been there for me in numerous practical, strengthening, and encouraging ways. In trying to describe his support, I decided I could best describe the range of his help by saying that no man could have done better—and neither could any woman. Finally, in unburdening to you, I can honestly say that I have no regrets, only gratitude for the courage I have witnessed, the trust that has been entrusted to me, and the many challenges that have demanded that I grow. ☞

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15. Robert Frost, "The Road Not Taken," *The Poetry of Robert Frost* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winstone, 1969), 105.

ONE YEAR

What would I do with it? Somehow write a great poem, at least make my life live up to its miracle? All the things I want are so slight they can disappear in one afternoon: the great poem half-composed in my head soon forgotten by the lake when a little boy falls through the ice, crying out because I happened to be there trying to save myself. I give him my hand after skating my heart across the ice over the parts where I have danced before. He takes my hand, a hand that's never known how to write the great poem now saving a life. The boy runs home against the wind with sunlight ringing in his hair as I disappear into the quiet afternoon.

—TIMOTHY LIU

SING A NEW SONG

By the rivers of babylon
we hang our harps
on the willows and weep
for we would keep Zion
in this strange land
of tinsel homes,
dead dry trees and gods,
wall street saints with honeyed smiles
holding mangers full of money
for the rich who starve,
the poor who covet
those who chant with babylon.

Who will tune the strings,
take harps down from the willows
to sing a new song?
And who will write the words
to those hushed rhythms lapping
at the river's edge?
For unto us is born
is borne
ever a new He comes
and comes
to sit with us and sing.

—CAROL CLARK OTTESEN

How does a man survive the shame and compromise, the violence of faith?

APPEAL TO A LOWER COURT

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By Neal Chandler



All our plotting and maneuvering was transparent. We'd deliberate, weigh the issues, the consequences, our morals, the salvation of the boy. And when we'd prayed and agonized we would help destroy Hanno Rieger.

PROGRAM NOTE

THIS PLAY IS BASED ON EVENTS THAT TOOK PLACE IN northern Germany in the years 1942 and 1943. But while it borrows from those events, it does not attempt to recreate them with historical accuracy, nor are the characters who appear in it historical. They are, without exception, invented. Moreover, in principle the action might

at another time as easily have taken place in Argentina or Iran, in Romania or South Africa or, for that matter, in the United States during the Civil War or at some all too conceivable time in the future. Despotism is the backdrop here, not the focus, and it would be an unfortunate distraction to burden the play with the theatrical paraphernalia of Nazism. Its practical setting is always here and now.

NEAL CHANDLER is the author of *Benediction: A Book of Stories*. He is currently coordinator of creative writing at Cleveland State University in Ohio. © 1990 by Neal Chandler. All rights are strictly reserved, including reproduction of the script and reading, recitation, and performance rights. Amateur and professional performance rights are available by writing the playwright through the SUNSTONE office.

CHARACTERS IN ORDER OF APPEARANCE

KARL IMMER	MEINHARD GLOFKA
AXEL SCHULER	MARTIN HINDER
WALTER LESSING	ERIKA RIEGER
DIETRICH FROMME	UNIFORMED OFFICER
WILLI ACKERMANN	INGRID IMMER
BROTHER BANSKI	A PARTY OFFICIAL



*I just want to release the sort of honest stench
that liberates good men from their faith and
faithful men from delusions of goodness.*

ACT ONE

SCENE: A street corner in an older neighborhood of Hamburg, Eppendorf. The main street is angled so that the sidewalk meets the apron at a spot to the left of stage center, and from there the connecting side street drops back at a sharper angle. There is a street light at the corner and a mailbox mounted on a pole. The corner building, whose brick facade is only suggested, is set back a few feet and, like the adjoining buildings in either direction, projects the worn respectability of fashionable pre-war row housing. The ground floor interior, raised above the level of the sidewalk, is an office and "council" room on the right toward the rear furnished with a large table and chairs and on the left along the interior wall with a desk and chairs. The corner of the room nearest the desk has been walled in to enclose an afterthought bathroom. On the other side of the desk toward the center of the wall is a coatrack consisting of a double row of staggered hooks and to the right of these a door, the only access to the council room. It leads from an unseen chapel beyond, which, in turn, is reached via stone steps and a formal stone entrance on the side street. In the wall beyond the table and suggested in the other exterior walls are high frame windows. Visible on both streets and through the windows and walls of the building are very tall trees. It is winter, and the trees are barren.

As the audience is seated the curtain is open. The building interior is dark, and the street lamp illuminates only the pavement below and the detail of the building facade. KARL IMMER, a large man in his seventies, enters stage right wearing an ancient overcoat, a hat, and carrying a Bible in a zippered leather case. He wears simple, wire rimmed glasses.

Stepping carefully onto the curb, he looks up and notes the audience without surprise, then nods a silent greeting. When he reaches the corner, he stops, turning to his left and craning to look down the side street. When he is satisfied that all is quiet, he turns again to the audience. Removing his hat and placing it together with his Bible on the mailbox next to him, he settles into the comfortably authoritative stance and smile of an experienced speaker.

KARL IMMER: My dear Brothers and Sisters. You must excuse an old man's unfashionable greeting, but, you see, it's a long, fond habit with me, and at my age I've no intention of giving it up. In this ancient head you are all still my brothers and sisters, and I have come forward, as an older brother must, to welcome . . . and to warn you. I welcome you to church. *(He turns and gestures toward the building behind him.)* Oh yes, "church"! Though, if I hadn't told you, you surely wouldn't have guessed. Doesn't look much like a church, does it? In fact, at one time it was the home of a certain Isidor Krepenski, a paint and wallpapering contractor, whose unfortunate wife scandalized the neighborhood here for blocks around by carrying on with her green grocer. The young man's shop was just over there across the street. *(He nods and points.)* The illicitly involved parties met a spectacular, tabloid sort of end, I'm afraid, right above us here in what was then the Krepenski bedroom. *(He turns and indicates.)* The husband was tried, of course, and then let off. This was all a very long time ago, and back then these things were understood. But vengeance is not a good beginning for a new life. Mr. Krepenski's ended badly as well. Alcoholicly, I believe. His house, meanwhile, fell to his only natural heirs, his lawyers and bickering creditors, who offered it for sale at a price of miraculous modesty, even for a house of tainted reputation. And so it happened that, as is required of serious believers, we embraced the miracle . . . and the house: we forgave it, converted it, tore down walls, built pews and a pulpit, a council room, class rooms. Even added a second bathroom. We made it over into a place of humble worship. And for all the years that most of us can or care to remember, we have met in this regenerate old building to praise God, to build his kingdom, and to edify the Saints.

Now, why am I recounting this entirely indelicate episode like one of those obsessed people in the subway or the grocery who feel impelled to entrust perfect strangers with the sordid entanglements of their private lives? Well, in fact, I have two reasons. First, I want to put you on your guard that the mysterious hand of God sometimes appears gloved . . . *(he pauses and glances cautiously to either side)* gloved in human felony. That may seem strange to some, blasphemous even, but it is nonetheless true. Secondly, I will foster no illusions here as to our worldly rank among the planet's estimable religions. No, we do not sit on the World Council of Churches. We are, instead, what most of you delight in referring to as a "sect." Now, there's a deliciously malevolent word, don't you think? Calls to mind "in-sects" and "di-sect-tions." Why, it's a word whose very pronunciation curls the lip. Yet, as far as I have been able to determine, the actual, practical and, of course, unpublished meaning of that word is simply: small in number and, therefore, available for abuse.

But, I'm wandering, of course, and I'm avoiding the painfully obvious question, which is what you of all people in the world are doing at church, and at a small, off-brand, sectarian sort of church like mine . . . on a *(Thurs., Fri., etc.)* Saturday evening, for heaven's sake, and with a neckline like

that one in the, ahhh . . . six . . . eight . . . the eleventh row. (He points and shakes his head.) Yes, well I'll admit I'm a little astonished myself. Certainly, you have every right to be. In fact, before this evening is out, you may conclude (raising his Bible) with that good and troubled farmer in St. Matthew—chapter 13, verse 28—that, indeed, some enemy hath done this to you. (A beat.) And you may be right. For you see—now we get to the warning I told you about earlier—you see, the truth is you are all victims. Yes! Victims in a conspiracy, a plot of which I myself am author. I have lured you here . . . because I need you to play a certain role in our production, a role for which, to be candid, I could find no sufficiently gifted and, certainly, no willing actor. (He has taken out his handkerchief. He blows his nose thoughtfully then begins to fold the handkerchief again.) I'm going to be disarmingly frank with you. Once, long ago, I played the role myself, and, though I am very, very good, I played it badly. The reviews . . . Well, in fact, the reviewers were generous, but you must understand that I am shamelessly well connected in this business, and it's a business that rewards shamelessness. Besides, for all my sinning, I'm still a lovable old sinner. Isn't that right, Axel?

(AXEL SCHULER has entered stage left on his way to the church, but, seeing KARL, has continued on past the steps, calling out a greeting—in audible to the audience—which KARL has not seemed to notice. In his early thirties, warmly and very correctly dressed, and carrying a briefcase, AXEL is greatly surprised when KARL suddenly turns and greets him with this question.)

AXEL SCHULER (stops, perplexed): Karl?

KARL: Lovable? Am I, or am I not a thoroughly lovable old man?

AXEL (still confused): Why . . . Why, of course . . . I mean . . . well . . . everyone thinks the world of you, Karl.

KARL (to the audience): You see. (Turning to AXEL again.) Thank you, Axel. I'm delighted you've come. You've made my point very nicely. Now, please hurry along and greet the others as they arrive. I'll join you in a moment. (KARL begins to turn to the audience, but, aware that AXEL has not left, he turns back to the young man once more.) Yes?

AXEL: Why . . . ahhh. Nothing, Karl.

KARL: Well then please hurry. The others will be impatient.

(AXEL hesitates and then, shrugging, goes back to the church entrance. He climbs the steps, looks back and goes inside where he turns on a light, very dimly illuminating the chapel, which becomes visible through the door at the back of the council room. After a moment he reappears through this door and switches on the council room light. He removes his coat, hangs it carefully on the rack, and then begins to unpack his briefcase on the desk. The light reveals another man, standing at a window, his hands behind his back. For some time AXEL doesn't notice him.)

KARL (meanwhile): Now what did I tell you? They think the world of me. Yes, and even so I played miserably. The production was credited a modest success, but in fact . . . and as God is my incorrigible witness . . . it was a disaster. Failed dismally. Failed on my account. And so it happens that tonight, many, many years later, I am staging a revival. Only this time I'm wiser, or at least more prudent, than I was. This time I've cast you, ALL of you, in the crucial role. I congratulate you, and if, among actors at least, it were not considered hideous luck, I would wish you good fortune as well. (KARL puts away his handkerchief and replaces his hat.) Heaven knows you'll need it. (Then, taking his Bible, he makes his way to the chapel steps.)

AXEL (who has just been startled by the discovery of the man at the window): OH, excuse me! I didn't realize there was anyone here.

(No response.) My name is Axel Schuler, Brother Schuler. I lead the congregation here. Can I help you in some way? (The man turns from the window, but still does not respond. AXEL is obviously uncomfortable.) Are you looking for someone?

WALTER LESSING: Karl Immer asked me to come.

AXEL: President Immer! Well, of course, uh . . . Yes. He'll be right along. I'm Brother Schuler. I think I said that, didn't I? I don't believe I've met you. (He offers his hand.)

WALTER (ignoring AXEL's extended hand, turns back toward the window): That's right. You haven't.

(In the meantime KARL has reached the chapel steps, but then suddenly changed his mind, turned, and now approaches the audience again.)

KARL: I'm getting old. I nearly forgot the most important part. While playing your role this evening, you must keep in mind that from our side of the footlights, down here in the real world, so to speak, you out there are merely a serious bit of make-believe, a fiction, if you will pardon the suggestion, possibly even an unconscionable lie. At any rate, you are not here.

(WILLI ACKERMANN and DIETRICH FROMME, who walks with a cane and a limp, have entered stage right and seeing KARL have begun animatedly and with evident concern to talk to one another. KARL, who once again has shown no sign that he is aware of their approach, nonetheless turns at precisely the moment of their arrival to greet them and shake their hands.)

KARL: Good evening, Dietrich. Good evening, Willi. (Introducing them to the audience.) My dear friend, Brother Dietrich Fromme, a stalwart in the Eppendorf congregation since its beginning. And this is Brother Willi Ackermann. Willi is a high councilman in our district. Among us that's very prestigious. Isn't that right, Willi?

WILLI ACKERMANN (Looks at DIETRICH, then back at KARL): Karl, hadn't you better come inside?

DIETRICH FROMME: It's cold, Karl, and it's getting late. Come along.

KARL: You are quite right, both of you. Tell the others I'll be right there.

DIETRICH: Oh, come with us now, Karl.

KARL: I have something I must finish, old friend. Trust me. It's very important. Go along and tell the others to be patient. I'm coming just as quickly as I can. (KARL turns to the audience and waits for the two to leave. Like AXEL before them, they hesitate for a moment, perplexed, and then shrug and go on inside. A moment or two later another elderly man, BROTHER BANSKI, appears stage left and follows them into the church. Meanwhile, KARL glances over his shoulder to check his friend's progress.) There! You see! You are not here. Not really. Oh, but you mustn't think I am disappointed on that account. To be honest, it's not at all your presence here that I require. On the contrary, it's precisely your absence, your brooding, palpable, exquisitely judgmental absence. (He winks slyly.) You see, absent you are everywhere and absolute, or at least as nearly as I can manage under difficult circumstances. Absent, you become the last inscrutable instance, the weighers of every act and of every secret thing. Absent, my dear Brothers and Sisters, ye are become as gods. (Clearly pleased with this metamorphosis, he turns again and at last goes into the church.)

(The lights go up in the council room where the others have already hung up their coats, greeted one another, and begun to talk. WALTER remains aloof and unnoticed at his window.)

BROTHER BANSKI: What on earth is he doing out there?

WILLI: I told you. He's talking to the intersection.

DIETRICH: I think he must be rehearsing something, a sermon

or . . . I really don't know.

WILLI: Karl Immer hasn't rehearsed a sermon in forty years. If you think he's out there practicing like some conscientious school boy, then you are as senile as he is.

AXEL: The man is 77 years old. His wife died only weeks ago. He's alone. He's grieving, and he still carries the burden of leadership for this entire district. If he seems a little eccentric, well . . .

WILLI: Eccentric? That old man out there, responsible for nine congregations, introduces me to an empty intersection, and you stand there and tell us he's a little eccentric?

BANSKI: In Frankfurt they say he's going to be released at the next conference.

WILLI: Well, it's overdue. **LONG** overdue.

DIETRICH: And who will replace him, Willi? You?

WILLI: That, Brother Fromme, is entirely up to the Lord.

KARL (*who has entered unnoticed and heard the last exchange*): Oh, don't rule out the Lord's politicians, Willi. I promise you, they'll have their say and probably their way as well. Good evening, brethren. It is really very good of you to come so late and in such weather. We have an urgent matter to take up, and I would like very much to begin. (*He has begun to remove his coat, and AXEL moves quickly to help him and to hang KARL's coat and hat on the rack with the others.*) But I see that not everyone has arrived. Brother Glofka is late, as usual.

AXEL: Brother who?

KARL: Glofka, Axel, Brother Meinhard Glofka. I've asked him to come as well.
(*There is an embarrassed silence.*)

DIETRICH (*with entreating concern*): Karl, Meinhard Glofka is dead. You spoke at his funeral.

KARL: Why yes, I did. Four years ago this April, I believe. Well, he was never on time while he was alive. Apparently death is no occasion for reform.

WILLI: What is this, Karl? Some sort of joke?

KARL: Not at all. Oh no. Not in the least. Now, sit back and be patient, all of you. There is someone else here I would like you to meet. Dietrich, you remember Brother Walter Lessing, don't you? (*He directs DIETRICH's and the others' attention to WALTER, who has been standing unnoticed at the window on the far side of the room.*) He was our elders quorum president during the war, and a very fine one indeed.

DIETRICH (*after squinting at WALTER a moment or two*): Certainly, I remember. How could I forget? Why, he's hardly changed. Let's see now. It must be. I'm sure it's more than thirty years. How are you, Brother? (*DIETRICH steps over to shake hands, which WALTER tolerates, though without any sign of warmth or interest.*) Where have you been? Old Sister Himmelreich told me you'd gone off to Australia, but then she thought everyone with any sense went off to Australia after the war. Her boy's there, you know. In Brisbane, I think, or Vancouver, one of those places. By heaven, Walter, you don't look a day older. How are you anyway?

KARL: Yes, Walter, how are you? It's good to see you here in the Church again.

WALTER: I'm not interested in the Church, Karl. You know that. I'm here only because you sent for me, and because after all these years this business is still unfinished. Now, can we get on with it at last, or have I made a mistake in coming?

KARL: No, Walter, you've made no mistake. But you must understand that there are certain formalities, procedures. You've waited a very long time. Now is not the moment to lose

patience.

WALTER: Then by all means, let us observe all the proprieties.

KARL: The necessary ones.

WILLI: Karl, what is this? What are you talking about?

BANSKI: For heaven's sake, Karl, my daughter-in-law is in labor. My wife threatened divorce when I left to come here, and now you and this fellow are talking riddles.

(*There is general confusion and grumbling.*)

KARL: Brothers! (*He waits for silence.*) I am sorry to call you away from your families. I dislike such meetings as much as any man here, but I can put this one off no longer. (*After a dramatic pause he begins again in a lowered voice.*) Very serious charges have been brought against one of our members. The matter is extremely sensitive. The accused is a respected Brother who holds high Church office. Worse yet, the allegations are not new. They were first made many years ago but have been, how shall I say . . . "postponed" by certain responsible officials. The delay and suppression of the trial that must take place here this evening have become a dangerous embarrassment to the faith. They demand correcting. Now, I am sorry that you must be here, but you must. And you must remain until the matter is resolved.

WILLI: Well, don't keep us waiting. Who is it?

DIETRICH: Who, Karl?

BANSKI: Who?

KARL: You'll all know soon enough. You needn't salivate like old dogs over some new bone. Brother Schuler will take charge.

AXEL: Me? But, Karl, I don't even know what's going on.

KARL: You now lead this congregation, do you not?

AXEL: Yes, sir.

KARL: Well, the matter concerns this congregation, so take charge and make it your business to find out what is going on.

AXEL (*chastened*): Very well. I'm sorry. Brothers, would you please all take seats at the table. (*He directs them to seats behind the table.*) Brother Ackermann. Brother Fromme. Brother Banski. Brother . . . ? (*He looks at WALTER, who is still at the window.*)

KARL: Lessing, Axel, Brother Walter Lessing.

AXEL: Brother Lessing, would you please sit at the end.

WALTER: I'll remain here, thank you.

AXEL (*annoyed*): Very well, do as you like. Karl?

KARL: I think you'll want me over here, Axel. (*He takes a seat near the desk.*)

AXEL (*still annoyed*): Do I understand correctly that I am to convene an elders' court and conduct a trial?

KARL: You understand correctly.

AXEL: Then may I know who has been accused and what the charges are?

KARL: You may. We are very fortunate to have here with us the brother who first brought the charges. (*KARL looks expectantly at WALTER, and the eyes of the others follow.*)

WALTER: The charge is murder.

(*There is a moment of general shock and consternation.*)

DIETRICH: Murder? Karl, did he say murder?

AXEL: You can't be serious.

KARL: Murder, Walter? Really? Are you exaggerating for affect, or have the years made you vicious?

WALTER: The years have made me impatient to call a thing by its name. The charge is murder!

AXEL: If you are serious, Mr. Lessing, this is a matter for the police.

BANSKI: Have you gone to the police?

WALTER: The police? (*He smiles coldly.*) No, not the police. This murder belongs to you, "Brethren." And if, as I fully expect, you

refuse to try it, then there will be no justice, no punishment, and, of course, no unpleasantness in the matter. There will be only the murder. The murder will remain.

WILLI: For heaven's sake, Lessing . . .

KARL (*cautioning*): "Brother" Lessing, Willi.

WILLI: For heaven's sake, if you have a charge, then make it. Who is this murderer?

(*There is silence while WALTER stares at KARL over the heads of the men at the table. One by one the others follow his gaze.*)

KARL: I am.

(*Once again there is an uproar and general consternation.*)

AXEL: You are accusing President Immer of murder?

WALTER: Yes.

AXEL: That is preposterous. Your charge is completely preposterous. You know that.

BANSKI: Karl, this is absurd.

KARL (*subdued*): Of course.

WALTER: Then how do you plead, Karl Immer? (*KARL doesn't answer. The others fall silent.*) We're waiting, President Immer. Tell us why we are here.

KARL: I, . . . (*In a rapid, angry whisper.*) You really leave me no choice, do you?

WALTER: How do you plead?

KARL (*quietly, after an awkward pause*): Guilty.

BANSKI: What?

DIETRICH (*leaning to AXEL*): What did he say?

KARL (*raising his voice*): Yes, I am guilty, but not of murder. Murder is a cruel exaggeration, Walter. There were extenuating circumstances.

AXEL (*after an awkward moment*): This is a practical joke of some kind, isn't it? Karl is a murderer. Next we learn that Dietrich here is a foreign agent, and I . . .

KARL: No, Axel, this is not a joke. I wish it were. (*A beat.*) During the war—it was the winter of 1942—I played a certain part in the destruction of a seventeen-year-old boy, a child, a member of my own congregation. His name was Johann Rieger, Hanno. (*To the others.*) Most of you knew him.

WILLI: Rieger! Hanno Rieger wasn't murdered.

AXEL: Who is Hanno Rieger?

WILLI: He was a criminal, a traitor. And he was legally tried and quite properly executed by the government. Karl had nothing to do with it.

DIETRICH: It was a terrible thing, an unfortunate thing, but Karl was not responsible. There was nothing he could do, nothing anyone could do.

KARL: In the winter of 1942 I cooperated in the destruction of a seventeen-year-old boy.

WILLI: No!

BANSKI: No!

DIETRICH: You did no such thing, and you know it.

KARL: That is very loyal of all of you. I should like to have lived my life with such marvelous certainty. Heaven knows I've tried. But for all my trying, I helped destroy that boy. I know it, and it's time the Church knew it as well. It may be painful, Brethren, but it's really very simple. You've heard the charge. The law of the Church requires that you try me, fairly, of course, and that you punish or absolve me in accordance with your finding. The handbook is very clear on that point. The guidelines are in section twenty-one. You'll want to look them up.

DIETRICH: I really don't believe this. You expect us to try you for a crime we all know you did not commit, and on the strength of a confession no one believes. Karl, I honor you. I love you as a

brother, but you are not responsible for what you are saying.

This whole thing is . . . is . . .

WILLI: Bizarre!

DIETRICH: Karl, you are really not well. You're overworked, and since Ingrid's death . . .

(*A man who for some time has been standing in the shadows just outside the open door steps inside into the light.*)

MAN: Oh no, Dietrich. It's not at all what you think. Karl's not crazy. He's just tired. He's been struggling with this thing for a very long time, you know. He needs your help.

WILLI: Who? Who in blazes . . . ? (*Turns and strains with the others to see who is speaking.*)

MAN: He needs you to do exactly what he's asked. You've heard his confession. Now you must try him fairly, and when you have fairly and emphatically acquitted him, then you can send him home to bed.

WILLI: Glofka! Dear God, it's Glofka!

MEINHARD GLOFKA: Good evening, Brethren. You're right, of course, the case is clear cut. But watch out for him. (*He points a playful finger at KARL.*) He's a crafty old politician, and if he thinks he wants you to send him off to hell with your blessing, then you are going to have to get up off your backsides and dance a little to stop him. Hello, Karl.

KARL: You're late.

MEINHARD (*looking over the astonished men at the table*): Close your mouth, Willi. You look like a highway overpass.

AXEL: I don't believe it.

MEINHARD: Don't believe? Now that's reassuring from an official of the faith.

DIETRICH: Meinhard, you mean you've risen?

MEINHARD: Daily, for as long as I can remember. It's a difficult habit to break.

DIETRICH: But you've come back.

MEINHARD: Of course. I was invited to this solemn assembly just like you, old fossil; only Karl didn't bother to tell me the time he'd appointed for his own hanging.

KARL: You knew the time as well as anyone.

