

SUNSTONE

SHEILA DAVANEY ON FEMINIST THEOLOGY TRENDS

TODD COMPTON ON NON-HIERARCHICAL REVELATION



"Do You Preach the Orthodox Religion?"

A PLACE FOR THEOLOGY IN MORMON COMMUNITY BY JANICE ALLRED



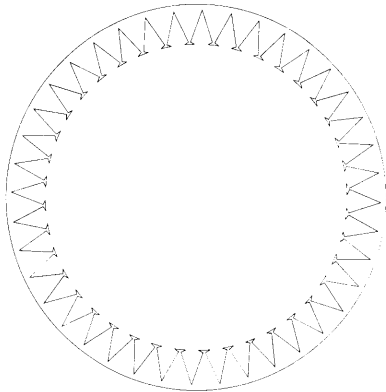
SUNSTONE

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READERS' FORUM

STANDING INDEPENDENT

IT SHOULD BE clearly understood by the readers of SUNSTONE magazine that the talks by Elder Boyd K. Packer ("Let Them Govern Themselves") and by Elder Ronald E. Poelman ("The Gospel and The Church") were printed in the October 1990 SUNSTONE magazine (14:5) without the permission of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. The Church wishes to avoid any implied endorsement of any private business or publication. In addition, the Church wants to protect the copyright ownership of writings and other creative works created or published by the Church.

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THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

LOCKED OUT

IN A VERY real sense, I have been inside the Church locked out. A year ago my relationship to the Church hung in the balance. For over sixty days, I had labored on a document through which I was making a most sincere effort to purify myself, to separate my personal problems and challenges from those I felt stemmed from the counter-productive emphasis in Church administration. I came to understand its purpose: It would become a formal presentation to my stake presidency.

My willingness to associate with the social/corporate Church would depend on the outcome of the meeting. I was very frightened. I needed four serious issues addressed: 1. Accusations that I do not support Church leaders; 2. The corollary idea that I have not received support from my Church leaders; 3. Spiritual damage sustained consequent to the pervasive "program emphasis" in evidence everywhere in the Church; 4. And acknowledgement of the mean-spirited treatment I'd experienced for years at the hands of "program-oriented" leaders.

After several hundred pages of revision, my document still amounted to over twenty pages. I knew that if we got sidetracked I wouldn't be able to communicate the gravity of my situation. To that end, with soft instrumental hymns in the background, I spoke the prayer into a tape recorder. I went to the meeting fasting; I received a priesthood blessing before leaving home.

What could have happened in the fourteen years since my baptism to make every-

thing seem so sad? Had I really not supported my leaders? Was I on that proverbial "high road to apostasy"? But then why were my deepest prayers answered so miraculously, so often? Why did Church members regularly approach me and say: "Your testimony mirrored the feelings in my soul today"? If I were so bad, where did I get the strength and love to teach and baptize a dozen friends in the previous four years? Why was I always willing to home teach six or eight inactives?

Going into that meeting, to quote Jim Croce, "I had begun to doubt all the things that were me." And yet, from deep within I cried out as Martin Luther: "Here I stand; I cannot do otherwise, so help me God!"

I got to make my complete presentation. Then we talked for an hour. That is, I talked; my Brethren listened. My pain kept coming out; flashes of anger threatened the spirit. But I was largely able to maintain my composure. Finally, my stake president looked straight at me, his eyes filled with tears. "Brother Hoefelmann, if you say these things happened to you, then I believe you."

A million pounds lifted from me. I love the Church so much. I love the gospel. I love the Lord. Then I felt the encircling love of my leaders. And I knew that if they ever again had questions or doubts about what I said or did, they would call me in directly and communicate their concerns to my face.

A year has now passed. For eleven months I've served as a counselor to the elder's quorum president. My strengths and talents are recognized and called upon as I visit the homes of each member.

I stand amazed that while I labored on my tender Leaves of Grass, Elder Packer was preparing a presentation of his own on de-programming the Church and stressing individual revelation and spirituality. My long night of darkness is over. I am among the Saints once again.

DON HOEFELMANN
St. Louis, MO

DOING ZION WITHOUT THE NET

I WAS GLAD to read Elder Packer's remarks to the regional representatives and the responses thereto. He forthrightly highlighted that the Church's "safety net" works so well that members have less incentive to be self-reliant.

The Church doesn't have the resources to

do all things. Many leaders and members are having a hard time in adjusting. That's what makes the claim that the Church should do more to feed, clothe, and medicate the world at large so ridiculous. If we are having a hard time taking care of our own members, how can we possibly take care of the rest of the world? (I don't think there can be much question that the Church itself should look after its own members first: after all, we are an extended family with bonds of mutual aid and support.)

The trend is towards equality and fairness. This applies not only to the new budgetary system but also to the new missionary support system, and to the way chapels are built. Inequities between rich and poor Saints are being levelled out. We are moving toward a Zion Society.

CHARLES L. SELLERS
Knoxville, TN

DISNEYLAND HISTORY

LOUIS MIDGLEY'S discourse on Mormon history is a mystery to me ("The

Myth of Objectivity: Some Lessons for Latter-day Saints," SUNSTONE 14:4).

Midgley's major point is that historical objectivity is impossible. He also asserts that Mormons who seek objective history betray their faith because the explanations of secular historiography "preclude the possibility that the claims upon which the Mormon faith rests are true." This is simply sophism. The new Mormon historians whose works I have read do not claim that they have achieved absolute objectivity or even hope to. Their limited goal is to claim as historical only that which the weight of documentary evidence will support.

I can imagine only two kinds of Mormon history of which Midgley might approve: "Disneyland history" and "Kremlin history." In Disneyland, every detail works to sustain the image of a "Magic Kingdom," where error and evil are always the work of painted monsters (never of Mickey, Goofy, and the rest of the insiders). The bad guys always disappear once you 'round the next corner to the reassuring refrain, "It's a small world after all." With the Kremlin (at least up until five

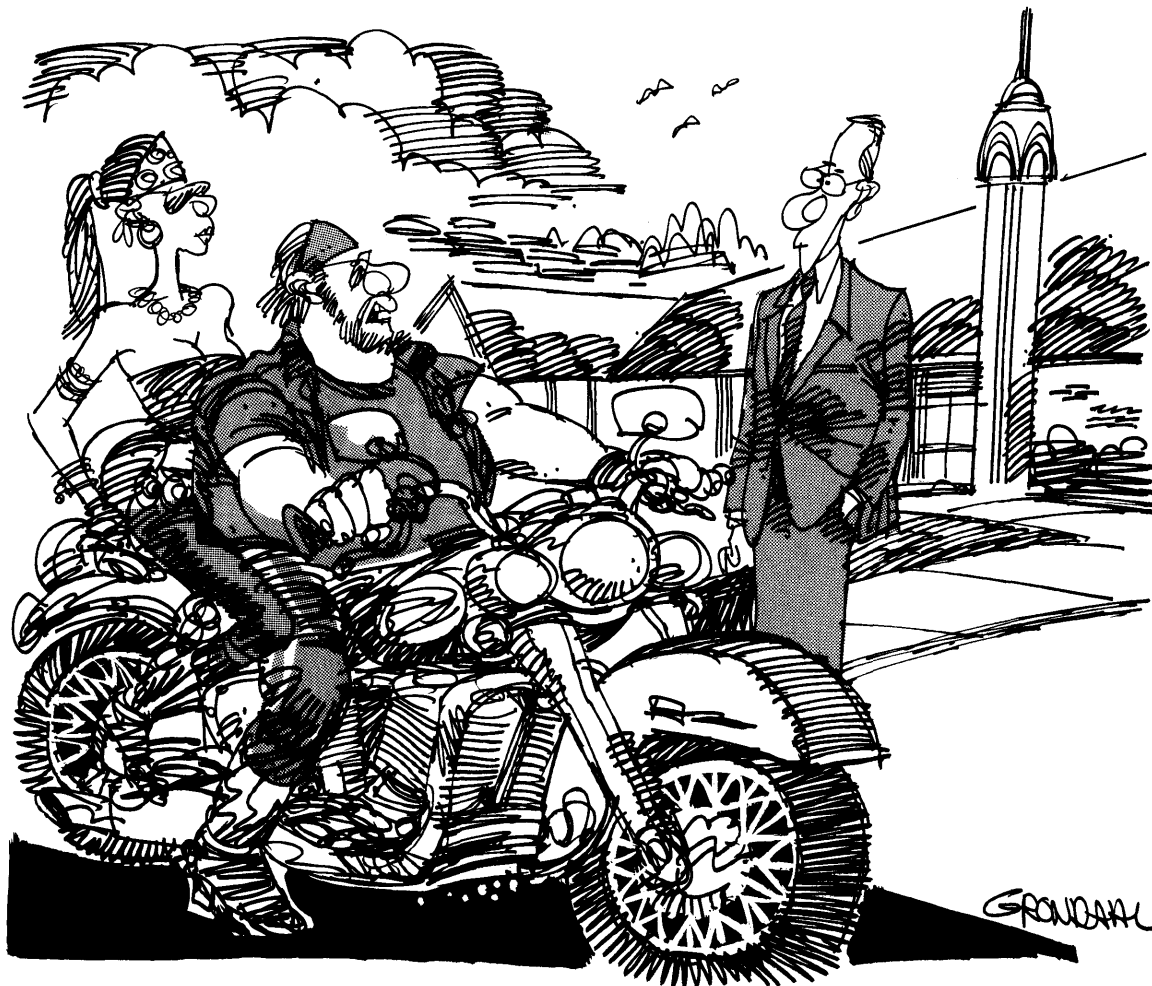
years ago), the task is to remake history, even if events, names, and whole peoples have to vanish from the record. Official "historians" doctor photographs, and incidents must be depicted so as to confirm in every case the ideology and perfection of the party.

The New Mormon History is faith-enhancing for many Saints. I am moved to gratitude and wonder that God can work through frail and imperfect people. I love to see Saints of the past in three dimensions, complete with their mistakes and contradictions. They do not make the saga of the Latter-day Saints less inspiring or divine. What kind of faith is it that must fear for its existence every time one of its historical figures is discovered to have had blemishes?

WAYNE SANDHOLTZ
Claremont, CA

NOT ALONE

AS A NEW subscriber I have been thrilled so far with many (not all) articles in SUNSTONE. I was glad to read the views of other Mormons expressed in complete hon-



"But we've been goin' to church for years, Bishop...we just haven't got there yet."

esty without fear of censure. I am willing to wade through the muck in order to find occasional treasures.

I have wondered why the brilliant ones are seldom the leaders. Perhaps it is because obedience, stability, and competence are valued more in the Church than brilliance, and that the Gods prefer to try the brilliant spirits through suppression and loneliness rather than to risk losing millions of mediocre (nevertheless precious) spirits who could be befuddled or led astray by the occasional tangents of brilliant thinking. Or perhaps it is something else. At any rate, some articles in *SUNSTONE* exude an exquisite intelligence and beautiful faith seldom encountered, which strengthen me when mine is lacking. I feel challenged, stimulated, and gratified in the knowledge that I am not alone in the poignant suffering that comes from asking too many questions in a church where many think it is sinful to question.

ADRIENNE FOSTER POTTER
Corona, CA

OBEDIENT VOICES

WHENEVER SOMEONE in authority speaks, the alternate voice, in consciously assuming the role, is compelled to regard everything with a degree of suspicion: The Church is automatically an organization to control minds and actions; any program or policy is examined and fault found. The alternate voices want to learn from *other* alternate voices and the mind sometimes closes to other edifying sources. Experimenting on the word (Alma 32) and feeling the spirit are not objective and are omitted.

Some of the issues upon which so much time and effort is given have to be met with a big "SO WHAT?" There are all sorts of justifications to make some items issues, but most pale against the needs of true service in both the Church and the world. Ideas which question and challenge existing doctrine and practices make far more interesting reading, but where do they lead?

To me, the alternate voice is that voice

which suggests there is another way than what I interpret as the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any voice which would lead us away from eternal goals, through whatever means, becomes an alternate voice. We need voices of faith and obedience. Obedience does not mean blind faith or silence when there is the need for opinion, scholarship, discussion, and experience. But it does mean to be true to the call to increase faith, to serve, and to live the commandments.

THOMAS D. COPPIN
Tacoma, WA

A CANDID COMMUNITY

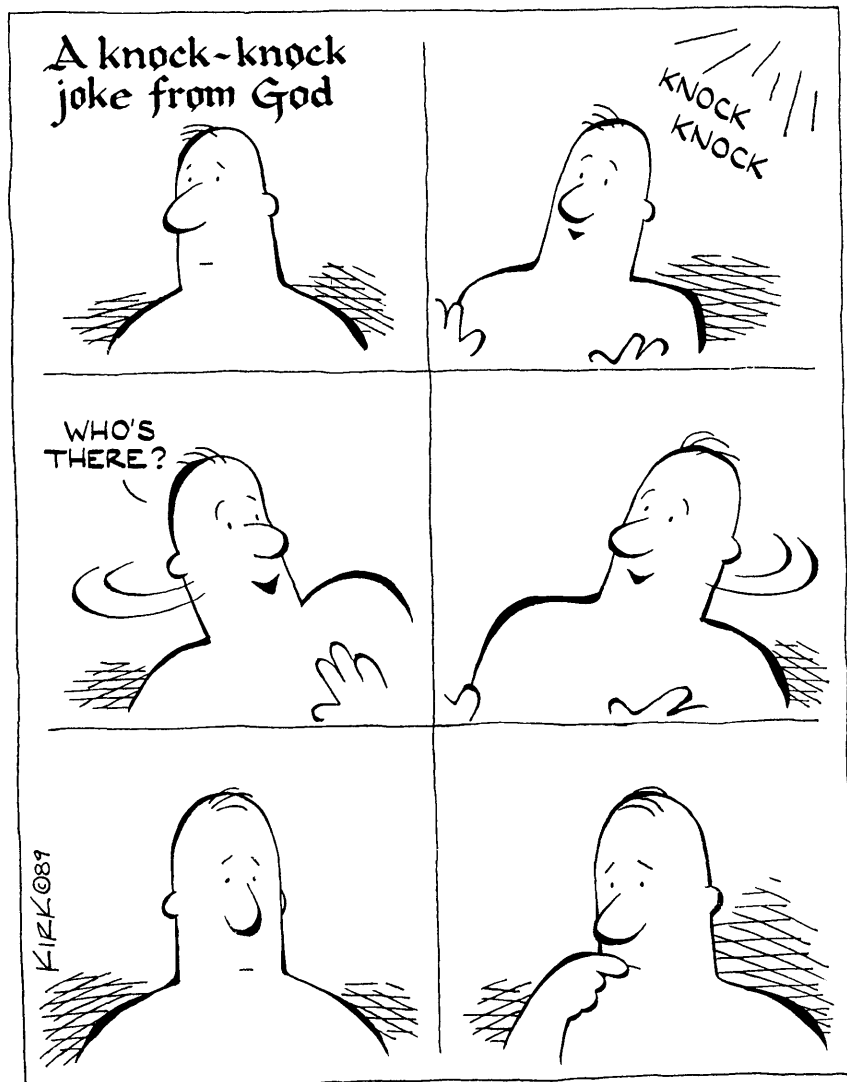
I HAVE OFTEN heard members express, as did Elbert Peck, that

the social experience in wards often compels conformity rather than celebrating God's diverse creations among us; cultivating orthodox appearances instead of blossoming genuineness, and this brings censure and stifles the opening of our vulnerable hearts ("Homemade Gatherings of Zion" *SUNSTONE* 14:5).

We members are responsible for this in our official gatherings: some of us speak, some teach, some ask and answer questions, some administer, and most of us bear testimony. We protect our appearances and conform to social norms when we use these forums. Admittedly, it takes two to engage in honest dialogue, but it takes only one to ask an honest question, and only one to speak candidly and openly in a testimony meeting, in a sacrament talk, or as a teacher. These create, if only momentarily, the united and loving community.

For example, after preparing for several months, a Sister in my ward spoke on the assigned topic of forgiveness. She had suffered a tragedy several years before and was hurt by the insensitivity and coldness she encountered in her grief. Her talk was an unflinchingly honest discussion of her struggle to understand her feelings and to learn to forgive. It was not the talk of one who had mastered the principle, but of someone struggling to forgive. She revealed some of the weaknesses that made her need the Atonement, helping me and other members, who still mention the power of her talk, face our weaknesses and our need for Christ.

Recently the bishop asked me to speak on hope in Christ. I tried to speak openly about my struggles with pride and materialism that keep me from Christ, and the importance of those times when I have felt the love of God. Though I felt directed to put myself on the



line, the experience was very frightening. However, in the course of the talk, I saw my ward and ward members through new eyes. There was one man who listened intently, a quiet man, with whom I have exchanged only one or two words. He had just suffered a deep loss, one of many in his life. As I looked at his upturned face, I felt the burden of his pain and longing and knew that my covenant to bear another's burdens extended to this unknown man. And before I finished my talk, I felt for a moment a shared longing with that congregation to put aside the world and come to Christ. It was a clear vision that a ward can be one.

SONDRA SUMSION SONDERBORG
Ann Arbor, MI

THE LEGACY OF OUR MANUALS

AS A CONVERT from the Protestant tradition, I was distressed to learn that the Presbyterian Church concluded that Mormons are not Christians ("Presbyterian Study Concludes LDS are Not Christians," SUNSTONE 14:4). The Presbyterian judgment presents a grave injustice to the millions of fine, dedicated Latter-day Saints who are devout in their love for the Savior and who render genuine Christian service in full measure.

What is particularly unnerving about the pronouncement is that the research was based on LDS materials. About the same time this action was reported, *The Legacies of Jesus* was released, written by Lowell Bennion, whose life and writings exemplify the teachings of the Savior.

Two things are apparent: (1) The Presbyterian researchers did not read the works of Lowell Bennion; and (2) the pondering wisdom of Lowell Bennion is not reflected in current official Church materials and manuals—sadly, his writings are no longer used as Church materials.

This comes as no surprise. Philip Barlow, in his fine forthcoming book, *Mormons and the Bible* (New York: Oxford University Press), details the process and extent to which the thinking of Elder Bruce R. McConkie has been embraced by the Church, to the exclusion of the influence of Lowell Bennion. As a result, the Church dispenses doctrine similar to advancing a technology: mastering the detailed skills of how a machine is put together. Unfortunately, this sterile approach is applied to the rich and weighty matters of principles and faith.

Laurie Newman Dipadova
Greenwich, NY

GIVING DIGNITY TO CONVERSION

MARY HARRINGTON'S "Not Every Family Rejoices to Have A Child Go on A Mission" (SUNSTONE 14:6) about her Protestant-raised son covertly converting to Mormonism, going on an LDS mission, and the subsequent betrayal and disappointment her family felt, aroused the annoyance I feel with my parents over joining the Church. However, I concede that a church that claims a monopoly on the ends will tolerate any means to accomplish them.

Mrs. Harrington, apologize to Jack for your family's disrespect of Jack's maturity and commitment to God. Apologize for a home environment where he did not feel free to discuss the changes he felt without encountering argument and judgment. Approach Jack without judgment and with genuine curiosity about his spiritual walk, his doubts, and any self-protection he may have put up against the family's opinions of his choices.

When Jack begins to yearn for what was good in his family's faith that is not in his new faith, and he will, there will be a barrier rather than a bridge to what he needs. The barrier is the lack of respect for his sincerity, his maturity, his availability to the Spirit.

NATHAN KIRK
Kennewick, WA

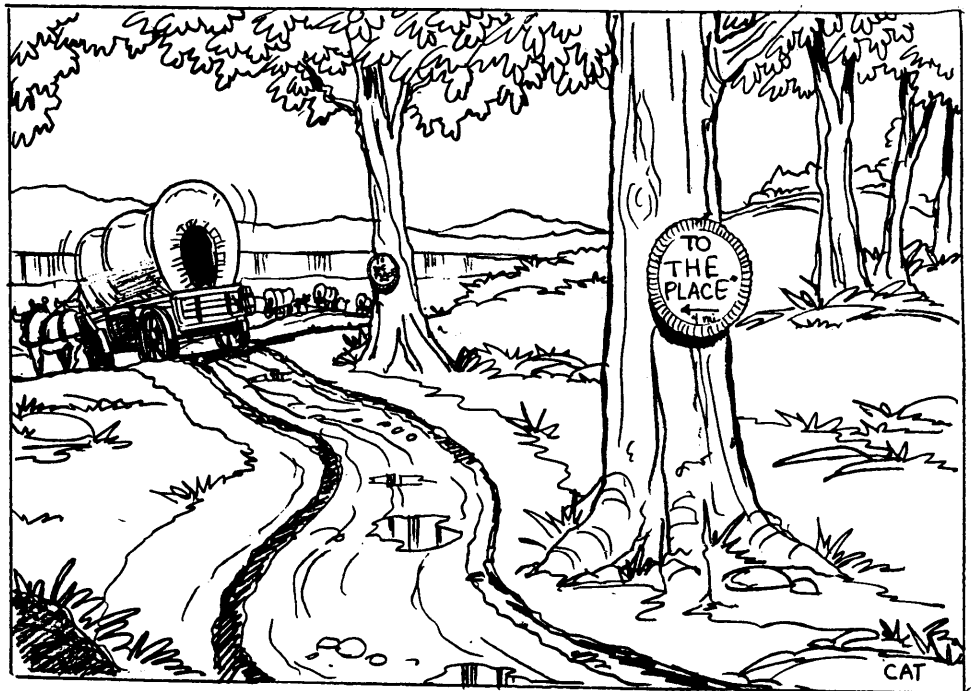
THE SORROW OF CONVERSION

I RELATE TO and agonize with Mary B. Harrington, over her supposed loss of her son. I am certain it would be of little comfort for her to know that her story has been reenacted in thousands of LDS homes. My own fifteen year old Danish grandmother was literally booted out of her home; she paid a high price for her faith in subsequently coming to America. On the other hand, it may be eye-opening for Mrs. Harrington to realize that somewhere along her own family's line that at least one of them left the Catholic faith, perhaps to the sorrow of many, and converted to Protestantism. It may prove profitable if she and her husband were to pleasantly and in good faith study the tenants of their son's new found faith. They could then, with love and understanding, speak knowledgeably with him of the error of his ways.

MAX H. RAMMELL
Rexburg, ID

PROFESSIONAL THEOLOGIAN

REGARDING BLAKE OSTLER'S review of Paul and Margaret Toscanos' *Strangers in*



The rest of the pioneers would've had a much tougher time finding the Salt Lake valley were it not for Brother Hezekiah's paper plate inspiration.

Paradox: Explorations in Mormon Theology ("Speculation, Myth, and Unfulfilled Expectations" SUNSTONE 14:6), my compliments to Ostler for his "philosophical" defense of twentieth-century Mormon doctrine. What really makes me smile is Ostler's closing comments:

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.

First, who is telling "the great lie"? Who is counseling against humanizing the Brethren? Who is sanitizing the historical record? Who has been offered the second-anointing ordinances? Surely Ostler is not suggesting that we, the great LDS unwashed, are deserving of that which has not been granted. Or is he merely suggesting that rank indeed has its privileges after all? Why is it we must be constantly reminded that "you don't have to

be a general authority to receive exaltation" and that "it's not where you serve, but how you serve"? Could it be because we simply don't believe that? Why wouldn't we believe those very "real people" who are telling us that? Too much theo-socio-cultural evidence to the contrary, I suspect.

Second, why would anyone "lament that the Church leaders are largely business people without competence in philosophical theology?" The Lord called them and chose them. Considering how much the Lord taught Joseph Smith about business (mostly to avoid it), it is little wonder He would call in the experts now—especially in the face of the complexities of our times. On the other hand, considering Joseph's obvious preeminence in simple theology, the Church is better off without professional philosophical theologians in its hierarchy. Otherwise, we might never give up the philosophies now plaguing us. It is tough enough overcoming the inadequacies inherent in the mastery of business administration, but even the thought that we must overcome inadequacy in an institutional sense is a lie. It's a lie because salvation and exaltation are not corporate processes. Neither are they corporately preventable.

JON LARSEN
Sandy, UT

PHILOSOPHY'S MYSTICAL SIDE

AS USUAL, Blake Ostler raises excellent theological points. He does, however, seem a bit too left-brained to appreciate a book which taps into our mystical sides, and for every objection one can raise to the Toscanos' views, other thorny theological/philosophical problems to the alternatives can be made. Ostler is too dismissive of heterodox but legitimate Mormon theorizing. Our theological conceptions need to adapt to our expanding knowledge.

The marvelous thing about the Toscanos' book is that they raise so many provocative questions and toss around so many fascinating ideas that one can disagree with many of them and still find it one of the most valuable LDS books ever published.

SCOTT S. SMITH
Thousand Oaks, CA

REALITY AND THE IDEAL

I HAVE THOROUGHLY enjoyed *Strangers in Paradox*. As far as the Toscano's argument against polygamy, though gener-



"With our girls he was a Liahona, with the boys an Iron-Rodder."

ally enlightening, it has a few faults. Almost always our ideal of anything is significantly different from the reality. On page 235, they suggest that women have problems with polygamy as part of the celestial kingdom because it doesn't fit in with an image of an ideal heaven. After Toscanos' discussion of the polyandrous as well as polygynous relationships among Mary, Eve, Adam and the Lord, and also among Sarah, Abraham and the Lord, it seems a bit oversensitive for them to worry about polygamy in heaven. I am afraid that we will find conditions in heaven a good deal different than we expect. Just because we think the condition weird doesn't make it so.

I hope that the Toscanos will continue to write such exciting, enlightening works. Too often we turn off our thinking processes and live with cliches and easily defined descriptions of the gospel.

DON LARRY PETERSON
Mapleton, UT

A STIMULATING THEOLOGY

STRANGERS IN PARADOX was the first treatment of Mormon theology I had read in years—official or otherwise—which did not bore me to utter distraction. Whatever its faults, it has the virtue of being able to engage the reader in a way in which few other writings on Mormon theology (with their intellectually inbred arguments and totally predictable conclusions) are able to do. I did not always agree with the Toscanos, but even where I disagreed, my own thought processes were stimulated positively. In reading some writers on Mormon theology, one is never quite sure that they believe what they write, or anything at all for that matter. Not so with the Toscanos' book.

ROGER THOMAS
Normal, IL

PERIOD POETRY

I AM A big fan of Loretta Randall Sharp. However, her "Blood Poem" (SUNSTONE 14:4) left me confused. I suppose I don't share that obsession with the menses some women embrace. I'm reminded of the line from the film *Desperately Seeking Susan*: "Not all women are obsessed with orgasms; some women just have them." Well, I guess I just have my period every month. I don't flush with "fists clenched at/cramps and the thought of being strapped spreadeagled,/for a D&C. . . ." It's not that I object to this poem for any

puritanical reasons, I just don't quite get it. (Might I suggest a different brand of tampon?) I know what I'm revealing about myself. I'm saying I'm one of *those* women: the old fashioned, shallow, uptight type who sews her own clothes, cans fruit, and expresses her philosophy using quotes from Madonna movies. I also realize that it takes so much more effort and talent to create piercing and sophisticated poetry (like Sharp's) than it does to write pithy letters to the editor! Please keep the great poetry and fiction coming. I always turn to it first.

DONNA BANTA
Lewisville, TX

A STATEMENT FOLLOWING THE PERSIAN GULF WAR

AS THE UNITED STATES recovers from war in the Persian Gulf and contemplates its role in the post-war world, we feel it is appropriate to express some concerns about the conduct of the war which continue to be relevant, and offer some recommendations for the future. As members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, we derive our concerns and recommendations largely from principles found in the teachings of Jesus Christ. We believe, however, that these principles are universal, and are widely accepted by most religions and creeds.

The decision to go to war is the single most serious, profound, and significant deci-

sion that a nation can make. Such a decision necessarily involves the imposition of death, suffering, and destruction by one people upon another people. Because the decision is so important, it should not only take into account strategic and political considerations, but should also satisfy the most stringent ethical and moral standards. When referring to United States actions in Iraq, President Bush often claimed that what we did was "just" and "moral." Lest such claims lose all significance through repeated invocation in every decision to go to war, we feel it is important to examine their meaning and their applicability to the Persian Gulf War.

We started with the belief that peaceful resolution of international disputes is always preferable to violent resolution. We acknowledge further that a peaceful resolution is not always possible, but believe that the admonition in Mormon scriptures to "renounce war and proclaim peace" (D&C 98:16) is a firm mandate, to which very few exceptions are justified. In particular, we believe that a nation must pursue all opportunities for a peaceful resolution before going to war. A war cannot be "moral" or "just" unless this has been done, even when dealing with an enemy that appears to be extremely defiant and intransigent.

Unfortunately, we feel that the U.S. did not exhaust all possibilities for a peaceful resolution before waging war on Iraq. Economic sanctions may have been effective in persuading Iraq to leave Kuwait, but we believe they were abandoned before they had a



real chance to work. In addition, we feel that Iraq's acceptance of the Soviet peace plan, while deserving of caution and skepticism, presented a possibility for peaceful resolution that should have been taken seriously by the United States. The ease and swiftness of our victory indicate not only the superiority of United States military capability, but also the utter lack of commitment within the Iraqi army to remaining in Kuwait. We feel that a peaceful withdrawal was eminently feasible just prior to the ground assault and should have been earnestly pursued.

Another defining criterion of a just war is that its motives must be purely defensive. Mormon scripture teaches that nations should go to war only "to defend themselves, and their families, and their lands, their country, and their rights, and their religion" (Alma 43:47). We believe that a nation may be justified in going to war under this standard to help a fellow nation that has been attacked and has asked for assistance in defending itself. Thus, the liberation of Kuwait from a hostile and brutal invasion may have been a just motive for going to war.

We are concerned, however, by indications that the United States agenda went be-

yond the liberation of Kuwait. In justifying our rejection of the Soviet peace plan, our leaders stated explicitly that their goal was to cripple Iraq's military capability, and that they would not be satisfied merely with an Iraqi withdrawal. Thus, many of our actions were disproportionate to a purely defensive goal. To the extent that United States goals went beyond the liberation of Kuwait, we believe that our actions were not purely defensive in motivation. A defensive war is justified against actual threats, not the possibility of future threats. Any future threats should be prevented first through peaceful means such as treaties, international monitoring, or arms embargoes.

These and other issues regarding the justness of war were discussed before and during the war, but have been largely forgotten since it ended. The United States-led operation was a stunning success, both strategically and militarily. It is only natural to feel a mixture of joy, relief, and pride. We are concerned, however, that this success may have rendered the moral and ethical questions pertaining to the war irrelevant in the minds of the victors. It would be all too easy to believe that victory means moral correctness,

or that the ends justified the means. Vietnam was wrong because we lost; the Persian Gulf was right because we won. Such a belief is dangerous because it is tantamount to a belief that military might is equivalent to moral justification, that might makes right. The American people must avoid the tendency to justify our actions merely because we were successful in attaining our goals.

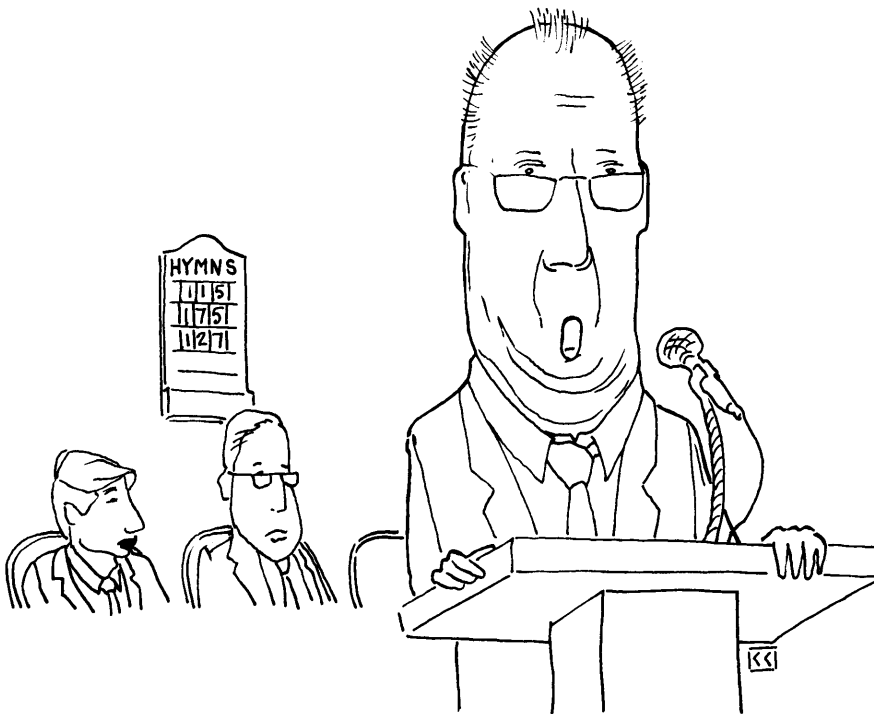
We are also concerned that the relative ease and painlessness of this military operation might render violence a more attractive option for resolving international disputes in the future. The liberation of Kuwait was indeed a success, but it would have been a much greater success if we had accomplished it through peaceful means.

Finally, we are alarmed by the apparent lack of concern over the death and destruction that our operations inflicted on Iraq. Iraqi casualties number in the tens of thousands, approaching one hundred thousand. Much of their infrastructure was destroyed, and the suffering and disease will continue for many years to come. We fear that the American media, with the implicit backing of our leaders, have characterized the Iraqis as irrational fanatics, thus dehumanizing them and allowing us to justify the death and destruction that we poured on them from the sky and the ground. In addition, the media and our leaders have sanitized this war, refusing to show us the casualties or other suffering caused by the war.

We feel that any dehumanization of the Iraqi people or sanitization of their suffering is immoral. Christian teachings require us to recognize the Iraqis as our brothers and sisters, to acknowledge the suffering that they have experienced and are experiencing, to mourn with them for their losses, and to provide them with aid so that they can recover as quickly as possible.

Jesus Christ taught that it is blessed to be a peacemaker. We take his teachings as our ideal, and have faith that it is possible for nations to meet this ideal, difficult though it may seem. In the future, we urge that the United States patiently pursue constructive policies of diplomacy and reconciliation before resorting to violence, and that it confine its goals to defense of the defenseless. In addition, we urge that the United States apply rigid ethical and moral standards to its own actions as well as to those of other nations.

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has taken no stand on the Persian Gulf war. We believe, however, that individual members of the Church have the right and



On behalf of the Bishopric I'd like to welcome you to the Temple view Second Co-dependent Singles Ward. We'll open our Sacrament Service today by singing from hymn 115: "Come, Ye Dysfunctional."

the responsibility to exercise their conscience in evaluating whether the actions of their country are morally and ethically justified.