MEINHARD: Well, if I did, it slipped my mind. But it looks like I've still arrived early enough to pour some sand under Walter's skids. How are you, Lessing? Bloodless and high principled as ever?

WALTER: I've not changed my mind if that's what you mean.

MEINHARD: Oh, I never doubted it. You're a rock, Walter, a regular moral stalactite. Or is it stalagmite? I can never remember.

WALTER: Well, I see your collective arteries are still not overly hardened by principle. But tell me, have your knees recovered from their infirmity . . . a sort of automatic jerking reflex, as I remember.

MEINHARD: Deft, Brother. Truly. You have a gift for invective.

WALTER: Perhaps it's a gift of the spirit.

KARL: Be still, both of you. That has no place here. Axel, ask someone to pray. We need to begin, and we had better clear the air.

AXEL: Dietrich, would you please.

DIETRICH: I will not.

AXEL: Brother Fromme, please.

DIETRICH: I have no intention of sanctifying . . .

KARL: Dietrich!

DIETRICH: All right. I . . . all right. (*He bows his head, and all follow suit except WALTER.*) Dear Father in Heaven . . . We are called together here for reasons I do not understand . . . to decide a thing which I . . . which we have long since decided. Help us

- please to understand what so troubles these brothers and to free them, if we can, from this burden Thy will be done. Amen.
- AXEL: Thank you, Dietrich. Now, Mr. Lessing.
- KARL: "Brother" Lessing, Axel.
- AXEL: Brother Lessing, I assume you want to present your case against Brother Immer.
- WALTER: That is why I've come.
- AXEL: Will there be witnesses?
- WALTER: There will.
- AXEL: And where are they?
- WALTER: They are here, or they will be as they are needed.
- AXEL (*uncertain, he looks over at KARL, who nods in affirmation*): Brother Glofka, if you truly are Meinhard Glofka, you alone seem to understand what is going on here. Will you speak for Karl?
- MEINHARD: I'd be delighted.
- AXEL: Thank you. Brother Lessing, you understand, I assume, that this is not a criminal court nor a court, for that matter, in any worldly sense. There are no prosecutors here. No adversaries. You and I and every man in this room are responsible only to see that this matter is presented fairly from all sides. (*He waits, but WALTER doesn't respond.*) If you understand, then in that spirit you may begin.
- WALTER: On February 21, 1943, two days after his seventeenth birthday, Hanno Rieger was executed in the Ploetzensee Prison in Berlin. He was beheaded.
- AXEL: Beheaded?
- WALTER: Oh yes. A barbaric entertainment revived by your former government in view of the very barbaric nature of Hanno's crime, which was . . .
- WILLI: We know what Rieger did.
- WALTER (*insistent*): Which was to have told the truth about the government, about the war, about certain "relocation" camps in the occupied East.
- WILLI: Rieger was spreading enemy war propaganda. He printed treasonous handbills and distributed them over half the city. He knew what he was doing. And he knew what to expect.
- WALTER: He printed the truth.
- WILLI: He broke the law. He betrayed his country.
- WALTER: Of course! He not only exposed the emperor, he threatened the empire as well. How thoughtless. Hardly surprising, is it, that a head freely speaking things which other heads resolutely refrain from speaking, that such a head must roll? What does surprise, however, and dismay a little is the identity of the headsman, the executioner.
- WILLI: The executioner? What has that got to do with Karl Immer?
- WALTER: Karl Immer WAS the executioner.
- DIETRICH: You're mad!
- WALTER: Perhaps.
- WILLI: You admit it?
- WALTER: As mad as Hanno Rieger, if telling the truth is madness.
- KARL: The truth is liberating. We have that on very good authority, Walter, scriptural authority. (*He raises his Bible.*) And we are here tonight because we have need of liberation.
- WALTER: Oh, but I know you, Karl. When you people say "truth," you mean manna from heaven, Sunday School press releases safely beyond the tainted reach of this poor world. You want your truths as you want your own squalid past . . . dead! . . . and carefully disinfected to be raised up again in glory. Mortal to immortal, corruption to incorruption. Everything tasteful. Everything sanitary. Everything absolutely guaranteed.
- KARL: Must the truth always be evil, Walter, always sordid and compromising? Is there no room in the truth for glory?
- WALTER: You'll excuse me if I find it difficult in these matters to think past a certain mutilated boy in a convict's grave in Berlin. I'm afraid I've lost my taste for high moral aesthetics. I just want to exhume the body . . . to free Hanno Rieger, or what's left of him . . . to release the sort of honest stench that liberates good men from their faith and faithful men from delusions of goodness. Will that suffice you as liberation, Karl?
- KARL: No.
- WALTER: And why not?
- KARL: Because it's not true.
- WALTER: And if it is? If the truth is no more enduring than that murdered boy, no more ennobling than your own so conveniently bad memories . . . if the truth is that there is no redeeming truth?
- MEINHARD (*intervening*): You are mad, aren't you?
- WILLI (*very impatient*): Did we come here to conduct an elders' court or some sort of philosophical debate? I haven't the faintest idea what any of you are talking about.
- AXEL: I don't see the point of all this either. Mr. Less . . .
- KARL: Axel!
- AXEL: Excuse me, I mean Brother Lessing, you are seriously accusing Karl Immer of murder?
- WALTER: He's confessed.
- AXEL: Well yes, he seems to have confessed, but I don't think we understand. Certainly, you cannot mean that it was Karl who carried out the boy's sentence.
- WALTER: No . . . Hanno's executioner wasn't the pathetic butcher who took his life. It was the close friend and counselor who spoiled his death. It was Karl Immer.
- AXEL (*after a beat*): I'm still completely baffled. You're going to have to be more explicit.
- DIETRICH: Yes, please!
- WALTER: Perhaps Karl would like to be explicit.
- KARL: I think you'd better finish what you've begun.
- WALTER: Very well. Ackermann is right, of course. Hanno knew what he was doing. Oh, he wasn't old enough to know he was mortal, but he knew the penalty for subversion. Unfortunately, he also knew what he believed. It's a terrible joke, but there are a few outrageous people in this world with the courage of their convictions. The government could kill such a boy, but it couldn't punish him. Power, you see, can create, but never punish a martyr. Only the good, the humble, and chosen representative of God's certified kingdom on earth had the power to do that. Right, Karl? And punish him you did.
- AXEL: What's he talking about?
(*Avoiding AXEL's eyes the others stare silently at the table before them.*)
- KARL: He'll tell you.
- WALTER: No. You'll tell him. It's been secret long enough. Say it, Karl. Admit it. Tell him who you are.
- KARL (*resignedly, after a beat*): I excommunicated him.
- AXEL: You what?!
- KARL: I excommunicated Hanno Rieger.
- WALTER: Before they'd even brought him to trial, our leader here took the law into his own hands. He cut Hanno off . . . from the Church, from the faith, from his oh-so-bitter sweet martyrdom. He denounced a trusting boy's courage as blasphemy, and in one master stroke accomplished all the authorities could never have accomplished. He destroyed Hanno Rieger.
- AXEL (*after a long silence*): Was it really necessary to excommunicate

- him?
- WILLI:** Of course it was necessary. Rieger committed a crime. There's no question about that. Anyone convicted of a serious crime is automatically excommunicated. That's in the handbook. You can look it up.
- WALTER:** Convicted? He hadn't even been tried yet.
- WILLI:** We're not above the law here. "Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves." Well, Rieger broke the law. He was in rebellion against man and God, and he paid the consequences.
- MEINHARD:** Brother Ackermann told you that Hanno printed up handbills. He didn't tell you that he printed them here in this very room.
- KARL:** He was my assistant. He was really a very good boy, far ahead of the others. I was proud of him, trusted him. I gave him a key so that he could come in after work to print the programs for Sunday services, and the news letter, and Relief Society bulletins . . . and nights behind my back. . . . When the police arrested him, we learned that he was not just printing programs.
- MEINHARD:** He used the typewriter. He used the mimeograph. He had his own key to the building. It looked very bad.
- DIETRICH:** We had to think about the safety of the congregation.
- KARL:** If I hadn't done something, the authorities would surely have blamed the Church.
- WALTER:** Was it the Church you were worried about or yourself?
- MEINHARD:** That's completely out of order. Completely!
- KARL:** Don't, Meinhard. It's true. I was terrified for myself and for my family.
- AXEL:** Had anyone accused you?
- KARL:** I was arrested. They questioned me.
- AXEL:** But they let you go again?
- KARL:** Yes. In the end.
- AXEL:** And they left you alone?
- MEINHARD:** Alone? Did they leave us alone? They sent party "observers" to our meetings. Posted thugs across the street. Made us register every time we scratched an itch or took a leak. Some of us were interviewed where we worked. Military status was reviewed. Karl worked for the War Ministry. Dietrich had his bad foot. Walter over there is diabetic. He taught in the high school and stood night watch in the harbor. They knew that. That was all clear in the records, but they reviewed us anyway, and denounced and ridiculed and threatened us.
- DIETRICH:** Some of the members were followed. Even elderly Sisters. It was an impossible situation.
- AXEL:** So you excommunicated the boy?
- KARL:** Yes.
- AXEL:** Was there a court held?
- KARL:** Of course. Right here in this room. Except for you, Axel, every man here this evening was here then.
- AXEL:** Why have I never heard any of this?
- DIETRICH:** Karl wanted it kept a secret.
- AXEL:** Secret? But I thought you were making a show for the government.
- MEINHARD:** We notified the authorities, but Karl wouldn't let us tell the congregation. The minutes were sealed, and after the excommunication was marked on Hanno's record, Karl locked it away with the minutes.
- AXEL:** No one else knew?
- KARL:** Oh, there were rumors enough, speculations, but there was never any official notification. After the war I tore up the minutes and erased the notation on Hanno's record.
- WALTER:** Is it really that simple, President Immer? Do you just erase betrayal? There was, after all, at least one member who received official notification.
- WILLI:** Who?
- BANSKI:** No. It was only the five of us who knew. I'm sure of it.
- WALTER:** Hanno Rieger was notified.
- DIETRICH** (*shocked, to KARL*): You notified Hanno?
- KARL:** I did not!
- WALTER:** But the government was kind enough to assist in that unpleasant task.
- KARL** (*conceding wearily*): Yes, they told him.
- WALTER:** Tell us, Karl. How did he take the news?
- KARL** (*angry*): I wasn't there.
- WALTER:** But you know more than you let on. There was a letter. (*KARL looks up in surprise.*) You didn't know that anyone else had seen the letter. Well, I found it right over there on the desk. It was in your Bible, Karl, that very Bible. Imagine, a letter with a party seal on party stationary sticking out of Karl Immer's Bible. I was consumed with curiosity. I couldn't help myself. Do you remember what the letter said?
- KARL:** It said they'd notified Hanno of the excommunication.
- WALTER:** Nothing more? Do you have the letter. I'd like to read it into evidence.
- KARL:** I destroyed it with the minutes.
- WALTER:** Perhaps I can help. Actually, I remember it rather well. "Reverend Immer," it began.
- KARL:** That insane man insisted on calling me "reverend."
- WALTER:** Dear Reverend Immer: A note of congratulation for your far-sighted and entirely voluntary cooperation in the painful matter of Hanno Rieger. Even in these critical times, there are some who must be prodded into doing their duty. But you and your church have not only met a difficult obligation entirely on your own, you have, in fact, exceeded official expectations. We are gratified. And please do not think your zealotry goes unrewarded. Until now Rieger had resisted every effort to awaken his conscience or to impress upon him the enormity of his crime. Yet in consequence of your news, I am told he is remarkably changed. We've shown him the document with your signature, and officials in Berlin tell me the boy seems genuinely crushed. Armed only with the moral force of your religion, you have brought down a proud enemy of the state. You have every cause to be pleased with this contribution to the war effort and to the new order of things in our country.
- KARL** (*who has been visibly agitated during the recitation of the letter*): Swine!
- WALTER:** Oh, it's a very flattering letter. I can't imagine why you kept it to yourself, why you didn't share it with these Brethren here who helped you earn it.
- KARL:** It was meant to mock us.
- WALTER:** Unfortunately, the author's name and rank were not memorable, but I can assure you his salutation was distinctly patriotic.
- KARL:** He was a poisonous, cynical swine!
- WALTER:** Well then, Karl Immer, tell me. For just what sort of services are "swine" so eminently grateful?
- (*KARL looks up sharply, but does not answer.*)
- AXEL:** I think this has gone far enough. I think . . . Karl . . . Karl . . .
- KARL** (*coming out of himself*): Yes?
- AXEL:** It's time we put an end to this and went home.
- KARL:** No, we will not go home.
- AXEL:** I don't see the point.
- KARL:** On the contrary, we are all beginning to see quite clearly, and

we will not go home.

MEINHARD: Then isn't it time you gave us your account, Karl?

KARL: My account?

MEINHARD: Your own.

KARL: Yes, I think I would like to do that now. I think . . . I think it began in the summer of 1941 when Hanno listened for the first time and secretly to a powerful French radio his stepfather had hidden away in the attic. In that summer the war was still young, still . . . (*Struggles for the right word.*)

MEINHARD: Glorious?

KARL: Yes. I suppose. Our troops were stretched out over Europe and Africa like a general with his feet up. Already we were gnawing away at Russia as fast as we could swallow, and England . . . England seemed only a thread away from Armageddon. Whatever Hanno heard in those first English broadcasts . . . wasn't it the delusions of desperate people?

MEINHARD: But delusions or not, the broadcasts had their effect on an impressionable boy.

KARL: He began to doubt. Or perhaps he only discovered he might be capable of doubt. But whatever the degree, it was enough, a chasm.

MEINHARD: His doubts grew, didn't they?

KARL: Until they were overwhelming, until there were so many he had to write them down to remember them all.

MEINHARD: And when he'd written them down, they took on an urgency, a life of their own. He could no longer keep them to himself.

KARL: He made copies. First by hand, then, later, with our machine. And he began to distribute them.

MEINHARD: Recklessly?

KARL: It was a foolish thing, but, no, Hanno was not reckless. He was not that kind of boy. He knew there were dangers. He took precautions.

MEINHARD: But he wasn't really in control either.

KARL: He couldn't help it. After all, he'd seen a vision in that attic. He'd had a revelation. Who was he to deny it or keep it to himself?

MEINHARD: And so he printed his handbills, and he left them in doorways, in hallways, on park benches, the public telephones. He recruited friends, apostles for his revelation, and by winter, that next winter, when the Russian offensive had faltered and begun to convulse, when suddenly Africa was slipping away, and the all but defeated British began hurtling ton after impossible ton of American bombs on German cities, that winter when glory and victory and invincible armies suddenly sounded less and less like things and more and more like words, by then the already public and incorrigible and principled doubt of a sixteen-year-old boy had become intolerable.

(*There is a commotion in the chapel, and the door to the council room is thrust open. MARTIN HINDER bursts into the room.*)

MARTIN HINDER: Look at this rag! Look what she's brought in here! Right into the church, this filth!

AXEL (*very surprised*): What's this? (*Addressing MARTIN, who freezes.*) Who . . . Who are you? Who is he, Karl?

KARL: You didn't know him, did you? Not like this. That was Brother Martin Hinder, Axel, forty years ago . . . on the morning of Hanno Rieger's arrest. (*He turns and steps toward MARTIN.*) What is it, Martin? What are you yelling about?

MARTIN (*comes to life again*): Look at this! Ida Rodefled was showing it to the Sisters, right out there in the chapel! (*KARL takes the flier and reads.*) I warned her!

KARL: Propaganda, probably dropped by a British plane, though it's a little primitive. One expects the British to be more fastidious. (*He offers the flier to WALTER who takes and reads it as well.*) It's unfortunate she brought it in here, Brother Hinder, but she's an old woman. She probably doesn't even understand what it is. Where did she get it?

MARTIN: Oh, she understands it all right. We are at war, and even old women understand war. This kind of treasonous filth (*pointing to the flier in WALTER's hand*) is more dangerous than all the bombs in England.

KARL: Where did she get it, Martin?

MARTIN: She claims she found it in the street.

KARL: I understand your concern, Brother. You were right to caution her. But we are also her Brothers, and we have to trust in her intentions. If need be, to forgive her. Here. (*He takes the flier from WALTER and hands it back to MARTIN.*) Take this and destroy it, and ask Sister Rodefled to come see me after the meeting. I promise you. It won't happen again.

(*MARTIN takes the flier in silence and turns to leave. At the door he looks at the flier again, but does not destroy it. Instead, he folds it and puts it in his pocket; then he exits.*)

WALTER: Our Brother or our keeper?

KARL: What do you mean?

WALTER: That Hinder is a dangerous man.

KARL: He's a sincerely patriotic man with two sons at the front. Sometimes his convictions overpower his generosity, but he's just as stalwart for the Church, and we have to trust his intentions as well.

WALTER: Oh, he has intentions all right. And if you're not careful, he'll have your whole flock grazing in a government camp.

KARL: That's ridiculous. I've known Martin Hinder all my life. And why would the government be concerned about us? We pose no threat to anyone.

WALTER: Don't we? Why not?

KARL: We are a church, a registered church. Our concerns are religious, not political. We encourage patriotism. We insist on obedience. Our able men are already at the front, and the rest have all volunteered. We are loyal citizens.

WALTER: And, of course, you work for the War Ministry.

KARL: Yes. I do. I work for the War Ministry.

WALTER: But you don't belong to the party?

KARL: No.

WALTER: Why not? Hinder belongs. Ackermann belongs. How is it that a man in your sensitive position stays aloof from politics?

KARL: Sensitive position? I'm a bookkeeper, Walter, a blank face behind a ledger. You don't need political credentials to add and subtract.

WALTER: But don't you want to get ahead, to advance your career? Have you no ambition?

KARL: I have enough to do here.

WALTER: Or is it just possible that one faith rules out the other, that you really can't decently serve both masters?

KARL: What are you getting at, Walter?

WALTER: Just that Brother Hinder's view is not quite so narrow. As I was coming in this morning, he was out there putting up a sign next to the door.

KARL: A sign?

WALTER: Oh yes, a very patriotic sign.

KARL: Don't play games with me, Walter. What sign?

WALTER: Nothing unusual. Not any more. It merely forbids entry to certain "degenerates."

KARL: You're joking?

WALTER: Joking? Brother Hinder is a very serious man. Perhaps he's worried they are going to come clamoring in here to be converted. Or perhaps he just wants to fly the flag.

KARL: And when Hanno and the boys see it?

WALTER: Exactly.

KARL: There'll be another explosion.

WALTER: Like the last, when Hinder locked them in and made them listen to his government broadcast. Or the one before that.

KARL: We don't want more incidents like that.

WALTER: Tell it to stalwart Brother Hinder. After all, he's a decent man, isn't he?

KARL: He is a decent man. But he's got to understand that government policies, whatever allegiance we owe them, are not the doctrines of the Church. He can't go on provoking boys who are too young to understand these things.

WALTER: You mean too honest, don't you?

KARL: I mean too inexperienced to make sensitive distinctions.

WALTER: Oh, I don't know. I think they recognize when policies in their church are dictated by the barbarous doctrines of the government.

KARL: That's not true!

WALTER: Isn't it? Do you want me to go out there then and tear down that sign?

KARL (*hesitating*): No.

WALTER: Why not, Karl?

KARL: Because it would be imprudent. Prudence is not moral collapse, Walter, it's common sense. The man is already upset. If you go out there and tear down his sign, you're slapping him directly in the face. Is it your purpose to tempt him beyond endurance?

WALTER (*after a beat*): No, I suppose not.

KARL: We'll take down the sign. Not now. Tomorrow or the next day when there's no one around, and when I've had a chance to talk to him. Besides, who knows who may have put him up to this, or who is out there watching.

WALTER: When Hanno and his friends get here, there'll be plenty to watch.

KARL: Dear Lord, I've got to get out there and talk to them before they see it.

(He heads for the door, but as he does so there is a loud knock. The door bursts open again and ERIKA RIEGER enters. She is a handsome woman in her late thirties or early forties, carefully and expensively dressed, but obviously distraught.)

ERIKA RIEGER: Karl Immer! (*She sees WALTER and addresses him icily.*) I have to speak to Brother Immer . . . Please!

(WALTER excuses himself and backs out of the light, then returns to his former position beyond the council table near the window.)

ERIKA (*with an accusatory tone*): They've arrested my son, Karl. They've taken him to jail.

KARL (*stunned*): Hanno?

ERIKA: The police came into my house this morning, and they took away my son. They said he was a traitor, a saboteur.

KARL: He's sixteen years old. He's not even out of school.

ERIKA: They took my son, Karl. Why did they take my son? Why?

KARL (*confused*): I . . . I don't know why, sister. What did they say?

ERIKA (*loosing control*): They said he was a traitor, a criminal. Why would they say that? And why were they asking about you, Karl, and the Church? What did they want to know?

KARL: They asked about me?

ERIKA: Over and over. But what could I tell them? I don't know anything. What were they looking for? What have you done to my son?

KARL: I've done nothing. I swear to you, I've done nothing.

ERIKA: Then why did they arrest him? (*KARL doesn't know what to answer.*) I trusted you. Hanno trusted you. He loved you. He'd have done anything for you. What terrible thing have you made him do? (*She breaks into sobs.*)

KARL (*for the first time in a consoling tone*): Sister Rieger, I've done nothing to harm Hanno, nothing to get him into trouble. I have no idea what's going on here, but I'm certain it's a terrible mistake. Hanno's a good boy, a fine boy. There is some horrible misunderstanding here. There has to be.

ERIKA (*still sobbing*): They've taken my son!

KARL: I don't understand this. Truly I don't. But I'll go to the police right now. I'll turn the service over to Brother Fromme, and I'll go find him. Do you know where they've taken him?

ERIKA: No! To jail.

KARL: Which jail? Did they give you any idea at all?

ERIKA (*vehemently*): No!

KARL: I'm sorry. Of course, you're upset. How could you not be. But if you could just tell me, were they regular policemen or military? (*She stares at him blankly.*) Did they wear brown uniforms or grey?

ERIKA: Brown, I think. Or . . . no . . . I don't remember!

KARL: It's all right. It doesn't matter. I'll find the responsible authorities, and we'll just see about this. There's been some inexcusable mistake. I'm going to find Hanno and bring him home.

UNIFORMED OFFICER (*who has been standing in the doorway*): I don't think so. (*He steps into the light.*)

KARL (*surprised*): What?

OFFICER: You are under arrest, Mr. Immer.

KARL: Arrest? What do you mean? Who are you?

OFFICER: I am the responsible authority.

KARL: Well, you can't . . . you can't just arrest me. I have a security clearance. I work at the War Ministry. Here, I can show you. (*He takes a document from the billfold in his jacket and holds it out to the OFFICER, who ignores it. A beat.*) Surely, there is some mistake. I've done nothing.

OFFICER: I hope you haven't, Mr. Immer. I'm afraid it will be very unpleasant if you have. Excuse me. (*He turns and gives orders into the darkness to men we cannot see, but whom, during the remainder of the scene, we hear searching and ransacking the room and carrying off equipment.*) The typewriter there on the desk. Take it. And the mimeograph machine. Go through all the drawers, every cupboard, every corner. I want it all . . . everything. (*He turns back to face KARL and ERIKA.*) This morning we arrested Hanno Rieger. I'm sure his mother has told you. We'd been looking for him for some time. He's been a very busy young man, distributing enemy lies, slander, discouragement. That's not a school boy's prank, is it? The boy has been seriously corrupted, and I think you can appreciate that we are very anxious to find out who put him up to this. Someone with a typewriter, I should think, and a mimeograph machine . . . someone with a gift for pulpit rhetoric and fanaticism and prophecies of doom.

ERIKA (*numbly*): I knew it.

OFFICER: For such a person the consequences are going to be very unpleasant.

ERIKA: You did it. (*With sudden hysteria she physically attacks KARL.*) You did this! I knew it! I knew it! I knew you'd done this to my Hanno.

KARL (*simultaneously, while trying to defend himself*): It's not true! Not a word! I have done nothing . . . nothing!

OFFICER (*restraining ERIKA*): Immer, you're coming with me. Get your coat. (KARL, *in shock, prepares to leave.*) Mrs. Rieger, you had better go home to your husband. These people have not done you or your family any good.

(ERIKA *cries while the OFFICER escorts KARL out of the room. The lights fade into darkness and then, after several beats, come up again on the other side of the room where, with the exception of AXEL, all the brethren including WALTER and KARL are seated at the table.*)

WILLI: And they let you go?

KARL: Yes, they let me go.

WALTER: Why?

DIETRICH: What do you mean, why? Because he hasn't done anything. He's innocent!

WALTER: What has innocence got to do with it? What does guilt or innocence have to do with anything anymore?

WILLI: And what is that supposed to mean?

WALTER: You know exactly what it means.

MEINHARD: Karl, what did you tell them?

KARL: I don't know. I don't remember. I didn't think there was anything I could say. The typewriter. The mimeograph. They found his notes right there in the cupboard. What could anyone say?

DIETRICH: But you're here.

KARL: Yes, I'm here. They let me go last night. I don't even know why.

BANSKI: It's a miracle.

DIETRICH: God knows we prayed for one.

KARL: Thank you, Brethren. God bless you. He alone knows what I told them. I don't. But here I am.

DIETRICH: You're an innocent man.

KARL: My heart's still pounding.

WALTER: They just let you go? No threats? No warning?

KARL: Oh, they warned me. They'll be watching. I've no doubt they're out there right now. We have to be careful, Brothers, very, very careful.

WILLI: Well, just what are we going to do?

KARL: Do?

WILLI: About Hanno?

KARL: What can we do? He's in police hands now. We don't even know where he is.

WILLI: I mean what are we going to do to disassociate ourselves from that boy. Surely you understand the danger we're in. The police have every reason to suspect us, and we had better waste no time in demonstrating . . . convincingly demonstrating our loyalty.

WALTER: Just what do you have in mind, Ackermann?

WILLI: Well, I think that's obvious, isn't it?

WALTER (*after a beat*): Apparently it is not obvious.

WILLI: All right then, if no one else will say it . . . excommunication. The boy has got to be officially cut off from the Church and as quickly as possible.

DIETRICH: Oh, I don't think that's necessary. Not Hanno.

MEINHARD: He's made a tragic mistake, God knows, Willi, but you don't excommunicate a boy for romantic idiocy.

WILLI: Treason is not romanticism.

MEINHARD: It's the grotesque circumstances of the war and not anything evil in Hanno that has brought this on him. For heaven's sake, Willi. You were sixteen years old once. Is your soul so dry-cleaned and pressed, you've forgotten the lunacy a sixteen-year-old boy is capable of? That's not evil. It's adolescence.

BANSKI: Hanno was always such a good boy. I don't understand how he could have done this.

WILLI: What you had better get clear in your head is that he did do it.

KARL: Well, he's not been convicted of anything yet. And surely Meinhard is right. Surely, they'll take into consideration that he's only sixteen. You don't abandon a boy in trouble. He's in error, yes, but he's our Brother. If we don't stand by him, who will?

WILLI: Let the devil stand by him. We can't afford it. You all know he's an exceptional boy, clever enough to think this thing up and to carry it off by himself and with full awareness of the consequences.

MEINHARD: I don't know any such thing.

WILLI: Do you really want the police to think he's just some teenage romantic who didn't understand what he was doing? If he didn't, then who did? I promise you someone will answer for this. Is it going to be you, Karl? Us? Are we responsible? The Church? Now, there is a made-to-order explanation: a fanatical religious sect subverting children, telling them that God has called them to betray their country.

DIETRICH: But how can we excommunicate him? He was always such a religious boy.

WILLI: Wonderful. And let him invoke his religion just once, and see how long it is before they're breaking down that door over there . . . unless we do something now to prevent it.

WALTER: On what grounds are we supposed to excommunicate him?

WILLI: Grounds?

WALTER: What is his sin, his crime against God and the Church?

WILLI: Treason. What more grounds do you want?

WALTER: I've read this treason. Have you? (*No answer.*) It says we're losing the war in Russia. Is there anyone here who seriously doubts that? (*Silence.*) It says that the government is corrupt, that it lies to us . . . that there are camps in the occupied East where defenseless people are starved and tortured. Would you care to take issue with that?

WILLI: Are you crazy? Do you have any idea what you are saying? Of course I take issue with it!

WALTER: Oh, I see. And on what authority? The accounts in the newspaper? The declarations of victory? Karl, you work in the War Ministry. Tell Willi how victorious we are in Russia. Reassure us all.

KARL: You know I can't talk about such things.

WALTER: But if all the news is good? If all the reports are true?

KARL: The government has to be concerned with morale. You can't always tell the people everything.

WALTER: Sometimes, I'll bet, you just can't tell them a thing. Why, for instance, troop transports race through here day and night headed east. Or why, suddenly, there is slave labor on the docks. Why? Well, you can't tell the people everything, can you? And whatever the reason, I'm sure it would reassure Brother Ackermann here. Or perhaps it's the deportations that make him so confident. Perhaps he takes heart when his neighbors are beaten senseless and dragged off to cattle cars. After all, can things be going badly in a country that finds time and money to send even its "degenerates" to camp?

WILLI: You are insane.

WALTER: Oh, you needn't take my word. We should ask Brother Bettner. Do you remember Brother Bettner?

MEINHARD: We know Bettner.

WILLI: We know he was arrested.

WALTER: Oh, you couldn't miss him. Big man. Opinionated.

DIETRICH: I know his wife. I don't think he came to church much.

WALTER: I'm afraid he never learned the pieties. He was caught speaking ill of the government's anointed.

KARL: They sent him to an internment camp.

WALTER: Yes, they were very helpful to him there. Locked him into a stock out in the bracing January air and then dripped water over his hands until the fingers were encased in ice. Really! Completely encased. (*He holds out his hands with fingers spread and turns them over slowly.*) Oh, but then the guard smashed it all off again with a rubber hose. He said it was to keep his hands warm. Get it? (*He laughs.*) To keep them warm. You certainly can't fault our government people for creativity. And you should see the result. He's back, you know. Have you seen him, Willi? (*No answer.*) No? Meinhard? Dietrich? Banski? (*Still no answer.*) Surely you want to see him. Your brother is restored to you. He who was lost is found. Hasn't anyone thought to take him his fatted calf? Karl?

KARL: I've seen him, Walter.

WALTER: Then you've seen the change, too. Camp was the making of him. Why, he's become a veritable paragon of piety and circumspection. Can't say enough in praise of the government. You should hear it, Willi. But you'd better hurry. Repentance is a hard road, and I don't think he has much road left in him. (*There is a long silence.*) Or is it just possible, Brother Ackermann, that you want Hanno Rieger cut off precisely because he's told the truth.

WILLI (*very controlled*): Even if it were true, which it is not, truth is not the issue here. We are at war, and when your country is at war, you are at war as well, whether you like it, whether you accept it, whether you approve of the rules or not. When a surgeon finds a cancer, he cuts it out. And if there's the least suspicion the disease has spread, he takes the limb as well. He has no choice. If you don't excommunicate that boy, don't cut him off, then you may as well prepare yourselves . . . and your families . . . to join him.

BANSKI (*hesitantly*): I think he has a point.

KARL: No.

BANSKI: I don't like it either, Karl, but he has a point.

KARL: He's a boy. He's like my own boy.

WILLI: He's a traitor.

DIETRICH: We do have to think of the congregation.

KARL: And you, Meinhard, have you changed your mind?

MEINHARD: What do I know? Am I supposed to make sense of this?

KARL: Walter? (*WALTER is silent.*)

WILLI: At least you could convene a court, Karl. You don't have to decide now, but at least we have to give some indication we're taking this seriously.

BANSKI: There's no harm in that.

KARL: Meinhard?

MEINHARD: Why not?

KARL: Very well then, in two weeks.

WILLI: God in heaven, Karl, we don't have two days.

KARL: A week then.

WILLI: Karl!

KARL: A week. No sooner. I have to think. You will all return here next Wednesday evening at the same hour. And Brethren, please, please don't speak about this to anyone . . . not a word. And when you come on Wednesday, come with prayer and with fasting.

(*They break up the meeting as lights dim. After a moment or two WALTER exits to the street, followed by KARL who calls after him.*)

KARL: Walter. Walter! (*WALTER stops at the corner and KARL catches up to him.*) You are still angry, Walter. When you are angry, you always make it a point to look bemused. If I didn't know you, you'd have me believing you were entertained by all this.

WALTER: Oh, but I am entertained, Karl. Truly I am. Don't you think it's very funny, all this "Why did he?", "How could he?" raging and agonizing?

KARL: No, I'm afraid I don't think it's funny at all.

WALTER: Am I the only man in the Church with a sense of humor? Do you really need me to explain the joke?

KARL: Perhaps you'd better.

WALTER: Why did he do it? He did it, Karl, because we told him to.

KARL: Don't be ridiculous! (*Then, with dawning apprehension.*) Did you? Did someone? Are you trying to tell me that it was someone here in the congregation?

WALTER: Oh no, Karl. No conspirators. I didn't. You certainly didn't. Who among the others would you propose as saboteur? Banski? Poor Dietrich? Meinhard good news Glofka? (*Laughs cynically.*) After Ackermann's speech in there, the first unannounced tap on the door will have them all wetting their pants. I told you. It's all really very amusing.

KARL: There's a boy's life at stake.

WALTER: Well, what did you expect?

KARL: Expect? What should I expect? Certainly not this.

WALTER: Wasn't he your student, your prize pupil? Where do you think he got this fixation on truth if not from you, Karl, and from me and the others. "Speak ye every man the truth," "Worship Him in spirit and in truth," "Rejoice in the truth, for the truth endureth, it abideth forever." Would you like the references?

KARL: I know the references.

WALTER: What did you expect, Karl? The boy had ears, and a mind, and a believing heart. How was he to know it was all a game—idle, promiscuous banter, grown men playing at conviction. Well, the game is over, and Hanno loses. So, come now, don't be a bad sport. It's all really grandly amusing.

KARL: Stop it! Stop it. Do you think your ridicule helps anything, changes anything? It's one matter, and a more difficult one than you seem to think, to know the truth. And it's quite another critical matter to know when to speak it, or whether to speak it at all.

WALTER: You mean we neglected to complete his education. We forgot to tell him that truth is fine, excellent, glorious, as long, of course, as it is carefully wrapped up in expedience?

KARL: This is not the kingdom of heaven, Walter. It's the poor, deficient planet Earth, and those people out there, all of them, are fallible, corruptible human beings. In this world we render unto God those things which are God's, but unto Caesar we still render—still have no choice but to render—the things which are Caesar's.

WALTER: Oh yes. Luke, chapter 20, verse 25. Very good, Karl, very, very good. "And they could not take hold of his words before the people; and they marvelled at his answer, and held their peace." That's verse 26. You do know your stuff, don't you? But do you really expect me to sleep with that fetching old whore of an answer after the legions of swine who've already had her, already used her. The truth is that we are going to render unto Caesar any damn thing he wants, anything we even suspect he wants. And you know it! (*Very angry, he turns and walks away while KARL calls after him.*)

KARL: That is a lie! Walter! WALTER!

(*After a while the light fades and resolves quickly into darkness.*)



We are his and at his coming he
will call us by our name, an
honored name, a victor's name.
That name is "weary."

ACT TWO

TIME: Sunday

SCENE: A grey winter morning. The council room is dark, but the lighted chapel can be seen through the open door. An old fashioned pedal harmonium plays prelude music as a very few, warmly dressed members of the congregation make their way to the entrance on the side street. WALTER LESSING and, shortly thereafter, WILLI ACKERMANN enter the council room. In silence and without any gesture of greeting each removes his coat and muffler hanging them on one of the hooks near the door. Then, separately, they return to the lighted chapel. While the congregation gathers, MARTIN HINDER enters the stage wearing a dark Sunday suit. He carries a folder and, seating himself near the mailbox on the front edge of the platform which serves as the council room floor, he opens it to sort through several papers. The unseen congregation begins an opening hymn as KARL IMMER appears. He seems a much younger man than he was in the previous act, and he approaches the stage through the house, stopping along the isle to shake hands, to welcome the "Brothers" and "Sisters," and to thank them warmly for coming. When he ascends to the stage, he sits down next to MARTIN and, after a moment, leans over and whispers to the smaller man. MARTIN looks up from his folder. He scans the house intently until he discovers what he is looking for; then, nodding deferentially in that direction, he gives a second confirming nod to KARL and returns to his papers. KARL joins in the singing, and when it is over, MARTIN stands, steps forward to lay his carefully ordered folder on top of the mailbox of which he takes firm hold with both hands.

MARTIN: We are grateful to Emil Hartsfeld for leading the singing this morning. He's a devoted Brother and each Sunday comes all the way from Rotmarschen to lead us in song. Not every member is so faithful. Many are missing today. How easily they forget the commandments. But those who've come here to keep the Lord's sabbath have claim on his blessings, Brothers and sisters, and this morning we have a special honor as well. This morning we have a visitor with us, an official, as I've just learned, who has been sent by the party to observe our worship service. (MARTIN seems to draw himself formally to attention and to address the stranger in the back of the room.) Let me welcome you, sir, and let me assure you that the faithful members of this church are deeply honored by your presence. We are God-fearing, patriotic people here with nothing to hide. And if there have been any among us who have forgotten the sacred obligations of a patriot, then they are apostates who deny the faith, and we denounce them. (MARTIN struggles for a moment to control his agitation.) I myself have two fine sons serving their country at the front, and I am proud to say those boys learned the lessons of duty and of loyalty and obedience right here inside these walls. No, you'll not find any room for slackers here, nor any tolerance for treason either! (There is silence again as MARTIN glares his warning at the congregation before turning to his notes.) This afternoon there will be a baptism. Gudrun Banski is eight years old, and since her father is home on furlough, he will baptize her himself. You are all invited. (MARTIN turns over a page in his folder.) We understand that Sister Keppel lost her apartment in the air raid on Wednesday. The government has generously provided her with temporary shelter (MARTIN directs a nod of acknowledgement toward the visitor), but she needs a regular home and people to care for her. Brother Immer will be speaking to some of you during the

Sunday School. I'm certain we'll quickly find a place for her. The Lord's church takes care of its own. (*He turns over another page.*) Finally, Sister Fromme has asked me to remind you that the Relief Society will meet here Tuesday at 7:00 PM to sort woolens for shipment to the front. Please see to it that you are prompt, sisters. (*MARTIN gathers up his folder and returns to his seat while KARL with his Bible takes his place at the podium.*)

KARL: Thank you, Brother Hinder. I think, in fact, we may all want to come on Tuesday evening. Brother Glofka tells me we've a little coal left for the stove, and if enough of us crowd into that council room over there, why, we may even manage to get it warm. Imagine that! (*There is timid laughter, or perhaps just a lighter, freer moment where laughter might have been.*) Let me also welcome our visitor. Our faith, sir, teaches us to obey, to honor, and to sustain the government and its representatives, and to seek diligently after whatever is praiseworthy or of good report. "Be ye therefore perfect," the Lord counsels in Matthew. And oh, indeed, we would be, but I'll tell you, it's an overwhelming task. And so, we are humbly grateful for all who enter here to put their shoulders to the wheel.

As I look around this morning, I see that Brother Hinder is right. Many of our number are not with us. But I wonder if he wasn't a little harsh with them. Is it really so much that they forget their obligations? Or is it perhaps that sometimes—like all of us—they grow weary, and overwhelmed, and frightened even at so many, weighty obligations. I for one have been weary this week, and overwhelmed, and, yes, frightened. I, too, thought twice—and then a third time—about coming here this morning. Surely, I reasoned, one of the other Brethren could take my place, stand in my stead, do my duty . . . surely, under the circumstances, just this one time. But in the end, as you see, I came. And, oh, I'm glad I did . . . because alone in the quiet of that council room before the meeting, I found a miracle . . . right here in the scriptures.

You know, I'm often startled by this old book. (*He raises his Bible holding it up with a gesture of head shaking affection.*) Sometimes I'm a little alarmed. The difficult truth is that truth does not always seem to bless the blessed, nor to honor those whom we feel bound to honor. The story I'm about to tell you is an old story, a familiar one, but suddenly I've discovered that though I'd read it, heard it countless times before, I'd never really heard or understood the story at all . . . until this morning. (*He leans forward over the pulpit.*)

You see, Brothers and Sisters, it seems there was once a very clever man, a man of business, who had two daughters in need of husbands. The older girl was virtuous and sensible, but the scripture tells us that, unlike her younger sister, who was very beautiful, this girl was "tender eyed." (*He takes off his glasses.*) I expect that means she was near-sighted. Probably squinted . . . something like this. (*He squints at the congregation and laughs a little.*) And if they'd had glasses in her time (*he puts his own back on*), they'd have said she was "four-eyed" as well. Oh yes, I can bear you witness to that. The girl was . . . homely. It wasn't her fault. She was a good girl, an obedient girl. And beauty, after all, is a temporary condition, not an achievement. But then, what clever and attractive young man ever fell madly in love with homely virtue?

Nevertheless, her father was a resourceful fellow who knew how to manage an investment. By a stunning and complicated maneuver, he managed to marry off this forlorn child to a very desirable fellow, an excellent catch, even though the groom had not in the least sought, nor desired, nor ever even resigned

himself to her. It was a master stroke. Moreover, the father obtained a very, very handsome bride price for this poor, plain, undervalued commodity. How, you will ask, did he do this? And the truth is, he enticed and pacified his new son-in-law with the promise—at no increase in price—of a second bride, an incomparable girl, a first class luxury model. In those days such arrangements were quite legal, and, you see, this practical man of business knew full well that the beautiful younger daughter was, in fact, the passion of this young man's heart, the apple of his eye, and that in his youthful fever to embrace the one, he would not dare reject the other. That was a stroke of genius!

And so the transaction and the story find their happy endings. The girls' father was gratified. He had gotten the same excellent price for a plain as well as for a pretty daughter. And the young man was mollified. Though paying twice what he'd intended, he'd obtained the bride of every young man's dream, and another as well, and, not least of all, a valuable lesson in business.

So. What do you think? A good story? Yes, I suppose it is. But is the story "good"? . . . this not altogether wholesome commercial entertainment, this buying and selling, this huckster's shell game with God's children and God's blessings? I'm going to be honest with you. It's always seemed to me an indiscretion, a sort of family embarrassment. If you or I had written this (*he raises his Bible and points to the offending passage*), you can bet we'd have been more circumspect with the soiled linen.

No . . . there was no consolation for a troubled soul in that story. It had nothing to do with me, with my difficulty, my fears and sorrows. And so this morning I read on. But then a voice came into my mind, an altogether subtle voice, a voice so still, I almost doubted hearing it. "Karl Immer," it whispered, "Karl . . . Karl Immer, what about this other wife?"

"The other wife? You mean the first one? Well, don't worry about her." I laughed. "Her father saw to her. She got a man." I was impatient, you see. I was already thumbing through another chapter, but the voice came again, more insistently. "What about the other wife?"

Well, all right then, what about her? Her father forced her on a man who did not want her. Mischievously, perhaps, or even deceitfully, though it was all quite legal. And surely her husband's cold indifference at her coming was made far bitterer to her by his joy over the younger, prettier woman. Think about it. How lonely, how estranged and abandoned . . . this other wife, this bride of slippery commerce? The scripture says, further, that when God saw that she was hated—hated!—and herself defenseless, herself incapable of hate, he opened up her womb. She bore a son while her beautiful sister remained barren.

And when she had delivered, she thought in her heart, "Surely now my husband will love me, for I have given him a son, his first born." But she was wrong, of course. He took the child and scorned her still. And so she bore him another, and then a third and a fourth, each time thinking, "Surely now he will love me, accept me together with my gift, forgive me my plainness and my father's deceit." And each time, however faithfully, hopefully, prayerfully she courted her rejecter, each time she was wrong. Until, when after many years, her sister bore a single, sickly child, she saw, was forced to see, her husband love that one frail, conceited boy more than all the six that she had born him.

What of such a woman? Well, you say, she had her children, fine, healthy children, and her oldest was the heir, successor to a mighty, to a holy birthright. Surely a woman could find solace in such children, or she might . . . if the honor to which they were pre-ordained were also pre-determined. That oldest boy was, I suspect, not unlike his mother . . . a good boy, loyal, sensitive . . . sensitive enough to see her isolation, to recognize unearned pain. And oh, he was resentful, as righteously and rashly mutinous as boys sometimes are. And in his zeal betrayed his own good cause with evil.

They told her he'd defiled his father's bed. Now, there was irony in that, and revenge, but oh it was all lost on her. She had no talent for revenge. And when at last she understood the crime, had got it through her simple head, it broke her heart. She was perhaps ignorant of honor and affection. She'd known no lover. But one thing she did know and clung to, and that was duty. She loved this son no less, whose zealous love could not have harmed nor hurt her more. She bore his shame. She shared his punishment. She was his mother . . .

But she was a wife as well, given and faithful to a chosen man, a godly man, though no god, heaven knows. When she died, he buried her beside her long-dead sister, and never knew, had never even half suspected that of all those who'd pleased and served him in a long and crowded life, this one . . . this one who'd pleased him least had served him best. Her name was "Leah." In her own language it meant "weary."

Brothers and Sisters, I have come here, been called here today to tell you that some of us are sent into this world to be the other wife. To the clever, the attractive, yes, and even the chosen of the Earth, we are homely and awkward and ill-favored. Our striving faithfully, hopefully, prayerfully to serve has often been rejected, our service unrecognized, unrewarded, treated with suspicion. It may even be that those who seem our very hope and consolation, our own children, betray our trust. But if we are without honor or the world's affection, still we do know this one thing and cling to it, and that is duty. For there is one nobler than the noble of this world, wiser than the wise, who finds true beauty alone in homely virtue. We are his, and at his coming he will call us by our name, an honored name, a victor's name. That name is "weary." (*Turning to the New Testament.*) Blessed are the weary, they who serve and persist in serving without reward, without acceptance. Blessed are ye when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely. For ye are still the salt of the Earth, and like Leah ye will serve, like Leah, remain faithful. Like Leah, my dear Brothers and Sisters, ye will neither resist authority nor revile the fallen, but instead go on your way and hide your broken hearts and do your duty. The God, who has called you to a lonely office, has given you faith, and stubbornness—oh, I can vouch for that—and a forewarning promise that in the end the very least among us all will be the first. A strange competition? Perhaps. But it's the only worthwhile struggle under heaven. Oh, may he bless our very weakness. May He mold and hammer it to make it strength. And may we truly serve . . . our God, our nation, one another, I ask in his holy name. Amen.

(KARL steps back from the mailbox turning to MARTIN who stands with his folder. The two men shake hands with affection, and then as a second hymn begins, far more enthusiastically than the first, they turn and leave the "stand." On the way KARL stops for a moment and looks out toward the rear of the house. He remains there staring several seconds. The lights and the music fade.)



*There was no long night of prayer,
no fasting, no vigil.
There was only love,
all night.
And in the Morning
I knew I would betray a child.
I excommunicated
Hanno Rieger.*

ACT THREE

[If Act II has been cut, then this act begins with the final paragraph of KARL's sermon heard coming from the chapel, at first barely audible, but then louder until it's as if he were speaking directly to the audience. The sermon is followed by a hymn.]

SCENE: As in Act II, the council room is dark while the lighted chapel can be seen through the open door. The court, excluding KARL IMMER, WALTER LESSING, and WILLI ACKERMANN, is seated at the table. We hear the final verse of the hymn that ended the previous act. After a moment or two, WILLI and, thereafter, WALTER enter the council room from the chapel. WILLI switches on a light and then paces expectantly while WALTER seats himself on the desk and folds his arms over his chest. They eye one another without speaking until, when the music has died, KARL enters the room.

WILLI: Is he gone?

KARL: He's gone.

WILLI: Who is he?

KARL: Does it matter? Some official from the party.

WILLI: But why was he here? What does he want?

KARL: Who knows? To frighten us, I suppose. Don't you think he succeeded?

WILLI: I think you were inspired. Karl Immer, I had no idea . . . I couldn't even imagine what you were going to say to those terrified people in front of that man, but you . . . you were obviously inspired.

KARL (nods a little uncomfortably): And what do you think, Walter? You look skeptical.

WALTER: Oh no, I'm impressed. You really are a clever bastard, aren't you?

WILLI (shocked): Just who do you think you're talking to?

KARL: No, Willi, don't. He's not wrong . . . not entirely. What you witnessed just now was also theater, drama, calculation. Our new guardian devil out there heard exactly what it was necessary for him and the party and the government to hear: The sheep have been returned to the fold which, of course (he laughs) they'd never really left, never even dreamed of leaving. I suppose I am a clever bastard, but under the circumstances, is that so little?