STIRLING ADAMS
ANN BAGLEY HARDY
MARK H. BREWER
STEPHEN HARDY
PANDORA BREWER
JOSEPH IZATT
M. D. CANNON
SUSAN IZATT
ALLISON PINGREE
JEFFREY S. TOLK
GREGORY A. CAMPBELL
ASTRID TUMINEZ
MARNI ASPLUND CAMPBELL
KAREN FARB TULLIS
Cambridge, MA

A MORALLY JUSTIFIED WAR?

I'M FEELING SO full of pride these days, after the Allied forces' stunning victory, that it has taken until today for me to remember President Benson's stern warnings regarding pride. I suspect that a large share of the credit for the U.S. victory in the Gulf War belongs to the Lord. When did any alliance or nation ever win a war so decisively and quickly, with so little loss of life of noncombatants and allied ("friendly") soldiers, without His aid, if not His blessing? Perhaps it was partially a "morally justified" war, because a virtually defenseless people were saved from a brutal aggressor. Also, we haven't seized "spoils," nor indiscriminately destroyed property, nor taken hostages, etc.

CARVEL THATCHER
Sandy, UT

NO "CHRISTIAN NATION"

IN RESPONSE to Eugene England's "On Trusting God, or Why We Should Not Fight Iraq" (SUNSTONE 14:5), while I agree the war is not going to help solve the many problems in the Middle East and will probably exacerbate them, I disagree that the problem of war can be solved if only the United States had "the spiritual and moral force of a united Christian nation." Aside from the obvious surprise and alienation the Jewish and Muslim communities in the United States would feel at hearing they are part of a Christian nation, there is a logical problem with the very idea of a "Christian nation" which has deep historical resonance in the Middle East.

Even though England cites Spencer Kimball as the authority for applying the ethics of Christianity to relations between nations, this is still a categorical mistake. Because something is morally imperative for individual Christians, it does not necessarily follow that it is morally imperative for nations. As Jean-Jacques Rousseau succinctly points out of this very problem in relation to war, "it is

impossible to fix any true relation between things of different kinds." If England is going to argue an ethics for the nation, he must address the categorical difference between individuals and nations.

The danger of not making the distinction between Christian and nation has been seen time and time again in history. The "nation," when associated with statehood, will inevitably be guilty of corruption, tyranny, and abuse and it seems even more horrible when it is done in the name of God. The Middle East in the twentieth century is a cauldron of violence and instability precisely because there are already two nations, both with strong and legitimate claims to historical and religious truths, both making claims of moral superiority, fighting over whose "nation" is right. The last thing the Middle East needs right now is a Christian "nation," no matter how well intentioned, prescribing moral rights and wrongs. Both the Muslim and the Jews have had more than enough experience with crusading Christian nations.

In fact, I lean to the more extreme possibility in Christianity—a total rejection of civic identity. As Christians, our saving message is that God loves and judges all his children as individuals, not as nations.

DIANE TUELLER PRITCHETT
Vienna, VA

A CASE FOR WAR

SUNSTONE READERS ARE unlikely to take issue with the general theme of Eugene England's article which is, as I read it, an admonition to be non-violent, turn the other cheek, love our enemies, bless them that curse us, do good to them that hate us, and let God's loving miracles assure our success.



It's from the Bishop, "In line with the new Church Budget Program you owe \$416.25 for missing Sacrament all last year. . ."

But England's arguments for peace-seeking actions based on these Christian principles fall short on four points:

1. *Christ's admonition certainly assumes that while we love our enemies we also love and help our friends, particularly those in need.*

Sometimes (as in this case), choices must be made regarding who and how we are to help. England asks us to follow the highest Christian ethic of meeting force with active, even self-sacrificing love (rather than counterforce). The question must be asked, however, whose cheek are we to turn? At the most fundamental level in this conflict, it was not our cheek, but the Kuwaitis'. How convenient to use someone else's cheek to accept the next blow as a demonstration of our righteousness. Are we asked to bless them that curse others while ignoring the plight of those being abused? Doesn't Christ's teaching of doing good to them that hate you include doing good to those who are friends as well?

2. *England's article, with its plea for Christ-like love, carefully avoids consideration of individual Kuwaitis—the victims of Saddam's outrageous aggression.*

England discusses Iraqis, Jews, Americans, Bush, Hussein, Christians, Palestinians, Mormons, and even Hitler, but never the Kuwaiti victims. Kuwait is mentioned only as a country, not as a people. That makes it easier to be indifferent to their plight. America has practiced this technique more than once in the past.

It is hard to denounce war under any conditions unless one's eyes are closed to suffering and genocide. Who would advocate waiting for sanctions to take effect while a sister, daughter, or friend is being raped? Nor is it easy to suggest that the victim await the Lord's intervention when nagging

thoughts intrude that perhaps He has already intervened by giving us the power to help. Maybe our blessings came with the full expectation that we would use this power for good. And contrary to what England implies, we probably don't even have to perfect ourselves before we can help.

3. In an unacceptable descent from his initial arguments based on Christian ethics, England adds this clincher: *What's in it for us?*

The moral force of England's proposed lack of militant action against Saddam is undermined when he explains just how expensive and troublesome a strong response would be for us: "If the West uses force in the Middle-east, a Westerner will not be safe in a Muslim city for 200 years." "Inevitably our long-term goals of a stable, friendly, or at least a divided Middle East, free of Soviet influence, would be lost." "We can work with our Arab allies to arrange a withdrawal of our troops, in stages corresponding to replacement by their own." Better them than us? His righteous cry for peace just degenerated into a whine for self-serving convenience!

4. Most of the article's historical generaliza-

tions are wrong.

England implied that Iraq has a legitimate right to Kuwait by claiming that Kuwait was only a vague Sheikdom a hundred years ago. Sheikdom yes, vague no. Unlike Iraq, Kuwait has a 250 year history of a stable and largely benevolent government. Since Iraq's formation as a country in the 1920s, Kuwait's independent existence was repeatedly and officially recognized by world leaders and Iraqi government leaders, including Saddam.

England accuses Kuwait of "thumbing its nose" at poor, war-torn, heavily indebted Iraq. The truth is, Iraq sits on large oil reserves, and unlike its Arab neighbors Iraq has more than one source of wealth: ample water, hydroelectric power and a broad industrial and agricultural base. Iraq just appears poor. Unlike Kuwait, its wealth is not distributed equitably. To finance his failing war efforts against Iran, Saddam demanded loans and concessions at gunpoint from Kuwait and other Gulf states.

Kuwait was rich and Saddam wanted it. The sack of Kuwait was like a girl being raped. As spectators with the power to help,

we could watch and do nothing, or intervene. England's solution: watch from the sidelines, pray it ends well, and admonish others not to interfere; since, (1) we are not perfect, (2) we could get hurt, and besides, (3) Kuwait was just getting what she deserved, that is, she provoked the whole incident by her behavior—she wore her skirts too short.

RICHARD CRIDDLE
Provo, UT

THE BOOK OF MORMON AND WAR

I AM NOT sure where Eugene England has been but I have heard quite a few prayers of gratitude for the opening of the nations for the teaching of the Gospel. England's basic premise is that pacifism is the most righteous course in all circumstances. A careful and prayerful study of the Book of Mormon has led me to conclude that this is not so.

An important and even major theme of the Book of Mormon is that the righteous are often compelled by circumstances to take up arms to defend themselves, loved ones, possessions, and freedoms. They were commanded through their prophets to go into battle retaining the companionship of the Spirit of God (equated in Alma 61:15 with the spirit of freedom). God's manner of protecting them from their enemies was to inspire them with courage and ingenuity and to add to their own strength and ability.

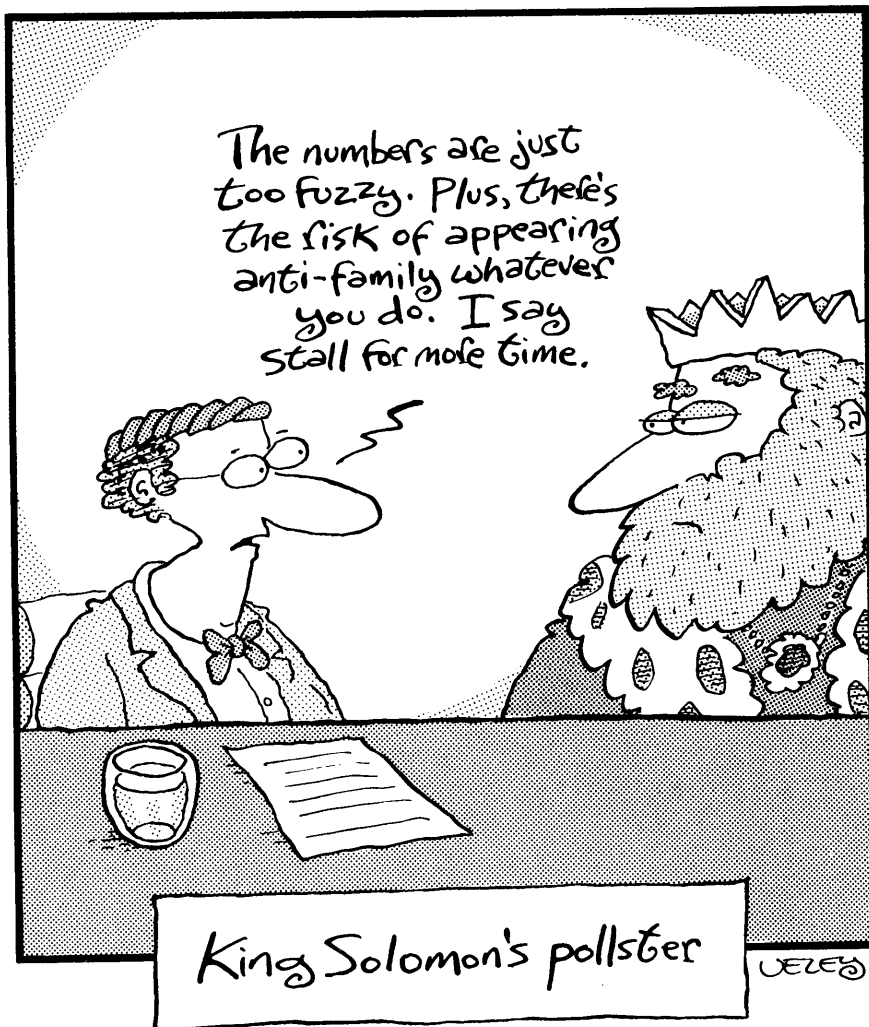
This pattern was established in the innocent days of Nephi, who of necessity used the sword of Laban in battle and also as a model to make additional swords for his people.

The story of the People of Ammon clearly demonstrates that some evil people can become so hardened that, if not resisted, they would continue the slaughter until they destroyed every righteous person from the earth. God's method of preserving the People of Ammon was to put them under protection of the prophet-warrior Moroni. Surely these people qualified to be protected by the power of God, and so he did protect them by blessing the Nephites in battle. Could it be said that the Anti-Nephi-Lehi's were more righteous than the Nephites who gave their lives to protect them?

ALLEN HUNT
Carnation, WA

A RIGHTEOUS ACTIVISM

EUGENE ENGLAND deserves credit for trying to slow down the headlong rush to



war with Iraq. Yet I wonder if the “proper Christian response” he advocates takes too narrow a view of both the conflict and Christian ethics.

England’s first objection is that the threat or use of force to meet another force violates the Christian ethic of meeting such force with active, self-sacrificing love. While such a response clearly makes sense when applied to a rebellious teenager or fractious neighbor, does it apply literally when one is attacked on the street by a mugger or terrorist?

We are taught to love our enemies. We also are encouraged to love our friends. Saddam Hussein’s vicious regime has caused the deaths of over 200,000 men, women and children, including many of his own countrymen. His premeditated genocide of Kurds and Kuwaitis, surprise attacks on peaceful neighbors, murder of dissenting aides, support of terrorists and launching of missiles into civilian populations might lead some Christians to wonder what atrocity would follow if we were to turn yet another cheek. Does the injunction against meeting force with counterforce apply in the case of known pathological killers? Would England stand by and allow a Ted Bundy to torture and kill his child, responding only with love? And if force is justified in self-defense, are we allowed to use force to defend a neighbor, even an Arab neighbor? True Christian love would lead us to do everything possible to free our Arab neighbors, including the Iraqis from Saddam’s control.

England’s other point is that the Middle East conflict violates the following conditions of a “just war”: (1) one fights defensively, on his own soil; (2) one fights only so long as necessary, never insists on unconditional surrender, and sends the enemy home as soon as fighting stops; and (3) one never sheds blood in a spirit of revenge.

No war is “just,” England tells us, but then he goes on to make the obligatory exception of World War II. “Hitler finally had to be stopped . . . with force . . . because he became insanely ambitious and impervious to all peaceful means.” Chamberlain was a hero for trying to avert war, but when war finally came “God helped us miraculously throughout the first years of the war.” An armistice in 1943, when the war “was essentially won” would have ended the holocaust, avoided further casualties and prevented the cold war.

Actually, most historians have concluded that Chamberlain’s appeasement helped launch the war. The first years of the war brought one disaster after another to the Allies—it must have seemed to many that God

was miraculously helping the Fascists. The lament over the missed armistice doesn’t take into account the possible reluctance of Hitler to agree to one.

On every point the Persian Gulf war meets the “just” war criteria better than WWII:

1. The Allies fought on enemy territory; whereas, the Kuwaitis fought with coalition help on their own soil.

2. WWII ended after six years of devastation with an unconditional surrender, thousands of Germans were held prisoner for years in the Soviet Union, and thousands died in captivity; whereas, the ground war in Kuwait was halted after four days, Iraqi soldiers were allowed to withdraw even before a formal cease-fire took effect, and prisoners were repatriated without delay.

3. WWII introduced the world to massive bombing of civilians, wholesale killing of prisoners, and brutal treatment of defeated populations; whereas, in the Gulf conflict coalition forces tried repeatedly to resolve the issue without war, heroic measures were taken to avoid targeting Iraqi civilians, Iraqi prisoners were treated better than they were by their own government, and our soldiers said they would rather go home than shoot the enemy.

Why does England insist that God takes sides in men’s wars? We would do well to take Lincoln’s approach, and pray that we are on God’s side. How do we know it was God who raised up “a Soviet leader he could inspire with patience and restraint?” Did God inspire Gorbachev to open fire on the Lithuanian demonstrators? England claims God inspired U.S. presidents from Eisenhower through Carter not to respond to force with counter-force. What about U.S. intervention in Greece, Korea, Cuba, Viet Nam, and Afghanistan?

The world can breathe easier now that Saddam’s military toys have been taken away. Now the West must act quickly to take advantage of its accumulated moral capital to establish a lasting peace which must include a solution to the Palestinian problem (something Saddam never intended to do). If we act wisely, we might not once again have to wait patiently for forty years for God to tackle the job and work the same miracles he worked in Eastern Europe. He has thoughtfully given us the tools to do the job more quickly ourselves, if we can avoid being sidetracked by those who would urge us to sit back in righteous pacifism and let God fight our battles for us.

DOUGLAS R. BOWEN
St. George, UT

THE MIRACLE OF PACIFISM

I HAVE NO doubt that Eugene England’s article on peace and pacifism will be dismissed by a great many who read it as naive and starry-eyed idealism from a peacenik who doesn’t realize how our sophisticated world works in this day of nuclear *realpolitik*. England’s thesis, that God provides a way to peace for those who seek peace, seems strange and foreign indeed to a culture steeped in the “patriotic” idea that there is no substitute for victory. Non-violence in the face of madness seems at best irrational.

And yet testimonies are born every fast Sunday about the blessings received in the face of “irrational” but principled sacrifice. Our Heavenly Father keeps his promises and blesses his children who follow his word, even (especially) when the enemy is Satan himself. Do we believe that the rules change when the enemy is Saddam Hussein?

We must remember that there is another and better way to resolve even our most challenging difficulties—with love, long-suffering and compassion. In the world as we find it, such a way does seem irrational and logically unworkable. But then, most miracles do.

RANDALL K. EDWARDS
Sparks, NV

SUNSTONE ENCOURAGES CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO “READERS’ FORUM.” WE EDIT FOR SPACE, CLARITY, AND TONE. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO AUTHORS WILL BE FORWARDED TO THEM. ☐

BEREFT

the man who lives behind us
whose fence we share
the one whose wife left
suddenly last may
has let his fruit trees go
wild and unpruned, heavy with
fat ripe plums and golden apricots
that hang way over
our side of the fence, reaching arms
full and wild with leaves
bent down with so much fruit
it spills torn, oozing-sweet
onto our lawn

—MARY BLANCHARD

FROM THE PUBLISHER

AN OPEN LETTER ABOUT SUNSTONE'S SUPPORT



By Daniel H. Rector

WHEN I CAME to Sunstone five years ago, the foundation was still reeling from the repercussions of Steven Christensen's murder by Mark Hofmann. For those who knew Steve, his loss was primarily a personal and religious tragedy, but it left many of the people and institutions he supported bereft financially as well. Sunstone was hard hit in both of these regards.

Steve was generous to a fault and Sunstone was one of his dearest causes. He was a columnist for the magazine, but his first love was the Sunstone symposium. More than once he underwrote all its expenses—a single donation providing over one-third of Sunstone's yearly fund-raising budget. In the year before he died, Steve's personal finances dwindled as did his gratuities, so the foundation was not caught entirely unprepared. But in spite of the

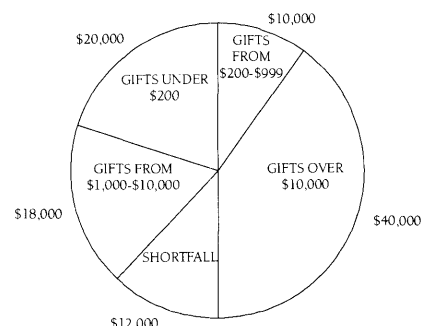
donor search that had been in process for several months, Steve's death left the foundation facing a lean and uncertain future.

Fortunately, soon after Elbert and I arrived at Sunstone, a few individuals came forward to fill the financial lacuna Steve left behind. Since then, Sunstone has not only recovered, it has also grown and prospered. We now have 8,000 subscribers compared to 3,500 in 1986, and we have four annual symposiums today instead of two. We've paid all our old debts, and the future of the foundation is secure.

Recently, however, one of the donors who rescued us in 1986 has experienced a financial reversal of his own. Primarily as a result of losing his support, Sunstone's 1990 financial statement (available for the asking) shows a \$12,000 deficit for the year. Fortunately, this

is not a replay of the crisis we faced five years ago; we now have a larger base of subscribers to fall back on, and this individual's setback is hopefully only temporary. But it's obvious that we're still relying too much on a small group of our largest donors; those who give over \$10,000 to the foundation.

Sunstone's best strategy for mitigating this vulnerability is to increase both the donation amounts and the number of contributors in our other giving categories. These giving levels and our 1990 percentages for each are illustrated below.



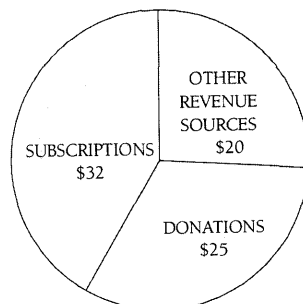
Sunstone's 1990 donation income by size of gift

Of course, the majority of our contributors are in the under \$200 category, and most of these donations come in response to the two fund-raising mailings we initiate each year. Our spring 1991 fund-raising letter coincides with the publication of this issue; if you haven't responded to it I hope you will do so soon. Every such offering means more to us than you may imagine. As the sidebar at the

AS WITH MOST INTELLECTUAL PUBLICATIONS, SUNSTONE SUBSCRIPTIONS ARE HIGHLY SUBSIDIZED

It may come as a surprise to some readers that Sunstone relies on donations at all. However, it's a hard fact of life for virtually all intellectual publications that subscription, advertising, and newsstand revenues must be matched, as much as dollar for dollar or more, with outside subsidies. In Sunstone's case, our total budget in round figures is \$300,000 per year. New subscriptions and renewals bring in about \$120,000; other sources of revenue including symposiums, advertising, and book and tape sales generate another \$80,000; the remaining \$100,000 must come from donations. This means that for every SUNSTONE issue we publish, we

have to raise nearly \$17,000 in contributions. To put it another way, the magazine in your hands that cost you as little as \$2.67, actually cost Sunstone \$6.42 to produce, \$2.10 of which came from donors. The effect of this subsidy on each subscription is illustrated in this graph.



Total cost to produce each twelve-issue SUNSTONE subscription by income source

Raising subscription prices would likely affect subscription revenues inversely because of the number of readers who would find \$57 for twelve issues to be prohibitive. At least until our circulation grows large enough to attract national advertisers, we will continue to seek donations from those who value SUNSTONE.

bottom of page twelve indicates, only those who donate in this way pay their own share of Sunstone's expenses. This group also forms an invaluable safety net of support without which Sunstone would surely falter.

The group of donors who give between \$200 and \$999 yearly has the greatest potential for expansion. As some of you who have given \$50 or \$100 in the past increase your donations to this level, you will help keep subscription prices within the reach of others and meet many of our pressing needs. For example, Steve Eccles, who gives liberally of his time as our West Coast symposium chair, also gave us money recently for a sorely-needed fax machine.

Only a small percentage of our readers can donate in the \$1,000 to \$10,000 range, but the impact of each of these contributions is great, and gifts of this size fund many of our most urgent necessities; travel and honoraria for non-Mormon guest speakers at our symposiums cost \$1,000-\$2,000 each, and printing SUNSTONE now costs \$7,000 per issue. Nicholas Smith's recent mutual fund donation, which printed our previous magazine, is a good example of what gifts of this size can do. Another recent gift in this category is a new laser printer from Kathy Call that will cut our typesetting costs considerably.

These are most welcome offerings, and we need many more. Undaunted by the magnitude of our fund-raising task, we now have an enthusiastic all-volunteer, Salt Lake-based development board working hard to support Sunstone's efforts. Marsha Stewart, the development board president, spends part of three days a week at Sunstone's office coordinating the board's activities and setting up appointments with prospective donors. If you or someone you know can help Sunstone as a development board member or as a major contributor, please call or write to Marsha or me at our office. Of course, calls from donors of all sizes are welcome any time on our toll-free line (800) 326-5926 or use the response card we've included in front of this issue if you prefer.

Those who are able to make large gifts should also know that Sunstone has retained Aldon Tueller, a nationally-recognized, planned-giving consultant to provide legal counsel to anyone with questions about creating a trust or making a bequest to Sunstone. We've identified several areas of need where permanent endowments could be established, including a magazine printing fund and endowed symposium chairs in each academic discipline. If you have any questions about the options and tax benefits in this sophisticated area of philanthropy, or about

gifts of insurance or appreciated stock, please let us know.

I believe that Sunstone's principal virtue is that it speaks to and for a large cross-section of the Mormon community. If this is correct, then it's important that the foundation be supported by the broad constituency it serves.

The Steve Christensens in our community continue to play an invaluable role in making this enterprise possible, and so do each of you who subscribe and donate to Sunstone at the level of your ability. Thank you all for contributing what you can. ☺

PSALM

IT HURTS TO THINK OF YOU

It hurts very much to think of you. How could you suffer not only our pains but our sicknesses and infirmities? Did you actually become sick and infirm or merely feel, with your greater imagination, something *like* what we feel when we are sick and infirm? But could you actually "know according to the flesh," as you say, if you didn't literally experience everything with your body? And if you did literally experience our infirmities, did you know our greatest one, sin? Everyone says you didn't sin, that you were always perfect. But how then could you learn how to help us? And yet if you did sin, if you actually became sick and infirm and unwilling, for a moment, to do what you knew was right, how does *that* help us? I don't want you to hurt like this, like I do now, to be ashamed, to hate the detailed, quotidian past. Yet I want you to know the worst of me, the worst of me possible, and still love me, still accept me—like a lovely, terrible drill, tearing me all the way down inside the root, until all the decay and then all the pulp and nerve and all the pain are gone.

Can't you tell us directly, without all the mystery and contradiction, if what I feel is right? Could it be that your very willingness to know the actual pain and confusion and despair of sin, to join with us fully, is what saves us? It's true, I feel your condescension in that; I feel you coming down from your formidable, separate height as my Judge and Conscience. I feel you next to me as my friend. Did it happen in Gethsemane, when you turned away from your father and your mission for just a moment? I think so. So how can I refuse to accept myself, refuse to be whole again, if you, though my Judge whom I hide from, know exactly what I feel and still accept me? Yet it hurts so much to hear you tell of your pain to Joseph Smith, when you remember that moment in the Garden. You say, "Which suffering caused myself, even God, the greatest of all, to tremble because of pain, and to bleed at every pore, and to suffer both body and spirit—and would that I might not drink the bitter cup, and shrink—Nevertheless glory be to the Father, and I partook and finished my preparations unto the children of men."

Was that preparation so painful, even when you recalled it as the resurrected Lord—and so many hundred years later—that you still shrank and could not complete your sentence? Is that pause between "shrink" and "nevertheless" the actual moment of your Atonement? And why did you also tell Joseph that you will be *red* in your apparel when you come, in garments like the one that treadeth in the winevat? Why will you have to say then, "I have trodden the winepress alone, and have brought judgment upon all people; and none were with me."

Who is it can withstand your love?

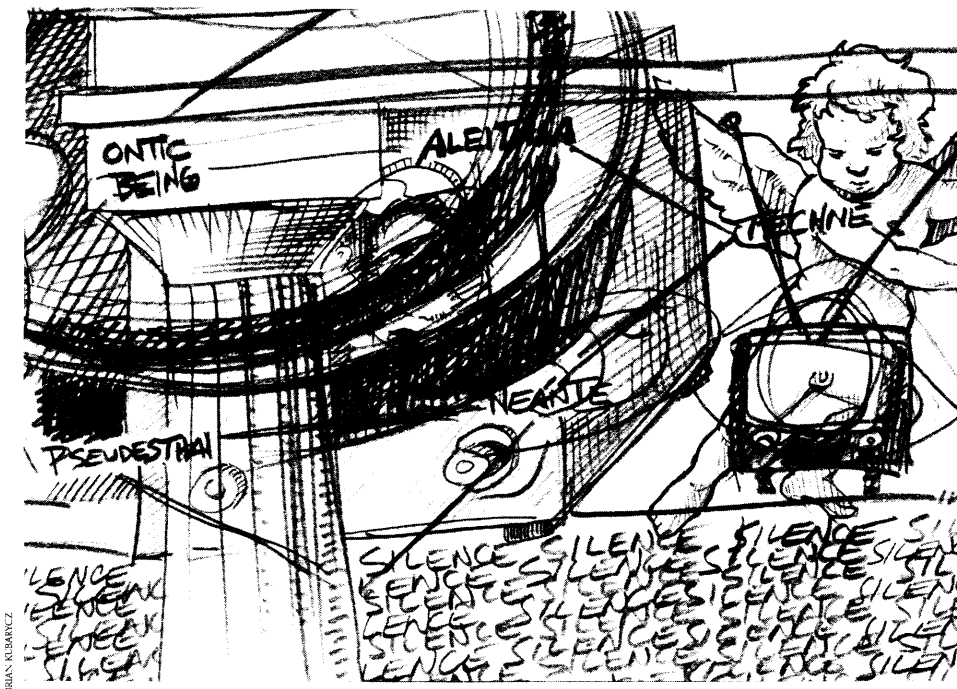
—EUGENE ENGLAND

From "Easter Weekend," *Dialogue* 21 (Spring 1988):22-23.

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Sheldon Greaves

JOSEPH'S AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAM-CHURCH: INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE IN THE VIDEO AGE



When scriptural video producers refuse to take interpretative liberties the tyranny of event over meaning is maintained.

IF OTHER SCHOLARS are anything like me, they do much of their work based, at first anyway, on intuition and gut feelings. This paper started from a nudge of intuition.

It began when I got my first look at the New Testament video which is being used by the Church in the Sunday School materials on the Gospel of Luke. This video is produced by a non-denominational group called The Genesis Project. I was impressed with the attention to detail and the obvious effort that went into re-creating the early biblical milieu. At

the same time I was uneasy for reasons that seemed obvious at the time: these presentations did not cover the whole book of scripture, and no attempts were made to cover the more abstract, theological sections. I also felt that this film stretched the imagination no further than about nineteen inches. On the other hand, when I saw *The Last Temptation of Christ*, I was treated to a film that was provocative, disturbing, frustrating, inspiring. Simply put, it had me going for days, and I was enriched seeing it.

Some months later I encountered a rather interesting article by John Boomershine. This article made two points. The first was that the medium-is-the-message idea also contributed to the great theological upheavals of history.

According to Boomershine, these upheavals came when the dominant media of communication were changing.¹ This thesis, first articulated by Marshall McLuhan,² has largely been discredited by later research.³

Boomershine's second point, however, was that when a culture adopts a new medium of communication, it adopts certain aspects of the culture in which the medium was developed. While I have trouble believing that this "cultural capitulation" was as pronounced in earlier media paradigm shifts as Boomershine claims, I agree that it has happened with the mass media techniques we are inundated with today. We are all aware, for example, of the increasing presence of the advertising and marketing mentality in the Church as it has made widespread use of television, radio, and other mass-communication technologies. In the recent LDS video presentation "Our Heavenly Father's Plan," for example, we see our protagonist as a young, white, middle-to upper-middle class male searching for life's meaning. This is a marketable image. The image most loved and emphasized by the Church is the white, middle-class American family with more than the average number of bright, beautiful children and an obedient wife under the wise leadership of the husband and father. Because this kind of family group represents a small percentage of the Church membership, it is not a realistic image of Mormonism, nor that of an international church.

To get a better idea of the thinking involved in these projects, I interviewed a representative of Living Scriptures, which is a different company than the one which produces the videos for the Church. I was told that the primary purpose of their products was entertainment, and that as a study help they were secondary; no video could substitute for a daily reading program, the representative explained. They hoped that these tapes might inspire some interest in the scriptures and encourage people to read them more. In many ways I applaud this. These kind of tapes are one way of showing what the Biblical world was probably like (assuming the producers have done their homework⁴) without all that tedious floundering about in books whose informative value is exceeded only by their effectiveness as a cure for insomnia. People may become interested in biblical scholarship; then again, maybe they won't. Is this a new way to get people interested in the scriptures, by way of light entertainment? Or are these people greasing the Iron Rod? Easing the process of study often translates into overlooking things that are uncomfortable or contradictory. Eventually, one or more of these

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gremlins will turn and bite. If the victim relies on having easy answers, they can bite hard. The Iron Rod leads both to and from the Tree of Life; Nephi never said anything about a revolving one-way gate.

It is still too early to tell whether people will take to these videos and use them in lieu of reading and studying, despite the manufacturer's intentions. I believe it is still too early to tell. Nevertheless, the potential demand for these tapes appears great enough that Living Scriptures took out a sixteen page ad in a recent *BYU Today*.

GETTING back to the problem of culture-mixing, these video scriptures actually represent the assimilation of two cultural phenomena: television and the King James Version of the Bible. These seem to mix well enough on the surface; dramatic use of the cinematographer's art merges well with the stately text and Shakespearean style of the KJV.

At the bottom of this mixture also lies the heart of the problem, the iconographic representation of the sacred. This is a problem which stretches across the whole spectrum of Mormon life in both directions along the Rod. As a missionary in Catholic Belgium, I was supposed to tell my investigators that having a cross or crucifix on the wall was not a proper vehicle for the expression of Mormon belief. Fortunately, I never could do that. I say fortunately because later I took a class in which one of the students gave a presentation about cross-markings on first-century B.C.E. Jewish ossuaries. The upshot of all this was that in order to make certain points, she gave a brief history of the symbolism of the Cross, and how it actually may have started out as a Jewish symbol of redemption years before the birth of Jesus. During the presentation I was struck by the beauty and depth of this symbol, and I sometimes regret our tendency to shun this symbol without attempting to understand it.

Interestingly, a Mormon who has a limited exposure to visual and ritual symbolisms gets swamped with symbols when he or she visits the temple. For some this is bewildering, and I sense that our general illiteracy in the realm of symbol outside the temple retards our understanding of things inside it.

Art and sculpture, Walter Benjamin reminds us, is originally created for one specific context.⁵ For example, movies are meant to be shown on a big screen in a movie theater, but a requiem is intended to be performed at a funeral held inside a church or cathedral. Benjamin further contends that something is lost when we take that art out of its intended

context. Suddenly the requiem resounds in the living room or automobile, and the big-screen panavision extravaganza gets scrunched onto a television screen. Similarly, I believe scripture itself can be regarded as a legitimate art form. Without going into specifics as to why I feel that way, the natural question is: "What is that art form's use, context, and purpose?" What happens, for example, when scripture is used as entertainment?

One could begin to answer by looking at how we view scripture in the Church at large. The rules of adaptation employed by the Living Scriptures are especially instructive here. Their intention was to make their programs "scriptural," which meant absolute fidelity to the King James Version. No artistic liberty was allowed if it in any way conflicted with the text of the KJV. The text was rendered in a very literalistic way as a record of events which were faithfully reproduced on video tape as accurately as possible. This was monitored by a committee which reviewed all the material to ensure its fidelity. I would not want to be on that committee. How would they decide to take the oracle of the prophet Nathan saying to David that the Lord would make him a house? We have two accounts of it: one in 2 Samuel 7 and one in 1 Chronicles 17. The problem is that they mean different things. The difficulty hangs on the use of the word "house." In Samuel, it is clearly intended to mean a dynasty. But in Chronicles it means a physical house, specifically, a temple. How would the committee handle this? Scriptural fidelity is *not* a simple issue.

For a long-time student of the scriptures, the attachment to the KJV presents other major problems. First is the obvious fact that these producers seem to have forgotten that scripture does not automatically mean the King James Version. There are many translations of the Bible, and several are far superior to the KJV. The irony is further compounded when one realizes that this text which they are trying to reproduce with such faithfulness takes some scandalous liberties with the original material, such as substituting the name "James" for the brother of John who in reality was named "Jacob." In other passages, especially in the Old Testament, certain texts are interpreted almost to the point of violence in order to impose a christological or messianic view.⁶ Encountering such a passage, the reader does not suspect that what he or she is reading violates what most of us would consider to be the boundary between translation and interpretation.