WALTER (insisting): Yes! (A beat.) Yes, it is. (There is an uncomfortable silence.)

MEINHARD: Well, go on, go on! What else, Brother Lessing, what more should Karl Immer have said on that Sunday morning forty years ago? (MEINHARD intrudes from across the stage where, as the lights go up, the court reasserts its presence. Startled, the three turn to face him.)

WALTER: The truth.

MEINHARD: Did it ever occur to you that martyrdom is no inordinate accomplishment?

WALTER: You think not? Why doesn't that surprise me? But then, redemption is promised to the faithful, isn't it, not the truthful?

KARL: The faithful follow the truth.

WALTER: Do they? How is it that a man who remembers so much should have learned so little. Look again, Karl, and this time pay attention. (He points across the room where MARTIN has appeared unnoticed during the preceding exchange. MARTIN goes to the coat rack and begins to put on his coat and muffler.)

KARL (surprised): Martin? (MARTIN, who is muttering angrily to himself, does not respond) Martin, the Sunday School has just begun. Where are you going?

MARTIN: I am going to the police.

KARL & WILLI (alarmed): The police?

MARTIN: I warned you, Karl. I warned everyone.

KARL: Why would you be going to the police?

MARTIN: That Rieger boy was arrested last Sunday.

KARL: We know that, Martin.

MARTIN: The whole congregation knows it.

WILLI (firmly): You are not going to the police.

KARL: I don't think you should go, Martin. I don't think you can tell the police anything about Hanno they don't already know.

MARTIN: Well, they don't know that it's not just Rieger, do they?

They don't know the Church is full of collaborators.

WILLI: God in heaven! What are you saying?

KARL: That's not true! You know that's not true!

MARTIN: That Rodefeld woman is standing out there defending Hanno Rieger to anyone who will listen.

KARL: Oh dear Lord.

MARTIN: I told you last week when she brought this into the church (he takes the folded flier from his pocket and waves it in front of KARL); I told you I'd report her. Well, she's out there slandering the government, spreading more lies, defending that traitor.

KARL: Martin, she doesn't understand!

MARTIN: She defied me in front of everyone, but I have the evidence right here, and I'm taking it to the police.

(He starts for the door, but both KARL and WILLI spring to intercept him. KARL steps into MARTIN's path while WILLI grabs the door and shuts it firmly.)

KARL: You can't do that, Martin.

MARTIN: You're part of this, too. Oh, I'm not surprised at Lessing, but you're all in it with them, aren't you?

WILLI: Don't be ridiculous!

MARTIN: What do you think you're going to do? Take me prisoner? Well, we'll just see. (He tries to get to the door, and when KARL will not let him past, he cries out.) Help! Police! Ppl . . .

KARL (who has grabbed MARTIN and clamped one hand firmly over his mouth): Listen to me, Martin. For God's sake, listen to me.

(MARTIN struggles violently, and KARL turns to the others for help.)

Help me! (WALTER doesn't move, but WILLI hurries from the door and helps KARL force the struggling MARTIN to the ground.)

WILLI: If you make another sound, I'll smash your skull. Do you understand? Do you? (After a moment MARTIN stops struggling.) That's better.

KARL: Brother Hinder, dear Brother Hinder, I am so sorry, so truly, deeply sorry we've had to do this, but you cannot go to the police. If I let you do that, if you made accusations, you would endanger everyone in the congregation, including your own family. You have no idea what a dangerous thing you are about to do. Please, Martin, please try to understand what I'm telling you . . . Please! (After a moment he tentatively releases MARTIN's mouth.)

MARTIN: Let me up.

KARL: I'm going to release you now. We're going to let you up, but you must not cry out. (A beat.) Will you promise?

WILLI: If you try anything, Hinder, if you make a sound, I promise, I'll strangle you!

KARL: Don't Willi. That's not necessary. That's uncalled for.

(They help MARTIN to his feet, and KARL helps brush off his clothes.)

MARTIN: My family has nothing to do with this treason.

KARL: Of course they don't. Neither do the others. But we all know Hanno. He is one of us, Martin, one of the Church. And it's the Church they suspect . . . not just Hanno . . . the Church. He printed those handbills right here in this very room, and if the authorities decide he was part of some religious conspiracy, well

then just who do you think they're going to spare?

MARTIN: I am a party member. I have two sons at the front. My family is loyal and law abiding. We have nothing to fear.

KARL: And other families? Can you promise me that if you go to the police, other innocent people will not suffer? (MARTIN is silent.) Martin, I've known you as long as I can remember. I've admired you, trusted in your judgment, relied on your faithfulness. Don't turn away from us now . . . after all this time. Don't let your anger betray the Brothers and Sisters who rely on you.

MARTIN: And that Rodefeld woman?

KARL: Ida Rodefeld is a foolish old gossip. But she's no collaborator. The boy she's defending out there is the boy she knew, the boy we all knew: Hanno at the head of the Sunday School, Hanno in his best suit, with his best manners bearing testimony to the truth of the gospel. Hanno before the war, before last Sunday. That Hanno has nothing to do with the boy the police arrested. He is a stranger to everyone in this congregation.

MARTIN: Rieger was disrespectful enough. I could have told you that.

KARL: Martin, even I was in custody. They kept me nearly three days.

MARTIN: They let you go.

KARL: But they haven't let me off. They haven't let any of us off. They told me as much. Listen, we are taking formal steps to make clear to the authorities that the Church is not involved in this.

MARTIN: Steps?

KARL: There's to be an elders' court.

MARTIN: When?

KARL: This week. (A beat.) Wednesday.

MARTIN: Well, I should think there would be a court . . . and an excommunication.

KARL: But what good would it do, how credible are we going to look, if you go to the police with this story about a church full of collaborators?

MARTIN: . . . and what about Ida Rodefeld?

KARL: I'll deal with Sister Rodefeld. I promise you. But if she should say anything again . . . anything at all . . . you must not take it personally, Martin. She's an old woman, and she's confused. She doesn't understand these things as we do. (A beat.) Now, please, please let me have the flier.

MARTIN (still reluctant, but hands it over): Very well.

KARL: Now go back to the Sunday School. And when it's over, take your family home. Caution them to keep silent about these matters. These are perilous times for the Saints. Believe me, Brother, treacherous times. (MARTIN hangs his coat back on the rack.) Thank you, Martin. You will not go to the police then?

MARTIN: No.

KARL: May I have your hand on it? (MARTIN surrenders his hand.) And your forgiveness? (MARTIN nods, and they shake hands, then he shakes WILLI'S offered hand as well and goes out into the chapel. After he leaves, KARL takes the flier, tears it into small pieces and then starts to throw them into a waste basket, but thinks better of it and carries them instead into the bathroom. When he returns a moment later, we hear the toilet flushing.)

WALTER (stares at KARL for a moment, then turns and approaches the court): So you see, Brethren, it was just as I said, even stalwart Brother Hinder was confused. Was he to be good . . . or faithful, generous or obedient, your forgiving brother or your law-abiding keeper? And would he remember in the morning which was which? (Turning back to KARL.) Did you sleep well, Karl, knowing your life, all our lives rested in his hands?

KARL (conceding): No.

WALTER: And such a stalwart defender of the faith.

MEINHARD: Well, at least you don't suffer from these confusions, Walter. It's obviously very clear to you, just who was good, and who merely faithful in this thing. I wonder though, if your vision is as broad as it is clear. I wonder, for instance, and since you seem an authority on these matters, if you could tell us something more about Hanno Rieger himself. Did you know him well?

WALTER: Of course, I knew him.

MEINHARD: But did you know him well? What was he like? .

WALTER: He was very intelligent.

MEINHARD: So we've heard already. Where did he go to school?

WALTER: The Upper School in Eppendorf.

MEINHARD: The Upper School? You mean your school? The school in which you taught?

WALTER: Yes, my school.

MEINHARD: Was he one of your students?

WALTER: No.

MEINHARD: But you knew him, knew about him?

WALTER: Yes, certainly.

MEINHARD: Tell us, how was his performance? I mean, compared to the others in his class. Was he average? above average?

WALTER: He was at the top of his class.

MEINHARD: Was he? And was he aware of his exceptional abilities? I mean, did he exploit his advantage . . . over the others?

WALTER: I don't understand what you're getting at.

MEINHARD: Well let me ask it another way then. Was he teachable?

WALTER: Obviously.

MEINHARD: Oh, I don't mean did he learn his lessons quickly or well. Of course he did. But was he teachable? Did he listen? Did he sometimes even defer to the less capable. Was he humble, Brother Lessing, humble?

WALTER (a beat): No, I don't suppose he was. He was an extremely gifted, sixteen-year-old boy, and bright adolescent boys are not noted for humility.

MEINHARD: No, they're not, are they? I suppose that comes later . . . if it comes.

WALTER: If you're trying to imply . . .

MEINHARD: I'm not trying to imply anything yet, but so much has been said about Karl, about the others here, I would like to clear up a few things about Hanno. Did you know his family?

WALTER: No.

MEINHARD: Someone must have known them.

DIETRICH: Karl was close to them.

MEINHARD: Yes, well then, tell us, Karl. Sister Rieger was always so elegantly dressed. And then to send a boy to the upper school. They must have had money.

KARL: They were well off.

MEINHARD: That's unusual, isn't it? It really isn't very often that people of means and influence join the Church. (There is no response.) Perhaps I should say it more directly . . . such people don't normally join a small, off-brand sect full of common working people, do they?

KARL: Hanno had no social ambitions.

MEINHARD: And Hanno was the first to join?

WALTER: The first and the most committed.

KARL: His mother came later.

MEINHARD: And I remember, he had such enthusiasm, such a testimony.

KARL: He was a remarkable boy.

DIETRICH: He was such a religious boy.

MEINHARD: And the father?

KARL: Stepfather.

MEINHARD: Right, I remember now.

KARL: No, his stepfather did not join the Church. He was not a religious man.

MEINHARD: Oh, but he did have a faith.

KARL (*puzzled*): I wasn't aware . . .

MEINHARD: He was a disciple of the party, wasn't he? An enthusiastic apostle of the new age. Do you suppose that the peculiar religious preference of his wife and stepson may have caused him any embarrassment . . . with the party?

WILLI: It's no wonder the man disliked the Church. That boy was rude to him. He was openly disrespectful.

MEINHARD: Then Hanno didn't get along with his stepfather?

WALTER: He hated him.

KARL: That's not true. There were problems, yes, but you're distorting it, Walter, getting it all out of perspective.

MEINHARD: Is he? Think, Karl, a gifted, adolescent boy who resents his overbearing, atheist stepfather . . . that boy encounters not just a church, but what his stepfather could only consider to be an eccentric religious "sect," and then embraces it with fire and, well, how else should I say it, with a vengeance. That, I suspect, was victory number 1. Next, he converts his mother. Victory number 2. And then . . . then discovers, quite by divine accident, that his stepfather's entire world of values is a grand, satanic lie, and that he personally has been called by God Almighty to expose that lie and destroy that world. That would be the final victory, wouldn't it?

DIETRICH: He was such a religious boy.

MEINHARD: He was an unhappy boy, Dietrich, a driven, self-called hero, and a victim, who made us all into victims.

KARL: I don't believe it.

MEINHARD: Of course, you don't. You want to carry this burden all by yourself. You're not unlike Hanno, Karl. You want to be a hero, but heroes make victims, and we'll have no more martyrs, no more holy sacrifices here.

KARL: And I'm to accept that Hanno's faith, his testimony, was just some vengeful neurosis?

MEINHARD: At least you must see that his heroic obsession was fired not by heaven, nor by us, but by his own cankered, adolescent pride. It's obvious, Karl.

KARL: Not to me!

MEINHARD: Even if you were blind to it in the boy, surely you can't have failed to see it in the mother. You saw her again.

KARL: She was beside herself. She didn't know what she was saying.

MEINHARD: What did she say?

KARL: She'd heard the rumors. She knew there was to be a court.

MEINHARD: Yes?

KARL: She was angry.

MEINHARD: Merely angry?

KARL: She was furious, then.

MEINHARD: And what did you tell her?

KARL: That we had no choice.

ERIKA (*appears from the shadows behind KARL and addresses him from across the room*): What do you mean you have no choice?

KARL (*still addressing the court, but distracted*): We had . . . I . . . She was furious.

ERIKA: Of course, you have a choice!

KARL (*looks back over his shoulder and then turns slowly to face her*):

Hanno is in serious trouble, and, because of Hanno, we are all in trouble, all in danger. I have to think of the congregation.

ERIKA: My son is innocent. Nothing's been proven.

KARL: Sister Rieger, the evidence was all over this room. You were here. He did what they say he did.

ERIKA: Well, if he did, you made him do it.

KARL: You know that's not true.

ERIKA: I don't know that. I don't. And who are you, who are any of you people to pass judgement on my Hanno?

KARL: No one is passing judgement. Not really. That is not our purpose. We are only trying to prevent an even more horrible disaster.

ERIKA: Hanno trusted you.

KARL: He'd want me to protect innocent lives.

ERIKA: Let me tell you something, Karl Immer. I don't care about your innocent lives, not one of them, not all of them together. What good are they to me? My husband is right. You're pathetic, all of you. You're weak and ludicrous and pathetic. And just where do you get the gall, the unbelievable presumption to pass judgement on my son? Where? I'd like to know WHERE? (*She is crying and almost hysterical with anger.*)

KARL (*After a long, shrugging silence, KARL looks back to the court.*

ERIKA *disappears*.): She never forgave me.

MEINHARD: She was a proud woman.

KARL: She was his mother. For heaven's sake, Meinhard, my own wife was no more generous, and her children were home safe in their beds.

MEINHARD: Ingrid?

KARL: Yes, Ingrid. My wife. She's dead, you know.

MEINHARD: I know.

KARL: I miss her. I miss her very much.

MEINHARD: Of course.

KARL: Oh, you take that for granted, do you? I'm surprised. You know, my wife was sometimes difficult. She was a strong-willed woman. Surely, I needn't tell you that. Look at the others there, staring at the table and grinning into their collars. They think I'm understating the case. Don't you, Brethren? (*All stare fixedly at the table.*) Well, you needn't be so tactful. She was difficult . . . she was a fearsome mother . . . and wife . . .

INGRID IMMER (*first heard, then appearing on the other side of the room, interjects*): You're late, Karl.

KARL: . . . and I assure you, no more generous, no more forgiving when it came to her children than Erika Rieger.

INGRID: Where were you?

KARL (*turns from the court*): I had to speak with Sister Rieger.

INGRID: At the office?

KARL: No, she sent a message.

INGRID: You mean a summons.

KARL: I went by after work.

INGRID: The children are in bed.

KARL: I'm glad. I don't think I could face them just now.

INGRID: And what did Sister Rieger want?

KARL: She's heard rumors about an elders' court. Why can't people keep things to themselves?

INGRID: Everyone knows, Karl.

KARL: She's very upset. She wants me to call it off.

INGRID: You won't do that.

KARL (*suddenly suspicious*): Why not?

INGRID: What Hanno did is a felony, and when there's a felony, you have to hold a court. It's in the handbook.

KARL: Who told you that? Willi Ackermann? And what else did Brother Ackermann tell you?

INGRID: We're in danger, Karl, all of us, even the children. They think we're all mixed up in some sort of fanatic plot. It's true, isn't it? That is what they think.

KARL: How should I know what they think. It's possible, I suppose.

INGRID: They kept you almost three days, Karl. They wouldn't even tell me where you were.

KARL: They also let me go. We're not mixed up in anything.

INGRID: Do they know that? Did you prove it to them?

KARL: And just how should I have done that?

INGRID: Oh, I think that's simple enough. You prove it by excommunicating Hanno.

KARL (*angry*): I suppose Ackermann told you that as well.

INGRID: It doesn't matter who told me. It's true. You can't provide proof for something you haven't done. You have to do something. And what else is there? What else can you do?

KARL: If he is innocent of offense against the Church, we will acquit him. This is Hanno's trial. It has nothing to do with anyone else.

INGRID: Hanno is lost, Karl. He's lost.

KARL: How do you know? Who's given you the gift of prophecy?

INGRID: Everyone knows it but you, and no one needs a crystal ball. Your acquittal won't bring him back. But in that room over there, there are sleeping children who are still my responsibility . . . and yours. I know what they do with people who are suspected of disloyalty. I've been to see Brother Bettner too, you know. I've sat in the kitchen and held his broken hands while he hid his face from me and cried. A grown man, Karl! And I've seen the families, the children lined up like cattle at the railway station.

KARL: They're sent to security camps in the east, away from the bombing. They're safer there than they would be here in the city.

INGRID: Do you still believe that? Do you really?

KARL (*after a long pause*): No.

INGRID: Then what choice do you have? Go in there and look at them. You're their father, for God's sake.

KARL: I know who their father is. I also know what I have to do. It's been quite a week, really. Hinder's patriotic rage, Willi's cold blood, Erika Rieger with her mother's fury and wounded bourgeois pride. And now my own wife arrives with yet another private morality. Well, I'm sorry, I have all the advice I can use. You'll have to stay out of this, Ingrid.

INGRID: No!

KARL: Ingrid!

INGRID (*calmly, but firmly*): No . . . no . . . no . . . no.

(*KARL raises a lecturer's finger at his wife's defiance, but then thinking better of it shrugs and drops his hand again. He turns back to the court. She, meanwhile, stands for a moment listening, and then seats herself on a straight back wooden chair on the far side of the stage.*)

KARL: You see! She was no submissive, pliant, longsuffering other wife. But she was not wrong either, not entirely. And of all the bitter opposition she was the most loyal, the most forgiving.

WALTER: And in the end she got her way. You closed your eyes, turned your back on that boy, and took care of your own.

MEINHARD: Is that right, Karl? Is it? Did Ingrid convince you? Did you just walk away?

KARL: No.

MEINHARD: What did you undertake?

KARL: Whatever I thought might help.

MEINHARD: You went to the authorities, didn't you?

KARL: Yes.

WILLI: You mean you went back to the police? You must have been mad.

KARL: Not to the police.

MEINHARD: The government then?

KARL: No. (*The others all wait for him to explain.*) I went to the party,

to the man who wrote that letter, Walter.

MEINHARD: But why the party? Certainly that was the last place you could expect to find sympathy for Hanno?

KARL: I went because it was the only place I could find anyone with the authority to help him. I was a bureaucrat, remember. And bureaucrats survive by knowing who makes threats and who makes real decisions.

DIETRICH: When did you go?

KARL: The morning of Hanno's court.

DIETRICH: But you didn't tell us.

KARL: No, I didn't tell you. I couldn't tell you. (*He steps timidly from the table toward the desk.*) I couldn't tell anyone. (*Seated at the desk is a very neatly dressed man in his thirties who looks up from his work as KARL approaches.*) Excuse me.

PARTY OFFICIAL: Yes? (*There is a pause.*) Can I help you?

KARL: Oh . . . Pardon me. I didn't . . . You're the gentleman who visited our service last Sunday morning, aren't you?

OFFICIAL: Yes, I am the one. Let me congratulate you, Reverend Immer. You were very impressive. Very.

KARL: That's kind of you, but I'm not a reverend. There are no paid ministers in our church. We're a lay ministry, and I am only a bookkeeper.

OFFICIAL: Ah yes, that's right . . . (*fishes a paper from the pile on his desk and runs down it with his finger*) . . . at the War Ministry.

KARL: Yes.

OFFICIAL: I suppose that explains why you are here and not at the front.

KARL: I've volunteered many times, but my eyes . . .

OFFICIAL (*runs his finger down the paper again*): Right. Here it is.

Your eyes. Well, don't apologize, Reverend. I have also volunteered many times. The country needs capable people here in Hamburg as well, and it's obvious that your congregation depends on you.

KARL: I try to do my best, but I'm . . .

OFFICIAL: But what, Reverend? You're only a simple bookkeeper? You really must save your protests of inadequacy for the faithful. I find them unconvincing . . . perhaps even insincere. You may not be paid for your work, preacher, but you are no harmless amateur. On the contrary, you tread a delicate and dangerous line with conspicuous authority. How is it that such a gifted man—and at the War Ministry of all places—is not a member of the party?

KARL: I'm afraid you overestimate me. Between my job and my work for the Church, I already have far more than I can manage.

OFFICIAL: No, Immer, that's not the reason. The truth is you're a dinosaur, a relic of pre-history. You are a prisoner of your obsolescent faith, Reverend Immer. It's a shame really. Perhaps, if the party had found you twenty years ago. . . . But then why am I telling you that? Nobody understands these things better than you people with your understandable enthusiasm for youth . . . youth groups . . . youth programs. "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."

KARL: Proverbs 22:6.

OFFICIAL: You see! (*He pauses with a smile and a gesture of conclusion.*) Now, how can I help you, Reverend?

KARL: As a matter of fact, I've come to you about a boy.

OFFICIAL: Hanno Rieger.

KARL: Yes, Hanno.

OFFICIAL: Your young man has gotten himself into a great deal of trouble.

KARL: He's gone seriously astray. But it's just as you've been saying.

- He's a boy, an impressionable, adolescent boy. He can surely be saved.
- OFFICIAL: Saved? For what? For the party? Is that what you want? Or is it another salvation you have in mind?
- KARL: I am . . . we are all loyal citizens. I don't think your distinction is necessary.
- OFFICIAL: It certainly wouldn't be expedient, would it? In any case, I'm afraid I can't help you. It's already been decided the boy is going to Berlin Tegel to stand trial.
- KARL (*thunderstruck*): Tegel? The Peoples Court? Oh no, there must be some mistake. He's just a child.
- OFFICIAL: A very foolhardy one, I'm afraid.
- KARL: There's no denying that, but . . .
- OFFICIAL (*with philosophical detachment*): Daring and foolhardy. I'm surprised really. It's not very like you people, is it? Too young, I suppose, to have learned proper Christian submissiveness. Or is your submission like your faith, Reverend . . . given by God to some, but mischievously denied to others?
- KARL (*pleading*): He's only sixteen!
- OFFICIAL: So young to have made himself so very useful.
- KARL: Useful?
- OFFICIAL: We are going to make an example of him, Immer. We are going to show other foolhardy boys just where such misplaced bravery leads. On the whole I think it will prove a very healthy demonstration. Your young hero may yet be the salvation of many, though not quite in the manner he had imagined. In a way we feel indebted to this rebel of yours, more so, I dare say, than you do at this moment.
- KARL (*after a beat*): I . . . I don't understand.
- OFFICIAL: You are feeling very threatened by all this, aren't you? I've seen you at your pulpit, Reverend. You're not normally a man who struggles for words.
- KARL: I've only come here to . . .
- OFFICIAL: Oh, don't apologize, Immer. You are quite right to feel threatened. At the moment we are preoccupied. There is, after all, a war. But there will come a time when events are not so pressing. Then we will turn our attention, among other things, to you and your sect. And we will eliminate you. Oh, you are no threat to us. Of course not. You are merely an embarrassment, a distraction from reality. But, you see, in the new order of things . . . reality will prevail. (*He smiles coldly.*) You seem shocked.
- KARL: I am shocked.
- OFFICIAL: That is to be expected, of course, but I would not want you to leave here draped in some cloak of moral indignation. It might comfort you needlessly. Do you know why you people don't strike back at your enemies?—We ARE your enemies, Immer. It's not charity that holds your wrath, your pious fanaticism, in check. Oh no. It's weakness. The weak strike down only those who are weaker still. And that, Reverend Immer, is why you and your fear-huddled congregation will help me destroy Hanno Rieger. Just as frightened animals turn on one of their own whose misfortune threatens the community, so you will turn on this unfortunate boy. You've really no choice. It's instinct, Reverend, herd instinct, the most natural, irrepressible thing in the world. (*He continues to smile.*)
- KARL: Obviously, I was mistaken in coming here. Excuse me, please, I'll just . . . (*He begins to back toward the door.*)
- OFFICIAL: Oh no. Not at all. I should say it's been a most enlightening interview. Indeed, I think we understand one another now. Don't you agree? Reverend? . . . Reverend? (*Calling playfully after IMMER who completes his escape and then turns toward the audience with evident self-disgust.*)
- KARL: Oh yes, I agreed. I agreed all right. All our plotting and maneuvering were as transparent to that man as the panicked flight of cattle or the mindless retreat of some column of red ants. (*He laughs.*) And now I was to take me to a court in Israel, an elders' court, a solemn judicial assembly to watch my solemnly judicious Brethren do and say exactly what that preening spider back there (*he points back over his shoulder*) with his preening spider's omniscience had decreed they would surely do and say. Oh, I knew that he was wrong, as wrong and vile as hell is wrong and vile. But I knew as well that every God forsaken word was prophecy. Yes, we'd deliberate. We'd weigh the issues. Weigh the consequences. We'd look to our morals and our standards and the salvation of the boy. We'd ponder and agonize and pray. Oh Lord, how we would pray. And when we'd prayed and agonized and done, our wisdom would be the wisdom of cattle and red ants. And we would . . . we would help destroy Hanno Rieger. (*KARL turns and approaches the table in anger.*) Brother Ackermann, you've had your say. You've heard the others. What do you recommend now?
- WILLI: You know what I recommend. Excommunicate him.
- KARL: Yes, I guess I do know. And you, Brother Banski?
- BANSKI: Willi is right.
- KARL: Right about what?
- BANSKI: We have to do it.
- KARL: Have to? What exactly do we HAVE to do?
- BANSKI (*somewhat cowed, but insistent*): We have to excommunicate Hanno.
- KARL: And your advice, Brother Fromme?
- DIETRICH: I don't like it either, Karl, but I think we must.
- KARL: Must?
- DIETRICH (*indulging KARL's insistence*): I think we must excommunicate him. I'm sorry.
- KARL: Meinhard? (*There is a long silence.*) Well . . . friend? (*Still he is silent.*) Well?
- MEINHARD (*with resignation*): Yes, excommunicate him.
- KARL: So then, Walter, if you agree as well, I'll have unanimity among all my advisors. (*He turns to WALTER who is still standing at the window beyond the table.*) That's a good thing, I understand, a sign. We strive for that in the Church. "Be ye all of one mind," says Peter. "Can even two walk together, if they be not agreed?" And there are fully seven of us here. So I ask you, brother, do you agree?
- WALTER (*calmly*): No, I do not . . . agree.
- WILLI (*upset*): For heaven's sake!
- KARL: Shhh, Willi. Shhhh. Let him speak. It's his turn and his right.
- WALTER: If anyone deserves excommunication, then we do, the men in this room. We were his teachers. We issued the permit. And if it was all a fraud, well then, punish the felons, not the victim.
- WILLI: He's babbling.
- BANSKI: What is he talking about? We've done nothing. I've certainly done nothing.
- WALTER: If we'd done, or if we would do so much as nothing, virtuous Brother Banski, I promise you I'd hold my peace and go along with nothing. You see, it's been my understanding until now that our faith neither encourages nor condones human sacrifice to pagan idols. If I have been mistaken in this, then please enlighten me.
- BANSKI: What? (*There is general consternation as most of the men take offense.*)
- MEINHARD (*raising his voice to get attention*): IT IS POSSIBLE, I

suppose . . . that you have some kind of point, Walter. What you do not have is a family . . . a wife . . . children. You can't moralize into a vacuum, man. There are other lives at stake here besides yours, and besides the seven in this room: old people, women, children whose fate, I promise you, will rest no more easily on a man's conscience than Hanno's. What is it you want us to do?

WALTER: Nothing. At least, do nothing.

WILLI: And if we do nothing, we're done for. I'll promise you that.

And I'll tell you one thing more. (*He points to WALTER.*) This man is as dangerous to us as Hanno Rieger.

KARL (*angry*): This man is our brother, Willi. He's a child of God with free agency and the responsibility to use it. If he disagrees with you, very well then, he disagrees. And you will respect and love him, as I do respect and love him, not despite the disagreement, and not ignoring disagreement, but because of it. Do you understand? Do you? Because of it! (*After a beat or two, KARL turns from the men at the table stepping down stage and speaking reflectively.*) No, I don't suppose you did understand, Willi. How should you have? I'm sorry. As you see, I was upset. It was a very difficult thing for me, but I want you to know I was grateful to you then, to all of you. The court was needed. It was not unanimous, not entirely, not mechanically, and for that I am grateful to Brother Walter Lessing, yet there was agreement.

AXEL (*who has been watching quietly in the background*): Did you agree, President Immer?

KARL: The others all concurred.

AXEL: But it wasn't the others. It was you, Karl. You made the decision.

KARL: Yes.

AXEL (*softly*): But, you were convinced it was wrong.

(*KARL is silent.*)

DIETRICH: What makes you say that?

AXEL: Listen to him. If Walter Lessing was free enough to say "no," and to earn Karl's so adamant respect, then why not Karl himself, whose freedom mattered?

MEINHARD: Well now, Axel, just how many years and how many sleepless nights have given you the right to ask Karl Immer a question like that?

AXEL: Oh, I'm not wise, Brother Glofka, or who or whatever you are, but none of this is making me any wiser. I did not ask to conduct this court. Truly, I'd prefer not to be here at all. But I am, and as long as I am, I would now like respectfully to ask whether President Immer acted out of conviction?

MEINHARD (*breaks another awkward silence*): He did what any good and righteous man does when he doesn't know what to do. He reasoned it through in his mind and heart until he couldn't reason or reconcile or think or feel any further. And then . . . then he went home and got down on his knees and humbled himself to find out what it was he was "supposed" to do. You see, young fellow, a man like Karl Immer, called, as Karl Immer is called, tempered, as he's been tempered . . . and tried . . . and tested, such a man knows his long nights, his vigils of prayer and of fasting before . . . (*INGRID, still seated on the far side of the room, laughs ironically and to herself, but loud enough to distract Glofka, who loses track of his sentence*) . . . before he makes such a decision. Brethren, he received the only answer a loving, decent God could give.

INGRID'S VOICE: Should I tell him, Karl?

KARL: No! No. I'll tell him. (*A beat.*) There was no long night of prayer, Meinhard, no fasting. I'm sorry, it was not like that.

AXEL: Then how was it, President Immer?

KARL: It was . . . uh . . . It . . .

MEINHARD (*admonishing*): Karl.

KARL: It was different.

(*A door is heard and KARL turns once more to the far side of the stage where INGRID is seated facing away from him. She looks up at the sound of the door.*)

INGRID: You're back so soon?

KARL: It didn't take long.

INGRID: Did you acquit him? (*No answer.*) Well?

KARL: It's not decided yet.

INGRID: I thought you were holding an elders' court. I thought that's why you went?

KARL: We held a court, but a court only recommends, gives council, dispenses wisdom. Playing God, on the other hand, is not a group activity.

INGRID: You decide, then.

KARL: Yes, I decide.

INGRID (*after a beat*): What was the recommendation?

KARL (*annoyed*): You know better than to ask these questions.

INGRID: This is not just some private indiscretion of Hanno's. And I am not just idly curious. I'm terrified for my husband and for my children.

KARL: I don't doubt you'd have been pleased with what the brethren had to say this evening.

INGRID (*another beat*): I'm sorry to make this more difficult for you. I'm sorry you're ashamed of me . . . of my "private morality."

KARL: I'm not ashamed of you.

INGRID: Oh yes you are. . . . But I can't change. I don't even want to.

KARL: I haven't asked you to change.

INGRID: How tolerant. How wonderfully, condescendingly tolerant.

You are obviously a much better person than I am.

KARL: Ingrid, please don't do this.

INGRID: Don't worry, I won't pressure you any more. I'm angry, incredulous, frightened, but I will not hound you.

KARL: Thank you.

(*There is a long pause. INGRID sits motionless. She has not looked at KARL nor will she during the exchange that follows. He, meanwhile, goes to the coat rack and through the motions of removing his coat. Then he busies himself at the desk.*)

INGRID: Are you coming to bed?

KARL: Not for a while yet.

INGRID: Oh, come with me now.

KARL: I still have a great deal to do.

INGRID: Please.

KARL: There is so much racing through my head. I wouldn't sleep anyway.

INGRID: You don't have to sleep, Karl.

KARL: I have to resolve this.

INGRID: Right now?

KARL: Soon.

INGRID: All right, soon. But not this minute. You've thought of nothing else for days. You're exhausted.

KARL: I can't sleep.

INGRID: Karl, you don't have to sleep, but you need to rest. At least that.

KARL: Perhaps you're right. I'm tired. I've thought and thought and thought, and still I don't know what to think. I've prayed, Lord knows, till prayers ring through my head like nursery rhymes. There are no answers, Ingrid, or no assurance for a hundred answers.

INGRID: Come to bed.

KARL: All right, all right, I'll get my Bible if you'll help me find my reading glasses.

INGRID: You don't need your Bible, Karl.

KARL: What?

INGRID: Must you read? Can't I distract you any more?

KARL: Of course you can.

INGRID: Really? Do you think so? I never see you, and when I do, you're so preoccupied, so obsessed you don't even know I'm here.

KARL: Of course I know you're here, but you have to understand that I have responsibilities as well, and there are some things that take precedence.

INGRID: I see. Well, I'm only your wife, Karl, but I am that. I'm not your child. You can't wave me away with a shrug of authority or send me off to play quietly until the grownups have finished. You married me. Remember? So tell me . . . I think you owe it to me . . . tell me clearly just what things take precedence over me, and what time, if any, will remain for me when hungry precedence has had its due.

KARL (*after a beat*): I didn't mean it like that.

INGRID: Why not? Why should a man with responsibilities squander his attention on the help?

KARL: Ingrid. Please.

INGRID: Well, tell me then. What time is there for me . . . for us?

KARL (*capitulating*): There is only stolen time.

INGRID: Then steal time with me, Karl. Now! Please!

KARL: All right, all right, my love. I'm coming. (*He steps across the stage and retrieves an empty chair from the council table, then sets it down 3 or 4 feet in back of and as many feet down stage from INGRID's chair facing in the opposite direction. He seats himself. During what follows the stage lights are dimmed so that except for circles of light around their chairs the remainder of the stage is soon obscured. Thereafter, even this light dims gradually until at the end of the dialogue, the stage is completely dark.*) You see. I'm here.

INGRID: Kidnapped.

KARL: No, not kidnapped. "Liberated," for the moment. (*A beat.*) Tell me, my love, why is it . . . (*breaks off in silence.*)

INGRID: Why is what?

KARL: Why is it so much easier to steal a little happiness than to earn it?

INGRID: You think too much.

KARL: Too much? I suppose, but not well, I'm afraid. It seems to be a question of efficiency.

INGRID: You should think less. You should rely on what you know without thinking.

KARL: Oh?

INGRID: The world would be better for it.

KARL: You think so?

INGRID: No, I don't "think" so, but I'm right.

KARL: And how do I go about this?

INGRID: Of all people, you should know. It's in the scriptures.

KARL: Scripture?

INGRID: Yes. Is there something wrong with that?

KARL: I'm just surprised.

INGRID: You needn't be. The scripture says, "His left hand should be under my head and his right hand should . . ."

KARL (*admonishing*): Ingrid.

INGRID (*insistent*): . . . his right hand should embrace me."

KARL: This is really not a time.

INGRID: Of course not. There is no time for us. Not unless it's stolen. Remember. No happiness that isn't plundered. Oh, but I'm a very willing thief, you see, and if I can . . . and if you love

me . . . I'll make you my accomplice. (*A beat.*) So now you've heard my confession, you can report me to the elders, or . . .

KARL: Or what?

INGRID: Or you can put your left hand behind my head and with this hand . . .

KARL: Yes?

INGRID: I love your hands, Karl Immer.

KARL: With this hand I embrace thee . . . here?

INGRID: Oh yes, there.

KARL: For thou art fair, my love, thou art truly fair.

INGRID: I am a plain woman, but I am a woman.

KARL: Thy lips are a blossom of scarlet.

INGRID: And where are your glasses?

KARL: Thy throat is the throat of a lily.

INGRID: My lover is blind—sweet blindness.

KARL: And thy sweet breasts . . .

INGRID: I hide them, you know.

KARL: Your breasts?

INGRID (*laughs softly*): No, your glasses. I always hide your glasses.

KARL: Oh, but hands have eyes, and lips, and tongues. See here?

INGRID: Ohhhh yes.

KARL: And here? I see that thou art all fair, my love, there is no spot in thee.

INGRID: Not one?

KARL: Well perhaps just this . . .

INGRID: I was afraid of that.

KARL: Perhaps this one sweet spot.

INGRID: Don't. I'm fat. I know it.

KARL: The navel like a rounded goblet, that wanteth not for wine, and the belly like a heap of sun paled wheat set far about with flowers.

INGRID: Wheat?

KARL: Oats for the horse, corn for the ox, but wheat, sweet wheat for man.

INGRID: Cracked wheat, I think.

KARL: No. No. By the feel of it, it's fine, round, whole wheat.

INGRID: And what sort of man is excited by wheat? Are you a husband or a botanist?

KARL: A vegetarian who would feed among flowers. (*INGRID laughs.*) And a man who knows the garden of a temptress when he sees it.

INGRID: Am I a temptress?

KARL: Oh yes.

INGRID: And are you tempted?

KARL: Thou art fair, my love, comely as morning, beguiling as the moon, and terrible as an army with banners.

INGRID: Oh how I wish I were. How I wish I had a temptress's gift to bend your high moral obstinance with a look, or a smile, or this more than willing body.

KARL: I love you, Delilah.

INGRID: Do you? Do you love me?

KARL: Yes.

INGRID: Then do my will.

KARL (*warily*): What?

INGRID: If you love me, then keep MY commandments.

KARL (*after a long pause*): Oh, you are a whore.

INGRID: If I am, I'm your whore, Karl Immer. I whore for you and with you. And it's to you I bring my wages.

KARL: And what are these wages of whoring?

INGRID: The wages of love! . . . if love is whoring.

KARL: And what are they?

INGRID: Life.

KARL: Is that all?
 INGRID: It's enough. I'm not very demanding, I suppose, but then I'm neither free nor called to calculate so careful a route to heaven as you. I'm here, and I am now with you and with my children. That's all. Besides, just where have all your calculations gotten you. Have they made you richer or wiser?
 KARL: No.
 INGRID: A better lover?
 KARL (*puzzled*): What do you mean?
 INGRID: Nothing . . . only that you're thinking again.
 KARL: And how do you know?
 INGRID: How do you think I know?
 KARL (*reflects*): Oh. Well, what can I say? (*He laughs. They laugh.*) Irrefutable. I think too much. But if I were to repent?
 INGRID: There is hope for the repentant.
 KARL: Then tell me, Sister, what should I do?
 INGRID: I've told you already, heed the voice of scripture.
 KARL: Remind me.
 INGRID: "His left hand should be under my head."
 KARL: Like this.
 INGRID: Mmm hmmm. And his right hand . . . Oh, his right hand should embrace me.
 KARL: Here?
 INGRID: Yes, there. And here.
 KARL: Thou art fair, my love.
 INGRID: And here.
 KARL: Thy lips, a scarlet flower.
 INGRID: Yes.
 KARL: Thy throat, the lily's throat.
 INGRID: Oh, Karl.
 KARL: And breasts like two young deer.
 INGRID: So wild?
 KARL: Oh yes.
 INGRID: And shy?
 KARL: Once they were shy, but now I think . . .
 INGRID: Don't think, Karl. Please don't think.
 KARL: . . . but now I'll roam all night betwixt these brazen breasts. Until the day, till shadows dim and lucent darkness come, I'll get me to this mountain here of myrrh, and this sweet hill of sweetest frankincense.
 INGRID: I love your hands.
 KARL: Such useless hands alone, on thee have eyes and mouth and tongue.
 INGRID: And see?
 KARL: And see that thou art fair.
 INGRID: And taste?
 KARL: And feed among the flowers.
 INGRID: And speak?
 KARL: To tell thee that I love thee. That I am lost, and won.
 INGRID: Then awake, my love, arise and come with me.
 KARL: Oh, I AM waked and risen here, and I will surely . . .
 (*They laugh together softly, and then there is silence.*)
 INGRID (*after a few moments, she begins in a narrative tone*): She took him, and she held him, and she would not let him go until he pleased her.
 KARL (*already on his feet and moving away in the darkness, turns back*): And did he please her?
 INGRID: Oh yes . . . yes . . . dear God in heaven, yes!
 (*As the council room is suddenly illuminated again, KARL is facing the court at the table.*)
 KARL: I'm sorry, Brethren, if I offend your sensibilities, but there was no long night of prayer, no fasting . . . no vigil. There was

only . . .
 INGRID: Only?
 KARL: There was love. We made love . . . all night. And in the morning returning from the bathroom, I stood in a cold hallway looking down on my sleeping children, and I knew that on that day I would betray a child. I dressed. I went to work. And coming home in the evening, I stopped here at the church, sat at that very table, and I excommunicated Hanno Rieger.
 MEINHARD: Karl.
 KARL: No, Meinhard, no Gethsemane.
 MEINHARD: And are we supposed to condemn you for comforting your wife in a terrifying time?
 KARL: She was the comforter. She offered refuge, warm, unthinking sanctuary, and how willingly I took it.
 WALTER (*breaking in*): Well now, Brethren, aren't you all entertained at last? Surely, this time the joke is not lost on you. Hanno Rieger's fate, his real execution did not, after all, turn on God's irresistible will, nor on his rule, nor even on his shrugging permission, but only on the fortuitous rise or fall of Karl Immer's reluctant male extremity. (*Taunting them with an obscene gesture.*) We witness here the triumph of blind biology over all our moralizing prattle. And what classic irony, on the one hand to despise the prophet, Karl, while on the other you carry out the prophecy. It was a matter of instinct after all, wasn't it? (*Repeating the gesture.*) Survival of the species, the most natural, irrepressible thing in the world.
 MEINHARD: Stop it!
 WALTER: Oh, it's not pretty, but it has the giddy, acid scent of truth?
 MEINHARD: Must every word that passes through your mouth sink into obscenity?
 WALTER: When exhuming bodies, Brother Glofka, one must be prepared to let the grave yield up her dead.
 KARL: There was no confirmation, Meinhard. No sudden light. No answer. There was no prayer. I took the evening off. That's all.
 MEINHARD: Did you? Did you really? You know, I'm told that in the orient they scoff at Christian prayers. Shopping lists, they call them, the pushy agenda of children who want what they want and refuse to see what is already simply and mercifully at hand. Was it really so God forsaken of a torn and divided man to find solace in a holy union? Was it perhaps an affront to Him who sealed and sanctified their bond? And was it so unlike prayer in the very shadow of death to invoke life, to invite it? What then is faith, if not that? And what is passion—strange, fugitive sweetness—if not an answer, however fleeting or out of context, to fear and doubt and resignation? How calmly Karl must have stood there in the morning and known what every holy lover knows—in the morning—that life is priceless and not nearly paid for with our grudging gifts, our "sacrifices" of conscience and principle and, yes . . . yes, even of innocent life. (*Turning to the court.*) And who are you? And who are we to question the tariff? We are merely human. Walter's made it plain enough. We are no hill-shining beacons of moral rectitude, and Karl Immer is no conquering hero. But he is here. Not in Australia, Walter, here . . . in the Church, in the close malodorous company of his fellow Saints. And who is there among us he's not carried on his broken, inadequate shoulders? Who? Not one? Well then, it's time you got this over with. It's time you sent this good man home. Send him with your forgiveness and with a lighter conscience. I promise you he's earned it with his own burdensome, mortifying humanity. It's a fair price.
 WALTER (*firmly*): It's a Judas price.

MEINHARD: It's the only price. The only burden in this world he bears alone.

WALTER: Then let him bear it openly, honestly.

MEINHARD: You astonish me. You really do. He called the court. No one asked him. No one forced him. It was Karl Immer who called you here.

WALTER: And you? Who called you?

MEINHARD: Karl, of course.

WALTER: And the others?

DIETRICH: He called us all here, Walter.

WALTER: The court. The defense. He even called the relentless prosecution. How noble. How disarmingly courageous. And how very, very politic. Is it possible, Brethren, he is writing the script as well . . . and directing . . . and managing the scenery and the lights? After all, you are hardly yourselves are you? This intensity, gentlemen. And vocabulary. This dramatic eloquence. I hardly recognize you. Is the dull and dreary world so easily transfigured, or aren't you . . . aren't we all really more like players in a guilty daydream? Is it possible we are, all of us, nothing more than the last self-abusing fantasy of this (points to KARL) terrified old man who is furiously masturbating his conscience in the dark?

AXEL (coming to his feet): That is quite enough!

WALTER: One last evening off, Karl? One last evasive self-indulgence?

AXEL: Mr. Lessing!

WALTER: Excuse me. Perhaps you failed to notice how strategically Brother Glofka's very moving oration just now arrived at the very climax of the proceeding leaving us all to bask now in the sweet, orgasmic afterglow of Christian absolution. It's perfect. The perfect denouement.

AXEL: You are in a church, sir, not the gutter.

WALTER: Are they so unlike?

AXEL: That's enough, Mr. Lessing.

WALTER: If you really want me to shut up, Karl, then tell me yourself. Don't use this inflated marionette.

AXEL: I'm quite capable of speaking for myself, and I have had enough. I am calling this meeting to an end. (They glare at one another in anger.)

MEINHARD (after a beat): Let's end it then, Axel.

AXEL (Encouraged by Glofka, he proceeds to close the meeting.):

Brother Immer, I'm not at all sure what good it's done to open up this wound again. It's all so long ago and so . . . ah, so very, very complicated. I wonder if anyone can really sort out what was right or who was wrong.

KARL: You are a judge in Israel, Axel Schuler. Right and wrong are your calling.

AXEL: Well, we'll try. We will try. We'll go over the testimony. We'll make it a matter of earnest prayer. I promise you that. And as soon as I possibly can, I'll send you word of my decision. (There is an uncomfortable pause.) Is there anything else you would like to say before we close?

KARL: No. (Then, thinking it over.) Yes, I suppose there is one last thing. Walter has called this trial a sham, and me a manipulating old hypocrite. Actually, it's one of the kinder things he's said of me today, not least of all because it's true. (There are protests from some of the others.) No, it's true . . . all true. But also because, as it turns out, we hypocrites are not

such a bad lot after all. At least we've had standards to fall short of. However short I have fallen, I know the measure. In this case it's simple enough. "What man of you having a hundred sheep doth not leave the ninety and nine in the wilderness and go after that one which is lost, until he find it." That's Luke 15, verse 4. A troubling question, don't you think, but to the point. I am that man. (Emphatically.) I did not murder Hanno Rieger (then, with evident weariness), but I abandoned him to murderers. AXEL (still uncomfortable): Well then . . . ah . . . well then, President Immer. We appreciate your forthrightness. We will let you know as soon as we decide what action, if any, is to be taken. In the meantime, sir, please . . . please go home and rest.

MEINHARD: Go home, Karl. It's over.

(As KARL is helped on with his coat and leaves, the stage darkens until the scene appears as at the beginning—the street light illuminating only the sidewalk and details of the building facade. After a moment or two, KARL, once again in his seventies, emerges from the church and descends the steps. He approaches the corner, hat in hand, and leans wearily against the mailbox.)

KARL: Well now, that took longer than I'd thought, but you've been very patient. Really, very patient indeed. And you are still awake. (He surveys the audience and shakes his head.) Well, some of you are awake. I'm tired myself. But the jury is finally out . . . though I don't think we can expect much to come of that, can we? Oh, Axel had a moment there, a flash of insight, a doubt, a tinge of moral resolution, but he ended, quite as I expected . . . in full bureaucratic retreat: "It's all so long ago, so complicated." No, there's no backbone in that bunch, no stomach for decisions. They're shadows . . . (he touches his finger to his forehead) all ghosts. You see, I have been faithful in this place. I've kept His word here and done His work. Yet for all I've been and done, I leave this sad old house exactly as my drunken predecessor left it forty years ago—still haunted, still tainted by blood and by betrayal. Walter is right, damn him. I am a fake.

But you! You, my brothers and sisters, are real. And you have seen through it all. I have been relying on you to keep me honest, to keep accounts here, and yes, I'll admit it, to keep Walter Lessing from having the final word. From your high perspective surely you have seen things quite distinctly. Unlike us, you are sophisticated people . . . and quite capable of judgment. In fact, judgment has always been your habit in this house. It's your calling here . . . your ministry. And, no, I am not troubled by your silence. After all, it is the convention. You will deliberate later over coffee and a large muffin, and I will wait for the morning paper. Those are the rules, and oh, I am a practiced follower of rules. I'll not embarrass you. I'll seek no sign. But do keep in mind that it was silence in this matter, long, unrelieved, unapologetic silence which lead me to this theatrical expedient in the first place. And, after all, I've heard you out there, heard you whisper, cough . . . even laugh a time or two. Oh yes, I heard it. You do have voices. But when the moment comes for speaking out, you sit there in majestic, brooding silence. How mysterious. How eternal. How Godlike after all.