Another problem is that this use of the KJV tends to further entrench the notions that the King James Version is the only True and Liv-

ing Translation, and that the text is internally consistent throughout. By clinging to this translation alone, one stands to lose the fruits of nearly 400 years of biblical scholarship. I know there are some who would say "good riddance." These same people might ask what good all that scholarship has done, other than to confuse issues that are perfectly clear to the careful reader of the KJV. In fact, the contributions have been enormous. Today, the locations of many biblical cities are known, along with detailed information on how their inhabitants lived. Extra-biblical literature like the Annals of Sennacherib have been brought to light, which discuss some of the events also recorded in the Bible. I might add that even if the King James scholars had known of these important histories, they would not have been able to read them. Languages like Akkadian, Egyptian, Eblaite, Moabite, Hittite and Ugartic have been discovered and deciphered only over the last two centuries, yielding tremendous amounts of information about the biblical world. For example, the discovery and decipherment of Ugartic in 1930 has helped to clarify the meanings of several obscure Hebrew words by means of comparative linguistics. These texts have also allowed us to see Baal worship through the eyes of its believers for the first time. But I believe Edgar Krentz best explained the contribution of Historical Criticism when he said, "Historical Criticism makes the gap between us and the biblical world as wide as it really is, forces us to face the peculiarities and particularity of the texts in their world."⁷

INTERPRETING SCRIPTURE

BUT more disturbing to me is that when scriptural video producers refuse to take interpretive liberties, the tyranny of event over meaning is maintained. The underlying assumption is that scriptures are valid only so long as they are historical fact. One is forced to ignore their moral and allegorical genius and acknowledge them only as cold repositories of objective reporting. I believe this is partially caused by our error in equating "accuracy" in scripture with "photographic accuracy"; that is, accuracy as a mirror image of reality. This attitude became pronounced during the nineteenth century, as fact gradually usurped allegory as a primary paradigm of truth. With the advent of video scriptures, the circle is complete with the sad result that we have forgotten how to think allegorically.

In point of fact, any artistic or even scholarly rendering of scriptural material *must* be interpretive at some level. It is impossible

to interact with text without any interpretation whatsoever. Trying to reduce artistic interpretation will inevitably sacrifice meaning for the event's reality. And a search for absolute correctness can be hazardous, especially if the fear of being incorrect is too strong. Unbridled fear of error inevitably leads to a sterile skepticism.

ON the positive side of image and scripture, the possibilities of actively interpreting scripture through video are enormous. This should be obvious to anyone who is at all familiar with the legacy of religious art in both Eastern and Western civilization. Perhaps the most potent of these images are the symbols which are woven into the artist's work. Although they certainly do not represent a historical reality, they tell us much about how the artist resonated to the events being described.

The furor over the movie *The Last Temptation of Christ* was partially caused by Martin Scorsese's daring use of symbols and events in the composition of the film which were mentioned nowhere in scripture. (The film, by its own admission, is "intended neither to be a life of Christ nor "based on the Gospels," but is an allegory on the struggle between the physical and the spiritual.) Because this film was attacked and unwittingly promoted by Christian fundamentalist groups, it inspired a number of discussion groups, lectures, and general dialogue among those who saw it. *The Last Temptation*, for better or worse, was a very provocative and interesting film.

THERE are more than fundamentalist sensibilities working against the use of overt symbolism. Along the paths of realism and the scientific method, humans today have lost their common religious, mythic, and mystic *lingua franca* translation. I refer to that collection of common archetypes and symbols that seem to be all-pervasive throughout archaic societies, and were found to be incredibly consistent both in form and meaning. Much of the work of comparative religionists like George Frazer, Theodore Gaster, Mircea Eliade, and Joseph Campbell has been to reconstruct and, in Campbell's case, reintroduce what was once a universal symbolic vocabulary of the sacred. These symbolic themes include the primordial hill, the idea of sacred space, the temple as a model or microcosm of the universe, the Waters of Life, the Tree of Life, the *axis mundi*, and so on. If these terms seem strange and unfamiliar, that is precisely the point. Without such a common basis, attempts at symbolic interpretation will be hit or miss, and

there will be those who will inevitably take offense when the symbols do not seem properly literal or historical.

Likewise, literalist and historical views of scriptural interpretation will always produce a badly warped reproduction of scriptural theology, history, and sense of significance. Trying to interpret through a filter created from a rehabilitated symbolic construct will also be distorted, but less severely.

The bold and daring use of allegory, symbolism, music, screenplay, and so forth *could* produce stimulating, exciting and disturbing interpretations of our sacred writ. Unfortunately, I doubt this will happen for two reasons. First of all, there are several independent companies who are starting to market productions of this type, both live and animated. As is the American Way, they are competing with each other. According to the Gospel of Competition, that is how superior, innovative products are produced. In actual fact, competing products usually look more and more alike over a period of time as competitors attempt to outdo each other by imitating each other to gain the broadest appeal. I fear the process will be accelerated by the fact that these companies are all trying to appeal to the same set standards of the same Utah LDS church. And because the larger your target audience, the less controversial you are, the usual fruits of mass marketing, sameness and mediocrity will prevail. Even worse, marketing competition might strengthen the notion that marketability equals exegetical validity. This could initiate even more creeping changes in the theological fabric of the Church.

The second and more pressing problem is our own reluctance to interpret scripture for ourselves. Both individually and collectively, we have abdicated the rights of interpretive revelation to those who lead us. I do not believe that Peter's warning that no "scripture is of any private interpretation" (2 Peter 1:20) should keep us from reading and interpreting the scriptures for ourselves. Ultimately, any spiritual exercise is a matter of private interpretation. The important factor is the spirit in which that interpretation is done. In fact, this last point applies as much to Sunday School lessons and sacrament meeting talks as it does to paintings, videos, or stained-glass windows.

As the computer age becomes more and more a part of our daily living, it will become possible to treat the text in ways which we have never even considered before. The emerging technologies of HyperText and HyperMedia will allow text to be immediately linked to cross-referenced materials right on

the screen. Unlike a book, however, these materials will include photos, music, animation, and video, as well as text. Study groups of the future might make such projects part of their research programs. This kind of technology presents its own advantages and problems.

I FEAR that a great opportunity is being wasted. Replacing the old seminary "Scripture Stories" filmstrips with videos takes very little imagination. I suspect that a corresponding low level of mental activity will result. Everybody already knows the script, so what's there to get all excited about? On the other hand, taking some artistic license and using video as a vehicle for interpretation offers many exciting possibilities. It's not just novelty that we are after, it is our own attempt to reach back, as generations past have done, and breathe new life into works grown weak from superficial familiarity. As art historian Jo Milgrom once noted: "Our challenge is to sustain intimacy in an old relationship. . . . like any longstanding relationship, it can grow stale. Only new metaphors can revive it."⁸

NOTES

1. Thomas E. Boomershine, "Biblical Megatrends: Toward a Paradigm for the Interpretation of the Bible in Electronic Media," SBL 1987 Seminar Papers, Kent Harold Richards, ed. (Atlanta: Scholars Press), 144-157.
2. Herbert Marshall McLuhan, "The Medium is the Message" (New York: Random House, 1967), 8.
3. John Peters, personal communication, 27 August 1988.
4. This can be a problem. An acquaintance of mine bought for his son a children's Bible book which tells the story of Jesus and his disciples rubbing the ears of corn on the Sabbath. The artist, however, shows the scene taking place in a field of maize—"corn"—1500 years before Cortez made the Eastern Hemisphere aware of its existence.
5. Walter Benjamin, "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproductions," *Illuminations* (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World, 1968).
6. Such as "What are these wounds in your hands?" (Zechariah 13:6), and "behold a virgin shall conceive . . ." (Isaiah 7:14).
7. Krentz, *Historical Criticism* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1975), 65.
8. Jo Milgrom, as cited in "The Last Temptation of Christ. A Discussion Guide by Cultural Information Service," Cultural Information Service, 1988, 8.

CALL FOR PICTURES OF LDS STEEPLES

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As LDS women increasingly explore the feminist aspects of Mormon theology in the 1990s, it is helpful to understand the historical and contemporary movements in feminist theology in society as a whole.

TRENDS IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY

By Sheila Greeve Davaney

WOMEN HAVE always been present in religious movements, and they have invariably been active participants in the life of religious communities, shaping the character and direction of religious traditions. As worshippers, preachers, teachers, and transmitters of belief and ritual, women have played vital roles in the religions of the world. But, until recently, history has given little recognition to those roles and has recorded little of women's religious lives and activities. Moreover, while women have been central participants within religious traditions, their reflections about the nature of those traditions have been almost totally absent from the communities' self-interpretation, and their experiences have rarely been considered worthy of religious analysis or understanding. Thus, both historically and theologically, women have been essentially invisible.

In recent decades, in North America and Europe and now, increasingly, in the rest of the world, much of this is changing. Women are rejecting their invisible status and are claiming more public roles within religious communities and are insisting upon their right to share in the theological interpretations of their traditions. This last development can be seen most clearly in the emergence of the theological perspective known



PAUL AND BARNABAS AT ANTIOCH

Theological positions of the human and the divine are deeply grounded in experience and the experience that has been the source for theological reflection has been male.

as feminist theology. This paper introduces this theological perspective and an attempt to locate it historically, and explains something of the current directions that are unfolding within it.

Let me, at the outset, state that there is no unified, singular feminist view of religion, nor is there a clear consensus about particular religious doctrines. While feminist theology had its origins in the women's movement and has, therefore, often reflected the white, middle-class, and Christian make-up of much of that movement; its proponents have always included a diverse set of women representing broad and even conflictual perspectives. Thus, from its beginnings, and in ever-greater ways now, feminist theology has been characterized by variety, creativity, and experimentation. I will outline some of the diverse options that are presently being articulated.

If uniformity and homogeneity are not characteristics of feminist theology, there exist nonetheless, real commonalities that shape the feminist theological discussion. One way of highlighting these commonalities is to trace the rise of feminist theological reflection.

THE ROOTS OF FEMINIST THEOLOGY

FEMINIST theology is rooted in what is known as the second wave of feminism that arose in the 1950s and 1960s. However, it has had deep resonance with the first women's movement of the nineteenth century. In 1895 and 1896, Eliz-

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abeth Cady Stanton and other feminists published *The Woman's Bible*. This work presented the various biblical verses that referred to women and complemented these verses with feminist commentary. For a variety of reasons, this work was not well received, but it served the purpose of raising important issues with which women today still struggle. One of those issues is the recognition that religion has played a role in the oppression of women and that liberation from this oppression must entail the radical transformation of religion as well as other social and political realities.

A second issue that *The Woman's Bible* raised that remains a central topic on the current agenda of feminist theology was the importance of history, and in particular, the role the Bible and biblical religion played in shaping female identity. Both of these areas of concern—the relation of religion to oppression in general and the particular role of the Bible in determining women's lives—continue to animate much discussion among feminists.

While the authors of *The Woman's Bible* raised critical questions concerning religion, many other early feminists positively linked their endeavors on behalf of women and other oppressed groups, especially blacks, to a religious vision. This anchoring of feminist commitments in the inherited traditions of Christianity and Judaism continues to ground the thought and action of many feminists today as they seek ways not only to engage their traditions critically, but also to garner from them resources to transform the condition and experience of women.

Both the critical challenge to religion and the positive appropriation of its resources continued to inform the feminist movement as it moved into the twentieth century. It was, however, only with the 1960 publication of an article by Valerie Saiving entitled "The Human Situation: A Feminine View" that women's experience emerged as an explicit issue for theological reflection.¹ Saiving suggested that much theology was primarily grounded in the analysis of male experience and that it neglected the female experience. She expounded this claim by an exploration of the then-current doctrines of sin and salvation, arguing that the widespread interpretations of sin as pride and the proposed redress of this hubris in terms of self-sacrifice and self-giving actually reflected the condition of men and did not adequately describe or respond to the situation of women. Saiving's analysis pointed in the direction of what has become an enduring theme in feminist theology: the insight that theological positions, including both interpretations of the human and the divine, are deeply grounded in experience and, historically, the experience that has been the source for theological reflection has been male, excluding or negatively evaluating women's experience. It has been precisely this absence of women's experience as the data for theological reflection that feminist theology has sought to alter.

Feminist theology did not emerge full-blown in response to Saiving's article. Instead, there was relative quiet on the theological scene for the next decade. However, other changes were taking place that would lead ineluctably to the emergence of an explicit feminist voice in theology. During this period,

increasing numbers of women began to go to seminaries and schools of theology, and to enter graduate programs in religion, only to be met by an almost total absence of women faculty and continued resistance from the churches. Slowly, but with rising intensity, voices of protest began to be heard. Articles and books began to appear whose explicit focus was women. Two early feminist theologians who are still prominent today were Rosemary Radford Ruether and Mary Daly.² Ruether, especially, linked her feminist concerns with the commitments of two other developing theologies—black theology and Latin American liberation thought—which were also challenging the hegemony of traditional white male theological reflection. All three movements, perhaps inevitably, were labeled non-theology and mere fads by the powerful white men who controlled the discipline of theology.

Feminist theology, at this formative stage, began with several central convictions and commitments. First, it argued that all theology is perspectival; that is, it grows out of and reflects particular social locations. As such, it is not, as it is often claimed to be, universal and neutral, but, in fact, is and always has been partial, relative, and laden with the values of its proponents. Feminist theologians did not deny this local character of theology for themselves but publicly declared that they were working out of a commitment to women and to the struggle to transform women's lives. With this conviction of the perspectival, value-laden character of all theology and out of this commitment to women, feminist theologians began to rethink the basic ideas of God, Christ, human existence, and nature.

While it is impossible to detail all the work that went on during this first, mostly critical stage of feminist theology, I will highlight several of the central arguments. Much energy was devoted to the analysis of the Western idea of God. Here Mary Daly is the most important feminist thinker.³ With compelling insight, she unmasked the male character of the Jewish and Christian God. Moreover, she argued this was not just a question of male language. Rather, Daly insisted that the Western conception of God is not accidentally expressed in male language but is, instead, inherently and irrevocably male—that is, the attributes of omnipresence, omniscience, and, especially, omnipotence are male values that emerge out of and contribute to the maintenance of patriarchy. Put succinctly, as Daly stated in *Beyond God the Father*: "If God is male, then the male is God."⁴

There were other related theological doctrines that came under critical scrutiny during the 1970s and early 1980s. The ancient christological formulations were examined with special reference to Jesus' maleness and to his advocacy and embodiment of an ethic of self-sacrificial love and the repercussions of these for women.⁵ The traditional and still prevalent understanding of human nature along a dualistic model in which males and females were essentially different and males were considered superior and females inferior, was also consistently challenged. And, finally, the traditional interpretations of nature and the body as lacking in inherent value, and as the possession of an essentially spiritual humanity to

use for its own purpose, were disputed and criticized. In each instance, feminist theologians insisted that there was an intimate connection between religious beliefs and theological interpretations and the oppression of women, and that the liberation of women entailed unmasking the unholy alliance between this oppression and religious traditions and the theologies that supported them.

CURRENT DIRECTIONS IN FEMINIST THEOLOGY

MUCH work was expended on this critical analysis, this theology of protest. But increasingly constructive alternatives also began to emerge and be developed. As alternatives have taken shape, along with these creative options, new tensions and conflicts have also surfaced. At this juncture, I will set forth several debates that are presently taking place within feminist theological circles. By examining them, we can discern the current directions of feminist theology and can see what is at stake in the options that are now on the scene.

Staying with the Christian Tradition

ONE ongoing debate revolves around the issue mentioned earlier of how to relate to our past. On the most fundamental level this dilemma has been focused on the question of whether to stay or leave the inherited traditions of Judaism and Christianity. Not only has this question represented deep and painful personal choices for feminists, but it has also issued forth in a sometimes bitter and divisive public struggle with various women calling themselves, or being labeled by others, as "reformers" or "revolutionaries."⁶ In recent years, the debate has centered on the viability for women of God-talk versus the developing notions of the Goddess. The former group, those who remain, if uneasily, within the Christian and Jewish traditions, argue that the

majority of women continue to abide in these religious communities because leaving would entail abandoning most women. They also insist that Christianity and Judaism, despite being implicated in the long history of the oppression of women, still contain rich resources for women in their struggle for liberation. Moreover, they argue that much talk about the Goddess is historically inaccurate and represents a kind of naive romanticism. And, finally, they suggest that Goddess religion essentially leaves out men and thus cannot function as an adequate emancipatory vision for all humans.⁷

For their parts, the proponents of Goddess language for the divine and of a Goddess-centered spirituality argue that without a fundamental rejection of the traditional Western god, and the predominantly male-centered religious traditions that have oppressed women, women will never be able to value themselves fully and positively and will never be able to claim their female power and potential. Carol Christ has been, perhaps, the most articulate proponent of this position.⁸ She has eloquently argued that the symbol of the Goddess acknowledges female power and will as legitimate, and affirms the female body and life cycle that have been so thoroughly denigrated in male-centered religious traditions. In contrast to those who say leaving their inherited traditions signals an abandonment of one's sisters,

Christ insists that the Goddess symbol embodies the value of women's bonds with one another. And, finally, for Christ and other proponents of Goddess language and spirituality, the Goddess is an important symbol for earth, for concrete, embodied life. Over against traditions that stressed the divine's utter transcendence of nature and the material realm, the Goddess proponents repeatedly emphasize the connection between the divine and the finite, the ever-changing world of nature, and they suggest that only such a vision will bring us



THE BATTLE OF THE ANGELS

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back from the threats of alienation from our bodies, of ecological disaster, and of nuclear destruction.

This ongoing debate has indeed been full of tension, but it has also contributed to the development of constructive alternatives for women. Increasingly, women who intellectually and existentially can no longer remain within Christianity or Judaism are finding a vibrant and growing Goddess-spirituality whose proponents are developing an ever more sophisticated theology. Those who continue to find intellectual and religious sustenance within Christianity and Judaism are, with ever greater force, articulating new interpretations of the divine that eschew the traditional doctrines, especially concerning God's purported omnipotence, and that support female experience and the struggle for transformation.

How to Approach the Bible

WHILE the discussions have raged about staying or leaving, there have also been differences among those women who have remained within Christianity and Judaism about how to relate to their pasts, especially that part of history, the Bible, that remains so powerful today. Early on, there was what I term the search for the pristine Bible. Many feminists insisted that either the Bible really was not patriarchal and, as such, not detrimental to women, but had only been misinterpreted and wrongly appropriated by males. Others took what might be called a "canon-within-the-canon" approach, that is, they acknowledged the male character of much of the Bible but insisted that the true core, the essential biblical message, was and is liberating to women. More recently, a different approach has emerged. While there are still proponents of the first two ways of conceiving of the Bible, increasingly I think feminist theologians are clearly stating that the biblical material is predominantly the product of male experience and perspective, that it is often anti-female, and that it has a long history of having been utilized to oppress women.⁹ As such, it must be thoroughly criticized. But, it also contains intimations of other more inclusive and just visions, and where that is true, such visions should be seen as resources for the creation of a new human society. Thus, for many Jewish and Christian women, the Bible has been demythologized and is no longer seen as the repository of unquestioned divine revelation, but as the deposit of human interpretations of God and of human life, and that, as such, it is an important human resource but no longer the final religious norm.

Third World Women and Women of Color

IF the question of how to relate to inherited traditions, their central symbols, and their time-honored resources, has captivated much of the consideration of feminist theologians, other issues are now vying for attention with these perennial concerns. A central issue is that of the relation of white women to women of color and, alternatively, First World women to Third World women. This issue first emerged for feminist theology as growing numbers of black women entered semin-

ary along with their white counterparts, and they began to articulate a theological vision out of their already powerful location in the black church. It soon became clear that the vaulted "women's experience" to which so much feminist theology appealed really referred to white, middle class women's experience. In the women's movement in general, and with special force in theology, black women, including theologians such as Jacquelyn Grant, have asserted that, while much is shared in common between white women and women of color, much divides these groups. It is not at all clear that the divisions are not greater than the commonalities. Moreover, any real solidarity, black women argue, necessarily presupposes white women's willingness and capacity to acknowledge their racism and to repent of it.¹⁰

Black women's voices are increasingly influencing theology, especially as they develop what is termed womanist theology. While committed to the liberation of women, womanist theology testifies to the distinctive experience of women of color and asserts that out of that unique history, shaped not only by sexism but also by racism and classism, come resources and insights that are different than those of white feminists and that, in alliance with those of men of color, challenge many of the values, privileges, and goals of middle class feminism.¹¹

It has not only been black North American women who have challenged white feminists. Third World women, as they have explicitly entered into the formal theological discussion, have also raised profoundly troubling questions both to their male compatriots and to First World women, especially those who are white. Importantly, they have stressed cultural and class concerns and have detailed a different religious and social history than is articulated by their white North American colleagues. In particular, they have sought to analyze the interconnection of their oppression as women and the life-defeating poverty in which so many exist and have emphatically stated that their struggle on women's behalf is a struggle, in solidarity with their brothers, against unjust political and economic systems that perpetuate poverty and deny so many access to life's necessities.¹²

Religious Pluralism

A VARIATION of this challenge by Third World women is being heard from non-Euro-American women living or studying in the United States.¹³ The theological reflection being done by these women is also giving new direction to feminist thought. Pluralism has been sounded as one of these themes. Many of these feminists grew up in cultures that offer much greater religious variety than the United States. This is especially true for Asian women who have heritages shaped by not only Christianity, but Buddhism, Confucianism, Islam, and folk religion. By attending to this pluralism, these women are proposing that feminists must not conclude that they have to choose to live in only one tradition and reject all others, but they must learn to incorporate the valuable beliefs and rituals of many traditions in a vision adequate for today. These feminist theologians, such as Chinese theologian Kwok Pui-lan and

Korean theologian Chung Hyun Kyung, are not calling for a simplistic syncretism but for the profound recognition that there are other histories than Western Christianity that offer ways of apprehending reality and leading meaningful lives.

While these women propose that we acknowledge the value of other traditions, they also suggest that we do not appropriate them or our own traditions uncritically, but apply norms that test the value and utility of religious beliefs in terms of how they affect women and provide for the creation and nourishment of humane life. Chung Hyun Kyung calls for a "survival-liberation-centered syncretism" and states that finally "life-giving power is the final criterion by which the validity of any religion is judged."¹⁴ Thus, while deeply rooted in particular religious traditions, many women who come from cultural contexts characterized by religious diversity are more interested in how to learn from all the various traditions than in maintaining the superiority of their own tradition.

This norm of the "contribution to the struggle for life" resonates strongly with the claims of many North American feminist theologians, such as Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, who are insisting that while the past, especially the Bible, may be a resource for present theological reflection, the critical norms of assessing theological claims finally reside in the present and, in particular, emerge from communities of struggle. Rather than existing unchanging in the past, our criteria of theological judgment should lie, as Pui-lan states, "in the praxes of the religious communities struggling for the liberation of humankind. All theologies must be judged as to how far they contribute to the liberation and humanization of the human community."¹⁵ Thus, whether it is our own religious traditions or those of others that we are evaluating, the central measure is how they can contribute to a more adequate vision of life today.

The articulation of this approach by both North American

feminists and their Third World sisters has resulted in a strong sense of the ambiguities of history and a determined commitment to give priority to those voices from history, especially of women, that have been ignored heretofore. While history is relativized, it is also broadened, offering new sources, often untraditional sources, such as songs, folk tales, poems, myths, and prayers, for the creation of religious visions. Though there are new gifts to be discovered there, most especially the stories of women who over the centuries persevered in the face of dehumanizing conditions, there is also the clear recognition that history is a tale full of losses, of beliefs and practices that did not give life but destroyed it, and that often women have themselves been implicated in the suffering and oppression of their sisters.

Exile and Community

A FINAL theme that recurs in the writings of Third World women, especially those residing in the United States, is that of exile. These women are separated from their land, cultural context, family, and, often, their primary religious communities. Being in exile highlights for them the importance of community, and separation from their natural networks of support and accountability points to the necessity of a global community of women who struggle, not

only for advancement in their own narrow contexts, but who seek to improve the lives of women everywhere. By so doing, Third World women have reminded feminist theologians in the context of relative privilege in the United States that more is at stake than ordinations or faculty appointments or middle-class upward mobility; in much of the world the struggle on behalf of women is a life and death struggle against poverty, political repression, and age-old beliefs in women's inferiority. They challenge First World women to examine not only our own oppression but also our implication in the pain and suffering of women a world away.



NAOMI AND HER DAUGHTERS-IN-LAW

Feminist theology must give priority to the poorest and most oppressed among us. Without such commitment, it becomes a vehicle for the advancement of the few at the expense of the majority of women.

THE FEMINIST THEOLOGICAL AGENDA FOR THE 1990S

I HAVE given an overview of some current trends in feminist theology. I have emphasized that there is a fair amount of diversity among feminist thinkers and that more rather than fewer options are coming on the scene. Despite this real diversity, an outline of feminist theology can be discerned. By way of closing, I will summarize what I take to be the feminist theological agenda for the 1990s.

First, I believe the call is for the creation of a constructive and substantive theology. While the critical theology of protest played a central role in the development of feminist theology, and while ongoing, critical scrutiny of historical theological claims and contemporary male offerings is certainly required, the main task for feminist theologians must be the articulation of new visions that will contribute to the creation of more humane life for all persons and especially the most oppressed among us.

Second, this means that the loyalty of feminists must not be to the past but to the present and future generations. The past is ambiguous, offering gifts for the struggle and a legacy of loss and suffering. It should be viewed as such, instead of as a divinely sanctioned repository of unchanging truth.

Third, as feminists carry out their constructive agenda, a commitment to the poorest and most oppressed must be central. Without such commitment, feminist theology becomes a vehicle for the advancement of the few, at the expense of the majority of women.

Fourth, this entails a global perspective for the doing of feminist theology. While all theology is local, reflecting the experience of those who carry it out, feminist theology today must be done against the horizon of the broader world and within a global network of women working for change.

Fifth, as more and more women contribute to the creation of a feminist vision, greater diversity will appear and feminists must learn to attend to their differences and welcome the plurality of voices that are being raised. Feminists must unlearn their fear of difference and conflict and embrace the hope that, even out of their discord, new and richer possibilities will arise for them and the rest of humanity.

Sixth, feminist theology must not only give priority to the poorest and most oppressed among us, but also to the earth and the body. If the human community is to survive at all, our wasteful, plundering, and arrogant treatment of nature and its resources must be radically transformed. This entails, I think, a radical revisioning of humanity's relation to nature and a thorough rejection of our assumption that we are the center of creation. Moreover, if we are to overcome the profound alienation to our bodies that characterizes so much of our experience, we will need to rethink what it means to be embodied, finite creatures who live out of the flesh and in deep interdependence with one another and the rest of the material world. This means, finally, that we must develop a theology and spirituality of sexuality.

Seventh, feminist theology must attend not only to the articulation of the heretofore ignored experience of women

and to a reconceived relation between humankind and the earth, but also to the sustained effort to rethink theological ideas and to reconstruct central religious doctrines, such as God and Christ in a manner more adequate for today. This must take place, not only on the level of complex theological systems, but also on the level of concrete metaphor and image. As theologian Sallie McFague has pointed out, we have made progress in rethinking our abstract systems but, for the most part, continue to live out of outmoded, indeed dangerous, metaphors and images such as God envisioned as an omnipotent male.¹⁶

Combined, these trends suggest a feminist theology that will be pluralistic, ecologically and bodily centered, focused toward the margins of society, and self-consciously constructive. It will claim its local and relative character and will, with hope and not a little fear, be about the creation of new world visions. I hope you will join us in this venture. ☐

NOTES

1. Valerie Saiving, "The Human Situation: A Feminine View," *Womanspirit Rising*, Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds. (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1979).
2. See Mary Daly, *The Church and Second Sex* (New York: Harper & Row, 1968). *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973), Rosemary Radford Ruether, *Liberation Theology: Human Hope Confronts Christian History and American Power* (New York: Paulist Press, 1972), and *New Woman/New Earth: Sexist Ideologies and Human Liberation* (New York: Seabury Press, 1975).
3. See Mary Daly, *Beyond God the Father: Toward a Philosophy of Women's Liberation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1973).
4. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, 19.
5. Daly, *Beyond God the Father*, chapter 3.
6. Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, "Introduction: Womanspirit Rising," in *Womanspirit Rising*, Carol P. Christ and Judith Plaskow, eds. (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1979).
7. Rosemary Radford Ruether, "Goddess and Witches Liberation and Countercultural Feminism," *Christian Century* (10-17 September 1980): 842-47.
8. See Carol P. Christ, "Why Women Need the Goddess," in *Womanspirit Rising and The Laughter of Aphrodite: Reflections on a Journey to the Goddess* (San Francisco: Harper and Row, 1987).
9. See Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza, *In Memory of Her: A Feminist Theological Reconstruction of Christian Origins* (New York: Crossroad, 1983) and *Bread Not Stone: The Challenge of Feminist Biblical Interpretation* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1984).
10. See Jacquelyn Grant, *White Women's Christ and Black Women's Jesus* (Atlanta: Scholars Press, 1989).
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12. Virginia Fabella, M.M. and Marcy Amba Oduyoye, *With Passion and Compassion: Third World Women Doing Theology* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1988). Elsa Tamez, ed., *Through Her Eyes: Women's Theology from Latin America* (Maryknoll, N.Y.: Orbis Books, 1989).
13. Letty M. Russell, Kwok Pui-lan, Ada Maria Isasi-Diaz, Katie Geneva Cannon, eds., *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens: Feminist Theology in Third World Perspective* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1988).
14. Chung Hyun Kyung, "Following Naked Dancing and Long Dreaming," in *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens*.
15. Kwok Pui-lan, "Mothers and Daughters, Writers and Fighters," in *Inheriting Our Mothers' Gardens*.
16. Sallie McFague, *Models of God: Theology for an Ecological Nuclear Age* (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1987).

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Orthodoxy is given by authorities, while revelation comes from God; orthodoxy is available to anyone who can learn the ideas, revelation requires faith in God; orthodoxy views truth as absolute, revelation sees it as relative. In its demand for objective certainty, orthodoxy deceives itself into believing that it possesses the absolute truth of God. Orthodoxy thus sees itself as revelation, but it is really a kind of theology.

DO YOU PREACH THE ORTHODOX RELIGION?

A PLACE FOR THEOLOGY IN MORMON COMMUNITY

By Janice Allred

DO YOU PREACH THE ORTHODOX RELIGION? IT IS Satan's question. The orthodox religion is what he offers Adam and Eve as a substitute for what they have been seeking. They have been calling upon God and are looking for messengers from him. For the revelation they desire, Satan substitutes orthodoxy. The particular creedal brand of orthodoxy preached by Satan's hired minister is one Mormons readily reject. But the notion of orthodoxy itself is firmly embedded in our thinking. In *Mormon Doctrine*, Bruce R. McConkie writes:

In the true sense, orthodoxy consists in believing that which is in harmony with the scriptures. Thus gospel orthodoxy requires belief in the truths of salvation as they have been revealed in this dispensation through Joseph Smith, and as they are understood and interpreted by the living oracles who wear the mantle of the Prophet.¹

What constitutes true orthodoxy and false orthodoxy depends, of course, on what you believe; it is a question of content. In this essay I will ignore the question of content and focus on the notion of orthodoxy itself. To understand what I will be doing you will need to understand the distinction between the meaning and the reference of the word orthodoxy. This distinction is also named by the terms connotation and denotation, or "form" and "content." "Orthodoxy" means right or correct belief and it refers to whatever doctrines a particular religious community holds as constitutive of faith or necessary to membership in its church. I will not discuss the correctness of

any particular religious beliefs; instead, I will criticize the concept of orthodoxy—its conception of truth and its role in individual spiritual development and in the development of Christian community. What I want to show is that for Mormons the concept of orthodoxy is unorthodox. Putting my aim thus paradoxically, I retain the concept which I hope to persuade you to repudiate. I do so consciously. I hope you will understand why by the end of this paper.

ORTHODOXY VS. REVELATION

LET us return now to the contrast suggested by Satan's promotion of orthodoxy as a substitute for revelation. Contrasting orthodoxy and revelation reveals the limitations, the poverty, and the lack of vitality of orthodoxy.

Satan makes sure that the man he has engaged to preach orthodoxy to Adam and Eve has been trained for the ministry at the university. Orthodoxy is thus presented as something which is acquired primarily through the intellect and available to anyone who can pay the fees and meet the intellectual requirements the university sets. Adam and Eve, however, are seeking light and knowledge from God—revelation. Their receiving revelation depends upon their faithfulness in keeping God's commandments. The prophet Alma taught, "Yea, he that repenteth and exerciseth faith, and bringeth forth good works, and prayeth continually without ceasing—unto such it is given to know the mysteries of God" (Alma 26:22).

Because it is addressed primarily to the intellect, orthodox theology is fundamentally propositional—logical and systematic. The scriptures, however, contain large portions of narrative—consisting of both history and myth—as well as metaphors, parables, and poetry. These cannot be reduced to

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propositions without loss of meaning; indeed, it can be argued that the meanings of metaphor, parable, poetry, and narrative cannot be given in propositions. Therefore, much contained in the scriptures is unavailable to orthodox notions of truth.

This point can be further elucidated by contrasting the objective and subjective dimensions of revelation. The objective dimension refers to *what* is revealed; the subjective dimension refers to *how* revelation is received. A messenger from God or God himself might speak certain words. These words might be thought of as the content of the revelation; these words might even be propositional. Nevertheless, the words of the revelation do not exhaust its content. If God speaks to me, what I see and feel and the very fact of his speaking to me are at least as important as the words he speaks. The subjective dimension of Joseph Smith's First Vision has proven more important to Mormon theology than its objective dimension. Because revelation always entails the appropriation and interpretation of what is revealed and because human faculties and experience play such an important role in this appropriation and interpretation, the objective dimension of revelation can never be separated from the subjective dimension, and orthodox propositional knowledge remains only a severely limited substitute for revelation.

Orthodoxy regards truth as absolute; revelation sees it as relative. Since orthodoxy regards truth revealed by God as absolute truth and considers relativism atheistic, this assertion requires some elucidation. Absolute truth is true for all people, in all circumstances, times, and places, but truth related to person, circumstance, time, and place is implicit in the concept of revelation. A revelation is given by someone to someone else at a particular time and place in particular circumstances. The objective dimension of revelation may be thought of as the truth of revelation, but because of the interconnectedness of its subjective and objective dimensions, the truth of revelation must be relative. I would like to point out several ways in which truth is relative.

First, truth is located in language; where there is no language there is no truth. The orthodox mind sees truth as existing out there, independent of mind, waiting to be found. But sentences or paragraphs or speeches or books or symbols are created by human beings or spirits or angels or gods; where there is no mind, there is no truth. Truth, then, is relative to mind and language generally, and specifically to the maker of a particular sentence or group of sentences. It is related to her experience, his knowledge, her language skills, his intelligence, her integrity, and his love. Once I prayed for help on a paper I was

struggling to write when the thought came to me that God could not give me something that did not exist. Someone had to do the work of giving a form to the jumble of ideas, feelings, concerns, and questions which I had in mind if the paper were ever to exist. I could do it if I was willing. And God helped me.

Truth is also relative to the language in which it is spoken. For example, Navajo orders reality differently than English, forcing some distinctions that English ignores while ignoring some distinctions that English makes. There are also different spheres or languages of discourse—the language of everyday conversation, the language of formal science, the language of mathematics, the language of poetry, the language of love—and each of these spheres has its own vocabulary and truths.

Truth is also relative to its audience, the listener or reader. This truth was brought home to me by my daughter. When she was three years old, we had a two-hour argument on what day of the week it was. I knew the truth and I was determined never to lie to my children, but she won the argument by screaming for twenty minutes and then falling asleep. My final point was, "You think it's Thursday and I think it's Friday," but she refused to accept even this effort to harmonize our views, and she shouted, "I don't think it's Thursday—it is Thursday!" before she lapsed into her final passionate plea

for understanding. No one speaks or writes without an audience in mind, and the presumed knowledge, experience, language, and circumstances of the audience affect the way the truth is formed.

Truth is relative to history. Every utterance, every sentence, has a story and is embedded in history. Yet orthodoxy is ahistorical. Orthodox thinkers believe that truths can be extracted from the scriptures without any reference to the culture, language, and history of its writer, or to the specific circumstances of its recording.

Orthodox thinkers are especially incensed by moral relativism. They believe that there is one set of commandments equally relevant to all circumstances by which all people are to live and be judged. Concerning this idea, Joseph Smith wrote, "God said, 'Thou shalt not kill'; at another time He said 'Thou shalt utterly destroy.' This is the principle on which the government of heaven is conducted—by revelation adapted to the circumstances in which the children of the kingdom are placed."²

I am saying that truth is contextual in the broadest sense of the word. I am not, however, arguing that nothing can be understood without understanding its full context. In fact,

The meanings of metaphor, parable, poetry, and narrative cannot be given in propositions. Therefore, much contained in the scriptures is unavailable to orthodox notions of truth.

since context is potentially infinite, a full understanding is impossible. Such an understanding would, indeed, be absolute truth. Orthodoxy, however, sees absolute truth as being without context. One orthodox thinker, confronted by the view that there is no final truth, exclaimed, "Then there is no point in discussing theology at all. We should all stop talking." A believer in relative truth responded, "No, if there were a final truth then we should all stop talking, for after uttering it we should have nothing more to say. But because truth is relative, we must talk *more*, but more humbly and more carefully." There is a truth, many truths, for every circumstance. The responsibility and the joy of creating truths and receiving the truths created by others are ours. The Lord said, "And because that I have spoken one word ye need not suppose that I cannot speak another; for my work is not yet finished; neither shall it be until the end of man, neither from that time henceforth and forever" (2 Nephi 29:9).

This leads us to the idea of continuing revelation. In his article, "The Structural Supports of Orthodoxy in the Jewish System and the Christian System," Andre Paul argues that orthodoxy is a necessity and not simply a possibility for Christianity because revelation is finished and the canon closed.³ A closed canon necessitates orthodoxy. How does orthodoxy deal with an open canon? No idea is more fundamental to Mormonism than that of continuing revelation, but, despite the fact that continuing revelation presents many difficulties and contradictions to orthodoxy, some Mormons persist in maintaining an orthodox mindset.

One way that orthodoxy deals with contradictions, discrepancies, and inconsistencies in the scriptures and words of Church leaders is by distinguishing between doctrine and policy. According to this approach, doctrine refers to eternal truth and policy refers to the procedures and practices of the Church as it directs the lives of its members and forms them into a community. After making this distinction, orthodox thinkers then assert that the eternal truths of doctrine never change but that policies may change as the needs of the people change. The purpose of continuing revelation is to direct the Church and give needed policy changes. Although the distinction between doctrine and policy may be useful for some purposes, it is not absolute. Were the revelations discontinuing the practice of polygamy and giving the priesthood to all races changes in doctrine or policy? Also, a careful study of the scriptures on any particular point of doctrine (for example, the nature of God, the nature of humanity, and the process of salvation) will disclose many passages difficult to harmonize.

Indeed, extracting doctrines from the scriptures has proven to be a very difficult task and Christians have never come to a complete agreement about what the scriptures say. This is why Elder McConkie, in his definition of orthodoxy, found it necessary to say that "gospel orthodoxy requires belief in the truths of salvation as they have been revealed in this dispensation through Joseph Smith, and as they are understood and interpreted by the living oracles who wear the mantle of the Prophet."⁴ This statement shows that the concepts of orthodoxy and continuing revelation are inherently contradictory. Elder McConkie's statement requires that orthodox Latter-day Saints during Brigham Young's presidency believe his teachings about Adam-God and that contemporary Latter-day Saints disbelieve them according to the most recent interpretations of this doctrine. But according to orthodoxy the eternal truths of doctrine do not change. Thus, Elder McConkie's statement constitutes an admission that orthodoxy finally rests on authority rather than on truth.

In "Orthodoxy and Orthopraxies in the Old Testament," Eric Zenger discusses how Old Testament Israel dealt with the problem of orthodoxy and the open canon. He writes:

In "Orthodoxy and Orthopraxies in the Old Testament," Eric Zenger discusses how Old Testament Israel dealt with the problem of orthodoxy and the open canon. He writes:

If we wish to talk at all about orthodoxy in the formation of Israel's tradition, we might perhaps term it a *kairological or-*

thodoxy in dialogue form. Israel knows the three constituents which are summed up in this concept. (a) Without its ties with what preceding generations taught and learned, Israel would be without a home and a foundation. (b) So that Israel could receive its social and political life from God's hand in the fullest sense, continual new attempts were made to formulate what had been passed down about God in a way that was related to the present situation, so that the "today" of the language was comprehensible and part of contemporary experience. (c) Israel allows these many different attempts to stand side by side unharmonized in its Bible and this must be interpreted as an offer of dialogue. . . . This Old Testament orthodoxy rejects the notion of qualitatively progressive revelation. . . . Israel required this commitment to itself: the dispute about truth must never be ended by any answers that have once been discovered.⁵

On the other hand, orthodoxy deals with continuing revelation by refusing to engage in dialogue. New revelations result either in schism if the orthodox believer chooses to believe the old revelations and deny the new, or they result in forgetting, denying, and changing the past and its revelations if one

Orthodoxy regards truth as absolute; revelation sees it as relative. But speeches are created by humans. Truth is relative to mind and language—to experience, knowledge, integrity, and love.

accepts the new revelations. Joseph Smith said:

I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions.⁶

This describes the orthodox believer who clings to tradition and creeds. Joseph also said:

I cannot believe in any of the creeds of the different denominations, because they all have some things in them I cannot subscribe to though all of them have some truth. But I want to come up into the presence of God, learn all things but the creeds set up stakes, and say hitherto shalt thou come, no further—which I cannot subscribe to.⁷

Orthodox believers who refuse to confront the contradictions, discrepancies, inconsistencies, and difficulties inherent in an open canon will never have more than a shallow understanding of revelation.

Orthodoxy craves certainty. It cannot abide contradictions, ambiguity, paradoxes, and the discomfort and tension of not knowing. Elder Dallin Oaks in his April 1989 conference address, "Alternate Voices," described this need for certainty, evidently assuming it is the normal and even the desirable condition of Church members:

We have procedures to ensure approved content for materials published in the name of the Church or used for instruction in its classes. These procedures can be somewhat slow and cumbersome, but they provide a spiritual quality control that allows members to rely on the truth of what is said. Members who listen to the voice of the Church need not be on guard against being misled. They have no such assurance for what they hear from alternate voices.⁸

Compare this to section 91 of the Doctrine and Covenants. In this revelation the Lord tells Joseph Smith that the Apocrypha contains many true things and also many things that are not true. He then says:

Therefore, whoso readeth it, let him understand, for the Spirit manifesteth truth; And whoso is enlightened by the Spirit shall obtain benefit therefrom; And whoso receiveth not by the Spirit, cannot be benefited (D&C 91:4-6).

Elder Oaks seems to believe that "spiritual quality control" comes from a correct text (the view of orthodoxy), while section 91 teaches that the benefits of revelation can only come

through the enlightenment of the spirit. In other words, to receive revelation you must have revelation. Elder Oaks implies that it is a bad thing for the Saints to have to be on guard against error, but revelation teaches that receiving truth is as much the responsibility of the receiver as the giver. Ironically, in demanding objective certainty, orthodoxy only obtains a false certainty, for there is no such thing as objective certainty, while the believer who is receptive to the spirit is able to

receive the subjective certainty that comes only from the spirit. I call this certainty subjective because it is felt in the heart and in the mind: "I will tell you in your mind and in your heart, by the Holy Ghost" (D&C 8:2); "And by the power of the Holy Ghost ye may know the truth of all things" (Moroni 10:5).

In contrasting orthodoxy and revelation we have seen that orthodoxy is given by authorities, while revelation comes from God; that orthodoxy is available to anyone who can learn the ideas, while revelation requires faith in God and obedience to his will; that orthodoxy is addressed primarily to the intellect, while revelation communicates in a variety of ways; that orthodoxy views truth as absolute, while revelation sees it as relative; and that orthodoxy is closed, while revelation is open and continuing. In each of these ways orthodoxy demands objective certainty, while revelation rel-

ies on the spirit. In its demand for objective certainty, orthodoxy deceives itself into believing that it possesses the absolute truth of the revealed word of God. Orthodoxy thus sees itself as revelation, but it is really a kind of theology.

ORTHODOXY, REVELATION, AND THEOLOGY

GENERALLY, Mormons do not regard theology favorably. After all, theology transformed the gospel of Jesus Christ into orthodox Christianity and has given us the philosophies of men in the guise of the doctrines of God. In his foreword to Hugh Nibley's *The World and the Prophets*, R. Douglas Phillips writes:

It is thus abundantly clear that the whole philosophical theological enterprise, however well intended, is incompatible with the existence of continuing revelation. For this reason there can never be a theology, a systematic theology as such, in the true Church.⁹

This idea, that theology and revelation are incompatible, that theology is a substitute for revelation, is widespread in the Church. I will argue that, on the contrary, revelation and theology are inextricably interrelated and that the real danger

Interpretations
contain both more and
less than the revelations
they interpret, more
because of what the
theologian adds and
less because no
interpretation can give
everything the
revelation gives.

to the Church is orthodoxy which does not recognize itself as theology but thinks it is revelation.

Satan characterizes the orthodox religion as the philosophies of men mingled with scripture. This is, I think, a fair definition of theology. These two components of theology are recognized in most definitions of theology and in most theological writing. A typical definition of theology is “that discipline which strives to give a coherent statement of the doctrines of the Christian faith based primarily upon the scriptures, placed in the context of culture in general, worded in a contemporary idiom and related to issues of life.”¹⁰ In this definition, the scriptures are specified as the foundation of theology which also has rational, cultural, linguistic, and practical dimensions. These dimensions we can call the “philosophies of men.”

We could also say that theology is the interpretation of revelation, the scriptures being a record of revelations which the theologian interprets through the medium of the philosophies of men. This is not a defect, but a necessary condition of interpretation and a defining characteristic of theology. Can we have revelation without interpretation? “When you see a vision pray for the interpretation,” Joseph Smith counseled,¹¹ and after receiving an answer to his question about when the Second Coming would occur, he wrote, “I was left to draw my own conclusions concerning this.”¹²

If we have no interpretation of revelation then we have no thinking about revelation and no response to revelation, which seems to me a very undesirable thing. Indeed, we might ask, “What good is revelation if we do not interpret it and respond to it, if we are not changed by it?” Interpretation has both unconscious and conscious dimensions. Unconscious interpretation, our immediate sense of what is being seen and heard, is influenced by our experiences, our culture, our worldview, and our particular circumstances at the time we experience or read about the revelation. Conscious interpretation, or theology, can consist of recounting revelation, attaching literal or abstract values to symbols, placing the revelation in its immediate or cultural context, attempting to answer philosophical questions on the basis of the revelation, and comparing revelations for doctrinal content.

Since interpretations of revelation vary according to the questions asked and to the presuppositions, world view, language, culture, spiritual maturity, and linguistic skills of those making them, it is obvious that the interpretation is not equivalent to the revelation; theology is not a substitute for revelation. Interpretations contain both more and less than the

revelations they interpret, more because of what the theologian adds (philosophy, language, culture, questions, etc.) and less because no account or interpretation of revelation can give everything the revelation itself gives. Many prophets have spoken of their inability to write all that they have seen and heard in their visions. After hearing his father tell of his vision of the tree of life, Nephi desired to receive the same vision and his request was granted. Lehi’s account of the vision was not

equivalent to the vision itself. Nephi also requested an interpretation of the vision and received another vision along with commentary by the Spirit. An interpretation of a revelation may also be a revelation, but it is still not equivalent to the first revelation (see 1 Nephi chapters 8, 11-14).

The idea that the interpretation of revelation can itself be revelation leads to another important idea. I pointed out two dimensions or sources of theology, the scriptures and the philosophies of men, and then equated the scriptures with revelation and the philosophies of men with interpretation. It should now be clear that this dichotomy is conceptual rather than existential; that is, if I examine any particular scripture or interpretation of scripture, I cannot necessarily say how much of the scripture is interpretation and how much of the interpretation is revelation. The scriptures are not pure revelation and some philosophies of

men are inspired by God. Nephi wrote, “Cursed is he that . . . shall hearken unto the precepts of men, save their precepts shall be given by the power of the Holy Ghost” (2 Nephi 28:31). Reason, which guides our interpretations, is not opposed to revelation:

And the light which shineth, which giveth you light, is through him who enlighteneth your eyes, which is the same light that quickeneth your understandings; Which light proceedeth forth from the presence of God to fill the immensity of space (D&C 88:11,12).

And,

[The] Holy Ghost has no other effect than pure intelligence. It is more powerful in expanding the mind, enlightening the understanding, and storing the intellect with present knowledge. . . .¹³

At this point distinguishing between two kinds of revelation is important. Joseph Smith alludes to this distinction in response to a letter inquiring for revelation on a particular subject.

It is a great thing to inquire at the hands of God, or to come into His presence; and we feel fearful to approach Him on subjects that are of little or no consequence, to

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satisfy the queries of individuals, especially about the things the knowledge of which men ought to obtain in all sincerity, before God, for themselves, in humility by the prayer of faith.¹⁴

Joseph is not saying here that the subject of this individual's inquiry was not important enough for him to ask God for enlightenment. His words imply that he was declining to ask the Lord for a particular kind of revelation and advising the man that a more common type was available to him.

The distinction may be thought of as being in the mode of reception of the revelation. In the first type, the one receiving the revelation experiences it more objectively than in the second; that is, she is aware of something outside herself. She sees a vision or hears a voice or sees a heavenly messenger who delivers her a message. The second type of revelation is experienced more subjectively. Ideas are received, impressions are experienced, feelings are given. The recipient of the first kind of revelation has no doubt that it was of God. Of course, there is the possibility that he was mistaken and his revelation was from the devil. Joseph was very concerned about this possibility and spoke often about the discerning of spirits. The subjective kind of revelation obviously contains more of the philosophies of men than the objective. The one receiving it formulates the thoughts and expresses the impressions and feelings in his own words. What she writes or speaks or understands will be influenced by her culture, language, experience, intelligence, and memory. It is less obvious, but the objective kind of revelation also contains something of the philosophies of men. The vision must be recorded, in memory if not in writing. We receive the words of the heavenly messenger in our own language with its cultural and conceptual biases. Brigham Young said:

I do not even believe that there is a single revelation, among the many God has given to the Church, that is perfect in its fullness. The revelations of God contain correct doctrine and principle, so far as they go; but it is impossible for the poor, weak, low, groveling, sinful inhabitants of the earth to receive a revelation from the Almighty in all its perfections. He has to speak to us in a manner to meet the extent of our capacities.¹⁵

The scriptures, then, contain revelations as well as the ideas, experiences, and philosophies of men, and thus revelation and theology are inextricably related. Theology, as I have used the word, is simply thinking, talking, and writing about the things of God. Concerning this, Joseph Smith said:

The things of God are of deep import; and time, and experience, and careful and ponderous and solemn thoughts can only find them out. Thy mind, O man! if thou wilt lead a soul unto salvation, must stretch as high as the utmost heavens, and search into and contemplate the darkest abyss, and the broad expanse of eternity—thou must commune with God.¹⁶

Theology is a danger to the Church only when it is combined with orthodoxy, when we think it is absolute and final. But as long as we recognize it for what it is—philosophies of men mingled with scripture, revelation interpreted by people—it can be a source of growth both for the individual and the Church community. We must not, of course, think of theology as being purely intellectual. It plays a vital role in the life of the individual and the development of community.

ORTHODOXY AND SPIRITUALITY

CONTINUING my critique of orthodoxy, I will now examine the effect of orthodoxy on individual spiritual development. The reason Satan brought a preacher to teach Adam and Eve religion was not, of course, to teach them anything of value, but to distract them from what they were trying to do, which was to receive messengers from God who would teach them what they needed

to know in order to return to His presence. Revelation does not simply impart abstract information but tells us what God wants us to do. It changes our hearts and enables us to do what we are commanded. Orthodoxy, although it presents itself as pure truth or correct doctrine, has a hidden agenda: it plays a role in individual spiritual development and it performs an institutional function for the Church.

“For behold, this is my work and my glory—to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). The purpose of God's work is to bring us from our present mortal condition of being, where we are subject to sin and death, to a state of being called eternal life, which is, according to our revelations, the life God lives, the state of being of the gods. The relationship of knowing and doing to being is complex. Mormon revelations give great importance to knowledge. “The glory of God is intelligence, or, in other words, light and truth” (D&C 93:36). “Whatever principle of intelligence we attain unto in this life, it will rise with us in the resurrection. And if a person gains more knowledge and intelligence in this life through his diligence and obedience than another, he will have so much the advantage in the world to come” (D&C 130:18, 19). Orthodoxy, with its concept of right belief, focuses ini-

Ordodoxy, with its concept of right belief, focuses initially on knowledge, but its real effect de-emphasizes knowledge. Its emphasis is on obedience, and it gives little importance to thinking.

tially on knowledge, but its real effect in religious life is to de-emphasize knowledge. With orthodoxy's notion that there are a few fundamental truths and commandments, its major emphasis is on obedience, and it gives little importance to theology or thinking about religion.

THE work of James Fowler on the stages of the development of faith sheds some light on the importance of knowledge and thinking in spiritual development.¹⁷ For more than ten years, Fowler and his associates conducted extensive research in which they invited people of a variety of ages, of both sexes, and of many different religious and secular orientations to discuss faith in their lives. Interpreting the resulting interviews, he formulated seven stages of spiritual growth. Fowler characterizes these stages according to their typical ways of knowing and valuing. The ways of knowing and valuing are directly related to fundamentally different concepts of self, so that transition from one stage to the next involves radical changes, not only in what is known and valued, but in ideas about the nature of knowledge and value and in ways of verifying and justifying beliefs and actions. Because Fowler interviewed people from a wide range of religious and secular traditions, he believes his findings are valid for all religions.

The first three stages of faith take us from birth to pre-adolescence and they reflect the immature cognitive abilities and ego development of children. Fowler's next three stages are stages where most adults are found. His fourth stage, the stage of *synthetic-conventional faith*, begins in early adolescence. At this age formal, operational thinking becomes possible and abstract concepts and ideals are understood. The project of this stage is to construct a worldview, a synthesis of beliefs and ideas. Fowler calls this synthesis conventional because it is largely taken over from significant others in the person's life, his family or church or an institution.

Stage five is called *individuating-reflective faith*. In this stage, people objectify, examine, and critically choose the defining elements of their identity and faith. To be fully in this stage an individual must no longer have a definition of self derived simply from relations with others and the roles she plays, but she must begin to be and act from a concept of self-authorization. Characterized as they are by analytical, critical thinking and the need to examine all beliefs in the light of reason or science or whatever tradition seems to offer valid principles of discovering truth, individuals in this stage are likely to become skeptics.

Much in our theology encourages thinking. However, there is a fear that a critical theology will destroy the faith of many. To develop spiritually we must experience the stage of doubt.

The next stage, *conjunctive faith*, Fowler discovered in some persons in mid-life or beyond; it integrates elements in ourselves, in society, and in reality that have apparent contradictions or polarities or paradoxes. People in this stage believe that truth is more complex than the logical, either-or categories of the individuating-reflective stage can grasp. People in this stage are open to the truths of traditions and communities other than their own, not through a lack of commitment to

their own communities but through the humility that knows that the truths of any tradition need to be challenged.

The last stage, which Fowler found only in a few individuals, he calls *universalizing faith*. It is marked by the completion of the decentration process. The individual in the universalizing stage experiences an epistemological decentration from self in his ability and readiness to balance his perspective with others. He also decenters in the valuing process so that he values from the point of view of the creator and not from the egocentric viewpoint of what values will give himself worth and power.

If we apply Fowler's model of faith development to our Mormon community several interesting observations can be made. Most observers would agree, I think, that Mormons are typical of the general population, that many Mormon adults are in the synthetic-con-

ventional and individuating-reflective stages; fewer are in the conjunctive stage, and fewer still in the universalizing stage. We may have become members of the Mormon community at any of the stages of faith (including the preadolescent stages, which I didn't discuss). Our conversion to the gospel may also have taken place at any of the stages and may or may not have been at the same time as our entrance into the community.

Because Fowler characterizes the stages according to ways of knowing and valuing in relation to the conception of self, we can use his conclusions to answer the question, "How does the concept of orthodoxy influence individual spiritual development?" Synthetic-conventional individuals formulate their beliefs in abstract language, but they do not reflect critically on them; they simply accept them from their community. Their beliefs are thus, by definition, orthodox—the beliefs which their community considers right. There is a less obvious orthodoxy in the thinking of individuating-reflective individuals. Because these people are critical and reflective, because they test their beliefs in a variety of ways, and because they accept personal responsibility for their beliefs rather than relying on authority to provide them, our first tendency is to say that their conception of knowledge is not orthodox. However, certain

elements of their mode of thinking also characterize orthodoxy. They tend to think that truth is propositional, that myths, metaphors, and symbols can and should be demythologized. Their thinking tends to be logical, rational, and either-or; in other words, they believe that truth can be discovered through appropriate procedure. Mormons in this stage probably think that the Church should have only a few required beliefs, but this is because they trust themselves to find truth not because they have developed non-orthodox ways of thinking. In order to pass from stage five to stage six, conjunctive thinking, orthodox modes of thinking have to be relinquished. Stage seven, universal faith, has moved even further from orthodoxy. Since our Mormon community comprises, as it must and should, individuals in all these stages of faith, our thinking, speaking, and writing about our religion, our theology, should be rich and representative of all levels or stages of faith. The scriptures have this richness. They can be read, understood, and appreciated from all these perspectives. However, I am concerned that our public discourse, our talks, our class discussions, our manuals, and material of approved content published by the Church do not have this richness. They are dominated by the orthodox notion of truth and have a conventional, noncritical content. What this means is that there is much in our

community discourse which hinders people from developing beyond synthetic-conventional faith. People in this stage are usually comfortable with what they hear at church and what they read in Church literature, but those in the next stage of faith often have difficulties. I do not wish to imply that theological difficulties are bad and that being comfortable in Church is necessarily good, but I think that this is the general perception, which means that people experiencing doubts and having questions often feel that they are out of step with and outside of the community.

Mormonism has been more successful than some other churches in keeping its critics. Much in our theology encourages critical thinking and seeking our own knowledge of the truth. However, there is also the widespread feeling that critical thinking is only acceptable when it supports orthodoxy and that we should share our experiences in searching for the truth only after we have arrived at the truth of orthodoxy. There is a fear among many of us that a critical and questioning theology will destroy the faith of many Church members. And this fear is not groundless. Many people do become skeptics, agnostics, and atheists in Fowler's fifth stage. Understanding the stages of faith, however, enables us to see this problem from a new

perspective. The faith that is vulnerable to the theological questions and methods of stage five is synthetic-conventional faith. Remember that this stage begins in early adolescence. Does the Church really want to encourage people to stay in this stage? To develop spiritually we must experience the stage of doubt and criticism. We cannot skip it. It is not necessary, of course, to leave the Church while in this stage. Many do not. More acceptance of stage five theology would encourage people

to leave stage four and perhaps provide them with guidance and acceptance so that it is not necessary for them to also leave the Church.

I have purposely defined theology democratically—simply as thinking, writing, and speaking about religious matters—because it is very important that no group should think that theology belongs exclusively to it. I believe this is a real danger. I have noticed that people who accept the validity of developmental stages usually classify themselves as being at or near the top. Those who would have to classify themselves as being in the lower stages usually think the categories are types rather than stages or they think the theory of stages is totally wrong. In other words, people in stage four are not likely to regard those in stage five as being more developed spiritually than themselves. Rather, they are more likely to think of them as irreligious or lacking in faith, while people in stage five may

think those in stage four are stupid, ignorant, or closed-minded. People in stage six may see those in stage five as being too rational or one-dimensional, even closedminded, and those in stage five may think stage six people are too mystical and irrational and that they hold crazy, contradictory ideas. In other words, people in different stages have difficulty understanding and communicating with each other. People often feel threatened by those in the next stage because they feel challenged to change, and those in the higher stage may feel contemptuous of or superior to those in the stage below, if they have not entirely distanced themselves from it. Can people with such diverse ways of knowing and valuing possibly discuss theology without coming to blows?

ORTHODOXY AND CONTENTION

THIS brings us to the problem of contention and the function of orthodoxy for institutions and groups. Elder Russell Nelson in his April 1989 general conference address, "The Canker of Contention," asserts that conflicting ideas are the beginning of contention, that the divine doctrine of the Church is the prime target of attack by the spiritually conten-

Control is the hidden agenda of orthodoxy. Christianity's controversy over doctrines is a struggle for power. To define a church by a set of beliefs—orthodoxy—is divisive and oppressive.

tious, and that dissecting doctrine in a controversial way in order to draw attention to oneself is not pleasing to the Lord.¹⁸ Elder Nelson's remarks might lead some to conclude that any critical approach to understanding doctrine is contentious and that the Church will become free of contention only when there are no conflicting ideas. The scriptures do teach that contention is of the devil and that there should be no contention in the church of God, but nowhere do they teach that God requires everyone to have the same thoughts or beliefs. Such a notion is so obviously absurd that I'm almost embarrassed to mention it, but there does seem to be a widespread view in the Church that in Zion where the people are of one heart and mind, everyone thinks alike and holds the same beliefs.

What is the nature of the contention that the scriptures so vigorously condemn? In the Book of Mormon, contention is often synonymous with war and war seems to be either the literal or figurative meaning of contention whenever it is used in the scriptures. War is concerned with winning and so is contention. When we contend over an idea the purpose of the argument is to get our opponent to admit that our idea is right. The concept of orthodoxy, that there is only one right answer to every question, one best way of dealing with any problem, which is supposed to do away with contention, thus actually promotes it. Since there will always be differing ideas, orthodox notions of truth will always lead to contention in a community that defines itself by its beliefs as differing factions attempt to gain control of the community.

Control is, in fact, the hidden agenda of orthodoxy. Christianity's long history of controversy over doctrines and creeds, of schism and putting down heresies, is more of a history of the struggle for power than a history of the development of ideas. If we think of the Church as being defined by its doctrine, if the unifying principle of Mormon community is a set of fundamental beliefs, then orthodoxy becomes very important; Church membership is contingent upon it. And who decides what the doctrine is and what views are consistent with it? If orthodoxy is defined by consensus, then there will be contention as individuals and factions compete to have their viewpoints gain supremacy. If orthodoxy is defined by authority, then compulsion of beliefs will arise. In every case where a church tries a member for heresy, the fundamental issue is always obedience to authority, not the truth of any particular doctrine. Although the authorities may attempt to persuade the heretic to believe the orthodox view, they never open themselves to his view. So the point of all trials for heresy is

A community must include the whole person: her anger as well as her tolerance, his feelings as well as his ideas, her problems as well as her solutions, his false ideas as well as his true ideas.

that members of the church must submit to authority if they want to remain in the church because the authorities get to decide what is doctrine and what isn't. Heretics must then decide whether to be excommunicated or to lie. Because belief cannot be compelled, people cannot just decide to believe what they do not really believe. So if they choose to submit to authority, they are compelled to lie about their beliefs. This analysis of what it means to define a church by a set of beliefs

should make it clear that orthodoxy is an inherently divisive and oppressive principle.

In an article entitled "Orthodoxy and Heresy in Marxism-Leninism and Psycho-analysis," Iring Fetscher writes:

The end point of the development of "orthodoxies" outside the sphere of the churches is always—not by coincidence—a "doctrine of infallibility." . . . Examples from the extra-ecclesial use of the orthodox-heterodox dichotomy shows that this demarcation is always the work of organizations whose interest in self-preservation requires the preservation (and transmission unchanged) of a binding ideology. Such institutions outwardly behave in an authoritarian manner towards their members, while their posture towards other institutions is defensive.¹⁹

He gives no reason why churches should escape this tendency of orthodoxy. I can only conclude that it

is his unfounded prejudice or hope that they do. My observation is otherwise. Of course, the Church does not have a doctrine of infallibility for the president of the Church. We have too many statements of the prophets specifically rejecting this doctrine for it to be adopted, but we also do have our own LDS version of this doctrine in the widely held belief that the Lord will not permit the prophet to lead the Church astray.

Joseph Smith specifically rejected the idea that the Church should be defined by orthodoxy. On one occasion he said, "did I ever exercise any compulsion over any man. did I not give him the liberty of disbelieving any doctrin I have preached if he saw fit,"²⁰ His most explicit rejection of the idea, however, was given at a general conference in which he discussed a member's being brought before the high council for erring in doctrine. The high council evidently considered it their duty to make sure no one erred in doctrine. Joseph said, "The High Council undertook to censure and correct Elder Brown, because of his teachings in relation to the beasts. Whether they actually corrected him or not I am a little doubtful, but don't care." For Joseph, then, Church authorities didn't have the right to correct anyone's doctrine and they didn't necessarily have the ability either:

I did not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodist, and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine.²¹

M. Scott Peck in his book, *The Different Drum*, which is about community making, discusses what he calls pseudocommunity:

In pseudocommunity a group attempts to purchase community cheaply by pretense. It is not an evil, conscious pretense of deliberate black lies. Rather it is an unconscious, gentle process whereby people who want to be loving attempt to be so by telling little white lies, by withholding some of the truth about themselves and their feelings in order to avoid conflict . . . The essential dynamics of pseudocommunity is conflict avoidance . . . [and] the basic pretense of pseudocommunity is the denial of individual differences.²²

The assumption, then, that a community consists of a group of people who share a set of beliefs actually prevents people from becoming a community. Again orthodoxy requires that people lie in order to maintain their membership in the group. Peck makes it clear that this pressure to lie need not come from a tyrannical inquisitor but can also come from the pressures of conformity, the perception that only certain ideas, certain modes of talking and acting are acceptable in a group.

Peck maintains that a community must be inclusive. This means not only that a community must include all kinds of people but that it must include the whole person, his sorrows as well as his joys, her anger as well as her tolerance, his feelings as well as his ideas, her problems as well as her solutions, his weaknesses as well as his strengths, her false ideas as well as her true ideas. Thus we cannot exclude the concept of orthodoxy from community. As we have seen, at certain stages of development individuals have an orthodox conception of truth. Since these individuals cannot be excluded from the community, orthodoxy cannot be excluded. How then does the community escape the division, oppression, and falseness which inhere in orthodoxy? By containing it rather than being contained by it, by refusing to define itself by a set of shared beliefs.

Here I would like to offer a little story about containing

orthodoxy. When one of my sons was two years old he believed that he was five. He would often declare this belief, and my older boys, all orthodox thinkers, attempted many times to get him to renounce his belief and say that he was two. They were unsuccessful and appealed to me, the authority, to make him say he was two, to forbid him to think he was five. "How can you let him say he's five when he's really two?" they demanded.

We cannot exclude the concept of orthodoxy. How then does the community escape the division, oppression, and falseness in orthodoxy? By refusing to define itself by a set of shared beliefs.

"How do you know what he means when he says, 'I'm five'?" I asked them. "Maybe he only means that five is his favorite number. A two year old doesn't understand time in the same way you do," I explained to them. I told them that they could not tell him he was stupid or yell at him or make him feel that he had to say what they wanted him to in order to be accepted by them. They could try to teach him about time and express their belief that he was only two in nonconfrontive ways. But he was to be allowed to discover the truth in his own way.


THE COMMUNITY OF CHRIST

HOW, then, is the community of the Church to be defined and unified? When Jesus spoke to Joseph Smith in the First Vision he explained why none of the churches were true: "They draw near to me with their lips, but their hearts are far

from me, they teach for doctrines the commandments of men" (Joseph Smith—History 1:19). The churches put their own creeds in the place of Jesus in their churches. They spoke of him but he was not their real foundation. Speaking to the Nephites after his resurrection, Jesus declared, "And this is my doctrine . . . and I bear record that the Father commandeth all men, everywhere, to repent and believe in me. And whoso believeth in me, and is baptized the same shall be saved; and they are they who shall inherit the kingdom of God" (3 Nephi 11:32, 33). In a modern revelation he declared, "Behold, this is my doctrine—whosoever repenteth and cometh unto me, the same is my church. Whosoever declareth more or less than this, the same is not of me, but is against me; therefore he is not of my church" (D&C 10:67, 68).

The doctrine of Christ is not a metaphysical truth, an eternal principle, or eternal law. It is that we must believe in him to be saved. The unifying belief of the Church is not in correct doctrines or principles but in Jesus Christ himself. "I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6).

The community of the Church is the community of Christ, the body of Christ, where all members are of equal value, where the truth of every member is listened to and valued,

where it is recognized that all members receive revelation. As Joseph Smith said, "The testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy," and "No man can receive the Holy Ghost without receiving revelations." Church members are united by their covenants with Jesus Christ and with each other. They are of one heart and one mind when each member values the heart and mind of every other member in the same way he values his own. 

NOTES

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THE TRUANT OFFICER RECALLS SWEET MAGGIE

Loved her? I left her. Don't think that qualifies.
She's single still (you know the grapevine here),
And back in school. *That* came as no surprise:
An ace brain, the safety there, her fear of getting stuck

Slaving away with the rest of us peons—
The job for her a chance to save some bucks.
Hell, at her age I had three kids to feed,
Not that I'd trade them for a hundred more degrees,

But she's been fancy-free her whole damned
Life. Admittedly—part of her appeal.
Could never figure how she slipped the net—
Mystery girl, Maggie of the books.

I was mateless, dateless, and she was damn
Near a vision, G-rated like a Disney flick:
"Gidget Graduates and Finds a Job,"
Or, better, "Pollyanna Falls in Love."

So there I was, crass Mel the hooky cop,
And there *she* is, falling for *me* for chrissake,
A gift-wrapped virgin I couldn't keep. I did
Play at losing myself to find myself.

Went cold-turkey on tobacco. Pictured
Kids climbing out of windows, the house so full of them;
Me a Mormon bishop, passing by the bars
My uncles keep open. Tried to learn to dance.

That really would have gotten my ex.
The final papers duly signed and me
Waltzing in monkey-suits in church cultural
Halls. But if I don't know by now

That marriage ain't no bare-assed fairy tale—
Drank
Two solid months the summer I broke it off.
Then Cindy came along. No Mormon Church
To keep us from shacking up—or getting hitched.

I'm not saying you can outclass a Rolls Royce—
But can you really see me driving one?
OK. I wanted to. Tell you something else. If Maggie
Just snapped her fingers I'd be in her bed.