(Smiling slyly to himself, KARL shakes his head, takes his Bible and his hat, and turns to make his careful way back along the walk and across the street toward home.)

SILENT EPILOGUE

[The following is not to be performed but may be included as an epilogue in the printed program.]

(An elderly man turns homeward while the theatre behind him empties. It is snowing quietly, and the night is diffused and grey with reflected street light. He is bent over, cautious about the slippery pavement.)

MEINHARD (voice only): You needn't have scolded them, Karl.

KARL (pauses, but goes on without turning): I did not scold them.

MEINHARD: Oh yes you did. You scolded them like a cantankerous old man.

KARL: Well, I am cantankerous. After all, I am about to be released from an office which for some years now I have held chiefly at the grace of political indecision. My wife is gone. She was, I suppose, not the companion a boy imagines. Still, she loved me . . . an irreplaceable virtue. My children and their children are far away and cannot see what I cannot forget. I am alone, past my usefulness. I've run my course. An obsolete, cantankerous old man, who is ready to quit and go home, but . . .

MEINHARD: But what?

KARL: I'm afraid.

MEINHARD: We're all afraid.

KARL: And I'm angry.

MEINHARD: And proud, Karl Immer?

KARL: Yes, and proud. Even the guilty have their pride.

MEINHARD: Are you too proud to accept forgiveness?

KARL: Can you tell me how I am to understand so compromised and compromising a forgiveness?

MEINHARD: Does it so offend you to cast your burden on a God with burdens of his own? Must you insist upon an audit, bookkeeper?

KARL: Yes, I suppose I must.

MEINHARD: And if the books don't balance. If even heaven proves ambiguous?

KARL: Heaven is not ambiguous.

MEINHARD: (mumbles to himself.)

KARL (half turning in the street): What did you say? I didn't hear.

MEINHARD: I'm just thinking how God must cherish a realist. The lost sheep in the scripture is the sinner, Karl, not your Hanno.

KARL: That's a lawyer's clever answer. We're not in court now.

MEINHARD: The boy has forgiven you.

KARL (sighs and pauses for a moment before going on): Of course. Whomever we discard, for whatever terrible and terribly understandable cause—God will raise him up again to console and reconcile him. If a man believes at all, he must believe that. But who consoles the undiscarded? Who consoles me for my squandered stewardship.

MEINHARD: You were a faithful steward. You've squandered nothing.

KARL: You think so? Nothing? Do you remember Ida Rodefled?

MEINHARD: You saved her life.

KARL: Yes, I suppose I did. That consoled me for a while. Do you know how she died?

MEINHARD: No.

KARL: She died not many years later of "natural" causes. Her saving took an hour, an afternoon perhaps. Her dying took a year. I visited her faithfully—my steward's calling—and watched the tumor grow beside her in the bed, saw it suck and feed and

thrive on her wasted body like some monstrous, parasitic lover. It was a long meal. She'd been a large woman. Ungrateful of her, don't you think, not to go swiftly, gently, gathering clouds of glory.

MEINHARD: I'm sorry to hear her death was difficult.

KARL: And just how was I to go on being so serenely wise and good while she lay there pleading with me in her sweat, and stench, and pain? Tell me. Wasn't that evil, pointless suffering the price she paid for not having suffered when there was every reason in the world to do so?— She was no coward. She told the truth. She alone among us defended Hanno openly until I silenced her . . . to save her . . . and betray her just as surely as I betrayed the boy. You see, how one well-intentioned crime begets another.

MEINHARD: Could you really have surrendered her to butchers?

KARL (conceding): Oh, you have me there. But is it so unthinkable that a man should surrender his friends, his wife, his children even for the truth. Abraham raised the sacrificial knife against his own son.

MEINHARD: God stayed his hand.

KARL: I am no speculator in miracles. I am a bookkeeper.

MEINHARD: And you did what you could as best you could. Let it rest. Even just wounds heal, if you let them.

KARL: Oh yes, the world is calmer now, cooler than it was, a comfortable, twilight sort of place in which to build our careful nests of bureaucratic moderation. Look. (He gestures around him.) Listen to the vast, upholstered, air-conditioned silence. I know you think I'm behaving badly. Perhaps you're right. But oh, old friend, I have seen God. He came to me in a nightmare, and now it is no small thing to turn and face him again. (There is a long silence.) We have a saying in the Church. Perhaps it's blasphemous, though I'm not sure in which direction. In either case I think it's true.

MEINHARD: What is the saying?

KARL: As man now is, God once was.

MEINHARD: I know the phrase.

KARL: Perhaps it means that once, a very long time ago, God—not man—was sovereign here, the first and final cause, the ruler of heavens and earth.

MEINHARD: Perhaps.

KARL: But that's just the first of it, the premise. There is still the conclusion.

MEINHARD: As God now is, man may yet become.

KARL: Yes. Does that inspire you?

MEINHARD (after a pause): I think it does.

KARL: A cautious answer. Good. Because, you see, it frightens me.

MEINHARD: And why is that, Karl Immer?

KARL: What if it merely means that, like God before him, man may yet become . . . extinct.

MEINHARD: Are you so lost in doubt?

KARL: Oh, I know well enough how to conquer doubt. I've known it all my life. Doubt is too easy, too obvious, too soon exhausted. It has the appearance of evil, but lacks the substance. No. I am lost in faith, old friend, and faith is hard. Tell me. How does a man survive the shame and compromise, the violence of faith? (There is no response.) Meinhard? (He stops and turns to press for an answer, but the street is empty. The snow falls in perfect silence.) You have no answer for me. There is no answer. No messenger, no pathway, no fixed star through the dark. God help us, friend, we are as free and lonely, as inscrutable as gods.



NOT EVERY FAMILY REJOICES TO HAVE A CHILD GO ON A MORMON MISSION

By Mary Paulson Harrington



If more Mormons would realize there are people other than themselves who devotedly believe in their own church, have their own values, then understanding might build between our faiths.

TO HEAR SOME MORMONS TALK, one would assume that every family rejoices to have a child go on a mission. A recently published article about The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints relates the utter delight of family and friends when a person receives a mission call.

I am a member of a mainline Protestant family totally committed and active in our church at many levels, and we were *not* elated to have our son go on a Mormon mission. When we tell our Protestant and Catholic

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friends about his mission they say, "Incredible! We're so sorry!"

Mormons interested in reaching out to the world need to realize that there are other deeply religious, active church people besides themselves who are sincere and possess valid beliefs. Certainly such people do not rejoice when their child joins the Mormon church and goes on a mission. My family's experience is an example.

Differences between Mormon and mainline Christian faiths need to be recognized. Mormons believe that drinking coffee is a sin which keeps them from getting a recommendation to enter their temple, but from my experience it seems that some believe that manipulating the truth is justified if it is a means toward the greater end of conversion. Most Protestants and Catholics

drink coffee as they choose, but those I know agree that telling untruths for any reason forfeits their opportunity for salvation. The difference is poignant in our story.

OUR friendly, hazel-eyed son Jack participated for twenty years with his brother and parents in a Utah mainline Protestant church. He attended Sunday School regularly, completed confirmation classes, and fellowshipped with the youth group.

As early as the third grade, Jack frequently made presentations from the pulpit during the worship service on historical subjects which he loved. First, he stood on a stool to reach the podium, speaking in a high, clear voice with his blond hair bobbing over his paper. Later, he towered above the pulpit, forcefully enunciating his reports with expressive gestures and a wide smile. Our church family followed his progress joyfully.

Jack wanted friends. As a child, he conversed well with adults but had some problems making friends of his own age. Therefore, when he began to pal around at the public high school with pleasant Mormon youth, we encouraged it. We became friendly with their families—and we still are. We were proud when he became a major school leader, mainly among Mormons.

As a non-Mormon president of the city PTA, and the only such person on the state PTA board at the time, I got along well with Mormons without being influenced by their faith. The same was true with my professor husband, a teacher and scholar highly regarded by colleagues, students, and the general community. We assumed it would be the case with our two sons.

Then Jack began to wonder, "Can I keep my friends if I don't join the Mormon church?" Looking back, I should have responded, "Why would you want them otherwise?"

Often I accompanied him to farewell services for LDS schoolmates leaving for missions. I considered such attendance the same as going to someone's wedding at their church. When people asked, "Would you like to study our religion?" I politely said, "Thank you, but we're completely committed to our own church."

The Mormons my husband and I met seemed to accept us as Protestants and refrained from proselytizing efforts. Not so with Jack. In his desire for friends—which our small congregation couldn't provide—he was vulnerable. To Mormons he was at a "teachable" moment in his life. Perhaps I

erred in not explaining our faith as well as I might have.

His brother Ed, two years older, made friends at the Catholic school where we had wanted Jack to attend, but he didn't choose to. Then Ed went away to a private college. Jack also received scholarships to several colleges, but when he decided to attend our local public university, we didn't interfere. My husband is a full professor at this university, and I am a community activist and writer. We have participated in a variety of activities with our outgoing son.

Although Jack enjoyed helping us host college and church gatherings, we noticed that his social life began to center at the Mormon institute. Then we discovered he was taking institute courses, although he didn't tell us about this development.

As a sophomore, Jack needed new contacts. We encouraged him to study in Spain for a quarter with a group from our school where he'd live with a Spanish family, meeting Spanish Catholics and Protestants. From Spain, Jack wrote us enthusiastically about his studies, his host family, and sightseeing. He didn't mention that all the young people with him from our university were Mormon, and that he was spending his time with them. Instead of investigating ancient cathedrals, he attended Mormon services in a small ward.

When he met a former schoolmate, an LDS missionary to Spain, in the massive crowd of the Good Friday holy procession, Jack felt the Mormon church was calling him. The students told him they were happy and close because they were all Mormons. He longed for such friendship himself. As the group traveled through Spain after finishing their spring quarter courses, Jack thought it was God's will that missionaries greeted the student bus at almost every stop. He began taking the missionary lessons.

When he returned to the states, Jack purposely neglected to tell us about the Mormon influence he'd been under. In six weeks he wrote a 110-page book illustrated with photos about Spain and the group's activities. Sharing his excitement in the project, I helped prepare the manuscript for publication and paid the costs. At ten dollars a copy, "Adventures of the Spanish Wildcats" was received with acclaim by both his fellow travelers and others. I didn't mind my small financial loss in subsidizing the publication.

ON a gray, damp December afternoon, Jack hesitantly revealed to his brother and me the explosive news that he would be baptized a Mormon in two days. We were

speechless. Ed, a recent college graduate, was home that month for Christmas before leaving for Asia to study Chinese, teach English, and serve as a volunteer with a mainline Protestant church. Jack explained he planned to be baptized "just before Christmas, as a Christmas present."

"A present for your family?" asked Dad, who had just come home from his office at my request.

"Well, I guess not," said Jack. "I guess it's just for me. It's too late now to change, though. People are bringing fancy food for a big reception after the Saturday service, which is rarely done. They like me at the college ward. Everybody's coming to my baptism."

"And everyone knew but your family? You said you'd never turn Mormon, even though you have Mormon friends," said Dad.

"I didn't want to hurt you. I was afraid to tell you. I love you. I needed your help with my Spain book."

"Remember all the evenings you flopped down on the couch beside me and we talked together," I reminisced. "We compared some Mormon and Protestant ideas but not in depth, for you said you'd never join. If you'd told us you were serious about Mormonism, we could have had clergy scholars talk with you. Then you could have made an objective decision. You could still do it, Jack! Put off this baptism! If you examine all sides and then decide to go Mormon, we might give permission."

"That's why I didn't tell you. I don't need permission. I'm twenty years old."

Later, on his overseas LDS mission, Jack discovered that nobody could be baptized or go on a mission without permission if they were living at home dependent upon parents or spouse. People were aware that Jack lived in our home with tuition, books, food, clothes, and car furnished by us.

My husband refused to attend Jack's baptism. "You lied—and so did the other people who knew about this," he said. "If something important isn't told, it's the same as a lie. Be baptized, when you've already been baptized, and go to heaven for lying?"

But Ed and I went to the baptism. The "saints" who greeted us said the crowd of 150 was large for one baptism. "Everyone thinks so highly of Jack. They admire him so much," they said.

As mainline Christians who see Christ's agony and death on Good Friday and his resurrection on Easter as the center of faith, Ed and I were surprised to hear Jack's conversion story. "He was converted in a famous Catholic cathedral in Spain during the Good

Friday Semana Santa," a young woman said. "That cavernous cathedral was cold and remote compared to our Mormon warmth. We had no background to prepare us to witness a bloody Christ hanging on the cross in scenes that made Catholics cry—a dead Christ, not a living one. Jack felt our closeness. We knew then that he'd become a Mormon."

Jack told us later that he told his friends that if Jesus hadn't suffered and died on the cross, there would be no resurrection and no Living Christ. When he protested to the students that his Protestant family would be very upset if he became a Mormon, they said, "Leave your parents and follow him."

Another speaker commended Jack for his "serious study" of Mormonism. A classmate reported that Jack had read the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the Pearl of Great Price, and the Bible a number of times.

When I asked the group during the attractive, finger-food reception if study didn't mean that Jack should have talked also with his pastor of years and other clergy, they were surprised. Nobody had thought of it. "Jack could have done that—if he'd wanted to," they faltered.

"Because of his background and family, why didn't you advise it?" I asked. "Did you know he promised us just this fall he would not become a Mormon?"

"Well—he shouldn't have done that, but he was afraid. He was also brave to stand against you for the faith. The salvation Jack will receive is for eternity, and that supercedes all else."

"We don't see it that way," Ed said tersely.

According to other families who had suffered the way we had, withholding information and waiting until the last minute to inform unsympathetic parents of a baptism, was not unusual.

Jack suggested that we "keep quiet at our church" about his new baptism. That way nobody in the flock who loved him would know, and he'd be able to attend with us sometimes. For a year his visible activity in the Mormon ward and institute was kept a secret, and no members of our church found out.

We also agreed not to tell Jack's Protestant grandmother and other relatives in faraway cities about his baptism. We hoped we could live harmoniously with him at home despite his change of religion.

THEN a year-and-a-half later I was spending two months 1,500 miles away fixing up and marketing my late parents'

house which I didn't want to sell but my co-owner brother did. Jack had said he'd come and help me when school was out in June, and I'd made dinner dates for both of us with friends.

My husband, living at home with Jack that spring, had noticed nothing out of the ordinary. Mail from Mormon sources wasn't sent to our residence, but to Jack in care of the bishop. No wonder! Jack telephoned me at the distant family house. "I have to tell you something you won't like. I'm leaving in two and a half weeks for a Mormon mission!"

"What!" I gasped, sinking to the floor.

A family friend who was visiting me asked him, "Did you get objective counseling for this?"

"No, but all my friends have gone on missions."

"You must have applied?"

"Yes, but I didn't think I'd be called so soon. I planned to help mother at the family home which I love, too. After the letter came, I thought maybe I'd cancel the mission because I was really torn. But everyone expected me to go. I asked God what to do and he said, 'Go.' I was afraid to tell my family because I knew they'd be upset. Mom! I hear you crying. Please don't. I love you!"

Quickly I left the family home and drove 1,500 miles over burning-hot roads on the Fourth of July weekend. Since I didn't finish my work, I'd have to drive back later to the house that Jack, Ed, and I had treasured.

Although Jack's friends knew he was going on the mission, he had asked them not to tell us—and they didn't. By the time his bishop brought him to my husband's office, the story had become a campus drama. The villain?—not our son, but "that non-Mormon family" Jack was leaving to follow the truth.

Jack had saved very little money so we wondered how he'd pay for his mission. Although parents customarily finance a child's mission, my husband said we wouldn't because of our principles. "Everyone knew you wouldn't pay," Jack said. "My friends' parents and the college ward will take care of everything."

Jack asked us, as at his baptism, not to tell our church about his mission. Now I said, "I have to tell them because we need their prayers!" On a too-sunny July Sunday morning, I stepped to the front of our congregation in a plain black dress. "We all know that our Mormon friends are ecstatic to have a child go on a mission," I said. "It's their lifelong dream, the fulfillment of their hopes. But it's not our dream, and it doesn't fulfill our hopes to have our Jack go on a Mormon mission! But that's what he's going to do. He's

leaving next week. His farewell service is this afternoon at the university ward. Will some of you come and give us support at the farewell? Please pray for all of us."

After church, stunned members hugged my husband and me in sympathy. "He's our boy, too. He grew up here and we love him."

We were consoled that the retired executive minister of our church's three-state region—similar in position to a Mormon general authority—agreed to pray at the farewell service. But the Mormon leaders said no. I was allowed to speak because I was Jack's mother

My name wasn't on the printed program where family members usually are listed as participants. Instead, the speakers were to me "outsiders": speakers from Jack's baptism, the bishop, stake president, and an eighteen-member choir of Jack's friends.

Again my husband did not attend. "A missionary to save souls through deceit? This is our thanks for all we've done for him and this community!"

He recalled that when many students came to him saying they no longer believed the Mormon faith and asked if they should leave their church, he had advised them not to. "Don't tear apart your family, your background. Do the best you can at church for at least a couple of years," my husband had said. "Why couldn't others have told my son that!"

Ed offered to fly home from Asia to help us in the crisis, but we didn't feel he should travel so far.

Alone, except for members of my church, I walked down the aisle of the Mormon chapel to the pulpit. "As Jack's mother, I share memories," I began. "Our family has been involved in missions. My grandparents went abroad for life as missionaries. My clergyman grandfather translated the Bible from English into the people's language. My brother founded a social settlement center in a needy country and a community for refugees. Our family, including Jack at age twelve, were missionaries for a year in Asia." I related anecdotes about Jack's growing up, as parents do at farewells. The audience smiled.

Then I changed my tone. "May I close with a prayer prepared by the retired top executive of our church's region. 'Our God, whom we know as Creator and Sustainer of life and love, we thank you for the opportunity to serve, even as we acknowledge there are many ways of serving you. Help Jack to understand there are many avenues by which your people may come to know you and your will and way,'" I read firmly. "Help us to

avoid the arrogance of believing there is only one right approach to your loving care. Grant us open minds to learn more of your truth, from whatever source. Grant Jack an open heart to receive all people—of whatever race or creed—as persons beloved by you. May we each hold to the integrity of our own beliefs, and may those beliefs be in accordance with the teachings of Jesus the Christ." Many of the 350 Mormons present told me they liked the prayer and understood how our family felt.

After several months on his mission in a far land, Jack started to comprehend our feelings. He wrote that he loved us, thanked us for bringing him up as we did, and apologized for the "selfish way" he'd treated us. His mission president counseled Jack that he and his associates were unkind in their actions toward us and said our family gave our son his values. "We appreciate the teachings he has received in the home and his high standards. We know they come from his family."

DESPITE the tears I have shed, we love our son deeply and appreciate many of his Mormon associates. He is our son and an integral part of our family.

We enjoy the support of our congregation and other Protestants. We continue to be fully involved with our church work. My husband is state president of the Protestant Campus Ministry which carries on the united work of seven denominations at nine higher education institutions. I am communications director of a three-state ecumenical ministry. I was presented with the national "Celebration of the Gifts of Women" award for mission and service by our denomination. When he visits, Ed tells our church and community of his work with Protestant churches in several Asian countries.

If more Mormons would realize there are people other than themselves who devotedly believe in their own church, have their own values, then understanding might build between our faiths. If some would see that others do not rejoice to have a child become a Mormon and go on a mission, rapport could develop.

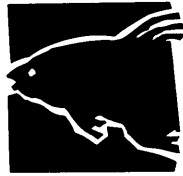
Some Protestants fear that Mormons allow untruths in order to get converts. With the sharing of integrity, appreciation, kindness, and respect between people of different faiths, fellowship could begin. Perhaps when he gains increased insight, Jack may be a *bridge* with others toward fulfilling the needs of an aching world: "That Brotherhood May Prevail."

REVIEWS

SPECULATION, MYTH, AND UNFULFILLED EXPECTATIONS

STRANGERS IN PARADOX:
EXPLORATIONS IN MORMON THEOLOGY

by Paul James Toscano and Margaret Merrill Toscano
Signature Books, 1990, 301 Pages, Paperback \$12.95



Reviewed by Blake T. Ostler

STRANGERS IN PARADOX represents an attempt to recreate Mormonism in the image of Margaret and Paul Toscanos' interesting but off-beat pop psycho-theo-mythology. The book is divided into five principle sections. The first section, "First Principles," deals with the presence of paradox in Mormon Christian thought and suggests seven principles of interpreting scripture and basic hermeneutics. The second section, "The Godhead," treats the Toscanos' views of the pantheon of deities consisting of Mother, Father, Son and Daughter (Spirit) which the Toscanos assert constitute the Godhead in Mormon thought. The third section, "Redemption," presents the Toscanos' views on soteriology or the theory of salvation. The fourth section, "Priesthood," argues that women should be granted the Mormon priesthood. The fifth section, "Sex Roles, Marriage Patterns, and the Temple," treats the relations of the sexes in theology.

The Toscanos' effort ranges from feminist theology and myth-criticism to basic discourse on the meaning of scriptures. They raise so many philosophical, theological, and political issues that it would be impossible to competently address them in the short space of a book review. While I would dearly like

to critique the Toscanos' attempt to drag paradox into Mormonism, I will instead discuss four areas, focusing primarily on doctrinal innovations attempted by the Toscanos.

The Toscanos argue that Mormons are mistaken to regard God the Father as our God and Father. "Christ's God and father is not our God and father except through Christ, our intercessor. . . . Our God and Father is Jesus" (64). The Toscanos rely almost exclusively on the Book of Mormon to support their argument. They downplay and all but ignore later developments in Mormon thought which emphasize that Christ's Father is the Father of both Christ's and our premortal spirits (65). Nevertheless, I believe that their reliance on the Book of Mormon is somewhat justified. For it seems to me that the Book of Mormon indeed teaches that Christ is both Son and Father in a very strong modalistic sense. (Modalism is the doctrine that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are merely different or roles undertaken by the one person who is God.) However, the Toscanos do not assert that the modalism presented in the Book of Mormon is the proper Mormon view; rather, they claim that God the Father is merely in the background and Jesus is the only God with whom we have to do: "What the Book of Mormon proclaims more clearly than any other book of scripture is that Jesus is our Heavenly Father" (64).

However, modalism is not the only view

taught in the Book of Mormon and certainly not the only view taught in Mormon scripture or in the developed thought of Joseph Smith and later Mormon prophets. Indeed, Mormon prophets after Brigham Young just don't seem to count in the Toscanos' book. The Book of Mormon also teaches, primarily in 3 Nephi, a social view of God where Christ is seen as a separate being from the Father who leads the Nephites to a direct relationship with his Father. After all, Jesus taught the Nephites in 3 Nephi to pray directly to and worship his God and his Father. Further, Joseph Smith taught in his later revelations that Jesus is our older brother in the premortal life who leads us to share his relationship directly with God the Father—the Father whom he worshipped and to whom he prayed and to whom "all glory is due."

My primary concern about the Toscanos' doctrine, however, is the violence it does to the real Jesus of Nazareth, the historical man who walked around the Palestinian countryside. I believe that the historical Jesus would be shocked at the Toscanos' suggestion that we should worship him directly as our father but not the one whom Jesus called "abba"—Father. Jesus of Nazareth even refused to let others put him in the same category as his Father, for there is none good but one, and that is the Father (Mark 10:18, Matthew 19:17, Luke 18:19). This Jesus, the real Jesus of history, is all but ignored by the Toscanos. Jesus emphasized the intimate and personal relation we should have with his Father, and Jesus' teachings about the Father cannot be squared with the Toscanos' belief that we do not have a direct relationship with our God and Father who is identical to Jesus' God and Father. This failure to come to grips with real history is endemic throughout the Toscanos' book.

To the extent the Toscanos assert that Mormon scripture teaches that Jesus is our God and Father and Jesus' Father is not, I think they are wrong. To the extent they assert that is what Mormon doctrine should be, regardless of what it actually is, I think they are misguided.