Amazing how she took my best yawning
Behavior for a sign I thought
The whole thing had a future. Chasms
Between us sometimes. That's what you call them. Chasms.

Like the time she asked me how an orgasm
Felt. Can you *imagine* her not knowing? Chasms.
And still she thought that we could make it. Try
Reasoning with rose-colored glasses. Try.

If she'd been born in the church . . . maybe then.
but a convert? Geez. How could I win? My ex denouncing
Christianity as patriarchal rot—
Maggie running to her bishop for advice.

Her consciousness so far from being raised
She'd yet to see herself as a grown woman.
Interviews to check her worthiness?
They couldn't see it? And me share her with that?

Sweet Maggie, treasure of Sierra Madre.
Loved her? Stripped down to her pagan self . . .
Hell. I would only disappoint her.
But she never thought so. Never. Can you beat that?

—KAREN MARGUERITE MOLONEY

Revelation can go upward in the Church, upward through a hierarchy at its top or bottom, or even from non-hierarchical to hierarchical positions.

COUNTER-HIERARCHICAL REVELATION

By Todd Compton

THIS PAPER DEALS WITH REVELATION AND HOW it is sometimes received. Specifically I will address a process of revelation in which revelation is received by someone comparatively low in a hierarchy, or not in the hierarchy, and is eventually accepted by someone higher in the hierarchy. I have noticed this pattern in the scriptures and in Church history—in fact, this article is a direct outgrowth of my teaching Sunday School for two years, trying to read the New Testament and Book of Mormon carefully.

While Church leaders can be inspired, they are still human and fallible. We find this fact exemplified all through the scriptures and Church history: Moses disobeyed God at Meribath-Kadesh (Numbers 20:11-12, 27:12-14); as this paper will show, according to Paul, Peter acted hypocritically in response to social pressure; Lehi joined Laman and Lemuel in murmuring against the Lord; Jonah did not want to save the repentant city of Ninevah. As President J. Reuben Clark said, “Even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost, for a prophet is not always a prophet. . . . In our own Church, leaders have differed in view from the first.”¹

Some might think that an emphasis on this idea is overly critical of prophets and Church leaders, even anti-Mormon. Actually, emphasizing the fallibility of inspired leaders is the only possible defense against simplistic anti-Mormon critics. Otherwise we have to run around in a state of paranoia covering up well-documented failings of Church leaders in an unconvincing—and seemingly dishonest—way. And as we try to cover up past mistakes, we add a whole new layer of failings

to Church history for the next generation of leaders to deal with.

While some might make a strong distinction between revelation and inspiration, in this paper I will treat them as if they are closely related, different in strength, but on the same continuum, and will consider inspiration, including moral insight, to be a sort of revelation. For instance, in an 1892 speech, President Wilford Woodruff seems to use revelation and inspiration as more or less interchangeable terms.²

PETER AND PAUL AT ANTIOCH

MY first test case is the confrontation of Paul and Peter at Antioch, which Paul describes in Galatians 2.³ Unfortunately, we don’t have Peter’s version of this event and some interpreters of this passage have viewed Peter with some sympathy. But for the purposes of this paper, in true fundamentalist fashion, I will assume that Paul’s version is substantially true. It is worth noting that the idea of a fallible Peter was so troubling to Patristic commentators that this passage became a model case of “polemical theology,” *Kontroversialtheologie*, in the Middle Ages. In fact, Augustine and Jerome had a famous epistolary dispute concerning it. While Augustine denounced Jerome’s simulation theory (in which Paul and Peter stage their dispute as a kind of teaching tool) because of the necessary truth of every word of scripture, he also tried to harmonize the two apostles. Later scholars also would be troubled by the dispute between Augustine and Jerome, and would propose harmonization theories to explain this dispute.⁴

When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was in the wrong. Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. When I saw that they were

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not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, “You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile, and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs? (Galatians 2:11-14, New International Version.)

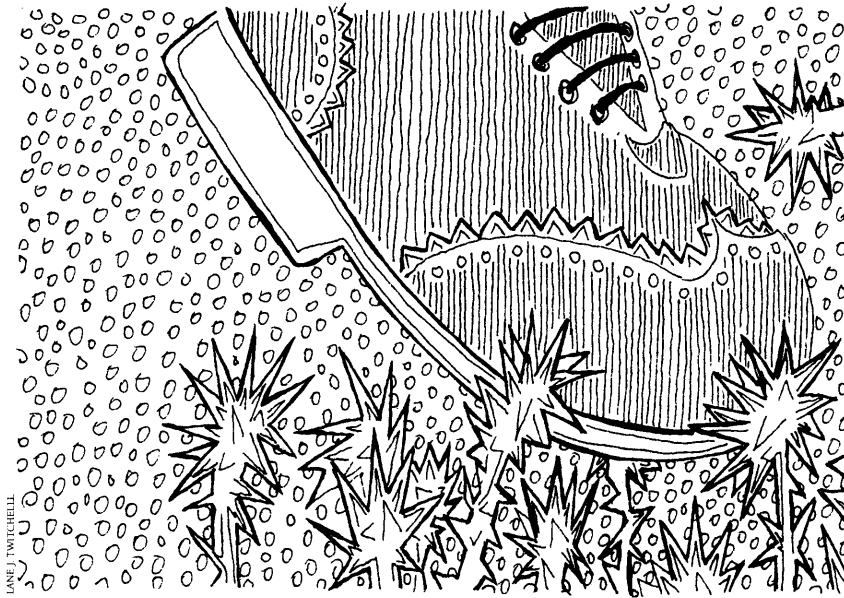
As we try to reconstruct the background to this incident, we see that Peter is something equivalent to the president of the primitive Church—the leading member of the twelve original apostles selected by Christ. Earlier, Peter had received an important vision relaxing the dietary laws of the Old Testament and encouraging gentiles to become Christian. Paul was an apostle who had received a personal visitation from Christ, but was not one of the Twelve. In Mormon terms, on one hand we have a president of the Church and on the other, a junior apostle, not even a member of the Quorum of the Twelve. Peter, in line with his revelation and Paul’s perspective, eats with gentile Christians—a highly symbolic act of Christian unity, since generally Jews were revolted by the idea of eating in common with gentiles; it was probably also a ritual act linked with the early celebration of the sacrament.⁵

But as Peter eats with Gentiles in the purity of Christian fellowship, visitors arrive from James, the leader of a conservative faction of the primitive Christian church concerned with preserving Jewish ritual practice. Peter immediately withdraws; Barnabas and other Christians follow him. To Paul, this is an act of moral cowardice, and he denounces Peter publicly “to his face,” “in front of them all.” “He was in the wrong”; “he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group.” Peter, along with others, “played the hypocrite” [in Greek, *sunupekrithēsan*]; “they carried Barnabas away with their “hypocrisy” [*tēi hupokrisei*]; “they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel.” This hypocrisy language is strong, especially since hypocrisy was the central accusation Christ leveled against the Pharisees.

Thus, when Peter had abdicated his position of moral leadership, Paul, though hierarchically inferior to Peter, assumed it and felt it was even necessary to denounce him publicly. Imagine that scene transferred to a Mormon setting—an equivalent might be a recently-called apostle denouncing

the president of the Church in a regional conference. Extraordinary as the situation was, the pattern is clear: moral leadership and inspiration flowed from below to above.

Significantly, a passage like this found its way into the scriptures and survived. Obviously, God wants us to ponder the fact that our leaders, prophetic as they may be, have faults. (However, it is interesting that the confrontation between Peter and Paul is not mentioned in Acts. “Correlating” is not a uniquely modern practice.)



A Church leader who seeks to wield his ecclesiastical authority in an area in which he has little or no expertise perhaps runs the risk of overstepping his bounds.

NEPHI'S SUBTLE REBUKE OF LEHI

A SECOND example comes from the Book of Mormon with Lehi and his clan in the desert on the way to the Red Sea: we have the “good,” prophetic Lehi and Nephi, versus the “bad” Laman and Lemuel. But, as often happens in the Book of Mormon, things are not quite that simple. Lehi, the chief prophet of the group, who had complete hierarchical and genealogical seniority, has a moral lapse (1 Nephi 16:18-20). We have a moment of crisis: Nephi broke his

bow and there was inadequate food for the exhausted desert travelers. Laman and Lemuel and the sons of Ishmael murmured “exceedingly,” and Lehi, surprisingly, joined them and “began to murmur against the Lord his God.” Then they all “were exceedingly sorrowful” and murmured against the Lord together.

What might have started out as a moment of discouragement for the elderly Lehi ended up as a virtual group rebellion against God. Of course, it was Nephi who assumed moral leadership at this point. His reaction to Lehi’s lapse was quite different from Paul’s reaction to Peter’s. But before he approached Lehi, he denounced his brothers (who were above him in normal family status, if not in religious hierarchy) for hardening their hearts to the extent of murmuring against God. There is an implicit reproach to Lehi here, for Lehi had been doing the same thing. Nephi then made a new bow and arrow, and, instead of denouncing his father, asked him for guidance: “And I said unto my father: Whither shall I go to obtain food?”

It is interesting that Nephi did not attack hierarchical structure or try to place himself above Lehi, just as Paul wasn’t trying to tear down Peter’s authority in an absolute way. In-

stead, Nephi tried to strengthen his father in his prophetic mission. As quiet and constructive as this response was, it was nevertheless a subtle but telling rebuke to an erring prophetic leader.

Lehi inquired of the Lord and was strongly and overtly rebuked by God “insomuch that he was brought down into the depths of sorrow.” Lehi consulted the Liahona and received further chastening so that he “did fear and tremble exceedingly.” But the instrument gave direction for Nephi’s hunting, and he found and killed game. The crisis was averted. Once again, the scriptures offer an example of a serious lapse in the chief prophet of a group and of moral inspiration going from a hierarchically lesser figure to the higher.

EMMA AND THE WORD OF WISDOM

MY third example is a delightful anecdote from modern Church history, the circumstances behind the bestowal of the Word of Wisdom revelation. Joseph Smith, in February 1833, held the School of the Prophets in a room above the kitchen of his house. According to Brigham Young,

the first thing they did was to light their pipes, and, while smoking, talk about the great things of the kingdom, and spit all over the room, and as soon as the pipe was out of their mouths a large chew of tobacco would then be taken. Often when the Prophet entered the room to give the school instructions he would find himself in a cloud of tobacco smoke.⁶

Emma complained at “having to clean so filthy a floor,” and according to Brigham Young, this in part “made the Prophet think upon the matter, and he inquired of the Lord relating to the conduct of the elders in using Tobacco, and the revelation known as Word of Wisdom was the result of his inquiry.” David Whitmer adds a bit more, telling us that Emma actually suggested a revelation on the subject:

Some of the men were excessive chewers of the filthy weed, and their disgusting slobbering and spitting caused Mrs. Smith . . . to make the ironical remark that “It would be a good thing if a revelation could be had declaring the use of tobacco a sin, and commanding its suppression.”⁷

According to Whitmer, the men suggested the banning of tea and coffee in this proposed revelation as a counter-dig against the women. Curiously, this proposed revelation came, and it discouraged use of both the men’s tobacco and the women’s tea and coffee, though it was originally a word of counsel, not an absolute ban.⁸ Emma’s complaint “made the Prophet think upon the matter”; moral inspiration came first to a technically non-hierarchical person, then moved upward to the head of the Church. We also have the important pattern of revelation coming through a husband-wife combination.

YOUNG JOSEPH F. SMITH DISSENTS

MY fourth example is an incident from the life of Joseph F. Smith. This comes from the most conservative source possi-

ble, President Smith’s *Gospel Doctrine*, a Melchizedek priesthood manual.⁹ President Smith had served a mission in Hawaii as a very young man. Then, after the notorious Walter Gibson had been presiding disastrously as mission president in Hawaii, two apostles, Ezra T. Benson, then 53, and the future prophet, Lorenzo Snow, then 50, accompanied by Joseph F. Smith, then 25, visited the islands to set up the mission again. Smith, not yet an apostle, acted as their interpreter and was left as mission president when the two apostles returned to Utah. However, as they arrived at the islands by boat, there was a tense moment as they tried to land. Their vessel was anchored in a rough channel, and the natives and young Joseph F. Smith knew it would be difficult to get to shore safely. The natives had built a breakwater, and normally would carefully ferry passengers to shore in their small boats. But, for some reason, the Apostles decided to take the ship’s “unwieldy freight-boat” and try for the shore. Smith strongly disagreed with this decision and warned the very much senior Church leaders that such a course would be extremely unsafe, that the boat ran a great risk of capsizing. The older men refused to listen to him. Smith offered to go ashore alone and bring a safer boat back, but the brethren were insistent on taking the freight-boat immediately. Emotions apparently became heated, and one of the apostles told the young missionary, “Young man, you would better obey counsel.” The party got on the boat; but the strong-minded Joseph F. Smith refused to leave the main ship.

The freight-boat came to the dangerous, rough bit of sea; a great wave overturned it, dumping the two apostles, along with Elder W. W. Cluff and others, into about thirty feet of water. Natives saw the disaster and hurriedly came out in a boat to rescue the drowning men. When they had pulled everyone they could see out of the water, they began to paddle toward land, but Elder Cluff realized that Elder Snow was nowhere to be seen. They turned back, eventually found him, and brought him into the boat, though he looked dead. A messenger went back to Joseph F. Smith, who had helplessly witnessed all this, and told him Elder Snow had died. But fortunately, with a priesthood blessing, Elder Snow was brought back to life on the shore.

This example shows a young man who simply had more experience and knowledge in a limited area than men who, though they were apostles and his ecclesiastical superiors, were newcomers to Hawaii and probably not well acquainted with seafaring, at least in the local area. Further, one of the apostles—who should have bowed to the younger man’s greater experience—demanded his obedience. But Smith “reiterated his impression of danger” and refused to obey.

Thus, a Church leader who seeks to wield his ecclesiastical authority in an area in which he has little or no expertise perhaps runs the risk of overstepping his bounds, despite his ecclesiastical position. For instance, if a Church leader deals with non-ecclesiastical subjects—be they geographic, economic, scientific—he incurs a certain danger if he has only a limited background in those subjects. Joseph F. Smith’s receptivity to an impression coincided with his knowledge and

experience—inspiration and perspiration go together, as they say about genius.¹⁰ For example, a Church leader who has a background in the methodology of history, or has even written history attempting to use the highest standards of historiography, would be best fitted for critiquing historians. Even if a Church leader expresses true principles, as he ventures into matters with a secular dimension he may not be able to make his points as effectively as possible without some measure of expertise.

The story of Levi Savage and the Willie handcart company illustrates this principle. Savage spoke vehemently against starting the westward journey so late in the season, as he had knowledge of the country and its weather. However, he was voted down by the highest Church leaders in the company, and he stoically chose to make the trip with the company despite impending disaster. A little later, he was denounced for his faithlessness by an apostle, Elder Franklin Richards. The journey was, of course, a tragic mistake, and loss of lives and many injuries ensued. In an ironic denouement, Brigham Young denounced Elder Richards; he had been a Church leader for most of his life and lacked practical knowledge, Young pointed out disparagingly. Thus, in this case, the rank and file member with expertise in a limited area was more inspired than an apostle out of his element.¹¹

Another interesting example of counter-hierarchical revelation is the conflict of Brigham Young and Orson Pratt over the Adam-God doctrine (i.e., the teaching that Adam is God the Father, and Christ is Adam's literal son), a topic so troubling to Church leadership that it has almost become a taboo subject. Brigham Young, as Church president, apparently was a strong proponent of this doctrine, though sometimes he seems to have had more typical views on Adam and God. Orson Pratt, on the other hand, was a strong opponent of it. In the fascinating, long, drawn out conflict between these strong-willed leaders, Brigham Young never quite got Orson to knuckle under completely, and Orson, though he had moments of retraction, never stopped insisting that the doctrine did not square with the scriptures. Brigham Young always claimed that

he had learned the Adam-God doctrine from Joseph Smith. In an article on this topic, David Buerger concludes, convincingly, that Joseph Smith did not teach the doctrine; Young was either elaborating on or misunderstood Joseph's teachings.¹² Though this conclusion, if correct, happily leaves us without the necessity of believing in the confusing (in my view) Adam-God doctrine, it also leaves us with a rather unnerving view of a Church president going fairly far astray, doctrinally. Though Brigham strongly believed in the doctrine, significantly, he

never advanced it as a revelation to be added to the Doctrine and Covenants, and the body of the Church, led by Orson Pratt and vindicated by time, never received it (to Brigham Young's frustration). This is an example of the body of the Church being more inspired than its leader on this particular issue (assuming that we reject the Adam-God doctrine, as Elder Bruce R. McConkie, for one, has instructed our generation to do). This does not mean that we can't accept Brigham Young as a prophet, an "American Moses" called by the Lord to fulfill a specific mission which he did with complete success though he was a

fallible human being. Perhaps doctrinal exploration was not Brigham's greatest area of expertise; like Elders Snow and Benson in Hawaii's treacherous waters, he was out of his depth in this matter. But in many other areas, his inspiration is evident. I am not suggesting that he had no theological insights, but rather that he was more inspired in certain doctrinal areas than in others.¹³

CONTEMPORARY EXAMPLES OF COUNTER-HIERARCHICAL REVELATION

FOR balance, I add two examples of the pattern from the contemporary Church. A friend of mine once had a stake president who felt strongly that long hair was inappropriate for men at a time when that style was popular. He refused to allow any of the young men of his stake to be ordained to the Melchizedek priesthood if they had long hair; this went on for years, and as a result many young men did not go on missions. Finally, when there had been widespread dissatisfaction with



If we follow Church leaders who are not doing right, we are not absolved from wrongdoing; we share their guilt. Sometimes obedience to Church leaders and obedience to God and moral justice are not the same thing.

his policy, he submitted it to his high council for a vote. They voted against it, and he bowed to their decision. When I first heard the story, I remarked that it showed humility that he would submit the question to the high council. My friend countered, "Yes, but only after years of practicing the previous policy with all its effects."

Another example involves a rank and file member of the Church. A friend of mine went to a foreign country on his mission, where he met someone who had been excommunicated from the Church for questioning the morals of a local leader. A stake president had become involved in a serious moral problem, and this member, not part of the local hierarchy, found out and was very troubled. He went to his bishop and told him the story. The bishop thought the member was falsely accusing the stake president (who he thought should be above suspicion) and excommunicated the member. Eventually there was an appeal to authority higher than the stake president and an investigation ensued. Finally the stake president was excommunicated, and the local member was re-instated in the Church.

This is, of course, a challenging and paradoxical situation. Church members have the "follow the Brethren" principle impressed on them continually. But, what do you do when church leaders have serious moral flaws? Fortunately, most Church leaders don't, but it is always possible that some leaders could have lapses. I think the Church member in the story above did exactly as he should have done, though he had to endure excommunication because of his actions. If he had a strong belief in the Church and Church leaders, this must have been a harrowing, lonely ordeal.

In addition, the counselor offices in Church government implicitly acknowledge this pattern of checking leaders. If the prophet were infallible, if he received a steady, direct stream of absolute revelation, and were entirely self-sufficient, he would not need counselors. Yet they are there—counselors for bishops, stake presidents, and the prophet of the Church. I've always been impressed with what Joseph F. Smith said on becoming president of the Church:

I propose that my counselors and fellow presidents in the First Presidency shall share with me in the responsibility of every act which I shall perform in this capacity. I do not propose to take the reins in my own hands to do as I please; but I propose to do as my brethren and I agree upon . . . I have always held, and do hold, and trust I always shall hold, that it is wrong for one man to exercise all the authority and power of presidency in the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. I dare not assume such a responsibility, and I will not, so long as I can have men like these [pointing to Presidents Winder and Lund] to stand by and counsel with me in the labors we have to perform. . . . If at any time my brethren of the apostleship shall see in me a disposition to depart from this principle, or a forgetfulness on my part of this covenant that I make today before this body of Priesthood, I ask them in the name of my Father, that they will come to me, as my

brethren, as counselors in the Priesthood, as watchmen on the towers of Zion, and remind me of this covenant and promise which I make to the body of the Church in general conference assembled at this time. The Lord never did intend that one man should have all power, and for that reason he has placed in his Church, presidents, apostles, high priests, 70s, elders, and the various officers of the lesser Priesthood, all of which are essential in their order and place.¹⁴

Here we have, connected with the concept of revelation going from lower to higher, the idea of revelation coming to a group. There is both an upward flow and a downward flow of inspiration—the counselors' insights and inspirations go up to the president, who in turn has a special link to God, and revelation comes down in response.

Also, the president, in true humility, welcomes reproof from his hierarchical subordinates, as watchmen, if he acts without taking counsel with those "beneath" him, the body of the Church. According to Joseph F. Smith, for us to reprove leaders who are too autocratic is not just an option, but our duty as watchmen on the towers of Zion.

As we ponder this recommendation for ecclesiastical reproof, we remember that a revelation given through Joseph Smith authorized that he be reprovved. In one of the earliest sections in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord instructed Oliver Cowdery to reprove Joseph on occasion: "Admonish him in his faults, and also receive admonition of him" (D&C 6:19). Thus we have an upward and downward interplay of reproof. But in the previous verse, Oliver is instructed to "stand by my servant Joseph, faithfully, in whatsoever difficult circumstances he may be. . . ." Paradoxically, "standing by" a leader and reproofing his faults are not opposed activities, if done in the right spirit.

This is not to deny that many times the leader is right, the followers wrong, perhaps the most common circumstance. But the other possibility exists: the pattern is there in the scriptures for us to think about.

OBEDIENCE TO LEADERS AND TO GOD

I WILL now discuss some of the implications this pattern has for us as Church members, for leaders and also for rank and file members.

First of all, it challenges us as leaders to take seriously the ideas, insights, counsel, suggestions, and even rebukes of those hierarchically beneath us, to accept inspiration wherever we may find it, and to look for it in other people, both "above" and "below" us. We should realize that we are fallible, morally and intellectually, and we should have the courage to admit our mistakes and get back on track, as did Lehi, instead of doggedly pursuing a wrong course—instead of thinking that, because we are leaders, everything we do is rubber-stamped as perfection. It is dangerous to equate our mistakes with the truth of the Church. There is also the danger of not subjecting ourselves to the continual moral and intellectual self-examination that all human beings need—even and perhaps especially

Church leaders. Lehi's community was much better off because Lehi did not lash out at the quiet rebuke given him by his son. The rebuke, combined with Lehi's humility, opened the way for a renewal of revelation in a community that was drifting away.

According to one patristic tradition regarding the Antioch incident, Peter "humbly submitted to the reproach of his 'inferior.'" This interpretation helped create the "humble prelate" theme, which theologians cited when trying to reason with obstinate popes in the middle ages. Later, Luther would use this theme to argue that the humblest Christian could correct an erring pope.¹⁵

The implications for the rank and file Church members are also important. We may return to the Antioch incident and apply to it a standard phrase from Mormonism: "Follow the Brethren." Consider Peter eating with gentile Christians, the arrival of a group from James, and then Peter, the Church president, withdrawing from the gathering. Then, others follow him, including Barnabas, Paul's missionary companion among the gentiles.

These people who withdrew with Peter were, literally, following the Brethren, the "president" of the Church. How does Paul view this obedience? Does he commend it, since the people were, after all, following the prophet of the Church? No, he denounces it strongly. They are "playing the hypocrite" along with Peter, and share his guilt. To Paul's shock, Barnabas (also an apostle and Paul's former mentor) is even led aside "by their hypocrisy." Thus, according to Paul, if we follow Church leaders who are not doing right, we are not absolved from wrongdoing; we share their guilt. And the conclusion is inescapable: sometimes obedience to Church leaders and obedience to God and moral justice are not the same thing.

This principle puts a sobering burden on us. It can be easy, in one sense, to live by a religious version of "my country right or wrong"; "when the prophet speaks the debate is over." But this isn't what the Lord wants; he requires us to subject our leaders' actions and directives to moral and intellectual scrutiny; to serve with all of our mind as well as our heart. That is more difficult. Then, if we find our leadership wanting,

morally, we have a duty to address the problem.¹⁶

Brigham Young instructed Church members not to take his counsel thoughtlessly, but to subject it to careful examination.¹⁷ Hugh B. Brown, as a counselor in the First Presidency, said:

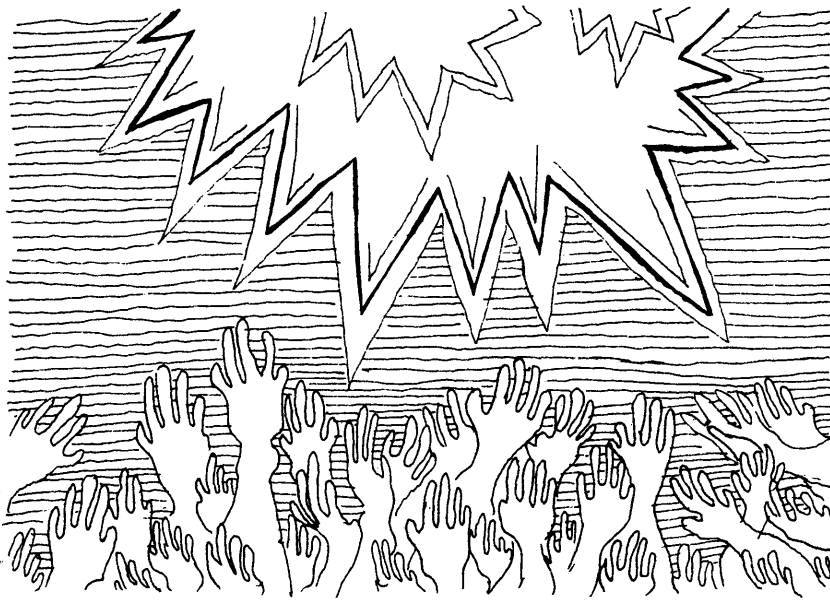
While all members should respect, support, and heed the teachings of the Authorities of the Church, no one should accept a statement and base his testimony upon it, no matter who makes it, until he has, under mature examination, found it to be true and worthwhile; then his logical deductions may be confirmed by the spirit of revelation to his spirit because real conversion must come from within.¹⁸

An interesting example in a non-Mormon setting is the case of Catholic theologian Hans Küng, who has openly spoken out against doctrines in the Catholic church he feels are not compatible with scripture. He has also opposed the present pope openly, who in turn has used every means in his power to quiet the theologian. Küng describes his dissent as "critical loyalty and loyal criticisms of

this Church."¹⁹ His criticisms are a result of his loyalty. Their main thrust has been directed against the doctrine of Papal infallibility, which he argues is not biblical in any way. In 1979 Küng's authorization to teach was withdrawn from him under the direction of Pope John Paul II, causing immediate international protest. Since then, the gulf between the theologian and the Pope has, if anything, widened, and Küng's criticisms have become sharp.

In the Church, we strongly hold to the idea of personal revelation but we often interpret it very hierarchically. You get personal revelation only for yourself; the Prophet alone gets inspiration for the Church. But the story of Emma and the Word of Wisdom shows that inspired insights, for the benefit of the Church, can come to us as non-hierarchical Church members. If our leaders are sensitive and thoughtful, as Joseph Smith was, insights we receive can affect them and lead them to receive further revelation.

Finally, this pattern leads us to one last implication. I have argued elsewhere that women have priesthood in our church,



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especially those who have been through the temple, and that it should be more recognized and integrated formally into the Church structure. But as matters presently stand, women are not part of the Church hierarchy—they are excluded from the most important Church positions. However, the counter-hierarchical pattern shows us that women can receive revelation and inspiration for the benefit of the Church, not just for themselves and their children.

I hope that we, as Church leaders, will be sensitive to inspiration from those “beneath” us, from the general membership of the church, and that we in general membership can live close to the spirit and convey inspiration to those above us on occasion, and, if necessary, constructively be the loyal opposition. I hope that together we can all find the unity necessary in the gospel.

AFTERWORD

SINCE I gave this talk, a few reasonable objections have been raised to it, which I will try to deal with now.

Some object that many of my examples of people who receive counter-hierarchical revelation are still part of the hierarchy, and perhaps even have a “calling” to dissent, i.e., a counselor. However, I shared some non-hierarchical examples, such as Emma Smith and the Word of Wisdom, the case of Levi Savage, and the two modern examples. Most of us can provide examples of local leaders who have acted because of a comment from the rank and file. However, this paper emphasizes only that revelation can go upward in the Church, upward through a hierarchy at its top or bottom, or even from non-hierarchical to hierarchical positions. I am certainly not saying that upward revelation is the only, or most common, pattern for revelation, only that it *can* happen and that it happens more often than we acknowledge. It is a necessary escape valve in the Church, and we should make use of it on occasion, as leaders or rank and file members.

Another valid question: does my model lead to the danger of schism? That danger obviously does exist. An authoritarian wrong-headed leader can do the Church a great deal of damage, but an authoritarian wrong-headed critic can also do the Church a lot of damage (in my experience, some Sunstone symposium lecturers are not entirely immune to dogmatism or wrong-headedness). But in none of my examples did the person leave the Church when they received their individual inspirations—they stayed with the Church and enriched it. Paul never dreamed of deposing Peter or leaving the Church, when he denounced him publicly, and there are hints that he continued working closely with Peter after the Antioch incident.²⁰ Levi Savage stayed with the ill-fated handcart company after his warning had been rejected and he did all he could to help the company endure the winter. His stoic heroism is all the more poignant when you consider that he was denounced by an apostle for being faithless.

Does non-hierarchical revelation make a person a law unto himself or herself? No, counter-hierarchical revelation does not negate the hierarchy. The hierarchy is still there; it is still

the structure. The people I have looked at are usually on good terms with the Church structure—either a part of it or related to it somehow. They were spiritually sensitive people. Nephi didn't lay down the law to Lehi; he went to Lehi and asked him for leadership. There are ways of working counter-hierarchically that are non-threatening.

What of the problem of conflicting revelations—members of the Church getting (false) revelations that counter the (true) revelations of the leadership? This obviously can happen. This is not a simple question; living in the real world, and in the real Church, many times does not give us simple solutions to complex problems. Every Church member must simply use judgment in evaluating what is inspiration and what isn't. In some ways the concept of counter-hierarchical revelation is freeing; in other ways it is a great burden. If it is misused it can lead to apostasy; but if it is not used in certain situations, that moral apathy can also lead to apostasy. Nephi helped bring his community back from the edge of rebellion.

Some wonder how it would be possible to keep order in the Church with such a “counter-hierarchical” pattern in operation. Again, I don't see this pattern denying the structure of the Church. I see it as using the structure of the Church. Any who have “counter-hierarchical” inspiration must subject it to Church leaders and the Church, even if informally, for acceptance or rejection. I believe God in his infinite vision sees the Church in all its complexity. While there is hierarchical order in the Church, it also contains important democratic elements. It is not strictly authoritarian, but a community, full of checks and balances, where important inspiration can come to any one who is in tune, not just to a few (though Church leaders have a responsibility to conduct the business of the Church). One reader of this talk commented that it raised interesting questions about how God looked at hierarchy, and mentioned that, after the Resurrection, Christ did not appear first to Peter, but to Mary, who was not part of the hierarchy. Thus, a “non-hierarchical” person was the first witness of the most important religious event in the history of humankind and was sent to take the message to the eleven apostles (Mark 16:7,9; John 20:17-18). But this did not negate the ecclesiastical structure that was already in existence—Mary was sent to help it.²¹

My paper could be seen as a critique of those critics of the Church who leave the Church, instead of staying with it and working constructively to improve it.²² ☞

NOTES

1. J. Reuben Clark, Jr., “When Are Church Leaders' Words Entitled to Claim of Scripture?” talk given to LDS Seminary and Institute Teachers, Brigham Young University, 7 July 1954, published in *Deseret News*, 31 July 1954, 2f. Clark quotes Joseph Smith, *History of the Church* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 5:265.

2. *Deseret Weekly* 45:545 (9 October 1892), as quoted in Rodney Turner, *Women and the Priesthood* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1972), 281.

3. For bibliography on this confrontation, see Hans Dieter Betz, *Galatians, A Commentary . . .* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1979), 104; Karlfried Froehlich, “Fallibility Instead of Infallibility? A Brief History of the Interpretation of Galatians 2:11-14,” in *Teaching Authority & Infallibility in the Church*, eds. Paul Empie, T. Austin Murphy, and Joseph Burgess (Minneapolis: Augsburg, 1978), 259-269.

4. For defenses of Peter in this incident, see the *Kerygmata Petrou* 1:4-5, found in Betz 331; Betz 109, 104, 103; for Augustine and Jerome, see Froehlich 261-62, with bibliography.

5. Cf. Günther Bornkamm, *Paul*, tr. D.M.G. Stalker (New York: Harper & Row, 1971), 45; S. Scott Bartchy, "Tablefellowship with Jesus and the 'Lord's Meal' at Corinth," in *Increase in Learning: Essays in Honor of James G. Van Burne*, ed. Owens and Hamm (Manhattan, Kansas: Manhattan Christian College, 1979), 45-61, especially 57; J. Jeremias, *The Eucharistic Words of Jesus* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1977), 204-6, 262.

6. *Journal of Discourses* (JD) 12:158.

7. David Whitmer, in *Des Moines Daily News*, 16 October 1886, 20; cf. Paul H. Peterson, *An Historical Analysis of the Word of Wisdom*, (Master's Thesis, BYU, 1972), 19-20; Linda King Newell and Valeen Tippetts Avery, *Mormon Enigma* (New York: Doubleday, 1984), 47.

8. Peterson, "An Historical Analysis," 19-20.

9. *Gospel Doctrine* (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 1956) 10th ed., 534-35; from a "Biographical Sketch," written by Edward H. Anderson. For another account of this incident, see Eliza R. Snow Smith, *Biography and Family Record of Lorenzo Snow . . .* (Salt Lake City: Desert News Co., 1884), 276-81.

10. Elder Dallin Oaks has said, "Seekers who have paid the price in perspiration have been magnified in inspiration," *Ensign* 19 (May 1989): 29.

11. See Wallace Stegner, *The Gathering of Zion* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, 1964), 221-48; LeRoy and Ann Hafer, *Handcarts to Zion, 1856-60* (Glendale, CA: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1960), 53-141; B.H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church . . .* (Provo, UT: BYU Press, 1965), 4:88-97. "To the overzeal, not to say fanaticism, of his brethren, Elder Savage opposed common sense, and his knowledge of the country. . . ." writes Roberts, 89.

12. David Buerger, "The Adam-God Doctrine," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 (Spring 1982): 14; see also Gary Bergera, "The Orson Pratt-Brigham Young Controversies: Conflicts within the Quorums, 1853-1868," *Dialogue* 13 (Summer 1980): 7. For Brigham's inspiration, see L. Arrington, *Brigham Young, American Moses* (New York: Knopf, 1985); H. Nibley, *Nibley on the Timely and Timeless* (Provo: BYU, 1978), 229-61.

13. Brigham Young and Orson Pratt also disagreed about whether God progressed in knowledge. In our day, Elder McConkie, following President Joseph Fielding Smith, supported the Pratt position, and Eugene England supports the Young position. See Eugene England, "Perfection and Progression: Two Complimentary Ways to Talk about God," *BYU Studies* 29 (Summer 1989): 31-47. Counter-hierarchical inspiration was operating in either the earlier or later controversy.

14. Quoted from *Gospel Doctrine* 176-77; *Conference Report* (Special) 1901, 82.

15. Froehlich 263, nn. 24-26; Augustine, *Epistle* 82.2.22; Cyprian, *Epistle* 71.3. For the humble prelate theme, Froehlich 265. For Luther, see Froehlich, 267.

16. See the thoughtful talk by L. Jackson Newell, "Personal Conscience and Priesthood Authority," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13 (Winter 1980): 81-87.

17. *JD* 3:45, quoted in D. Michael Quinn, "From Sacred Grove to Sacral Power Structure," *Dialogue* 17 (Summer 1984): 14. "Some may say, 'Brethren, you who lead the Church, we have all confidence in you . . . and if Brother Brigham is satisfied with it, I am.' I do not wish any Latter-day Saint in this world, nor in heaven, to be satisfied with anything I do, unless the Spirit of the Lord Jesus Christ, the spirit of revelation, makes them satisfied." Quinn cites instances in which congregations have voted against proposed Church leaders presented by even the President of the Church; in these cases, the President acceded to the community vote.

18. "Pres. Brown Addresses BYU," *Church News*, 24 May 1969, 13.

19. Hans Küng, *His Work and His Way*, Hermann Häring and Karl-Josef Kuschel, eds. (Garden City, New York: Image, 1980, orig. 1978), 176, cf. 170-75; L. Swidler, *Küng in Conflict* (New York: Doubleday, 1981); H. Küng, *The Church—Maintained in Truth* (New York: Seabury Press, 1980); *Freedom Today* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966); *Truthfulness: the Future of the Church* (New York: Sheed and Ward, 1966).

20. See Bornkamm 48; 1 Corinthians 9.6. "Paul reinstated the unity . . . between the Jerusalem mother church and his churches, and down to the end sought to promote this with all his power."

21. A most paradoxical situation for a woman to be "sent" to the apostles, for apostle means "one sent," from the Greek *apostellō*, "to send." I recently learned that Mary was known in the Middle Ages as *apostola apostolorum*, the apostle to the apostles (see *The Golden Legend of Jacobus de Voragine* tr. by Granger Ryan and Helmut Ripperger [New York: Arno Press, 1969], 357).

22. Cf. Levi Peterson's discussion of Juanita Brooks as an "inside," loyal critic of Mormonism, including the wonderful biography, *Juanita Brooks, Mormon Woman Historian* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1988) and "Juanita Brooks, My Subject, My Sister," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 22:1 (Spring 1989): 16-29, especially 22-24. There is also such a thing as a disloyal inside critic of Mormonism, of course.

LE BONNE VAUX

You watch Ed pad his window
to mute the outside world.
You close your door to invaders,
take off the receiver to the telephone
move to the back back bedroom.
Walls of your skin link together
to exclude all but inside
sight that's dropped inside you.
You crawl under the web
of sheets, your brain wrapped
in a bandage of fog so dense
the sun has gone down behind
your eyes that close and see

honey-combed walls spun under-
ground like Christians of old
who hid in dark tunnels beneath Rome
secretly close to what they loved
in catacombs and you drift off, barely
remembering about cobweb cataracts—
"The outside world was unclear
to James Joyce" and you imagine
his glasses thickening, "so he became intro-
spective," you read, feeling yourself falling

inside where these sheets seem to tumble
in soft down through layers of comfort
and you drop into the dark of sleep surrounded
in salmon light and feed on what nurtures
you—joined to a primitive source almost
like a desert dwelling or mother's soft
adobe walls—your private Walden,

secluded and so close to home, dreaming
of ancient Jews who leave sands
of Egypt, wandering through the Red Sea
that opens, and feel yourself falling,
through wilderness—wandering further
into the steady pulse of deep sleep
and sink into the ebb, the flow
of the ocean breaking and pulling
you in now, retreating again
then gently pushing against
what is solid on shore.

You want
to stay in this world of deep peace.
It is what you know, a place to be
alone like Jews who finally found their own
Jericho—a bonne vaux. What you love is this
familiar place where as a child you sank

inside to this comfort, seeing gardens
like those in Rome where inner courts
held secrets of foliage growing lush
behind terra cotta more primitive than cave
dwellings and recall your mother telling you
of the desert when over walls of adobe
she peeked in, seeing green so luminous
it was like a comb of Eden, moist
and rich like life here and you dream
of marmots biting you, and jump
from your sleep, thinking that if you
sink back now, this earthwomb might swallow
you, bury you in warm moist walls for good.

—MARGARET RECHIF

Second Place, 1989 Brookie & D.K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest

REFLECTIONS OF THE LOST AND FOUND

By Hodgson Van Wagoner

I LOOK OUT MY WINDOW. UNBLEMISHED NORWAY skirts by; too pure, almost-too pure, at least to ignore. Even after twenty months. I shift my focus and see the girl in the window's reflection. She still watches me, hoping, perhaps, I'll watch her too. I'm wishing I could. "God dagen," I'd say after a timid smile. "Amerikaner?" she'd ask, less timidly, her face open and expansive, pure and intoxicating like the land outside. But I don't turn to announce my interest. I close my eyes, instead, and remember that Norwegian girls do not shave their legs . . . nor their armpits. It doesn't help, really. So I remember I'm a missionary—a good missionary, a faithful missionary, long legs, good language, beyond reproach. My companions agree. So does the President. There are girls back home. Soon.

Back to the office the train trains. Nine hours back to the office. I'm tired, though I've strained only in thought. Thought is not my friend. It is not my big, brown, scrumpled King James, nor is it my little white bible—the one they say is my friend. Thought is my nearest, most constant companion, however. Often my only companion. Usually my enemy. Perhaps Elder Miller's too.

Elder Miller, the target of my return. It's getting dark outside. Oslo in less than an hour. And Elder Miller.

Yesterday before Priesthood meeting the Branch President taps me on the shoulder. "Telefon, Eldste Roberts. President Forsgren." Zone leader stuff, I think as I walk to the telephone, a speaking assignment for the upcoming Zone Conference. Strange news for a Sunday. Never happens—right in the middle of the President's sacrament meeting too. I know; I've been there.

"Pack your bags, Elder," the President says. Never heard him sound so bad. "You're coming home to Oslo. I need you here. Elder Miller needs you here."

"Elder Miller?" I swallow hard.

"He's ill." Tremoring voice. "Finances are shot. It's not his fault . . . too much for anyone. Will you please come quickly?"

"Sure," I say. "Tomorrow's train okay?"

"Have to be. Tell Elder Henderson it's a threesome until I replace you."

"I will."

"And Elder Roberts, don't tell anyone about Miller . . . please."

It's dark and the train is squeaking and jerking into Oslo

West. I can't see out the windows anymore. The girl looks at me helplessly as she gathers her handbags. Perhaps it's a Freudian event, and I'm the one looking helplessly at her. I sit, waiting politely to be the last one off. She brushes by and touches my shoulder gently. An accident? I wait some more and think of Elder Miller.

At last the car is nearly empty. I heft my briefcase and walk stiff-legged, like an old cowboy, to the baggage racks. Twenty-two months of 'just-couldn't-throw-it-aways' bulge ominously against my luggage zippers. Must make some adjustments before I fly home. Nothing very important in there anyway—just pieces of me.

On my final, burdensome descent to the platform, Elders Jensen and Baker trudge to my rescue. New boys, the younger crop—President's Secretary and Supply Manager extraordinaire. They arrived at the office three months ago when I left. They now look only slightly alive.

"Elder Roberts!" Jensen hails. He's wearing a dirty sweater and no coat. I look at the station's huge circular thermometer: 0°centigrade. "You can't believe how glad we are to see you." They take my heaviest bags and drag/carry them down the loading-strip, and I feel guilty. They both look exhausted.

"How's Miller?" My question is feeble.

"Tried to jump out the window this morning," Baker mumbles. "Jorgensen dragged him back in."

"Finances are a mess," Jensen says. "We're getting late notices all over the place."

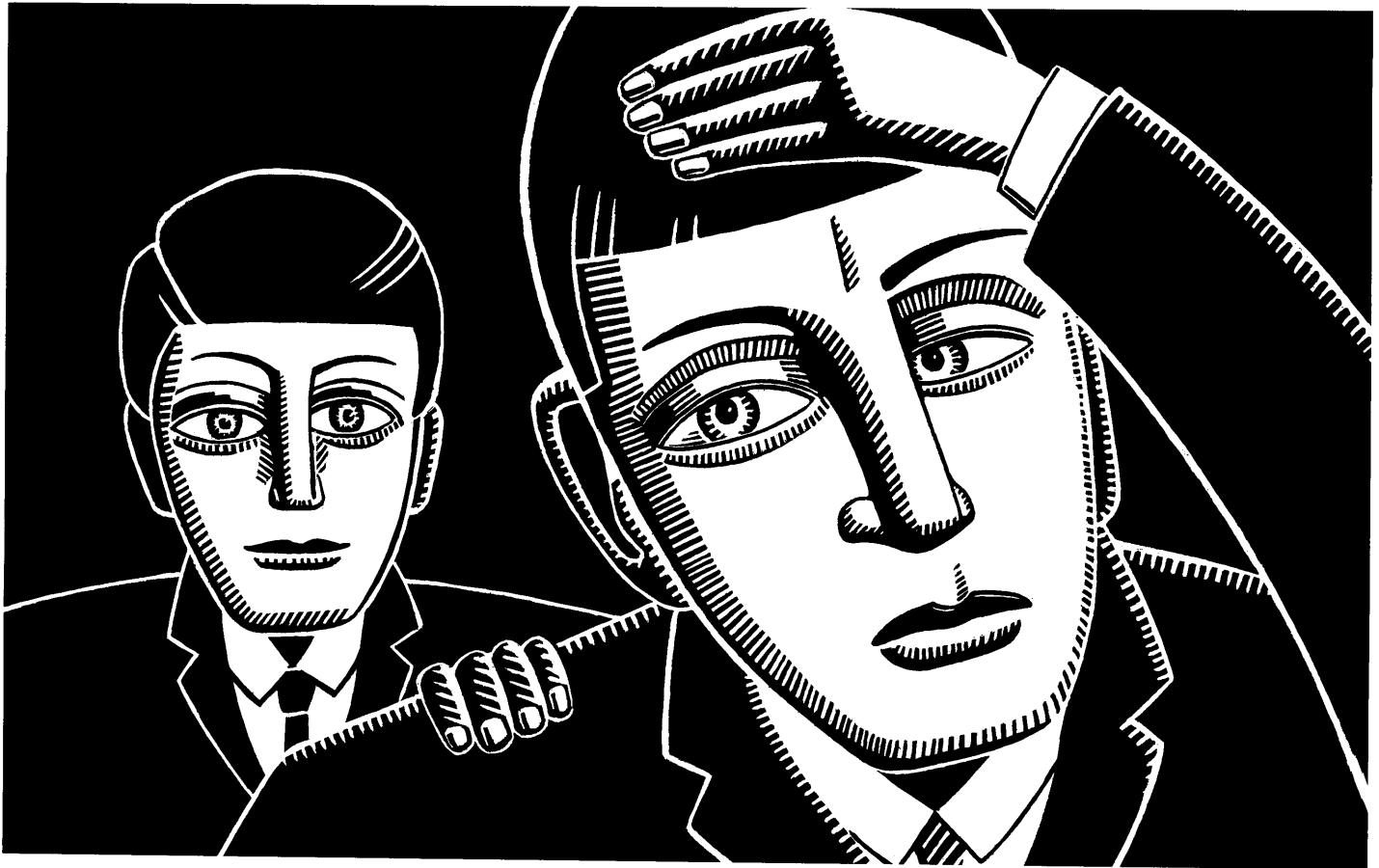
"Why didn't someone call me sooner?"

Shrugging shoulders to both sides. "We didn't realize, I guess."

Inside my brain I shrug my shoulders too. I'd known, I suppose. Miller called me often enough with problems—too often. "I'll get it Elder Roberts, I'll get it. Just tell me this one thing and I'll have it." What slightly derogatory, overly irritated Miller comments had I cast upon my consoling Elder Henderson after hanging up the telephone each time? Miller would have cried had he listened. He was too sensitive for the job. Certainly I was more worthy of insult than he.

In the mission van I hold myself tightly, begging warmth, and I feel sorry for Jensen who must be frozen.

"Everything's falling apart," Baker confides. "We have to watch Miller twenty-four hours a day. We've hidden all the



"I'm not crazy. I'm not crazy. I'm evil. Oh Elder Roberts, I love God. Why couldn't I do it right for God?"

knives, locked windows—even stashed our ties, just in case."

I say nothing.

"Miller's the sweetest kid I've ever met," says Jensen. "I don't understand."

I understand—part of it, anyway. "No! Not like that!" I groan, looking over Miller's shoulder. I want to turn around and punch the wall. "I've told you before; you have to add these two columns to the total before you can enter on line twenty-six."

Miller looks up over his shoulder sheepishly and smiles. "My dad used to hate to teach me new things too. You're nothing compared to him, though." There is no malice, no leverage in his voice; just apology. I grit my teeth and remember what an asshole I am. And then my impatience chews through, and I cut once more.

My escorts heave my luggage up four flights of stairs. They insist. My old room of ten months, my favorite bed, the source of my escape, is favored by another. So I take the green room at the end of the hall. I open my suitcases but take nothing out. An old face, a remnant from the old crew, appears. Shake of the hand and a hug. I still feel like winter.

"Where's Miller?"

"Hansen's old room." Elder Jorgensen kicks at the carpet after answering. Dark circles under his eyes make his white,

blonde hair seem ancient. "Don't expect too much."

At the top of the office's circular stairwell I pace aimlessly around the banistered platform for a time. I look over the railing and see only cylindrical hollow space dropping down into eternal nothingness of dark, lower floors. I wonder what it's like at the bottom, looking up. I'm too tired to explore, so I go to Elder Miller.

Two Elders, more new blood in the office, stand up as I enter. Their expressions are shy and agreeable. Terribly tired.

"I'll stay for a while."

They nod thankfully and retreat. On the bottom bunk of a two-bedder, Miller, his back to me, breathes deeply, rhythmically, asleep. I sit down in a dusty old chair and stare at a cowlick on the back of his head. I'm still tired—wide awake: The twenty-two-month-tired is not a sleepy tired. Twenty-two months. I'm tired of me; the Lord is tired of me, too. Still haven't lost myself . . . still haven't found myself. I act like I have, though, and it makes time go faster. Nobody knows the difference but me and God. And a part of Elder Miller, maybe.

"You should leave!"

I look up, startled. I scarcely recognize the speaker. Miller's eyes are dark and recessive. How long since he's eaten? His smile is a bitter frown, more bitter than my own. He seethes self-hated.

"I'm Satan, Roberts."

"You're Miller."

"No!" He screams the word, and I squeeze lids against tearing eyes. "You're not safe around me, bud. You should leave. You should all leave."

"But I just got here," I lamely say.

Miller laughs hysterically. "I couldn't do it, man. Why didn't you tell me I couldn't do it?"

"I don't know."

"I'm not crazy. I'm not crazy. I'm evil. Oh Roberts, I love God. Why couldn't I do it right for God?"

"You did all right."

"I did my best. But I didn't do it the way you said to do it. My best wasn't all right. It was evil, like I'm evil."

"No!" I say. "You're not evil. You're Miller!" He starts to cry and rolls away from me, against the wall. I despise myself in the mirrored comparison of his dedication, in the hot beating of his committed heart. "You're Miller," I say again.

I WAKE up late in the night kneeling next to his bed, my chest and shoulders are slumped across the mattress beside him. A transient memory of prayer flickers and ebbs. I find the dusty chair, and force myself awake until daylight.

"WOULD he've done it?" I set the bottle of Dristan on my desk beside the ledger.

"Don't know," says Jorgensen. "Jensen practically had to beat him up to get the bottle away."

"He needs to go to the hospital."

"President says no. Too much bad publicity."

I pretend to see the wisdom in this. *Church News* reads: "Norwegian Elder Sacrifices Self with Dristan to Save Church Image." Obedience, I tell myself, so I say nothing.

"Do you remember Fru Johansen?" Jorgensen asks. An eternal investigator; one of Miller's investigators. I remember. "She's a nurse. Came to see him yesterday. She's moving in after work today."

"You're kidding?"

"Nope. Took her vacation time and everything."

"What does the Prez say?"

"Thank you!" He's desperate, Roberts. You should've heard the blessing he gave Miller."

I think about this for a minute. "I don't understand this happening to Miller." I wish for a moment to trade him places.

"The President says maybe it's a blessing in disguise. Fru Johansen, you know, maybe this is going to get her in the water."

"You don't think God would do that, do you?"

"Sure, why not? The President says so."

"Really, her vacation?" I ask, changing the subject. Jorgensen nods. "The Lord must love her a lot."

"ELDSTE Roberts?" Fru Johansen throws her arms around me.

"You look as lovely as always," I say to her.

"Your Norwegian is even better than the last time," she tells

me. "But your dialect is sounding Swedish."

I smile. "You're not the first to tell me." I look at her closely. She's aged slightly, even in three months. Too old to be my mother, but not old enough to be my grandmother.

"Why haven't you joined the Church yet?"

She's not offended; probably expected it. "Not enough kindness in your church. I don't feel Christ."

I nod my head, almost imperceptibly, and say nothing. She's speaking of the Church in Norway, and I have no defense.

"I'm glad you're here," I say, and kiss her on the cheek.

She kisses my cheek in return. "Miller needs me."

I PUSH the ledgers away and consider vomiting numbers. The office is empty; everyone is asleep but me and Fru Johansen. Reports are three months behind. I should work longer, but fourteen hours is all I'm good for on little sleep. I turn out the lights and wander upstairs to Miller's room.

"Roberts?" Fru Johansen's voice warms and melts the blackness.

"Is he asleep?"

"Yes. Slept most of the day."

"Is he still Satan?"

"Still Satan—bad Norwegian and all."

"Amazing how that works," I mumble.

"You all right? You drive yourself too hard."

"I'm fine."

"You lie, but you don't have to tell me."

"I'll sit with him for a while." It's very thick and dark again while she thinks about this.

"You come wake me in an hour. One hour; understand? You need sleep." She leaves.

I take my shoes off and sit back in the dusty chair. It's a good chair. I wonder what it feels like to be Miller. He's serving God. In that bed, in that hazy head, he's serving God. Still dedicated, still trying to please. Can't ever do enough. New job: he's the Exterminator, God's Exterminator, out to kill the only Devil left, the Devil in his head. I wonder who will exterminate whom.

The bed squeaks and I see Miller's outline against the window.

"Hi bud," I say.

He opens a drawer and fumbles around for a moment. Pulls clothes on—looks like sweats. Shoes come next, running shoes, I guess.

"Where you going?"

He walks past me, out of the room, and heads for the stairwell. I follow. He winds down the stairs and pushes out into the foyer. I stumble down the stairs after him in my slippery, stocking feet. At the bottom the front door stands wide. No Miller. Outside on the steps I look both ways. He's not so far ahead, but far enough if you're not a fast runner. I run crazily onto the frosty sidewalk and then into the cobblestone road. Miller is running next to the streetcar track, so I do too. I think he knows I'm behind, but he never looks back. He runs and I run harder. Ahead I see the light of an approaching streetcar. Miller jumps from outside the right track to the

middle of the two tracks, and keeps running at the floating headlight. I forget my feet and *run*—and pray the driver is paying attention. Like they usually aren't.

I catch up with Miller on a side-swipe. It's not that close, really. But close enough to make me wet my pants. We both crash and tumble over cobblestones until my shoulder blades hitch and catch on the the curb. He's on top of me. I can't breath, but he can.

"Let me kill the bastard!" he screams. His face is five inches from mine and his tears are raining on me.

"You just about killed this bastard," I groan back.

In the light of the street-lamp, I see the old Miller traipsing across wounded sensitivities. His eyes are soft and mild. "I wouldn't hurt you," he says. He pulls himself up and drags me to my feet. He walks back to the office ahead of me. Neither of us says anything.

I SIT on the edge of my bed and examine my bleeding feet. No pain until they thaw a little.

"Just think, if you wouldn't have been there . . ." Jorgensen shakes his head. "Those pants are ruined."

I nod my head and rub my feet.

"What makes you such a good missionary?" Jorgensen asks.

"What do you mean 'good?'"

"You work hard, you get along with companions, you even stay up all night with Miller so we can sleep."

I look up.

"You've baptized—that's better than most of us."

"I don't know," I say. "I don't think I'm very good."

I see surprise in Jorgensen's face. "No big head, either."

"No. I'm not good at the important things."

"What's more important than baptizing?"

He won't understand.

"Honesty," I say. "Doing things, and wanting to do them. You know, forgetting home and losing yourself in the work. Like Jesus said. Like Miller does."

"Miller?" More surprise.

"Yeah, Miller."

He doesn't understand and I'm not sure I do anymore, either.

"Do those little things really matter?" he asks. "Isn't it how hard you work that counts?"

"They matter to me," I say. "Probably matter to Miller too."

"YOU a member yet?" Miller asks Fru Johansen. I stand back by the bureau and watch.

"No," she answers quietly.

"I'm not a member, either," Miller says.

The skin around Fru Johansen's eyes jiggles. "Of course you're a member."

"No!" Miller is emphatic. "I'm not a member, I don't want to be a member. I'm not a good missionary, and I'm not a member."

"Why aren't you a good missionary?"

"Because I can't do the finances—because I don't even want to do the finances. And because I can't convert you."

"It's not your responsibility to convert me."

"That's why I'm not a member anymore."

"Why?"

"Because if it were true, you'd be a member."

Fru Johansen looks sideways at me; it is a compassionate glance. "It's true, Miller. The good stuff is true—the parts you've taught me. It's the other stuff inside you, this torment and punishment, that isn't true. I see too much of it here—nothing is good enough. Not even for the moment."

"No, nothing is good enough," Miller repeats.

"But why?"

"Because it's not the way it's supposed to be. It's not the way they said it would be. It's not even the kind of *hard* they said it would be. It's dark and angry and lonely. God doesn't want me. I'm not good enough in here, and here." Miller jabs at his head and heart.

"Who says you're not good enough?" I ask from behind.

Miller looks past Fru Johansen at me.

"Satan," he finally says. "He says I'm not good enough."

I RAISE my head from a stack of checks as Miller pads into my office. He's wearing huge, fluffy slippers; two giant plastic eyes bulge from each furry foot. His bathrobe hangs open, untied. He hasn't shaved for days.

"Do you think I'm Satan?" he asks.

"No," I say.

"Neither does Fru Johansen." He sits on the edge of my desk. "Do you think you're Satan?"

I don't answer for a moment. "Sometimes, maybe . . . in a way."

"Why?" he asks.

"I'm not pure. I'm unkind."

"No, you're very kind."

"You don't know me."

He shrugs like he doesn't believe me. "How are the finances?"

"Not so bad," I say. "You did better than you think."

"Fru Johansen says God appreciates the good things I do and probably never even thinks about the bad stuff . . . or the things I can't seem to beat, like the finances. What do you think?"

"I think she knows a lot. More than I know."

"She says I punish myself more than the Lord ever would."

"You do. I don't think you've made too many mistakes, though."

"She says the Lord could care less about mission finances. He probably thinks finances are messy and boring, like I do."

"They are messy and boring."

Miller takes my pen and scribbles absently on an old check.

"Roberts, do you think I have to be just the way they say I have to be to be a good missionary? I mean, I'm not happy and I'm not enjoying my mission. Does God think I'm a bad missionary?"

"It's hard to know what God thinks. The scriptures and all, you know. I don't know."

"You don't think so, then?"

"I don't know."

"I don't know either—I'll think about it and tell you later."

Elder Miller slides off the desk and thumps toward the door.

"Maybe we don't know what's good and what's bad anymore," Miller says, stopping. "Do you like my slippers?"

"Love 'em."

Miller disappears.

"**H**OW can you spend so much time with Miller?" Jorgensen stands in front of the sink holding a frothy toothbrush. I urinate in a toilet on the other side of the room.

"It's not so hard."

"He makes me feel funny. I can't relate—all that Satan talk."

"I relate, I guess." I flush the toilet and sit down on the radiator. "He's all right."

"Mmm," Jorgensen says, and spits. "I've been thinking about what you said the other night."

"About?"

"About forgetting home and getting lost in the work."

I look at myself in the mirror across the room.

"I think I'm there," he says. "I feel good about it. I wish my mission would never end. I'll bet if you really thought about it, you'd feel the same, too."

I shrug my shoulders.

"Maybe you ought to pray about it. Do you pray about it?"

"Sometimes," I say.

"Oh. Well, maybe there's something else you're not doing. Maybe you need to work on faith or something."

"Maybe," I say.

"I'll bet that's Miller's problem, too."

"Hard to say."

"I'll pray for you," Jorgensen offers, and walks out of the room.

"**Y**OU feel it too?" Miller asks. The shoulders of his

polyester suit shimmer in the early morning light.

"I feel it."

He looks out the window toward the fjord.

"That's why you're not afraid, like the others."

"I'm afraid, just not like the others."

"I'm really not Satan, you know."

"I know." I go to the window. It is getting lighter. The boats move away from dock.

"What are you going to do?" he asks.

"I'll hang on in my own way, like you. It's almost over."

"I'm not hanging on. I'm going home."

"I know. You're still hanging on, though."

"I don't want to just hang on."

"Maybe you're doing more than just hanging on. You're going home. That's doing something."

Miller presses his nose against the window and blows fog.

"The President thinks I'm making a mistake."

"What do you think?"

"I'm right. It makes God happy—he told me. I prayed about it." He turns and leans against the windowsill. "Why are you staying?"

"I want to." The sun is coming up behind us, I see it on the sails. "I'm not done yet; I can't leave until I know as much as you do."

"Oh, you know a hundred times as much as I do."


"No." I shake my head. "I don't know anything."

"You know God's not what we thought he was."

"I guess I do know that." I shake my head, smiling, and wipe away the mist. "I can't believe I actually want to stay."

Miller watches me. He's thinking about going home, facing his family. I see it in the window's reflection.

"What do you think God's like?" I ask.

"Like Fru Johansen," he says. "And like you." 

CONVERSATION WITH A CANCER

"Why don't you ever tell me you love me?"

"Don't actions speak louder than words?"

"A woman likes to hear it sometimes."

"It would be easy to say if I didn't mean it."

"Why should it be so hard if you do?"

"It's only hard because it should be obvious."

"Well, if you love me all that much, why do I always feel like you don't?"

I'll bet you only love me because I love you.

Maybe you can't love me unless I love you first.

You probably don't even know you don't love me!"

"Whatever you say." "No wonder I'm going crazy!"

And the world goes 'round, and night after night, the moon shines by reflected light.

—R.A. CHRISTMAS

BETHANY

No flesh could last in the early heat
That fired the sky to a thin and brittle blue.
The road strapped the hills to Palestine
And tethered Bethany upon the slope.
The women carried sorrow on the face
As on a plate. They walked the village streets
Thickly forested with stucco moons.
The dust dissolved their feet like leprosy.

In none of this was Christ the Lord surprised.
And yet, as earlier he'd joined the dust
To yield unstopping of the quiet eyes,
So now his lungs, his pores inhaled the dust
To break his blood upon the necessary grief,
To voice the call, "Lazarus, come forth."

—KATHRYN R. ASHWORTH

FROM THE CAMPUS

LETTER FROM BYU



By B. J. Fogg

THE FRESHMEN WHO entered BYU last fall probably couldn't decipher this year's changes here, but many veteran students could. Whether the differences stemmed from Rex Lee's settling into his second year at BYU's helm or from better-prepared students entering school is difficult to say. In any case, some aspects of BYU seemed as new to graduating seniors as to first-year students.

Of course, we older BYU students still remember the Holland legacy. We haven't forgotten the warmth and intimacy Jeff and Pat Holland projected to 26,000 listeners at the special devotional assemblies (what we affectionately called the "Pat and Jeff Show"). Also, Jeff Holland's ability to remember names and minute facts about the people he passed each day on the sidewalk was equally amazing. In fulfilling the role of BYU's president—a figurehead and a fund raiser—more than one student leader has called Holland "genius." A hard act to follow.

Now, two years later, it's clear that Rex (what most students call him) won't try to match the Holland legacy head on. Campus opinion says he's doing an equally effective job of winning student confidence by performing in a different arena: public question and answer sessions. A refreshing change for BYU. Holland would never touch this kind of open forum, one university official told me, because he needed everything planned out; he squirmed just thinking about the uncertainties a Q&A would present.

Yet this is Rex's genius. And he's put his quick-thinking mind on display four times in two years, responding to students' questions and gripes publicly, cleverly glossing over sticky issues with humor, and in the end endearing himself to most students. Of course, he also invites the press. (This show is a P.R. move, after all.) Being a Supreme Court lawyer, Rex undoubtedly knew his Q&A per-

formances for BYU students would win their admiration. However, Rex doesn't arrive as unprepared as he'd like to appear. He is briefed on almost every conceivable topic that students might ask about.

Unlike what seemed a closed-door Holland administration, Lee at least gives the impression that he's willing to discuss campus issues without a safety net. His verbal acrobatics have won him P.R. points, despite the fact that he doesn't always give answers the students want or expect. On at least two occasions Rex's spontaneity has gotten him into hot water. The most serious wasn't at a Q&A but at a pep rally for Ty Detmer, where the campus paper, the *Daily Universe*, quoted Rex as saying that Ty had done more for the Mormon cause than all the missionaries out there. This upset students, many who are returned missionaries or are waiting for one. Rex clarified his remark a few days later, saying he was, of course, exaggerating.

In his second year, Rex seems to have changed his views about BYUSA, the student service association that replaced ASBYU, the "student government" (really a student *activities* department). Because Rex was student-body president while a BYU student, he was initially suspicious of a service organization's role, one BYUSA leader told me. Rex didn't seem to fully understand both the service and advisory aspects of BYUSA until this year. Apparently, he's now ready to consult its leaders when making policy changes that affect students. While past BYUSA presidents have had difficulty getting an appointment with university presidents, the new BYUSA President, Amy Baird, reports a change: "The administration came and asked me how often I'd like to meet with them."

Baird says she plans to make good use of this advantage. The other advantage, one she won't publicly acknowledge, is her influence as the first woman elected president in BYU history. (In the past four years of BYUSA [s]elections, sixty people have applied to run, unfortunately, only two of them women; Baird was the second one.) Two previous student-body presidents tell me that Baird is

immensely qualified, knows how the system runs, and won on her own merits. Others acknowledge Baird's experience but also point out that this year the campus ambiance was right to have a woman win, while just ten years ago BYU students might have voted against a woman presidential candidate. Though the majority of students quite frankly don't care much about BYUSA, nearly 20 percent voted, giving Baird the largest landslide in recent memory. Throughout the campaign Baird repeatedly refused to discuss her gender as an issue, but her victory made all the local media and even *USA Today*. Baird also was given access to Ronald Reagan when he spoke.

Yes, this was also the year Reagan visited BYU. Only a minority of students attended because—the official story goes—a Sesame Street show was set up to perform in the Marriott Center that night, closing off half the arena. Those who did attend didn't seem to mind Reagan's unlikely story about reporting BYU sports scores when he was a radio broadcaster in the 1930s. On the contrary, my friends said that Reagan captured the BYU audience like no one ever has—not even Holland—and that the brief protests from the upper concourse failed to dampen the laughter and overwhelming ovations. ("Mr. Reagan, why did you arm Iraq?" two men shouted while holding a banner. Security guards entered. Protestors exited. "Not BYU students," the school quickly announced.) Some of the more thoughtful students wondered which Marriott Center audience had been more gullible that day: Reagan's or Sesame Street's.

The protest at the Reagan speech came as no surprise to many. In the last few years, activism at BYU has gradually increased, with the Gulf War providing ample opportunity for students ready to exercise their rights. Transferring their energies from BYU's ever-more-popular environmental movement, a small but determined group orchestrated what *The Militant* claims was the largest anti-war movement on any campus, ironic considering that the Vietnam era reportedly passed by BYU without public protests. One "teach-in" on the Gulf War reached an estimated 1,000 students, a group attracted largely by keynote speaker Hugh Nibley. Wearing just one suspender, Nibley denounced war to the standing-room-only crowd, many of them conservative Nibley-philes, hawkish by tradition, and suddenly confused.

For the duration of the war, organizers of BYU's peace movement were quick to stake out a table in the Wilkinson Center stepdown lounge, a major campus crossroads, where they distributed literature and represented the

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minority opinion. Supporters told me they were skipping classes to maintain a presence there throughout each day of the war; one even dropped out of school. Eventually another group set up a "support the troops" booth across the lounge. Throughout the conflict students sat mesmerized between these two booths while watching CNN, which was continually broadcast onto the lounge's big screen. A free-speech euphoria filled the lounge and spilled over to the rest of campus when students realized that BYU had never seen such intense political involvement before; it was a just-watch-us-make-history feeling. And they did. Clashes in the stepdown lounge were frequent and usually unproductive, one peace activist told me; the discussions often degenerated into name-calling and "stupid arguments."

The peace movement also dovetailed off the rise of political correctness. Though most students here still can't define "politically correct," P.C. issues surfaced as much at BYU as on most other campuses. For example, what was once viewed as a harmless scavenger hunt for women, a traditional activity for the ASA Sportsmen club, quickly turned into a major discussion on the exploitation of women, as shown by letters in the *Universe*. P.C. also entered the classroom. While one academic department attempted to immerse students in the Western classical tradition, another department deconstructed Plato and Aristotle. P.C. also entered the religious realm when a student offering the April commencement prayer began: "Our dear Father and Mother in Heaven . . ."

The off-campus paper, the *Student Review*, added more controversial issues to the discussion this year. Dealing with rape, AIDS, sexism, racism, homosexuality, and P.C. itself, the *Review* raised students' awareness, as well as offending some readers. (Also involving themselves in the congressional political scene last fall, students on the *Review* staff feel they had a significant hand in helping Karl Snow lose the "most Republican district" in the United States to Democrat Bill Orton. The *Review* was the first to print allegations against Snow, which other papers picked up on. When Snow saw he was losing ground, his campaign workers ran an ad that smacked of homophobia; it backfired.)

BESIDES Ty Detmer's Heismann Trophy and unannounced baptism, perhaps the most memorable event for students will be the long-awaited change in the dress and grooming standards. Before this year, shorts were forbidden, and males were required to wear socks (a perennial controversy since the

Preppy Handbook advocated the sockless look in the early 1980s). After a few months—some claim years—of committee meetings, the Board of Trustees finally approved a new standard.