TWO observations on the Toscanos' method of arguing for one doctrine in preference to another are appropriate here. First, the Toscanos have some very good things to say about how we should approach and understand scripture. I liked their discussion of the fundamental issues of hermeneutics and interpretation. Second, the Toscanos simply ignore their own insights into scriptural interpretation when they actually get around to dealing with scriptures to support their

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views. Too often the Toscanos take one view asserted in scripture, cite a few scriptures which seem to support their view, and gloss over alternative points of view expressed in scripture. Their methodology can only be described as proof-texting—the wresting of scripture to support one’s own point of view without regard for other possible interpretations or even other views presented in scripture itself. The Toscanos appear to torture the scriptures in favor of idiosyncratic interpretations. For example, they do not adopt the Book of Mormon teaching that the Son is identical to the Father, for they clearly recognize that Jesus as Father is separate from his Father in Heaven in identity. Rather, they adopt a strange hybrid not asserted by any scripture but which somehow becomes controlling for them: The notion that there is a God, the father of Jesus, but he is only Jesus’ God and not ours. This doctrine is not only not scriptural, it doesn’t make any sense.

The Toscanos go on to argue that the doctrine that Jesus shared our premortal state with us can be reconciled with their view because in this premortal state “He was a deity who had been resurrected, perhaps many times” (65). To support this view they note that when the premortal Christ appeared to the brother of Jared he did not say he appeared in his “spirit body”; rather, he stated that the brother of Jared saw “the body of my spirit” (Ether 3:16). The Toscanos see a significant difference in meaning between “spirit body” and “body of my spirit.” This interpretation is tendentious at best and certainly does not support their view of numerous premortal resurrections. This scripture indicates, and quite clearly in my view, that Jesus is contrasting the body of flesh which he would someday (but had not yet) take upon himself with the body of spirit which he possessed prior to the incarnation: “Thou hast seen that I shall take upon me flesh and blood. . . even as I appear unto thee to be in the spirit will I appear unto my people in the flesh” (Ether 3:9,16). The future tense used for the mortal body which Jesus would one day take upon himself, the present tense used for the spirit, and the contrast between the body of flesh and the body of spirit indicate that Jesus was not flesh but spirit prior to his mortality. (Strangely the Toscanos continually refer to “incarnation” or enfleshment even though they believe that Jesus was already in the flesh prior to mortality and had to “disembody” himself to enter another body [65].) Further, I see absolutely no scriptural support for the Toscanos’ view that Christ had been resurrected prior to mortal-

ity. This view raises an obvious question: How can a resurrected body die and again be resurrected, especially given the Toscanos’ own argument that the resurrected body is perfected and a body of glory not subject to infirmities?

The Toscanos finally admit that “speculation and mythmaking” are the “only” way to deal “in a non-dogmatic way” with “God-concepts of Mormonism” (68). I agree that their arguments amount to “speculation and mythmaking,” but not in any acceptable sense that they want to give to these words. Rather, their arguments seem to ignore the obvious meaning of Mormon scriptures for the mere purpose of disagreeing with the Mormon beliefs in general and with the evil “ecclesiastical institution” in particular.

The Toscanos also assert that Mormons are wrong to accept B. H. Roberts’ view of premortal intelligences as individual centers of free will having cognitive and conative powers. They reject this view because they don’t agree that persons “exist independently from God and. . . are innately good”; they argue that “until we were made independent, our self-existence or intelligence was merged in God’s self-existence” (108). That is, until God created us, we existed merely as a “potentiality but not an actuality” in God. They seem to recognize that some statements by Joseph Smith are inconsistent with their view such as Joseph Smith’s statement in the King Follett discourse: “The mind, the soul of man, the eternal part of man was never created.” They argue that mere potentialities can be understood to have free will from all eternity: “Because we always existed in God as an independent potential we always had an independent will; therefore, God did not create our freedom from nothing.” (109).

There are so many things wrong with this statement that it would be difficult to deal with them all in a book-length work. However, I should point out that mere potentialities simply don’t have a free will because there is no will, no entity yet there. There is a subtle logical fallacy involved in such ephemeral things as “potential entities”: It is certainly not appropriate to say that there now exists a free will possessed by a person who does not now actually exist. At best, one can coherently assert that “a person potentially exists who, if such person actually existed, would have free will.” But to potentially be something is not to already be that thing. I am potentially the president of the United States, but that is hardly a potentiality that makes any difference to the way things actually are or will be. The Toscanos’ views on this point might sound

nice in their phraseology, but when it is analyzed I think it’s clear that they don’t say anything that really makes any sense if it has any ascertainable meaning at all.

Again the Toscanos assert a view that is not anywhere expressed in Mormon scripture. Van Hale and I have written articles which analyze the Mormon concepts of human premortal existence which I believe more accurately represent Mormon beliefs than the Toscanos have done (see *Line Upon Line: Essays on Mormon Doctrine* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989], 115-144). I suspect that the Toscanos assert this view because they find it more amenable to their doctrines of human nature and grace than the classical Mormon view expressed by Joseph Smith and B. H. Roberts; rejection of the traditional Mormon view that humans exist eternally as individuals plays a major role in their arguments for their theory of grace (123).

GRACE AND FREE WILL

THE Toscanos also argue that Mormon doctrine is, properly understood, based on a rejection of works in relation to salvation and by “grace alone” (116-29). They argue that “Mormon scripture teaches salvation by grace, while the ecclesiastical institution throws its weight behind self-reliance, self-help, self-atonement, and self-salvation” (119), and unequivocally assert that in “Mormonism salvation is by grace alone” (129). Throughout the entire history of Christian thought the assertion that salvation is by grace alone has been understood to mean that human agency plays no role in salvation. Only God’s decisions determine whether a person is saved or damned, rejected or exalted. That is why it is “grace alone” and not “grace and free will” or “grace and human decisions.” Given this view, it follows that God chooses to leave at least some persons to damnation which he could save for some mysterious (translate it “arbitrary”) reason (see my “The Concept of Grace in Christian Thought” in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Winter 1991). The Toscanos apparently write ignoring the entire history of theological discussion on this point and in defiance of their own words, for their real position is not “grace alone” but “grace together with free human decisions”: At one point they argue that God “made us free so that we could voluntarily accept God’s gift of salvation by grace” (124). This position seems to amount to no more than the assertion that we are free to accept or reject God’s saving grace—the ultimate

decision is up to us, not up to God. This is hardly a doctrine of "salvation by grace alone." The Toscanos' repeated failure to recognize the well-established meaning of the terms they use within the context of the entire history of Christian thought is a major weakness of their work. They use terms loaded with centuries of theological baggage as if they could simply ignore that meaning.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Toscanos teach that salvation is ultimately by free human decision in response to God's freely offered grace, they also embrace theological determinism and arbitrary divine decision. Responding to an argument that salvation by grace alone contradicts the Mormon concept of free will because it leads to determinism, the Toscanos state: "This argument is unpersuasive because determinism is not tied exclusively to the idea of grace. It fits into the idea of works too" (124). Note that they do not reject determinism; rather, they argue that determinism is unavoidable even if one believes in works, so it must be acceptable to believe in determinism as a result of grace as well. Their argument is certainly unpersuasive to me. It does not demonstrate that determinism necessarily follows from the commitment to good works; it only show

that determinism follows if one is confused about what "good works" mean. But such an argument hardly applies to a correct conception of the relation between works and grace. Further, the Toscanos have simply failed to respond to the argument that their view of grace contradicts free will because it adopts determinism. They appear to argue that two wrongs make a right. As I see it, they have simply denied the Mormon doctrine of free will, for determinism, in any form, is incompatible with the robust notion of libertarian free will adopted in Mormon scripture. (see my "The Concept of Grace in Mormon Thought" in *Dialogue*, Spring 1991). Strangely enough, the Toscanos reject the idea that God has absolute knowledge of the future because such a view contradicts the Mormon view of free will (101). I think that the Mormon notion of free will is in fact incompatible with infallible foreknowledge of the future. However, the same notion of free will is also incompatible with the determinism which the Toscanos use to protect their belief in grace alone.

The Toscanos also adopt the Lutheran notion (virtually absent in scripture) that persons, if saved by grace, are not judged by their own deeds but by Christ's merits (124-

25). This position is exactly the opposite of Alma's response to Corianton's argument that God is not just in his judgments. Alma argued that God is just precisely because all persons will be judged according to their own works. If they are good they shall have good rewarded to them in judgment, and if evil then they will reap evil (Alma 41). The view actually taught in Mormon scripture, it seems to me, is that persons must depend wholly on the merits of Christ to enter the way that leads to eternal life; but once on the path it is up to human will and perseverance to remain on the path.

The Toscanos' arguments for the doctrine of "salvation by grace alone" suffer from inadequate supporting evidence and a failure to see the implications of such beliefs. They cite a number of rather short and controversial articles, (one unpublished and the rest published in *SUNSTONE*, where one cannot expect to find exhaustive argumentation in four to eight pages) and assert that these articles "establish" that Mormonism teaches doctrines of original sin and salvation by grace alone (120). As we have seen, the Toscanos both do and don't mean "by grace alone without free human choice." Further, they fail to explain how persons could freely



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choose to accept God's grace if they are burdened by original sin, for given their doctrine persons must first freely accept God's grace in order to overcome original sin. Yet persons must be freed from original sin before they can freely choose to accept grace. This pair of doctrines thus establishes a vicious circle of presuppositions, which was the primary focus of Augustine and the entire Reformation debate. The only way to get an evil nature to accept grace, according to Augustine, is to make prevenient grace irresistible. But the Toscanos reject the notion of irresistible grace and do not seem to recognize that it is even a problem raised by the doctrine of "salvation by grace alone."

I think that it is accurate to say that the Toscanos have tried to claim as Mormon doctrine a view that is nowhere taught in any Mormon scripture, never asserted by a Church leader and positively contrary to the entire history of Mormon thought. And yet I agree with them that much more emphasis should be put on the teaching of grace in Mormon thought and discourse, and I applaud them for properly bringing the doctrine of grace to the forefront of discussion, even though I believe their own view of the matter is fundamentally flawed.

THE Toscanos certainly have a flare for catchy phrases. I found their book interesting from the standpoint of rhetoric alone. Consider for instance this felicitous phrase: "A pocket of time may become an eternity, which may eventually spawn new pockets of time that themselves may be transformed into eternities" (104). I like the way this phrase sounds, but I must confess I read it many times in context and couldn't for the life of me figure out what it might mean. I finally concluded that it wasn't intended to mean anything definite; just to sound good. The Toscanos' book abounds in such catchy but meaningless phrases. For example, I had somewhat the same response to the following quote:

[I]f the cosmos is truly the mind of God and if we are even now part of the divine, cosmic tabernacle, then evil in the universe done by devils and humans is an unavoidable part of God. The evil happening on earth is not only our responsibility but God's... God is good not because God is utterly disassociated from evil but because, as a being of glory, God can recognize evil, circumscribe it, and primarily through personal sacrifice God can bring good out of evil, light out of darkness, fullness out of empti-

ness, health out of sickness, and perfection out of imperfection. (112-13)

Can this be anything but outright and intentional contradiction? It is a theodicy which consists in calling evil good. The Toscanos' response to the problem of evil is that God is good because he ("he" is appropriate here because they refer solely to Christ as God in this passage) accepts responsibility for being evil. This just won't do. For example, the fact that the confessed murderer Gary Bishop accepted responsibility for brutally killing several young boys hardly exonerates him. Similarly, God cannot be regarded as good if he contains within himself evil and is in fact responsible for all events because he causes them via universal causal determinism as the Toscanos suggest. We cannot call such a being good in any sense consistent with the unconditioned awe, respect and worship which God demands and merits. I understand what it means to bring good out of evil, but the Toscanos fail to address the real problem of evil: Why is there anything evil in the first place if God is powerful enough to act unilaterally to make it good, as the Toscanos assert? Nevertheless, there is a strange consistency here, for their acknowledgment that God contains evil within himself is indeed entailed by the pantheistic view of God which they seem to adopt at this point.

THIS review has been critical so far, but I think there are also worthwhile and insightful observations made by the Toscanos. They are in the forefront of the movement to get women the priesthood. I found their responses to various arguments that women should not be given the priesthood to be convincing. The chapters treating the history of the priesthood concepts and women were both informed and interesting. (And they do consider real history and not mere myth in chapters 15, 16, and 18.) Even here I have some reservations, for I am very suspicious of anyone who argues a polemical position from historical evidence, especially one as inherently political as the Toscanos'. While I don't have the space here to cite examples, I think the Toscanos have slighted or ignored historical evidence to bend it into conformity with their view. However, I think that they have made an attempt to correct for their biases even if they are not wholly successful (nobody ever is).

Notwithstanding their interesting response to arguments against giving women the priesthood, they need something more. They need not only a response to such negative arguments, but also an affirmative argu-

ment that the Church has an obligation to give women the priesthood. They in fact give one such argument which I shall refer to as the "argument from democratic equality." The Toscanos observe: "Women are the spiritual equals of men and ought to have full access to all of the privileges, keys, rights, offices, callings, and gifts that have been available to men in the church" (7). I believe that this is the most common argument given by those who believe that women should have the priesthood: women are spiritual equals of men, therefore they ought to be called to the priesthood. However, this argument is invalid in an interesting way. Perhaps I can show the nature of this fallacy by a parallel argument from democratic equality.

Suppose that it is true (it may well be) that Rex Lee is the spiritual equal of Dallin Oaks (or any other person in the entire Church). Does it follow that God or the Church has any sort of obligation to make Rex Lee an apostle because of this spiritual equality? Of course not. The problem is that priesthood is not a democracy, not a result of spiritual equality, superiority, or inferiority. Priesthood is part of the inscrutable call from God to serve. It may go only to one tribe of a rather small nation, only to males, only to females, to all believers or to all humanity. Priesthood is not acquired through a political campaign like a democratic election. Perhaps some day women will be called to the priesthood or perhaps they already hold it in some non-trivial sense. Perhaps not. But it seems to me that God has no obligation to call any particular persons or even any group of persons to his priesthood because priesthood is not a right but an obligation, not a popularity contest but a calling, not a seal of righteousness but the opportunity to seal in heaven spiritual blessings for those who are righteous. The priesthood must be independent, to some degree, of the worthiness of its bearer. Otherwise the baptism performed by the unworthy priest is not valid. Orderly administration requires priesthood to be regarded as a universal characterizing God's righteousness rather than simply the worthiness or unworthiness of the particular person officiating in his office and calling. It is a calling that only God can choose. On the other hand, it seems to me that there isn't a good reason why God shouldn't choose women. The Toscanos have convinced me of that. But they haven't convinced me that God or the Mormon Church have some sort of moral obligation to grant women the priesthood.

The Toscanos also assert the basic "historical argument" that women have actually

held the priesthood in times past (chs. 15, 16 and 18). They clearly intend their readers to infer that if women held the priesthood in the past, then women should hold the priesthood now. I have always found this argument interesting because those who think women should be granted the priesthood also invariably argue that past tradition and practices are not necessarily a guide for what the present is or ought to be. In fact, the Toscanos make this very argument: "The fact that a condition prevails or is long-standing is no guarantee that it is God-approved" (212-213). The historical argument and the argument that tradition is not controlling are quite obviously inconsistent. For example, if it could be shown that women in fact did not hold any priesthood offices in the LDS church in the past (and I think a convincing argument for this proposition can be made from the historical evidence), would the Toscanos and other "Mormon feminists" accept the argument as valid to show that women should not hold priesthood offices now? Of course not. Neither should they accept it as a sound argument. My point is that all of this arguing about whether women held the priesthood in the past is quite irrelevant to whether women ought to hold priesthood offices today.

Clearly the heart of the Toscanos' innovations is belief in a "Jungian cosmology" wherein all persons pass through a maternal stage and later to a patriarchal stage and finally into an integrated stage where both maternal and paternal are joined in their personal development. Jung originally argued that individual persons develop from a stage of maternal orientation to paternal orientation. Jung noticed that many myths seem to deal with this process of individual development by transforming it into a story of hero development and struggle with maternal and paternal conflicts. The Toscanos wrench this concept from its basis in individual psychology and apply it to "cosmic history" and attempt to create a "new" Mormon myth out of it. Thus, all persons were originally in the presence of a Mother in Heaven who ruled in the preexistence and it is only with separation from our true selves and entrance into a fractured and fallen mortality that we enter into a patriarchal stage of existence. In the afterlife, we will return to a unity of male and female. The problem with this way of dealing with Jung is that it misapplies his original insights. There are few psychologists who would apply Jung's view at all, let alone take it seriously as an accurate picture of actual cosmic experience. The particular problem is

that when Jung's insights are taken from the arena of individual development and applied to cosmic history or myth, one commits the fallacy of composition—or the fallacy that the properties of one thing can be applied to the whole. It is analogous to the mistake of saying that a large crowd of people is a crowd of large people—and that certainly is a mistake. Their methodology would be seen as fallacious even by serious Jungian psychologists and, independent of its moorings in Jungian thought, there are no other reasons for believing that it describes anything remotely resembling reality.

The Toscanos also attempt to develop some concept of a Mother in Heaven. The notion of a Mother in Heaven seems to have a strong emotional appeal to many, especially feminists, many of whom find the Father figure to be unacceptable or too remote. The interplay of Freudian psychology in such views is very interesting. The Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard argued that orthodox Christianity made God over in the image of the Roman emperor and pictured God as the reflection of the Roman empire itself. As such, God became the keeper of the status quo. The Toscanos recognize this profound psychology of religion and their entire book is an attempt to overturn the dominant images of the "male-dominated" (as they see it) LDS church which has created God (they claim) over in its own image as a priesthood quorum presidency of three males. They thus offer an alternative which incorporates maternal values into our "God-concept"—an attempt I applaud so long as the Mother in Heaven is a companion to rather than a replacement for our Father in Heaven. To their credit, they try to balance the male and the female rather than to replace an "inadequate" male. The view that I have heard from many "feminists," that our Father in Heaven is somehow unable to understand women because of his "maleness," is theologically naive and religiously grotesque, for God is the person whose immanent presence is aware of our own experiences as his very experiences. God is aware of everything from every perspective. It follows that God knows us better than we know ourselves. Any suggestion that God the Father is somehow less than aware or understanding is a failure to understand the nature of God. Yet one must pause to wonder why the Mother in Heaven has not revealed herself. We have poems and songs about the Mother in Heaven in the Mormon tradition, but not a single scripture that expressly addresses even the existence of a Mother in Heaven, let alone a revelation of her will and attributes. I raise the question

without any proposal for a definitive response.

I ALSO enjoyed the chapter called "Zion: Vision or Mirage." The Toscanos lament the loss of the vision of Zion which was the heart, soul, and very life-blood of early Mormonism. Their comments on Zion and its loss are eloquent and insightful, though also very depressing. I urge the reader to peruse this chapter.

I do not share the Toscanos' extreme alienation or disillusionment with the "institutional hierarchy" because I have had enough direct contact to know that the "institution" is simply made up of real people doing their best to promote the kingdom of God. They are far from perfect—but to expect them to be somehow more divine than the rest of us is the great lie. I lament that the Church leaders are largely business people who do not have competence in philosophical theology—but on second thought maybe the Church is better off without professional theologians. Like the Toscanos, I feel some alienation, but that is the essence of human experience. The Toscanos are extremely critical of Church leaders. I hope they don't mind that I have been critical of them. One paragraph in their book is especially enlightening to explain the Toscanos' perspective and motives and is a good summary of their entire work. I call this passage the Toscanos' confession:

Many of us [read "we the Toscanos"] who have felt the call to Zion in our blood and in our bones wrongly thought we had been called to be "a marvelous work and wonder," to realize the fulfillment of all the promises. But this was too great an expectation. God has made too many promises. We should have known we could not see with the eyes nor speak with the tongues of angels. We unwisely let our expectations inflate; and then, perhaps, we lost our faith and became cynical when faced with the meagerness of our contributions and the puniness of our results. (232-33)

Strangers in Paradox seems to me to suffer similarly from inflated expectations and claims. I think that a good argument can be made that the Toscanos have not sufficiently distinguished between paradox, mere difference, and outright contradiction. They mistake theology for sheer speculation and literary and political bravado. I believe that Mormon theology deserves more thought and less fanfare. ☐

HISTORY OF LDS FRAUD CHRONICLED

SINCE THE beginning of their history, Mormons have been susceptible to risky business speculation. Often Mormon leaders, or other prominent Church members, have headed or been connected to fraudulent or negligent money-losing ventures, and they have urged others to invest in or support such ventures.

A Church connection to a financial enterprise assures many Mormons that their investments will be good. As history shows, however, investing because of a promoter's religious position or devotion is naive and, too often, financially disastrous.

Although Church members have been advised repeatedly to save their money and to be wary of get-rich-quick schemes, Mormons' gullibility to fraudulent business deals, especially when presented as Church-connected, seems to be deeply, culturally embedded. Recently, journalist Lynn Packer chronicled failed and controversial LDS ventures in the widely discussed October 1990 edition of *Utah Holiday*. The following highlights from Packer's article characterize the nature and extent of the money-losing ventures Mormon leaders or Mormons who emphasize their Church connection have supported and promoted to other Church members.

1836: In Kirtland, Joseph Smith and other prominent leaders found the Kirtland Safety Society Bank. The bank issues its own money (which other banks don't accept) and refuses to redeem its own notes for equal value in silver or gold. The bank quickly fails, and suits are filed against the bank. Joseph Smith and a cashier are accused of embezzlement.

1839: The Saints are driven out of Missouri and flee to Illinois. Reputed counterfeiter Isaac Galland sells land with dubious titles

to the Church leaders. The leaders divide the land and sell it to emigrating saints. In 1844, the *Nauvoo Expositor* accuses Joseph Smith of selling the land at inflated prices. [Joseph Smith declares the *Expositor* a public nuisance and has it destroyed. This order leads directly to his incarceration at Carthage and his murder.]

1847: Samuel Brannan, leading a group of Mormons to the Salt Lake Valley via San Francisco, collects tithes in gold from Church members who have been prospecting near Sutter's Fort. When Brigham Young sends a messenger for the tithes, Brannan declares, "I'll give up the Lord's money when [Brigham Young] sends me a receipt signed by the Lord."

1849: In Salt Lake City, the Church mints gold coins which soon acquire a reputation for containing less gold than their face value. The coins begin affecting the Church's credit. Brigham Young orders the mint closed.

1890s: Apostle Abraham H. Cannon, director of the Utah Loan and Trust Company, dies. Apos-

tle Joseph F. Smith replaces Elder Cannon as president, and Frances M. Lyman, a member of the First Council of the Seventy, becomes director. Another Apostle, Heber J. Grant, discovers the bank's insolvency and informs President Lorenzo Snow. Elder Grant explains the bank's dubious position and the possibility that all board members could be indicted on felony charges. President Snow tells Elder Grant to do everything he can to save the bank. Elder Grant convinces Provo miner magnate Jesse Knight to put up \$10,000 to rescue the bank from its financial troubles.

1925: Charles S. Merrill, a Salt Lake undertaker, devises a scheme to sell burial plots at cost plus 10 percent. Apostle George A. Smith's brother is a founding director and his son-in-law sells certificates. By 1932, the company is in receivership and the company principals are charged with fraud. Merrill admits that salespeople were given a list of prominent men, including many high Church officials, to show to prospective customers as an inducement to invest. Apostle Smith pulls strings in all arenas to have the charges dropped. Eventually the men are acquitted, but the court determines that fraudulent representations were made although there is no proof that directors schemed to make

sales using deception.

1960s: Another burial estate venture emerges. Elder Bruce R. McConkie, four stake presidents, three stake high councilmen, a bishop, and a member of the Church welfare committee form the Memorial Estates Security Corp. In November 1964, the company files for bankruptcy. A class-action suit is brought against Elder McConkie and other directors. The suit alleges misstatements and withholding information on the prospectus. Days before the trial begins, the parties settle out of court.

Also in the early 1960s: Mormon leaders, including Elder Marion D. Hanks and Utah legislator E. LaMar Buchner, organize the Guaranty Trust Deed Corp. It fails within two years. Civil action is taken against the directors, Church-owned KSL, and Elder Hanks. Criminal charges are levied against other top principals in the company. The court decides that all principals are "negligent and careless in their management of Guaranty."