The first proposed revision of dress standards went through BYUSA channels last fall, where it passed with no mention of beards, earrings, or long hair, implying that those decisions should be left up to each student. When the local press heard that the BYUSA group had passed a new dress and grooming proposal, it mistakenly announced that the official BYU policy had changed, which caused confusion on and off campus. It took a few weeks and several articles in the *Universe* to straighten things out, but by that time it seemed both students and faculty had started viewing the dress and grooming policy with more leniency. For example, as tension mounted in the Gulf and student activism increased, beards sprouted all over campus. And not just on students. One department chair confided that he was thinking about getting one of those much-talked-about medical waivers to grow a beard, while another faculty member went ahead and did just that.

When the Board of Trustees finally did pass the new standards a few months later, the announcement was an anti-climax. The new standards stressed principles over rules but beards and earrings on males are still specifically forbidden; shorts are acceptable as long as they reach the knee. No mention of socks. Now the hyper-orthodox students write letters to the editor, not about wicked students who wear shorts, but about where the knee cap is anatomically situated.

While the dress and grooming changes got the most airtime this year, the biggest institutional issue has been—and will continue to be—the BYU enrollment ceiling. The university turns away more and more students each year, qualified applicants who at one time might have received scholarships. It seems everyone on campus knows someone back home who had planned on coming to BYU since Primary days and then received a thin rejection letter in the mail: no room. Certain Board of Trustees members have defined BYU as a undergraduate university to educate the Saints, as many as qualify religiously, but forces within the university keep pushing for academic promise more than religiosity. One person who has just been through a week of meetings about the enrollment ceiling says the problem is that BYU has no objective way to measure faithfulness, no SAT for spirituality or GPA for devotion. She reports that for now the admission procedure will probably

be based on a minimal level of religious commitment and then more dramatically on academic achievement. Yet the critical problem for general authorities and Board members remains: appeasing faithful, tithing-paying Church members whose children are denied admission to BYU.

The three-year-old "ecclesiastical endorsement" program, a yearly worthiness interview required of students with their BYU bishop before they can register for the fall semester, seems to have done little to reduce the student population, although it is an attempt to marry faithfulness with academics.

Nevertheless, BYU has started to welcome—or at least tolerate—diversity; there is one notable exception: illicit sex. Rumors sometimes circulate of people sleeping and living together, even homosexual couples, but virtually all students here frown on such things. Even with the opening of an instant-marriage chapel in Salt Lake City, the incidence of quickie marriages and annulments (a "chastity loophole" formerly exploited in Las Vegas) probably won't increase, in spite of student folklore. Too many stories also circulate about campus bishops—even the lenient ones—who've thrown the book at the " 'til Monday do we part" honeymooners.

A recent informal survey by the *Student Review* of students exiting the Lee Library shows some interesting stats on both religious commitment and sex: 91 percent of students study the scriptures at least once a week and a full third study more than five times each week, yet 24 percent have "broken the code governing physical intimacy" since coming to BYU (of course, to BYU students "breaking the code" might mean anything from French kissing to adultery). Frankly, students here are fallible yet faithful. And from what I've heard, most campus bishops do an admirable job of making the required "ecclesiastical endorsement interview" worthwhile, and students simply accept the yearly check-up as part of staying in school. Of course, there are exceptions: bishops who have ecclesiastical endorsement signing parties and students who wish they could pay the higher non-member tuition and avoid such requirements. Maybe this will be a question at Rex's next Q&A session.

In retrospect, the 1990-91 school year appears to have been one of increased dialogue and pluralism. Let's hope so. In any event, some things at BYU never do change: freshmen still get lost in September, the Palace still fills up on Ladies' Night, and, darn it, the Cougarreat is still the closest thing we have to a kick-back, college town coffee shop. ☐

A NON-MORMON IN ZION: A STRANGER IN PARADISE

By Elise Lazar



There are problems and some very serious issues that need to be addressed. However, living among Mormons does not fit the extreme negative image. In fact, I very much like it here.

MY OBSESSION WITH JOTTING notes began over four years ago when I moved to Utah. With no preconceived notion to do so, and for reasons unbeknownst to me, I found myself seized by the impulse to document new, or what I called “unique to Utah,” experiences. With the fresh eyes of a newcomer, I hoarded and recorded hundreds of observations. Sometimes my search

for pen and paper would be triggered by a full-blown experience, sometimes by merely a word; for example, “they use the word ‘tending’ down here instead of ‘babysitting,’ very biblical.”

For years I accumulated these notes, with regular transfers from purse to desk, eventually acknowledging that somehow they were serving a role toward my adjustment. The challenge now is in trying to organize these little pieces of paper—disjointed thoughts—into something which is coherent. I also realize that I don’t know whether these observations are on Mormon culture or just reflect the experience of living in Utah—the

two seem to be inextricably interwoven.

My husband, our three children, and I came here by choice. We moved to Salt Lake from Baltimore where we had lived for twenty years, driven out by a crime rate which did not allow us to feel comfortable allowing our children to play in our own backyard, where walks, even during the day, were a risk, by a public school system which had removed school psychologists and replaced them with security guards, and by the staggering tuition of the alternative education of private schools.

We were drawn to Utah by the comparative safety of the city and relative quality of public schools, the skiing, the beauty of the state, and by what seemed to be a very healthy environment in which to raise children.

I also came with some misgivings. In fact, I am astonished by the prejudices and misperceptions I brought. They’re worth mentioning because they’re not unique to me. Responses to the announcement of our moving included, “Utah, where’s that?!” or “Why would you want to live among Mormons?” Even some of the people I met who had lived in Salt Lake City had negative impressions (although, interestingly, they always mentioned how clean the city was).

They spoke of proselytizing, which was, more or less, synonymous with Mormons. They said that Mormons made good neighbors, but they’d never be friends. But what also emerged from conversations was the fact that either you were dropped as a potential friend if you weren’t perceived as a likely candidate for conversion, or you experienced what I call “passive ostracism,” where you were dismissed simply because LDS members, who have much of their time dictated by the structure of the Church and by “callings,” have little time for you.

I also came with the perceptions, again gleaned from people who had lived here as well as from the media, that Utah was conservative, backward, and controlled—a backdrop made all the more sensational by the national coverage Utah receives about such persons as Gary Gilmore, Ted Bundy, and Vickie Singer/Addam Swapp. This, so far, is not news to anyone. But, yes, there are problems and some very serious issues that need to be addressed. However, living among Mormons and living in Utah does not fit the extreme negative image. It’s not as bad as it’s cracked up to be. In fact, I very much like it here.

Given the perceptions I came with, that is, conservative, backward, and controlled, I’ve had many pleasant surprises. The first happened when we drove into the state and traveled through Park City before reaching our

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new home. Coincidentally, the Arts Festival was in progress, complete with the Saliva Sisters—hardly controlled. I watched television that evening and caught “Civic Dialogue” on KUED which was the first Utah program I saw. It was lively and controversial.

The next day, after moving vans had departed, there was a knock on the door. My husband and I looked at each other—here it is—and opened the door on two smiling faces; one was the bishop. His opening comment was, “I am here to welcome you, not to convert you.” Unexpected and unusual, maybe, but to my way of thinking this bishop should serve as a role model because with that statement, I relaxed. I have since been invited and felt comfortable attending ward functions, including a lip-sync tribute to mothers for Mother’s Day and, our offering, a Hanukkah service.

In this conservative state, I have found Yoga teachers, nude models in my drawing class (I was told it wouldn’t happen), and a counterculture that is alive, well, and thriving and actually very intense—perhaps as a response to conservatism. I walk during the day, at night even, without a fear reflex when shrubs move. Cars actually stop when I cross the street; I’m no longer a moving target when I step off a curb. The schools, while uninspiring, are adequate in my area. In addition, and this is no small thing, there is a high courtesy quotient: a sweater lent by a stranger when I was cold, a tennis racket lent to me by someone I had never seen before—“Just bring it up to the house when you’re finished. Here’s my address.” There is a trust and innocence reminiscent of the 1950s, a confirmation of the accusation made by a Los Angeles reporter that we’re behind times. Maybe, but it sure feels good to me.

BUT there is a trade-off. Shortly after I moved here, I met two neighbors, Mormon women, who invited me to join them in their daily routine of walking. I accepted, and for a year we walked two or three times a week. I saw it first as an opportunity for friendship. Gradually, I became a social scientist merely studying their culture, and then, finally, I stopped walking with them altogether. One of the warnings had begun to prove itself accurate. As we walked and talked the conversation always seemed to turn to Church matters, not just activities but interpretations of events. For example, if a child had misbehaved, it was the devil. Now, as a social scientist, I could deal with this and for the rest of the year I learned a lot about the Mormon religion. I was curious and interested. But topics outside the Church or fam-

ily, anything national or international, could not be discussed. They would listen politely but the conversation would go flat. I remember distinctly the day I decided to stop walking. I had mentioned how delighted I was that Robert Bork had not been confirmed to the Supreme Court. They had never heard of him. These were bright women, but women whose world was not stretched beyond the Church.

On other occasions, I sat next to a young man on a plane, a freshly scrubbed missionary off to the big adventure of Pittsburgh (he’d never left Utah before), who thought that Margaret Thatcher was the U.S. ambassador to England. A junior at BYU came to interview me about my Utah/Soviet Awareness Program. He had never heard of the words *glasnost* or *perestroika*, and when told that as a part of the program we had an actress portraying Catherine the Great, he asked whether we also had an actor portraying Alexander the Great. And so on. Now certainly there are well informed LDS members, but my experience has been that there is an undeniable parochial, insular orientation here. And although I do have some Mormon female friends whom I enjoy very much, I have found that my interests and need for debate have, just by natural selection, led me toward more non-Mormons.

There is also another barrier toward friendship here: the emotional orientation of Mormons to “put on a happy face.” I’ve heard it in lessons in Relief Society and I’ve seen it in action. Emotional testimonials are sanctioned, but there is a denial of real feelings to the outside world.

I’ll relate one of several examples. I was instrumental in placing a foreign student in the home of a Mormon neighbor. After a month, I knew it was not working from horrendous stories I had heard from this neighbor’s young daughter. But when I called, suggesting that perhaps a different placement could be found, she refused and completely denied that anything was wrong. In fact, she enthusiastically stated that “it was a tremendous growing experience.” During the rest of the year I heard terrible stories, but never from her. When I spoke with her everything was always wonderful. I’ve seen it, of course, in men, too. This is an attitude that leads some Mormons to a strong avoidance of confrontation, of passive-aggressive behavior, of strong depression, particularly in women, and for me (a direct person) to sometimes question the sincerity of some people and to have the disquieting feeling of not knowing where a person is really coming from.

The whole issue of religion is one which,

until moving here, was pretty irrelevant to me. I am Jewish and practice my faith, but religion was never a factor that pertained in any way to work, politics, or the social fiber of my life. Now, living in Utah, there’s a self-consciousness that my family and I have never known before. It’s disconcerting. The religious issue is a hindrance in ways that I’m probably not even aware of, and is, at the very least, a nuisance: implications in offering and/or accepting coffee; discomfort in using our favorite expression, “Oh my God!” (I refuse to accept that this shows disrespect and that “Oh my Gall” is an acceptable substitute.)

My children, ages 15, 14, and 11, thus far have been affected only in minor ways. They have friends who are both Mormon and non-Mormon. But I understand that will change gradually as dating begins, and will be most difficult in upper grades when there’s a clearly defined schism. However, as long as we are in an area where the school is mixed, and we are, then I think we’ll be okay. I have known other families who have been unaware of the pervasiveness of this social division and have had teenagers who had some very damaging experiences.

So far, the effects for my children of living in a predominantly Mormon culture have been more subtle. I think it’s interesting how they started to question people about their religion. That’s new. And how, when we traveled outside of Utah, they were delighted that they were surrounded by all those Jewish relatives—not delighted by the relatives, mind you, but by the fact that there were so many Jewish people. For them, just as for me, religion has become a focus. It is an adjustment, particularly since I have always felt religion is a personal, private matter. I resent being asked, or sometimes ascertained through disguised means, to what religion I belong.

And yet, even with these nuisances and hindrances, adjustments, compromises, issues, and problems, the balance of the scale of pluses and minuses still leans to the positive. And, just as important to know, is that the reality of living here is vastly better than the prejudice from the outside would lead one to believe.

A few years ago members of the Newcomers Club met on several occasions with LDS church officials to voice their grievances. I was fortunate enough to be at two of those meetings. Richard Lindsay said, “We are not thin-skinned; we want to hear all.” The “do Mormons make good neighbors” issue was addressed at a general conference as well as in a cover story in *This People* magazine. This dialogue must continue. Some of the people

THE GATHERING OF THE FAITHFUL

By Ellen Fagg

who are leaving this state with bad feelings are confirming, in exponentially increasing numbers, the worst of Utah.

We've got to continue openly discussing these issues, but in a receptive, safe atmosphere. Some time ago KUED had a television program on the reasons for out-migration from Utah. I was on that program but only after three other women withdrew their commitment to appear: all three were afraid of adverse ramifications.

Somehow, we've got to get past that fear and feel free to have constructive, creative interchange. To have dialogue, for example, at the ward, inviting non-Mormons within each community for frank but friendly discussion to foster respect for differences, to broaden the perspective both of non-Mormons and Mormons to ease the tensions both real and imagined between neighbors. I, for one, appreciate being a part of this important process.



During two usually blustery weekends in April and October, Utah's capitol city becomes Mormon Central.

HE APPEARED TO be in a hurry, that man scurrying along the sidewalk in downtown Salt Lake City. He wore earphones plugged to a Walkman. And as he walked, listening to a general conference session, he raised his right arm to sustain leaders of the LDS church. He didn't miss a step. Just raised his arm to the square in support of his prophet. Curiously, no one gawked. No one stared. But then, this is the place. And this is the time. Welcome to general conference in Salt Lake City.

New Orleans transforms itself for Mardi Gras; New York, during Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade; and during two usually blustery weekends in April and October, Utah's capitol city becomes Mormon Central.

Salt Lake City acts pretty cosmopolitan most of the year. Recent articles in the *New York Times* and *U.S. News and World Report* said so. We've got ballet and opera playing

next door to tractor-pulls and demolition derbies. There's a brew pub downtown, and just this year you can now buy a Polish sausage from a street vendor. Despite the state's bumper crop of Republicans, Democrats claim a slight edge in city voting districts, keeping environmentalist Wayne Owens in Congress, so far. Hell, we've even got ourselves a Catholic mayor.

But twice a year, the city spit-shines its streets to prepare for an army of the faithful who return to the hometown of the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. Both local newspapers splash full-color, talking-heads-from-the-pulpit on their front pages. Tradition is tradition, after all. And, anyway, there are some weekends when newsstand sales override the international news.

Evening newscasts are filled with scenes of wooden pews and lines of Saints serpentine across Temple Square. Then there's the cut to a golden statue, glittering against multiple views of the everlasting hills. And Bill Alder, local media guru at the National Weather

IF EARTH WERE A WOMAN

she would breathe cycles
and season, days and years
in ebbs and in flows
knowing both sides
her lightness and
darkness, her days
nights through cold
and warmth.

If Earth had a gender
and it were female
she would moan with us
over greed, over war
She would carry, let go of
her gifts for the good
of her whole humankind.

If Earth were a mother
she would have valleys
and hills of fullness.
She'd want children
to respect her troves,
the substance beneath her
to nurture her living
and replenish all who live on
our Mother Earth.

—MARGARET RECHIF

ELLEN FAGG *doesn't wear gingham, anymore.*

Service, eagerly tallies the historical percentage of rain- or snow-covered conferences; after all, as Latter-day Saints curiously boast, when the Mormons meet, the heavens weep.

At conference time, LDS headquarters' gardens appear to naturally blossom, regardless whether all other flowers have died from an early autumn frost or an unusual wintery spring. And just as traditionally, the season brings the Lawn People, folks who think that watching sessions on television pales in comparison to being there, even without a seat. Then there are reunions. Returned missionaries get together with former companions to show off a fiancée or a new baby in cultural halls across the city. In addition to all the meeting-and-greeting, conference doubles as a cheap date for BYU students.

Church spokesman Joseph Walker says some 35,000 visitors pass through the gates of Temple Square on conference Sunday. Conference is such an important event that Zions Security Corp. planned a major building project around it. The Church-owned development company wouldn't tear up State Street to build an underground walkway until after April conference visitors left. And the project must be completed by October.

CONFERENCE spills over the Temple Square walls into downtown commerce. It's a time when the most popular color is white-shirt-white. "On Super Bowl weekends in most cities the bars are packed," says Mary Dickson, director of advertising and public relations for KUED-TV. "On conference weekends in Salt Lake, it's the ice cream parlors. You can't get into an ice cream parlor from here to Monticello."

Cars boasting out-of-state license plates flood city parking lots. The church atmosphere crowning downtown is enough to make locals seek shelter in the south. One Salt Laker, complaining about missionary sidewalks, vows never to get a haircut during April or October. "One of the best times to go mall-ing is during conference weekend because it looks like a different city," Dickson says. "They're all in their dark suits, carrying their three-in-ones, and they're everywhere." She vividly remembers "the parade of dark-suited men" on the South Temple crosswalk a few years ago. "It was like watching a Fellini movie. They all looked just alike and there weren't any women."

As regularly as general authorities pass out pulpit edicts to be clean, play fair, and convert thy neighbor, local clothiers advertise two-pant-suit sales. And although the conference sales aren't as splashy as they used to be in the pre-satellite days when the faithful really

gathered to Utah, still, the line between profits and prophets blurs. "Anything with a temple on it sells right now," says Bruce Hamilton, assistant superintendent at Pioneer Trail State Park.

April and October brings the battle of the malls, a contest between Crossroads, the gentile center (open on Sunday) with the better location, and ZCMI Center, the Mormon complex with the one-and-only-true bookstore: Deseret Book. This year, one book propped up in the store's windows was *What I Wish I'd Known Sooner: Personal Discoveries of a Mother of 12*.

The Church-owned Deseret Book hosts a special Saturday evening sale for general priesthood session widows. Pat Bagley, *Salt Lake Tribune* and Mormon cartoonist, saw lots of ruffles and lace when he played author-in-residence at the Ladies' Night Sale. "They would say things like 'I'm just up here for conference.' It was like their annual pilgrimage to Mecca. It kind of makes you wonder if Mecca has a bookstore."

For those who make the pilgrimage, a sideline to all the religion is the shopping and the eating. Conference is a time to stock up on Church-related paraphernalia, from scripture guides to gold Primary CTR rings for adults which retail from \$57.95 to \$165.95. Children, of course, *earn* the inexpensive versions

of the ring (the "Choose the Right" adage is part of the baptism training course), but it's become trendy for teens and adults to wear grown-up versions.

At the ZCMI Center, Doug Mendenhall sells animated Living Scripture videos, kind of Walt Disney does religion. Mendenhall used to peddle behind a massive, simulated stone display, but other retailers at the mall complained. Indeed, Utah Holiday labeled the styrofoam structure the "ugliest monstrosity in Utah." But, ugly or not, the attention-grabbing display sold a lot of cassettes, and Mendenhall misses the sales it generated.

"At the first of the week, they [visitors] start coming from Australia and Japan," says Lanel Peck, owner of the Missionary Emporium. "We try to be well stocked with the hot stuff, the churchy stuff." Peck says many of her customers are semi-annual visitors. They're not interested in Utah souvenirs, but eagerly snatch up church knickknacks they can't buy in their hometowns.

Conference weekends are gravy time—make that chocolate sundae sauce time—for Mendenhall and other merchants. "Those weekends are two of the best of the year, right up there with Christmas," says Richard Snelgrove, of the Snelgrove's ice cream family. ☞

OCTOBER SHOOT

we stopped north of the reservation
to tape a roadside inferno, not ours.
afterward, breakdowns pursued the van—
a pack of rattle-mouth skinwalkers.

running hard and late all day, we walked
one night awake with stars flashing
crystal and garnet, a rainbow round the moon
above stone sentries, breathing dark.

outside a female hogan—a navel in field
and sky—as foreigners we waited passage.
inside its weave, the medicine man talked us
from our world into his and staked us there

withholding unearned vision, saying come back.
oh, we left tracks everywhere, like leaf and lizard
on sandstone, our every wish indelible and known,
our cameras full, our plans and maps windlost.

—LINDA SILLITOE

REVIEWS

THE NEW MORMON ANTI-INTELLECTUALISM

“TO BE LEARNED IS GOOD IF . . .”: A RESPONSE BY MORMON
EDUCATORS TO CONTROVERSIAL RELIGIOUS QUESTIONS

edited by Robert L. Millet
Bookcraft, 1987, 232 pages, \$11.95



Reviewed by Gary James Bergera

“*TO BE LEARNED Is Good If . . .*”: A Response by Mormon Educators to Controversial Religious Questions is one of the more chilling exposés of anti-intellectual paranoia to have appeared in recent years. According to its contributors, groups of “savants” (225) and “Cultural Mormons” (226) at work in the LDS church today

feel some sense of mission to steady the ark; a compulsion to bring the Church up to date; a desire to supersede traditional values, to liberate the “naive” believer; and an inordinate zeal to revise the message of the Restoration in a manner that would be more palatable and acceptable to a cynical secular world (ix).

“Grievous wolves,” these misled men and women “preach from forums of dissent” (x), mingling “the philosophies of men with the revealed word” (ix). They “have their own voices, outlets, and sounding boards” and are “often the center of controversy” (205), pointing out “what they consider to be flaws in the doctrines, history, or practices of the Church” (205). Attracted by “fashionable new explanations,” they have been “busy

reinterpreting the generative texts and founding events of the Mormon past in secular or naturalistic terms” (219). However “eloquent, scholarly, and diligent in the pursuit of learning,” “these skeptics” in many ways are “further away from true intelligence than the vast majority of ordinary, faithful members of the kingdom” (206).

Facing such developments, each of the twelve contributors to *To Be Learned Is Good If . . .* feels the time has come to begin addressing some of the “controversial religious questions” these so-called “Mormon intellectuals” (205) have been publicly raising in order to defend the LDS church and its members from what they see as attacks from within the Church’s own ranks. Editor Robert L. Millet sets the tone and theme in his introductory call-to-arms, “How Should Our Story Be Told?”

Millet, a professor in Religious Education at Brigham Young University (as are six other contributors—in fact, all twelve are employees of the LDS educational system), explains that Mormon history “must be told in the Lord’s own way” (2)—that is, “written and understood properly by the spirit of prophecy and revelation” (3). Millet, who was recently appointed dean of Religious Education, bemoans current Mormon historians, in particular, who, he feels, have become “en-

amored with the use of academic jargon or theoretical models from other disciplines to interpret that which is only to be fully understood with an eye of faith” and who “rush about, putting out historical ‘fires’” and suggesting “naturalistic explanations” (3). Millet longs for the day when “academically competent Latter-day Saint thinkers [will] make judgments by the proper standards—the Lord’s standards” (4).

For example, Millet continues, “It has become somewhat fashionable . . . to stress the humanity and weaknesses of those called to lead the Church; to cast aspersions on their motives or character; and to reveal personal and intricate historical details, the context and true meanings of which are often lacking” (5). Since “prophets are called and approved of God,” Millet wonders, “what further and greater recommendation do we need?” (6). Thus “those who attempt to mar the name or works of the Lord’s anointed are covenant-breakers and will eventually answer to God himself for their actions” (6). Instead, “we must do all that we can in the present to reconstruct the past, to write the story of the Latter-day Saints and prepare that sacred history, that saga of a message, which will yet touch the hearts and build the faith of many. But we must be patient in writing it, avoiding the temptation to attribute improper motivation or to jump prematurely to confusions, and seeking earnestly to give the leaders of the Church the benefit of the doubt” (7).

FROM this point on, each succeeding essay builds on the foundation Millet erects. Colleague LaMar E. Garrard notes that Joseph Smith’s grandfather and father were reported to be men of honesty and integrity, suggesting that these same traits—either genetically or environmentally—would have also been present in the prophet Joseph despite the claims of his detractors (9-19). Milton V. Backman, Jr., follows with a twenty-one-page discussion of Joseph’s First Vision, addressing some of the published objections that have been raised against it since the mid-1960s. Drawing upon his own previously published responses, Backman insists that such a vision actually occurred, as Joseph and later LDS prophets have testified, that it took place in 1820, that Joseph’s description of associated religious revivals is accurate, and that as a direct result Joseph learned that the Father and the Son are separate, perhaps even corporeal, beings.

Next, Bruce Van Orden offers numerous examples of Joseph’s compassion, while Mil-

GARY JAMES BERGERA is co-author of Brigham Young University: A House of Faith.

let, in his second essay, emphasizes that since the Book of Mormon is ancient history, it can be used to interpret ancient Near Eastern history; that its description of God is not nineteenth-century "trinitarian," or "Calvinistic," but genuinely ancient; and that its theology in no way reflects Joseph Smith's own developing understanding of God. Although Millet admits that "what the Prophet understood as he left the Sacred Grove was no doubt a small amount compared with what he had come to know by the time of his death in 1844" (63-64), he insists that "to place the Book of Mormon within the developmental process is to accentuate the man (Joseph Smith) at the expense of the record (the Book of Mormon)" (66). For "to ascribe to Joseph Smith the theology of the Book of Mormon," Millet feels, "is to give him more credit than is due, and likewise to call into question the historicity of the record and its ancient contents" (66-67). "My position," Millet stresses, "is that . . . the Book of Mormon theology was not a part of a line-upon-line unfolding of doctrine in this dispensation" but "rather the understanding had by the ancients" (67). Millet concludes his essay with his reasons for believing that the Book of Mormon teaches that the Father and the Son are separate beings, Book of Mormon statements that "the Father and the Son are one" notwithstanding.

The sixth contribution, by Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., suggests that since the three Mormon standard works—the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price—all testify of the Bible, they are as true as the Bible and can clarify obscure biblical passages. Joseph Fielding McConkie continues in this vein in his "Modern Revelation: A Window to the Past," claiming that "to fail to use the Book of Mormon prophets to understand the teachings of Old World prophets is to misunderstand the eternal nature of God and the gospel. To fail to use the revelations of the Doctrine and Covenants to interpret the teachings of the Old and New Testaments is to misunderstand the very nature of the Restoration. Our doctrines and our covenants were their doctrines and covenants" (126).

Stephen D. Ricks and Daniel C. Peterson, teachers of Hebrew and Semitic languages at BYU, follow suit with two academically-oriented essays that seem out of place here. The first, "Joseph Smith and 'Magic': Methodological Reflections on the Use of Term," seeks to convince readers that the terms "folk religion" or "popular religion," not "magic," best describe the early Mormon use of seer

stones, divining rods, and other "magical" practices. They are concerned that "magic" carries today too many negative connotations to be appropriately applied to early Mormonism. Ricks's and Peterson's second essay, "Is Mormonism Christian? An Investigation of Definitions," concludes that despite the passionate arguments of evangelical Christians, Mormonism is a Christian religion because of its emphasis on Jesus Christ, his atonement, crucifixion, and second coming.

Sandwiched between Ricks's and Peterson's two articles is Daniel K. Judd's provocative "Not As the World Giveth . . . : Mormonism and Popular Psychology." Responding to largely anecdotal reports of the negative effects of Mormonism on mental health, Judd counters with the results of his 1985 BYU master's thesis that no reputable study has ever linked Mormonism and mental illness (150). He then spends the next nine pages describing very general ways in which gospel teachings regarding mental health seem to be superior to contemporary popular psychology.

The eleventh contribution is editor Millet's third essay, "Biblical Criticism and the Four Gospels: A Critical Look," and is his most restrained. Millet briefly defines five different kinds of biblical criticism—historical, textual, source, form, and redaction—and notes what he sees as their strengths and weaknesses. For Mormons, Millet writes, the crucial criterion in considering the value of these various approaches is identifying the presuppositions of the authors they are reading (189). Thus authors whose presuppositions or personal beliefs vary from their readers' can be ignored. For example, he continues, "Should we be surprised that elements of [Jesus Christ's eternal gospel which Mormons know has been preached from the beginning] or semblances of the ordinances or ritual (albeit in fragmentary and even apostate form) should be found in cultures throughout the world?" (190). Millet concludes, "Latter-day Saints would do well to ensure that theirs is a 'critical' look at biblical critical presuppositions, methodologies, and conclusions; some things we simply need not swallow. A firm belief in prophecy, revelation, divine intervention, and absolute truths precludes an overwhelming and indiscriminating acceptance of many of the underlying principles of the science of biblical criticism" (200).

The next two essays are no-holds-barred attacks on "Mormon intellectuals." In "The True Mormon Intellectual," S. Michael Wilcox tries to define "intellectual" in such a way as to suggest that the most "intellectual"

(that is, according to Wilcox, those most filled with the light of Christ which quickens the intellect) Mormons today are the general authorities. Wilcox insists that he does not want to offend readers (205), but his definition of Mormon intellectuals, quoted at the beginning of this review, is expressed in largely negative, pejorative terms.

Wilcox stresses that Mormons "do not believe in blind obedience in this Church," but, he hastens to add, "we believe in trust, a trust that is born when one recognizes the intelligence of the 'noble and great ones'—the 'Apostles and prophets'" (214). He notes that "these men are not infallible; they have never claimed to be; but a wise man will recognize their advanced state of intelligence and think long and hard before choosing to ignore or rebel against their counsel" (212). But one wonders how Wilcox would deal with Heber J. Grant's comment to a young Marion G. Romney that "you always keep your eye on the President of the Church, and if he ever tells you to do anything, and it is wrong, and you do it, the Lord will bless you for it. . . . But you don't need to worry. The Lord will never let his mouthpiece lead the people astray" (Conference Reports, Oct. 1960, 78). In fact, one wonders if Wilcox protests too much his and his colleagues' "freedom" to choose to follow the Brethren.

Political scientist Louis Midgley follows with a topic that has become his bailiwick in recent years, "Faith and History." For Midgley, like many of the contributors, the question of the historical authenticity of the Book of Mormon is central to Church's unique truthfulness. Although the issue may not be "in the end analysis the decisive one," Midgley concedes, still, it is a crucial one. For, Midgley insists, the "Restoration message is true if—and only if—the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient history. And clearly these questions can be tested," he says, "if not settled, by the methods of the historian" (224). This issue of the historicity of the Book of Mormon is fundamental for Midgley because "we begin to become faithful Saints by receiving that book and embracing its message" (224). Thus, according to Midgley, the Book of Mormon can only be properly "embraced" as a wholly literal ancient history of the Near East and Mesoamerica.

Unfortunately, he continues, "there are now a few Latter-day Saints who insist that the Book of Mormon is fiction—that is, who deny that it is an authentic history—but who also deny that they have thereby challenged the foundations of the faith" (224). According to Midgley, these unidentified "savants" "argue that what Joseph Smith gave us—ei-

ther intentionally or more probably unintentionally—is best understood as a ‘Mormon myth’ in the sense of inspiring or ‘inspired fiction’ and that “the fabrication by Joseph Smith of fictional accounts of the past is what the Saints must now come to understand as divine ‘revelation’ . . .” (225). These “revisionists,” he contends, “set their kind over against sentimental and incompetent people whose work is merely traditional, apologetic, and ‘faith-promoting,’ and therefore neither honest nor competent” (226). Evidently alluding to the reactions to his own earlier public criticisms of this “cutting edge of the new views of Mormon history,” Midgley contends that “efforts to scrutinize revisionist explanations and accounts are characterized as the work of anti-intellectual fundamentalists or of traditionalists bent on causing some personal harm to the purveyors of revisionist ideology” (226).

Midgley concludes that these “Cultural Mormons” and “marginal members,” who “can neither spit nor swallow when it comes to the gospel,” “are clearly not sound guides” (226). He speculates that they are merely “caught between different and, at times, competing worlds”—the gospel and secular learning—and warns Mormons to be “prudent when confronted with revisionist accounts of their past” and “leery of fashionable new explanations of the Book of Mormon” (226).

The fourteenth and final essay, again by Joseph Fielding McConkie, is entitled “The Spirit of Truth.” According to McConkie, the “truth” is the gospel of Jesus Christ, and the gospel expressed “truthfully” is the gospel expressed honestly, directly, bluntly. Furthermore, a knowledge of the gospel—the “truth”—is “obtainable only through obedience” and “purity,” not through books or one’s intellect or compassionate acts (230, 231). In fact, “Christ’s greatest deeds consisted in obedient submission to the will of his Father, not per se in feeding the hungry or healing the sick and afflicted” (231). Thus, one is ultimately saved by one’s obedience. To be learned is good, McConkie might conclude, if one is obedient to Church authority.

DESPITE some bright spots and useful advice, what emerges from “*To Be Learned Is Good If . . .*” is a short-sighted, occasionally offensive, and unnecessary defense of the LDS church. The majority of contributors are not interested in opening a dialogue on the specific “controversial issues” they address. Rather, by their tone, the sources they cite or do not cite, and the answers they give, they are more interested in lecturing readers into

accepting what they have to say as the definitive responses to whatever questions they choose to raise. As to those particular essays discussing Mormon intellectualism and current trends in Mormon scholarly studies, I have five specific objections.

First, they do not identify those individual books, articles, essays, publications, forums, outlets, or Mormons they find so destructive to Mormon faith or exactly how these destroy faith. As a reader, I grew frustrated not knowing exactly what the contributors found objectionable or how prevalent this kind of writing is, especially since I know of no Mormon now writing whose works approach the kind of deliberate anti-Mormonism the contributors criticize. Perhaps they feared the repercussions of direct confrontation and the possibility of having to defend their assertions, since vague criticisms are harder to address than specific ones and it is easier to rally support for an anonymous enemy than a real, identifiable one.

Second, many of the essays focusing on the question of the historicity of the Book of Mormon tended to interpose current LDS interpretations into early nineteenth-century documents and events. For example, Millett contended in his essay, “Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the Nature of God,” that “trinitarian ideas concerning God—that the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost are simply three manifestations of one and the same being—are unscriptural, foreign to the spirit or content of the New Testament, and doctrinally untenable,” and that “although the Book of Mormon prophets speak of the ‘oneness’ of the members of the Godhead, this does not imply trinitarianism” (70). Yet one early Mormon defender, Stephen Post, saw no difficulty in interpreting the Book of Mormon differently from Millett, stating explicitly, “The Scriptures plainly declare that there is but one [God], and he a God that will not give his glory to another . . . Were the Father and Son united in the same person? They were” (in Gregory L. Kofford, “The First Vision: Doctrinal Development and Analysis,” 20 [unpublished]).

Third, several contributors seemed to advocate a kind of hands-off approach to the critical study of scripture and canon. Yet we know that Mormon scripture, particularly modern canon, contains historical error. For example, Alvin Smith died in 1823, not 1824 (see Joseph Smith 2:4, 56, but corrected in Joseph Smith—History 1:4, 56), and even contributor Milton Backman suggests that Joseph Smith erred in his canonized history in stating that his family moved to Manchester four years after moving to Palmyra (39,

n48; cf. Joseph Smith—History 1: 3, 5). Thus Mormons cannot assume that their scriptures are inerrant in terms of history or that it is inappropriate to subject them to “critical” scrutiny in an attempt to better understand them.