1970s: Snellen M. Johnson founds American Ranch and Recreation, Inc. Salespeople encourage Mormons to invest in family-oriented vacation sites. Victor L. Brown is a board vice chairman, and J. Thomas Fyans is director. The resorts never mater-



ialize. In 1974, Johnson and his brother plead guilty to selling securities without a license and selling unregistered securities in American Ranch. The Judge orders restitution of \$700,000 to 250 stockholders.

1968-78: Snellen Johnson also founds Navsat, a firm which supposedly develops satellite guidance systems for ships. Johnson raises 7 million dollars by exploiting close Church connections. Thomas Fyans is president of Navsat, and investors include N. Eldon Tanner and Victor L. Brown. Johnson claims that Elder Tanner endorses Navsat to potential investors. In 1978, Johnson is convicted of thirty counts of mail, wire, and securities fraud.

1970s-80s: Former BYU faculty member Einar Erickson sells silver mining claims to investors and then shows them how to donate the claims to BYU and declare the value of the claims (often at ten times their face value according to the IRS) as charitable contributions on their income taxes. Erickson is indicted on twenty-four counts of preparing fraudulent tax returns and mail frauds.

1980s: AFCO chairman Grant Affleck, a former bishop, and Carvel Shaffer, a former high-councilman, entice hundreds of Mormons to invest in various land and real estate ventures. Each emphasizes his personal devotion to the Mormon church in attracting investors. Elder Paul H. Dunn sits on the board of directors, and potential investors are shown a prospectus with Elder Dunn's name and picture in order to inspire confidence. Affleck and Shaffer are both convicted of securities fraud.

1985: Mark Hofmann bilks hundreds of thousands of dollars from prominent Mormons who are anxious to acquire documents relating to Mormon history. Elder Hugh Pinnock helps Hofmann secure a \$185,000 signature loan in order to buy the non-existent McClellin Collection.

Also in the 1980s: CFS Financial Corporation headed by former bishop J. Gary Sheets fails. In-

vestors lose millions of dollars. Sheets is later acquitted of thirty-four fraud charges. A year later, C. Dean Larsen, a high priest group leader, is convicted of eighteen felony counts of securities fraud. Through his company, Granada, Larsen lost tens of millions of investors' dollars in various real estate projects.

1990s: Penny stocks are emerging as the scam for the 1990s. Carl W. Martin and Michael D. Wright, both prominent Mormons, have pleaded guilty to non-related penny stock swindles in the past several months. One stock broker who specializes in identifying and exploiting bogus penny stock schemes says the Utah market is the "slimiest financial market in the U.S., bar none."

Packer offers the following suggestions which the LDS church could adopt to help reduce many of the dishonest or questionable ethical practices many Church members and leaders have supported.

1. Prohibit paid Church leaders from sitting on any private boards or engaging in outside business activities. Substantial investments should be put in blind trusts.

2. Adopt a conflict-of-interest policy for lay Church leaders. Leaders should not create new financial relationships with anyone under their authority or sphere of influence.

3. A higher percentage of non-businessmen (teachers, farmers, laborers, clerks, technicians, etc.) should be called to both lay and paid positions.

4. The Church should divest itself of all properties and businesses that do not have a direct and substantial humanitarian purpose. No tithing-in-kind from high speculation sources should be accepted.

5. Teach that God is not a financial partner who pays back tithes and offerings with interest.

6. Leaders at all levels should emphasize thrift, savings, and debt-avoidance by precept and example.

ONE FOLD

DECLINE IN CHURCH DONATIONS FORECASTED

BASED ON giving trends in more than two dozen U.S. denominations, Empty Tomb, Inc., an Illinois-based research group, projects that by 2002, donations by church members will average 1.94 percent of their annual income, compared with 3.05 percent in 1968. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

**RELIGIOUS KIBBUTZIM PROSPER*

WHILE THE kibbutz movement in Israel continues to lose many of its members and suffer financial losses, the religious kibbutzes are showing a surprising resiliency, according to *Reason*, a libertarian magazine. The declining state of the kibbutz movement has been accelerated because the idea that a socialist system will dominate the world doesn't exist any more. The religious kibbutzim are more successful because religion gives them the ideology the secular kibbutzim have lost. (*Religion Watch*)

VENEZUELAN DEBATE PROSELYTING BAN

U.S.-BASED NEWS Network International reports that the Venezuelan Senate is considering a law which would make it illegal for Protestant missions to evangelize among indigenous tribal groups, especially in the Amazon area. Governments in both Venezuela and Brazil are trying to protect the culture and health of these stone-age cultures. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

BAPTISTS PROPOSE TO PREACH GOSPEL TO WORLD

AT THEIR sixteenth Baptist World Congress in August in Seoul, Baptists from around the world passed a series of resolutions which includes a pledge to try to present the gospel of Jesus Christ to every person in the world by the end of the century. Throughout the meeting, congress leaders and speakers prayed repeatedly for God to prepare the way for the Christian message in places such as North Korea, China, and parts of the Soviet Union. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

CHINA STRESSES CONFUCIANISM TO COMBAT WEST

THE RECENT revival of Confucianism in China has gained strength since the Tiananmen Square massacres of 1989, according to *Areopagus*, a Hong Kong-based Christian magazine. This is a dramatic change from only 20 years ago when Confucianism was openly reviled by the government as counter-revolutionary. Eric Bosell writes that the government interest in Confucian teachings stems partly from the drive to create moral values for the young and bolster Chinese national pride. However, one Chinese scholar of Confucianism, whose views have been suppressed by the Communist Party, says the "government...has never emphasized Confucianism more than now.... In the past the Party has opposed both traditional culture and Western culture. But since [Tiananmen Square] the Party is using Confucianism to oppose Western culture." (*Religion Watch*)

NEW PAPERS PICK UP PIECES AFTER SENTINEL'S FAILURE

IN THE early and mid 1980s the number of independent regional LDS newspapers continued to grow, particularly when the *Latter-day Sentinel* instituted editions throughout the western United States. Today, however, only a few regional papers exist. Since the collapse of the *Latter-day Sentinel* in September 1989, several papers have struggled to publish Mormon-oriented news in the Arizona market. This September, Marsha Ward began a monthly publication called *The Arizona Latter-day Journal*. The *Journal* will now compete with the twice-monthly *Arizona Latter-day Sun* which former employees of the *Sentinel*, including Ward, began publishing in October 1989.

Ward says she decided to begin the *Journal* because she wanted to publish news features the *Sun* does not cover. The *Sun* deals with "hard news that ha[s] to do with the Church," she said. The *Journal* will focus on feature articles, a food section, teen advice column, and items that children will enjoy.

Unlike the late *Latter-day Sentinel*, which published editions in California, Nevada, Oregon, Idaho, and Utah, the *Sun* and the *Journal* are exclusively Arizona papers, and they are competing in a market that was unable or unwilling to support the *Sentinel*.

The *Sentinel* folded after the Deseret Bookstore, one of the *Sentinel's* major advertisers, stopped carrying the publication in its bookstores and began phasing out advertising in the paper as its contracts expired. Although there was no official reason given, many felt Deseret Book withdrew its support because of the *Sentinel's* defense of former governor Evan Mecham when impeachment proceedings against him began.

There are about 250,000 Mormons in the Arizona market, and the *Sun* currently claims 2,500 paid subscribers. Ward hopes to amass a circulation of 5,000. Both Ward and Jim Olsen, *Sun* editor,

are optimistic that their papers will flourish even though the *Sentinel* failed with a much larger circulation. "We're farther ahead than most people thought we would be, though you can never live up to your expectations," Olsen said.

Several other papers continue to be published in the Arizona-Utah-Nevada region which the *Sentinel* served. Charlene and Richard Taylor continue to publish the *Beehive* in the Las Vegas area. Originally started in 1975, the *Beehive* was later bought by the *Sentinel*, but unlike other *Sentinel* publications, it continued to use its original name. The *Beehive*, a monthly, covers local issues in the Las Vegas valley, but it also concentrates on national or Church-wide stories that would interest the Las Vegas Mormon population.

The Latter-day Family Journal,

published by Val and Terri Buhecker, competes with the *Beehive* in Las Vegas. The *Family Journal* also covers only the Las Vegas area instead of circulating to the larger Arizona-Nevada-Utah area. Its news orientation is local. Another Las Vegas *Sentinel* spinoff, although not a newspaper, is the *LDS Guide*, published by Ed Kanet. The *Guide* is a yearly directory of local Church information. It lists Church officials, maps, and histories of stakes and wards, and a calendar of events.

Several regional papers, such as the *Latter-day Trumpet* in Idaho Falls and the *Latter-day Sentinel* in Cerritos, California, which had been purchased by the *Sentinel*, ceased publishing when the Arizona paper failed. Among the papers no longer in publication include the *California Intermountain News* in Los Angeles and the *Mormon Trail* in Denver. Of the other independent Mormon regional newspapers being published in the mid-1980s in California, Col-

orado, Washington, and Canada, only the *San Diego Seagull* is still produced on a regular basis.

In some regions, the Church seems to be filling the void for Mormon-oriented news through its Area Public Communications Council. The council in Southern California publishes a quarterly newsletter called the *LDS Update* which tracks Church members and their activities. In Hawaii, the Church sponsors a monthly newspaper called the *LDS Hawaii News* which is free to Hawaii residents. Jerry Pond, of the LDS Church Public Communications Department, says that there is no set format, audience, or publication schedule for these Church-sponsored newsletters. They may be published at the ward, stake, or regional levels, and may be targeted for Church members, the community at large, or intended just for Church public communications members. ☐

INDEPENDENT REGIONAL MORMON-ORIENTED PUBLICATIONS

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Las Vegas, NV 89104-3106

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c/o Ed Kanet

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Las Vegas, NV 89110

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\$2.00 postage and handling to residents outside of Las Vegas

MORMON JOURNAL

c/o Wayne Pickerell

Denver, CO

published irregularly

Free to Denver residents

UPDATE



NORTHWEST SYMPOSIUM MEETS

THE SECOND Sunstone Northwest Symposium was held November 9-10 at the Mountaineers Building in Seattle. Keynote scholars BYU English Professor Louise Bell, author of *Only When I Laugh*, spoke on "Juggling the Claims of Creativity and Correlation," and Mormon historian Richard Poll spoke on "Our Dynamic Church." After the closing banquet Richard Poll and his wife, Gene, (center) posed with the organizing committee members (from left): Diana Nielson, Steve Whitlock, Kathleen Barrett (program chair), Patrick McKenzie, Molly Bennion (symposium chair), March Oiese, Tamara Burdick, Mark Thomas, Anne Breckon. There will be a third Pacific Northwest Symposium next November in Seattle.

BYU CANCELS ISRAEL STUDY ABROAD

BYU HAS canceled the 1991 winter study abroad program in Jerusalem because of the U.N. Security Council's decision to use force against Saddam Hussein after 15 January. Students who were scheduled to attend BYU in Jerusalem will be allowed to enroll at the Provo campus instead.

Students who enrolled for the fall 1990 semester were initially rerouted to Greece for two weeks and spent another week in Turkey before going to Jerusalem while the Board of Trustees waited to see what would happen in the gulf.

Only a maintenance staff will remain at the center. (*Daily Universe*)

MORMON CRITIC DIES

REVEREND WESLEY WALTERS died 9 November 1990 after undergoing gall bladder surgery. For 30 years Walters was pastor of the Marissa Presbyterian Church, Marissa, Illinois. Walters conducted primary research and wrote articles challenging Mormon scholars' conclusions regarding early Mormon history which strongly impacted historical scholarship.

Responding to Walters's writings in a 1969 *Dialogue* article, Richard L. Bushman said, "While Mr. Walters has put us on the spot for the moment, in the long run Mormon scholarship will benefit from his attack....Mormon historians asked themselves how many other questions about our early history remain unasked as well as unanswered....Without wholly intending it, Mr. Walters may have done as much to advance the cause of Mormon history within the Church as anyone in recent years."

ECCLESIASTICAL COUNSELING

U.S. MAGISTRATE Ronald Boyce has ruled that the Mormon church and a man accused of abusing his adoptive daughter do not have to disclose conversations between the man and his ecclesiastical leaders or information involving his Church excommunication. Magistrate Boyce said conversations between a church member and an ecclesiastical leader are privileged when it is understood the conversation is to be confidential, even when there is no confession. "The modern trend of cases construing the scope of the clergy privilege is to read it more broadly than merely being applicable to 'confessions' in the penitential sense, but to apply it to communication for religious counseling," Boyce wrote.

Records and conversations involving excommunication or other church disciplinary actions are also privileged, according to the order. (*Salt Lake Tribune*)

GHANA LIFTS BAN ON LDS ACTIVITY

IN DECEMBER the government of Ghana ended a 17-month ban on most LDS church activities in the West African nation. Bruce L. Olsen, managing director of the LDS Public Communications Department, said sacrament meetings were to be conducted beginning 9 December, and the full schedule of Sunday meetings—priesthood, Relief Society, Primary, Young Men and Young Women, and Sunday School would resume 16 December.

The announcement, which came in an official government broadcast in Accra, Ghana, expressed satisfaction that the Church teaches members to honor the flag and promotes racial harmony. Olsen said, "We are grateful for the faithful members who conducted themselves honorably and patiently during these months while questions concerning the Church and its work in Ghana were discussed and resolved to the satisfaction of government officials and the Church."

Missionary work and public meetings of the Church had been banned in Ghana since 14 June 1989, but members were permitted to conduct worship services in their homes.

Y POLICY KILLS HOUSING FUNDS

UTAH'S FAIR housing law has failed to receive federal certification because of a BYU requirement that privately owned apartment buildings must be segregated by gender if students live in them. This means Utah cannot receive Federal reimbursement for anti-discrimination housing cases.

A state law in 1989 includes a section requested by BYU which allows housing to be segregated "for reasons of personal modesty or privacy." The Department for Housing and Urban Development (HUD) concludes that the separation of persons by gender is permitted for personal modesty or privacy if limited to dormitories with sleeping rooms that use common bathing rooms. Because there are no common bathing rooms in private apartment complexes, HUD sees no infringement of privacy or modesty.

"Utah already must abide by the federal law so removing a portion of the state law really won't change anything," said Frances Farley, Utah senator, and co-sponsor of the Fair Housing Act. "Changing ours just means a person won't have to go out of state for help," she said. Until the Utah law is certified, individuals who feel they've faced housing discrimination must complain to the HUD regional office in Denver.

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

THE JORDAN SCHOOL DISTRICT is sponsoring "**Celebrating Women's History**" on **1-2 March** at the Mount Jordan Middle School, 9360 So. 300 E., Sandy, UT 84070-2998. Funded in part by the Utah Humanities Council, some of the fifteen presentations include: **Jessie Embry**, "Life Cycles of Utah Women at the Turn of the Twentieth Century"; **Maureen Beecher**, "Everyday Lives: Utah Mormon Women"; **Carol Madsen**, "Nineteenth Century Utah Professional Women"; and **Elizabeth Cunningham**, "Changing Role of Women in Religion." Admission is free; however, *prior registration is required*. Contact: Jean Wollam at the Jordan School District, 9360 So. 300 E., Sandy, UT 84070-2998 (801/565-7100).

THE MOUNTAIN WEST CENTER FOR REGIONAL STUDIES at Utah State University announces the **1990 David Wooley and Beatrice Cannon Evans Biography Award**. A prize of \$10,000 is awarded for a biography or autobiography on a person playing a role in "Mormon Country," as defined by Wallace Stegner. Eligibility: publication must have 1990 copyrights; no reeditions or new editions; manuscripts are accepted. Deadline: March 1991. Send six copies to MWCRS, USU, Logan, UT 84322-0735 (801/750-3630).

THE NATIONAL HISTORIC COMMUNAL SOCIETIES ASSOCIATION is having its eighteenth annual National Historic Communal Societies Association conference at the 19th century Keilite village of Aurora, Oregon on October 10-12, 1991. The theme is "**Community as Family: Family as Community**." Send brief personal resume and one hundred-word abstract by April 1 to the program chair, Mr. Patrick Harris, Director, Old Aurora Colony Museum, P.O. Box 202, Aurora, Oregon 97002 (503-678-5754).

THE 1991 NEW TESTAMENT LECTURE SERIES, sponsored by the Sunstone Foundation and the Student Religious Forum, features a monthly lecture on the second Tuesday of each month. On **12 March** Ph.D. candidate in Hebrew **Margaret Toscano** will address "Is Jesus God in the New Testament?" On 9 April BYU philosophy department chair **James E. Faulconer** will speak on "Paul's Letters to the Romans."

Lectures will be held in room 101 of the James Fletcher Physics Building at the University of Utah, \$2 donation. To receive a notice each month of the upcoming lecture, send your name and \$5 to Sunstone, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY, with funding from the Pew Charitable Trusts, will host a conference 6-9 June 1991 on "**Christian Primitivism and Modernization: Coming to Terms with Our Age**." The conference will focus on American religious bodies whose historic identity is bound up with restorationist or primitivist ideals. Conferees will ask how modernization has impacted these traditions and especially their restorationist ideals. The session on Mormonism will be on 8 June at 9 A.M. and feature **Grant Underwood** on "Primitivism in Pentecostal Traditions: Historic Strengths and Weaknesses," **Thomas Alexander** on "Mormon Primitivism and Modernization," and **James Allen** on "Toward A Responsible Future."

Other sessions include "Primitivism as an Aspect of Fundamentalism" as well as sessions on the Stone-Campbell Movement, the Holiness and Pentecostal Traditions, and the Radical Reformation (Mennonites). **Martin E. Marty** will speak in the closing session as a respondent to the conference.

Registration is \$25 and on and off campus housing is available.

Contact: Lori Glenn, Conference Coordinator, c/o Religion Division, Pepperdine University, Malibu, CA 90263.

THE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM XIII will be held earlier than usual, on **7-10 August** at the University Park Hotel. Proposals for papers or panel discussions are now being accepted. Send to Cindy Dahle, Sunstone, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM WEST will be held at the Oakland Airport Hilton on **1-2 March**. Speakers include **Ed Ashment** and **Paul and Margaret Toscano** on the historical origins of the temple; **Bonner Ritchie** and **Kate Kirkham** on the individual and the Church; **Todd Compton** on the spiritual outcast in the Book of Mormon; and **Erin Silva** on the ecclesiastical implications of grace and unrighteous dominion. Registration is \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. Contact: Bonnie Bobet at 415/843-0296. Send registration to: Sunstone West, 158 Paseo del Rio, Moraga, CA 94556.

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY will hold its 1991 annual meeting on 12 July and will focus on the theme of **recreation and leisure in Utah**. The program committee hopes to have papers on a broad range of categories including, but not limited to, sports, travel and tourism, entertainment, skiing, river running, fishing, boating, hunting, movies and movie-making, living history and historical reenactments, and the development of recreational facilities. Individuals or groups interested in presenting a paper or session at the meeting should send a one-page proposal by 1 March to Kent Powell, Utah State Historical Society, 300 Rio Grande, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

THE WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held on **19-20 April** at the American University Campus. Guest scholars include **Jan Shipps** and **Maureen Ursenbach Beecher**. **Carol Lynn Pearson** will perform her one-woman play, "Mother Wove the Morning." Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Contact: Donald Gustavson, 413 Clearview Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

THE **Mormon History** ASSOCIATION

was organized in 1965 as a scholarly organization dedicated to the understanding, research, and publication of Mormon history. Membership is \$10 a year and is open to any person interested in Mormon History. The Mormon History Association has no official ties with any church. Members receive:

- The *Journal of Mormon History*
- A quarterly *Newsletter*
- Announcements of the annual meeting and other activities.

As a special introductory offer, new MHA members will receive one free back issue of the *Journal*. Other back issues (Vol 7-16) are available at a reduced rate.

For information, contact Jessie L. Embry, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602.

THE STUDENT (MIS)PRINTS

IN A recent letter to the *Idaho Statesman*, Jim Weiser wrote: "Lest we be concerned that the younger generation in Idaho is not exposed (now, now) to the classics, I offer the following from the newspaper published by the students at Ricks College in Rexburg: 'Hafen is an enthusiastic reader and claims "Lame is Rob," by Victor Hugo as her favorite book.'"

THE GIFTS OF TONGUES

THE CHURCH is creating reprint editions of the first fifteen foreign languages that the Book of Mormon was published in—comprising all languages it was translated into in the nineteenth century. The collections will be distributed only to general authorities and other high Church officials. The project is being carried out jointly by the translation department, the historical department, and the display department. One hundred copies of each language first edition will be printed and hardbound at a prestigious bindery in Boston. Sources within the publishing community estimate the cost of the project to be around \$100,000. Reportedly, the project arose from a request by President Benson to have a representative copy of each language in which the Book of Mormon has been published.

LUTHER GETS CREDIT

A LUTHERAN parish in Washington has received a form letter from Chevy Chase credit-card company addressed to the 16th-century reformer Martin Luther. The letters says Luther is "in a unique and distinguished group" with "exceptional financial credentials" and an "outstanding credit background." The signer of the letter, a Chevy Chase vice president, looks forward to Luther's reply "at your earliest possible convenience," and promises to "recognize and respect your expectations" and to "meet and exceed them all." (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

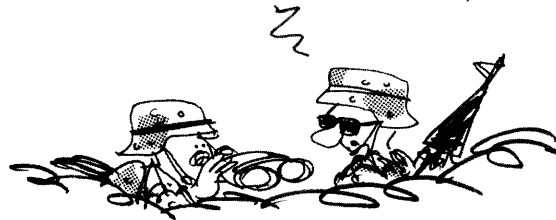
PASTOR SUSPENDED FOR BAPTIZING CATS

THE GERMAN Lutheran provincial church of Thuringia has suspended Pastor Matthias Pohland for baptizing cats at the request of their mostly elderly owners. Church officials called the cat baptisms "theologically highly suspect."

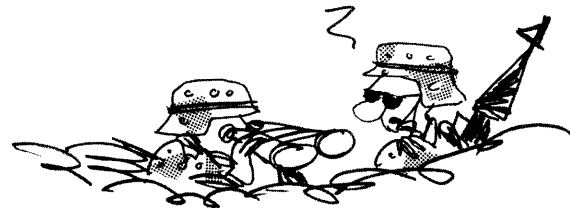
RESEARCH REQUEST

JOYCE HOGGAN is writing a graduate paper on "Prostitution and Its Place in the American West" and would appreciate individuals sharing information about any primary sources such as diaries, newspapers, letters or bibliographies listing secondary sources such as books, journals, essays, manuscripts, dissertations. Joyce Hoggan, 4928 Cartwright Ave., North Hollywood, CA 91601.

BEING LDS, I SUBSCRIBE TO THE "JUST WAR" THEORY. SEVERAL OF OUR ANCIENT PROPHETS WERE, AFTER ALL, MILITARY MEN.



STILL, I WOULD FIND IT DIFFICULT TO FIRE ON A BROTHER IN THE GOSPEL.



THERE'S AN IRAQI OUT THERE!

WHERE!

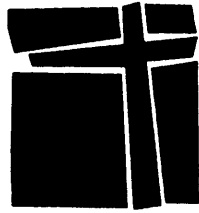


HOLD IT! I SEE A BOOK OF MORMON IN HIS POCKET!

FLIP! WELL MAYBE HE'S RLDS...



NOW AVAILABLE ON TAPE:
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Containing the seminal New Testament essay "The Jewish Jesus."

Utah Unitarian minister **Barbara Hamilton-Holway** shares her understanding of the New Testament ideal of religious inclusiveness.

Near Eastern scholar **Ed Firmage** examines church government in the New Testament.

UCLA classics scholar **Todd Compton** discusses "Mary Magdalene and the recognition of Christ."

BYU English literature scholar **Stephen Walker** illuminates Jesus's parables.

F.A.R.M.S. president **Stephen Ricks** looks at the influence of the Old Testament on the New.

BYU Near Eastern professor **Daniel Peterson** probes the epistle of James.

Apologist **Van Hale** reveals the problems in reconstructing the New Testament text.

BYU philosophy department chair **James Falconer** explores Paul's letter to the Romans

BYU humanities professor **Arthur Bassett** asks "Do we teach four gospels or one?"

Author **Blake Ostler** explores what it means for the New Testament to be "translated correctly."

Hebrew scholar **Margaret Toscano** asks "Is Jesus God in the New Testament?"

Author **Eugene England** finds Christ the Merciful at Christmas.