Fourth, to view the Book of Mormon as an ancient work only ignores the counsel of the Book of Mormon itself and discounts attempts to better understand the meaning of the book, as well as to respond to problems with the text. Presumably, contributors, such as Robert Millett, opposed to discerning what nineteenth-century influences Joseph Smith may have brought to his translation (66-67, for example), would also condemn colleague Joseph Fielding McConkie’s suggestion that some words in the Book of Mormon may be best understood in terms of their nineteenth-century English/American definitions, and not those of ancient Hebraic or Egyptian (229). In fact, ranking Church leaders themselves allowed for nonhistorical, nonliteralistic approaches to scripture when Charles W. Penrose, in behalf of the First Presidency, wrote of Jonah and the whale in 1921 that “it is of little significance whether Jonah was a real individual or one chosen by the writer of the book to write what is set forth therein” (in LDS archives).

Finally, several essays presumed, either implicitly or explicitly, to dictate just what a “faithful” Mormon is—what he or she must study, read, write, and conclude from his or her researches. What could have been an important contribution to the discussion of what one’s Mormon faith must consist of and how one as a “faithful Mormon” must view the Book of Mormon or Joseph Smith, became at the hands of these writers little more than an exercise in arrogance. Such dogmatic approaches to the Book of Mormon, which insist that the book is either wholly ancient and therefore true or wholly modern and therefore false, succeed only in setting up countless members to reject the Book of Mormon entirely if they should happen to discern modern elements in it.

In many ways “*To Be Learned Is Good If . . .*” is a landmark: it publicly raises important issues for Mormons today. But it is also a landmark in ways no book—especially one authored by LDS employees, published by a Mormon press, and addressed to Mormons generally—should ever be: it is, in its tone and intent, condescending and uncharitable. The kind of Mormonism most of these essays defend is a Mormonism I have never known and one I would never want to know.



BOOKNOTES

THE OWL ON THE AERIAL

By Clarice Short

Edited by Barbara J. Duree

Signature Books, 1990, \$14.95, 174 pages

CLARICE SHORT DIED in 1977 as she was preparing her second volume of poems. They are now available in *The Owl on the Aerial*, strikingly designed by Keith Montague. The book has four sections. Emma Lou Thayne, Short's friend and literary executor, introduces the poems and the poet, a "legendary" professor of English literature at the University of Utah from 1946 until retirement in 1975. Short was austere and demanding and required excellence of her students.

The second section is the poems as Short compiled them. The first group of poems is about birds and animals. Short was an avid sportswoman. The poems recreate such strong images as the "perfect parentheses" of a blue heron's wings and "the dove's eggs . . . secure on five loose twigs." The second group records her travels to the Mediterranean, combining her imagination and ancient literature. "Easter on Crete," for example, considers Zeus and the coming of "the other god," Christ, noting the use of similar symbols in both Greek and Christian religious observances—the olive, wine, and the lamb. The final poems come from Short's family heritage and her life in the New Mexican desert. In "The Elusive" she describes how time collapsed for her father in his old age, and he "unharnessed, / Fed, spoke to, calling each by name, / Horses sixty years dead." Other poems recall earlier inhabitants—the "Jicarilla Apache," the "Picuris Pueblo" dwellers, Spanish explorers, and ancient Indians on the "Road by the Rio Grande." The poems are intelligent, spare, and observant, offering clear images of the natural world Short delighted in.

The third section is a fine critical response by Jim Elledge. The fourth gives the book its particular richness. Barbara Duree excerpts Short's diaries into brief portraits of this multifaceted woman, showing how far Short came in her life, from her girlhood in the Ozark hills ("Took the ducks swimming and went swimming myself for the first time this season") to her teaching at the University of Utah ("Today when I concluded the class in the Romantic Period, the class applauded. This has never happened") to her travels in Europe ("I stood by a sycamore tree and watched the

Queen go by. . . . Yeats was right about ceremony. The English make it a work of art"). They reveal a woman of compassion and sensitivity whose intelligent interest in every experience is a lesson in how to draw deep satisfaction from life.

Clarice Short was not famous, but she was extraordinary.

—SUSAN HOWE

MY HARD BARGAIN

By Walter Kim

Alfred A. Knopf, 1990

\$18.95, 145 pages

IN THE INTRODUCTION of *A Palpable God*, Reynolds Price says that storytelling is a basic human need. Walter Kim's *My Hard Bargain* captures the essence of storytelling on paper in this brief collection of thirteen short stories. They all have one thing in common—they celebrate the ordinary and make it seem unique. Kim deals with traditional themes of family, adolescence, and religion in such a wonderfully familiar manner that the reader can't help but relate to them. Kim weaves most of his tales through the experiences of adolescent boys in heartland America. His ability to comically portray youth's anxiety in everyday situations is masterful, best capturing the nuances of teenage frustration in "Planetarium."

"Planetarium" describes the efforts of a young men's leader to help the boys of the local ward control their teenage urges. They mark each of their transgressions on a sheet of black paper with an invisible fluorescent yellow pen. No one would be able to see the marks until the group was brought together at the end of one month. The story captures not only ubiquitous teenage frustration, but the ridiculous ways they are dealt with by adults. Some traditional Mormon readers may be turned off by this first story, but to be so would be tragic, and certainly unfair to Kim's superb tales.

Kim's at his best when telling Mormon and near-Mormon experiences. "Devil of a Curve" and "The New Timothy" are brilliant portrayals of common Mormon experiences told with just a twinge of comic relief. "The Orphan" and "Toward The Radical Church" are particularly good, non-LDS-centered stories, but they don't have the same effectiveness as those that stick to Mormon experiences.

My Hard Bargain is a wonderful collection

of teenage musings with a splash of 20/20 hindsight.

—DANNY MAY

EVOLUTION OF THE MORMON TEMPLE CEREMONY: 1920-1990

By Jerald and Sandra Tanner

Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1990

\$5.00, 184 pages

THE LDS ENDOWMENT ritual is imbued with intense religious meaning for its participants; because of its sacred, personal nature, Church leaders have always admonished restraint in talking about it. However, shortly after major changes were made on 10 April 1990, Jerald and Sandra Tanner, former Mormons, published the "complete text of the 1990 endowment ceremony and a study of all the recent changes." For many Saints, the Tanners' study addresses the unspeakable; for others, it may enrich their understanding of what is dear to them.

The Tanners base their examination of recent alterations on verbatim transcripts of the ceremony made by Church members in 1984 and 1990. The book contrasts word-for-word the two recent versions of the temple ritual and compares them with early accounts published in 1847, 1882, and 1931, giving a broad overview of the evolution of the Mormon temple rites, including Masonic parallels. The Tanners appear to have been meticulous in their reporting, but the secrecy of the temple makes it difficult to verify their accuracy. They express their consideration for Latter-day Saint sensibilities, yet the study at times sounds unnecessarily polemic. For example, they use the changes to impugn LDS assurances that the rituals are unchanging and eternal.

Their short probe reveals the need for further examination of relevant historical relationships: the evolution of the Masonic ritual itself; Joseph Smith's involvement with Masonry (his reported plural marriage to Lucinda Morgan, former wife of martyred Masonic dissident William Morgan, raises the interesting question of Smith's familiarity with Masonry before 1842, when he became a Mason and also initiated the endowment); the orthodox Jewish tradition, including ancient forms of prayer; and the religious events in 1842 Nauvoo.

—GEORGE D. SMITH, JR.

NEWS

OAKLAND STAKE HOSTS KING INTERFAITH SERVICE

By Carol Lynn Pearson

OAKLAND, CA.—A most wonderful and thrilling thing happened here. Following is the entry from my diary that describes it.

January 20, 1991, Sunday

And when I climbed out of bed this morning, still tired from having performed my play last night [*Mother Wove the Morning*], and began an ordinary Sunday, would I have thought that when the day was over I would have experienced one of the most memorable, moving, thrilling events of my entire life?

At Church I saw in my program an insert that I could not believe: to be held at four P.M. that afternoon at the Interstake Center in Oakland, "An Ecumenical Celebration of the dream of Martin Luther King, Jr.," sponsored by the Interreligious Council of Oakland: Buddhist, Hindu, Jewish, Mormon, Orthodox, Protestant, Roman Catholic, Unitarian.

Of course I went, and I took Aaron and Katy with me. I made an effort to get others from the ward to come, but I didn't succeed.

As we approached the entrance, the temple was to my right and there in front of me was a beautiful bearded black Catholic priest in colorful robes standing at the door, greeting us. I gave him a hug and said, "I'm from a Mormon ward in Walnut Creek, and do you know how happy I am to see you here?" He hugged me back and laughed and said, "And do you know how happy I am to be here?"

We walked toward the main hall. Did I hear gospel music, real gospel music? Up behind the podium was a black choir of maybe sixty voices. I looked at

my program. "The Shiloh Baptist Church Choir."

We were early. By the time the meeting started, there were close to four hundred people, most of them black.

As it came time to begin, we all stood as, down the aisle to the music of the choir and organ and tambourine, walked the dignitaries: several Catholic priests in robes, a Jewish Rabbi, a female Unitarian pastor, a Baptist minister, a Greek Orthodox father, and my wonderful stake president, Gary Anderson. I burst into tears, and my tears did not stop for minutes. I felt in the middle of a miracle: all these magnificent people gathered together here on Mormon territory, in a building my tithing had helped to erect.

President Anderson rose and greeted the group, welcoming them all. Then various dignitaries read scriptures and gave short talks on keeping alive the dream of Dr. King for peace and equality and progress; the choir sang three electrifying numbers; a young black pastor gave the famous "I Have A Dream" speech; and the congregation felt the sadness of the Gulf war. "All wars are civil wars," we were reminded.

The major address was given by Father James Good, pastor of St. Paul of The Shipwreck Catholic Church, the man who had greeted us. He was passionate, entertaining, and powerful. "If we take what God has given us and do something with it, then we have got a victory and we have a cause to celebrate! We will rise from misery to majesty!" And to my delight he spoke of God our Mother and God our Father.

Reverend Jesse Davis, pastor of the Shiloh Baptist Church and in charge of the evening's or-

ganization, led the offering, passing baskets for donations toward Oakland's drug program. I was so grateful for having been present at this amazing event that I gave fifty dollars as the basket came around.

The reverend then said, "After the benediction, we will go to enjoy the refreshments prepared for us by the Latter-day Saint sisters. At our Baptist church we always serve red punch. I hear the Mormons always serve green. Let us go see what color we got tonight."

He then gave a prayer of dedication, followed by a benediction given by the pastor of the Greek Orthodox Church of the Ascension. Then we all stood and

sang together: "Lift every voice and sing, 'til earth and heaven ring / Ring with the harmonies of liberty. / Let our voices resound loud as the rolling sea / Sing a song full of the faith / That the dark past has brought us, / Facing the rising sun of our new day begun. / Let us march on 'til victory is won."

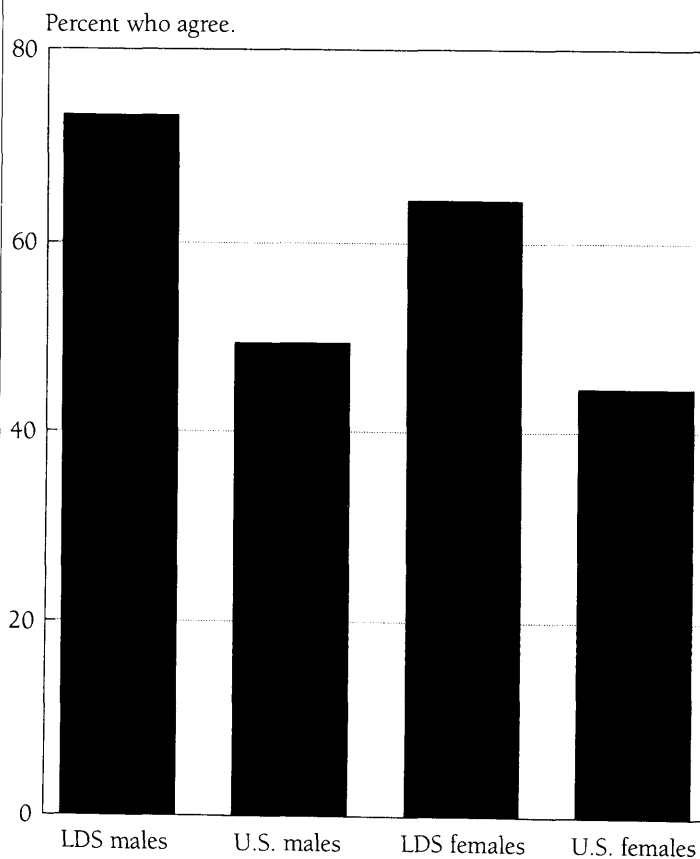
For more than two hours a smile of amazed delight had not left my face. And the same was true for President Anderson. I hugged him and his wife, Lynn, afterwards and told them how deeply I had appreciated the experience.

We can bring miracles. We absolutely can. ☐

PECULIAR PEOPLE

GENDER ROLE ATTITUDES OF MORMONS

IT IS much better for everyone if the man earns the main living and the woman takes care of the home and family.



Source: 1987 Survey of Families and Households

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS 1992 annual symposium will be held at Westminster College in Salt Lake City on 25 January. Proposals for sessions are desired which will combine the presentation of creative works with critical analysis. Possible topics include Mormon domestic life, gender, missions, portraits of the Mormon as artist, the fictionalizing of true experiences, realistic portrayals of spiritual experiences, Mormon pop romance, and millennial/apocalyptic fantasy. Contact: program chair Richard Cracroft, English Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-3082).

At the 1991 annual symposium the following individuals were elected AML officers and board members: **Ann Edwards Cannon**, president-elect and vice president; **John Bennion**, **Patricia T. Aikins** and **Robert M. Hogge**, new board members. Continuing officers include: **Richard H. Cracroft**, president; **Bruce W. Jorgensen**, past president; **Steven P. Sondrup**, secretary and treasurer; **Linda Brummett**, **Susan Howe**, and **Dennis Clark**, board members.

AML will again sponsor a section at the annual conference of the **Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association** on 17-19 October 1991 at Arizona State University in Tempe. Original works by Mormon poets and papers on contemporary Mormon poetry are solicited. Papers dealing with poets outside the U.S. or poems in languages other than English are especially welcome. A solid review of the recently published anthology *Harvest* is also sought. Contact: Elouise Bell, 350 MSRB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (work: 801/378-3261; home: 801/225-2151).

KNOW THE BOOK OF MORMON SEMINAR sponsored by BYU Conferences and Workshops will be held on 1 June 1991 at the BYU conference center and will focus on great prophets of the Book of Mormon: **Robert E. Parsons** on "Teachings of the Lord Jesus Christ in America"; **Robert L. Millett** on "The Message of Jacob"; **Robert J. Matthews** on "The Words of Abinadi"; and **Monte S. Nyman** on "The Teachings of Amulek." Registration is \$5 in advance, \$6 at door. Contact: BYU Conferences and Workshops, 136 Harman Building, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-3559).

THE MORMON WOMEN'S FORUM will sponsor a lecture by **Ed Firmage** on 12 June at the University of Utah's Fine Arts Auditorium at 7:00 P.M.

The Forum now has chapters in five locations, in addition to the Salt Lake Chapter. For more information, contact each chapter directly: **Alberta, Canada**, Chapter, 212 Woodstock Place S.W., Calgary, AB T2W 5W5, CANADA; **Northern California** Chapter, 755 Page Mill Road, #B-9, Palo Alto, CA 94304; **Southern California** Chapter, 1685 West Haven Road, San Marino, CA 91108; **Seattle, Washington**, Chapter, 1021 142nd Avenue S.E., Bellevue, WA 98007; **Houston, Texas**, Chapter, 11909 Barry Knoll, Houston, TX 77024. To receive the Forum's seasonal **newsletter**, send \$8 to Mormon Women's Forum, P.O. Box 58281, Salt Lake City, UT 84158.

THE MOUNTAIN WEST CENTER FOR REGIONAL STUDIES is sponsoring a week-long workshop entitled "**Biography As High Adventure**" on 24-28 June 1991. The workshop is designed to provide budding writers with the skills they need to write a creditable biography. Each day will focus on a theme (biography, sources, family history, writing and organization, or publication), and participants may choose from the various sessions. Writers with manuscripts can have them critiqued by professionals, and a \$1,000 prize will be given for the best biographical manuscript reviewed. **Stephen Oates**, author of *Biography As High Adventure* and biographer of Lincoln and

Martin Luther King, will be the keynote speaker; Mormon scholars will include **Levi Peterson**, **Ross Peterson**, **Leonard Arrington**, **Thomas Alexander**, and **James Allen**. Registration is \$140 for 2 credit hours, slightly less for non-credit attenders. Contact: Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322 (801/750-3639).

STAFF NOTES is an independent bi-monthly newsletter for **LDS church musicians and choristers** which features suggestions for congregational and choir singing, tips for organists, new hymns, an idea exchange, and historical tidbits. Published by LaVonne VanOrden, *Staff Notes* is offered without charge (although donations are probably accepted) and back issues are available for a modest cost. International subscriptions are also free but require \$5 (U.S.) for postage. Contact: *Staff Notes*, P.O. Box 3281, Salt Lake City, UT 84110-3281.

SUNSTONE LECTURES AND SYMPOSIA

1991 NEW TESTAMENT LECTURE SERIES, co-sponsored by the Student Religious Forum, features a monthly lecture on the second Tuesday of each month. On 11 June **Blake Ostler** will speak on "What Does it Mean to be 'Translated Correctly?'" On 9 July **Todd Compton** will speak on "Mary Magdalene and the Recognition of Christ."

Lectures are held in room 101 of the James Fletcher Physics Building at the University of Utah; \$2 donation. To receive a monthly notice of the upcoming 1991 lectures, send your name and \$3 to Sunstone, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

1991 SUNSTONE NORTHWEST SYMPOSIUM will be held on 8-9 November at the Mountaineers Building in Seattle, WA. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Volunteers interested in helping organize the conference are needed. Contact: Molly Bennion, 1150 22nd Avenue East, Seattle, WA 98112 (206/325-6868).

SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM XIII will be held earlier than usual, on 7-10 August at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. Last-minute proposals for papers and panel discussion should be sent in immediately. Individuals beyond Utah's Wasatch Front who want to receive a copy of the preliminary program should notify Sunstone. Contact: symposium chair Cindy Dahle, Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 30, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

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SPEECHES & CONFERENCES

BYU WOMEN'S CONFERENCE TURNS ANOTHER CORNER

THE ANNUAL BYU Women's Conference has an interesting history. It began as a conference sponsored by the Women's Office of the student association; next it was planned by the Women's Research Institute in the College of Family and Social Sciences; later it was organized by a university faculty committee through the division of speeches and conferences. Although it has always been a university function, most of its thousands of attenders have been LDS Sisters from along Utah's Wasatch Front and beyond. This mixing of the academic and the popular has occasionally caused skepticism among non-participating BYU faculty and tension between the organizers and attenders. Several years ago many Sisters complained that only women with Ph.D.s were speaking; were the planners implying that only degreed Sisters were worthy role models? Last year, conservative Sisters strongly protested the composition of a panel discussion on day care.

Perhaps in an attempt to address that duality, this year's mid-April women's conference was co-sponsored by BYU and the General Relief Society presidency and, as a result, had the largest attendance ever at the women's conference. Some faculty familiar with past conferences felt the Relief Society was overly cautious in trying not to offend the general authorities or the average LDS woman who would attend. Still, the opening session featured a dramatization of the strong differences between Emma Smith and Eliza R. Snow, the first two general presidents, and there were sessions dealing with social concerns, such as spouse abuse, but they weren't evident in the session titles, and other topics were addressed openly and honestly. Indeed, both old and new planners commented on the amount of pain and frustration expressed by the attenders in Q&A sessions, discounting the complaint that this was just another saccharine Education Week, but in the spring. Apparently, the conference was successful enough that it will be co-sponsored next year, and with perhaps a little more daring.

LDS COUNSELORS MEET IN SALT LAKE

"FOR ME to show you a part of myself is one thing, but for you to invade my privacy is another," explained BYU Professor Louise Bell to the semi-annual pre-general conference gathering of the Association of Counselors and Psychotherapists (AMCAP) at the University of Utah LDS Institute. Bell's topic, "When Humor Heals, When Humor Hurts," helped set the tone for the conference which was dedicated to "Women and Therapy: A Spiritual and Clinical Update." Indeed, the conference welcomed the advice of those outside the counseling profession. BYU English professor Eugene England explored how in the works of Shakespeare women are healers. Vocalist Lisa Arrington discussed music as therapy. Stake president/physician George Durham explored ways priesthood roles can sustain women by taking them seriously. Mormon essayist Donlu Thayer discussed ways competition mitigates spirituality and concluded that we should wrestle with contraries in obtaining balance and harmony instead of trying to overcome necessary oppositions. BYU sociologist Tim Heaton reported that average Mormon couples are like the average American couple, except in familial areas, where they are higher than the norm: they have more children, a higher level of

chastity, a greater commitment to marriage, and are more chauvinistic. BYU Women's Research Institute Director Marie Cornwall forecasted organizational tensions between the goals of First and Third World women in the Church, as well as among U.S. Sisters.

The conference also hosted professional counselors, including three sessions on Mormon men's issues and an excellent presentation by BYU counselor Sally Barlow on the male biases men and women have in diagnosing women's mental health. Tapes of all sessions are available from AMCAP (\$6 each, \$45 for all 15 sessions): 2500 East 1700 South, Salt Lake City, UT 84108.

PARTICIPANTS WRESTLE WITH GENDER, FAMILY ISSUES

THE MOVIES have moved away from the Rambo-like warrior and have begun to project men like Steve Martin's character in *Parenthood*, men who "can keep their sexual, romantic side, but they can nurture too, and in this way they offer a redefinition of what makes a family," said Sharon Swenson at the International Conference on Gender and the Family held at BYU on 6-8 February 1991, and sponsored by BYU's Women's Research Institute, the BYU Center for Studies of the Family, and the Utah Governor's Commission for Women and Families.

The aim of the three-day conference was to bring together research over the past two decades regarding "what is known about the family with what is known about gender." The conference attracted over 200 scholars nationally and internationally—two participants came from the Soviet Union and one from New Zealand—and included as one of its plenary speakers Pulitzer-prize winning New England historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich.

Highlights from the conference follow (presenters are in parentheses).

In a study examining marriages of thirty to thirty-five years, "women become more openly assertive in later life, and are less compliant and less willing to trade compliance for security." As women become more assertive, both partners experience a heightened degree of marital stress. Both are most distressed when the husband thinks he is giving in to a domineering wife or when the wife is unambivalently assertive. Satisfaction is also low when either partner perceives a struggle for control. After thirty-five years of marriage, however, both partners seem to move into a period of "relative harmony." "Thus, while there are strains in long-term marriages, they may reflect normal transitions which can evolve into another form of gratifying relationship." (Margaret Hellie Huyck, psychology, Illinois Institute of Technology)

Contrary to popular belief, fathers in contemporary society are becoming less—not more—involved in the "center of family life." After the shift to a more industrialized society, "the paternal role, while still central to the economic function of the family, was increasingly peripheral to the emotional dimension of the family realm."

Most studies suggest that fathers' participation in housework and child care in the twentieth century has not increased substantially over the past twenty years. In fact, "fathers are increasingly absent from the homes in which their children reside," usually because of divorce. Some researchers think that husbands will participate more in domestic life, especially in families where the wife is gone from the family for a significant part of each day. Their participation will

translate to "deeper father-child relationships." (Alan J. Hawkins, family sciences, Brigham Young University)

In a study done in Utah County of 200 victims of robbery or rape, women reported more traumatization immediately after the crime, while men experienced more dissatisfaction six months after the occurrence, during the criminal investigation. Several explanations were proposed: (1) Women were much more likely to be victims of assault; therefore, "it would seem reasonable to assume that assault [would] be more traumatic than burglary or theft." (2) Men may be less willing to admit "physical or emotional reactions to victimization." (3) Men tend to "expect to have an active role in all aspects of their lives," and, when they are left out of the investigation or judicial process, they tend to experience more dissatisfaction than women who are inclined to "expect to have a more passive role." (Wanda M. Spaid, social work, Brigham Young University)

In a different study, Mormon women view having a baby as a "developmental task endowed with significant meaning" as contrasted to other first-time mothers who see the experience more as an important "event in their life." Mormon women are more apt to "relate childbirth and motherhood to one's ultimate destiny or reason for being" than are non-Mormon women. They also equate "childbirth with a profound spiritual dimension, and [draw] an inner strength from their religious beliefs."

Other comparisons between Mormon and non-Mormon women show that Mormon women are just as likely to use birth control as are non-Mormons, and, in contrast to national norms, "Mormons with higher family income and a higher level of maternal education are likely to have more children." (Lynn Clark Callister, nursing, Brigham Young University)

Women seek help for psycho-social disorders more often than do men. Why? Rather than being mentally ill or socially dysfunctional, women seek help from psycho-social quarters because they are "socialized to seek help while men are socialized not to seek help." In fact, "females utilize one of the most effective coping strategies available and that is the use of support systems." In the future, "some mental illness syndromes such as personality disorders will be redefined with gender factored in" to reflect the different genders' coping strategies. (Barbara R. Wheeler, social work, Brigham Young University)

In a plenary session, speaking on women and the law, Utah Supreme Court Justice Christine M. Durham concluded, "The truth is that the lives of an overwhelming number of women and children . . . are impoverished, sometimes violent, and mostly marginal in terms of participation, power, and self-determination. . . . The poor are disproportionately women and children. . . . We must constantly reexamine the instruments of change to ensure that they are capable of helping us build new places for women to live."



UPDATE

UTAH ACLU SET TO DEFEND PLURAL MARRIAGE

"WHILE THE ACLU does not advocate the practice of plural marriage, . . . the ACLU believes the practice . . . among informed consenting adults is protected by the Constitution," states a recent Utah ACLU chapter petition to its national organization. The Utah chapter of the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) plans to protect the rights of adults who practice plural marriage as a part of their religion. Before it can do that, however, the national ACLU will have to support the petition.

The change is prompted by a recent Utah Supreme Court decision that states a Utah polygamous family cannot be denied the privilege of adopting children solely on the grounds that they practice plural marriage. "We can't just protect the religions we like, the ones we agree with and get along with," says Michelle Parish, Utah ACLU director. The Utah petition further states that the First Amendment protects the rights of fundamentalists who practice plural marriage as a part of their beliefs and says the state of Utah also threatens the fundamentalists' right to privacy and equal protection by continuing to recognize plural marriage as a third-degree felony even though there has been no prosecution of the offense for forty years.

EX-LDS AUTHORITY CONTEMPLATES LEADING NAVAJOS

GEORGE P. LEE, a former member of the First Quorum of the Seventy who was excommunicated from the Church 18 months ago, says he is waiting for the "green light" from God to pursue the presidency of the Navajo Nation. Lee staged a write-in campaign for the presidency last year when Peter McDonald, who was running for the presidency, was convicted of ethics, bribery, and conspiracy charges a month before the election.

On election day, Lee garnered a surprising 22 percent of the votes, and according to some observers, established himself as a force to be reckoned with in tribal politics.

Lee has until June to decide whether he will run for the presidency. At that time, he must move to the reservation from his suburban Salt Lake home to establish the required three-year residency before the 1994 election. "I'm not worried about that," Lee said. "I leave everything in the hands of God. If the sign comes again before June, I'll do something about the law. It's in his hands."

MORMON MEDIA IMAGE

**IN UTAH,
THEY KNOW HOW
TO PUNISH A
WOMAN WHO HAS
AN ABORTION.
SHOOT HER.**

UTAH ABORTION BILL ENRAGES PRO-CHOICE ADVOCATES

LAST JANUARY, when Utah's legislature passed the most restrictive abortion law in the United States it was in such a hurry that the lawmakers unintentionally allowed the prosecution of women having an abortion to be tried for a capital offense. Pro-choice advocates quickly seized the opportunity: representatives of the National Organization of Women belittled the state in the media and the American Civil Liberties Union took out a full-page ad in the *New York Times* and other national publications. In response, Utah's legislative leaders acknowledged their mistake, and in a special session of the legislature corrected the law. In any event, the state has agreed not to enforce the law until its legality has been resolved in the courts.

LDS IMAGE ENCOURAGES SOUTH AMERICAN ATTACKS

BECAUSE MANY South Americans perceive the LDS church as a U.S. entity competing with the region's dominant Roman Catholic Church, the Mormon church of all the religious groups in South America has borne the brunt of terrorist attacks by left-wing guerrillas, especially after war broke out in the Persian Gulf, said Anne H. Harrison in a UPI story.

On Valentine's Day 1991, suspected left-wing guerrillas bombed four LDS churches in Huancayo, Peru. That attack came six months after two Peruvian missionaries were killed by a pair of alleged rebels in the city's Beanvacu district. Mormon chapels have been the target of rebels in other Peruvian cities as well as the target of at least twenty bombings in Chile since August. In Brazil, where guerrilla activity is nearly non-existent, rebels have attacked an LDS church in the central state of Goias. Similar attacks have also occurred in Bolivia and Colombia.

Peruvian LDS church spokesman Juan Prieto Zapata said that

guerrillas in his country "have the idea that our church represents North American interests because our headquarters are in Utah. That is why they attack us."

Referring to recent attacks on missionaries in Peru and the frequent bombings on Church buildings in Colombia, David C. Knowlton, assistant professor of anthropology at BYU, explained at a BYU Kennedy Center forum on 21 March, "Two percent of the people in Chile are Mormon as opposed to 1.7 percent of the people that are Mormon in America." The difference is that the growth of Mormonism in American society has occurred over a period of 160 years, while the growth of the Church in Latin America has occurred essentially during the last twenty years.

Church membership in South America grew from 317,000 in 1980 to 1,189,000 members in 1989, according to official figures. "The Church tries to remain outside political involvement, but its very presence in Latin America is political," Knowlton said. "The Church's silence, while rapidly growing, is a political act."

That growth is threatening to a culture that is strongly dominated by the Roman Catholic Church. Knowlton said culture identification in Latin America is more important to the people than it is to Americans, and the LDS church is viewed as an American institution that poses a threat to their identity.

Apparently several practices that the Church perpetuates underscore the perceived threat. According to the UPI article, one spokesman in Peru said the hundreds of white-shirted, clean-cut young American missionaries in the region tend to strengthen the public image that the Church is U.S.-based.

Another spokesman in Argentina said that because the Church uses many computers to store its genealogical data, many left-wing rebels believe the organization is connected with the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency. A leftist leader in Argentina said another possible strike against the Church is its extremely conservative image. Leftist guerrillas in Chile and Peru urge armed revolution for the masses, and they see the Church's twelfth Article of Faith, which urges members to be subject to "kings, presidents, rulers and magistrates" as anathema to their purposes. The Catholic church, on the other hand, has many priests who openly support revolutions.

Another likely problem between the rebels and Church is that both are often trying to recruit followers from the same group—the region's poorest. The left may lose ground where the Mormon church gains.

Knowlton said he thinks terrorist attacks on the Church could be reduced in South America if the Church became more international and less of an American institution. If we are to really preach the gospel to every "nation, kindred and tongue," then we have to de-Americanize the Church and respect other cultures, Knowlton concluded.

FINNS RATE MORMONISM NEGATIVELY

A POLL by the research center of the Evangelical-Lutheran Church in Finland (SELK) suggests that Mormonism, Islam, and Jehovah's Witnesses are viewed especially negatively by Finns in general. Two-thirds of those polled expressed a negative view of Islam. Attitudes toward Mormonism were almost as negative, and Jehovah's Witnesses got a negative rating of 82 percent. About seven Finns in eight belong to SELK, which was viewed favorably by about two-thirds of those surveyed. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

AWARDS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS 1990 AWARDS

Given at the Annual Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, 26 January 1991

AN AWARD IN CRITICISM

William A. Wilson

for his essay

"In Praise of Ourselves: Stories to Tell"
Brigham Young University Studies, 30:1,
(Winter, 1990)

Bert Wilson has stories to tell. He tells stories well. And they are our stories (even, and perhaps most especially, when they are his own).¹ Missionary stories. Stories of Relief Society presidents and bishops. Three-Nephite stories. Trickster tales. Serious stories of humor. Farming stories. Outlaw stories. Theological stories. personal narratives. His mother's stories of Riddyville, a town that now exists only in stories.

His—our—stories are celebratory, healing, human stories. Stories that help us build a sense of community and then deal with the pressures that community imposes. Stories without which we have no selves. Stories that shape our lives as we shape them. He doesn't teach us to tell stories (for he seems to think of us as natural geniuses), but he does help us to value them, to study them, to recognize our humanity in them, to feel again the power of our own good fictions, the joy of our divine capacity to create.

1. He tells the stories referred to here in the following articles, among others:
"The Study of Mormon Folklore: An Uncertain Mirror for Truth,"
Dialogue 22:4 (Winter 1989).

"Freeways, Parking Lots and Ice Cream Stands: The Three Nephites in Contemporary Mormon Culture," *Dialogue* 21:3 (Fall 1988).

"The Seriousness of Mormon Humor," *SUNSTONE* 10:1 (January 1985).
"Mormon Folklore," In *Handbook of American Folklore*, ed. Richard M. Dorson. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1983.

"Trickster Tales and the Location of Cultural Boundaries: A Mormon Example," *Journal of Folklore Research* 20 (1983).

"On Being Human: The Folklore of Mormon Missionaries," Utah State University Faculty Honor Lecture, Logan: Utah State University Press, 1981.

"The Curse of Cain, and Other Stories: Blacks in Mormon Folklore,"
SUNSTONE 5:6 (Nov-Dec 1980).

"Folklore of Utah's Little Scandinavia," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 47 (1979).

"The Study of Mormon Folklore," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 44 (1976).
... and others.

AN AWARD IN THE ESSAY

Elouise Bell

Only When I Laugh

Salt Lake City: Signature, 1990

As Elouise Bell explains it: "The title of this collection . . . comes . . . from the old story about a man who had been run through with a large spear. When asked if it hurt terribly, he replied, 'Only when I laugh.' Sometimes it hurts whether we laugh or not." Reading these essays, I wept, I wailed, I gnashed my teeth. But mostly I laughed.

For many years, Elouise Bell has explored the range of the personal essay, trying it on like a body-suit, finding where it bends, where it stretches, where it fits best, where it's a bit loose and wrinkled. Most of these trials have been undertaken for *Network* magazine. To it, for its deadlines, we owe an immense debt of gratitude; without them, the tongue of this Bell might never have rung so many changes on the form.

And such changes! There is the voice of "When Nice Ain't so Nice" warning us of the danger to our society of suppressing our feelings, especially anger. There is the backward unmasking of our Sunday rituals in "The Meeting," loosing a friction of nervous laughter that scrubs away the local anesthetic which lets us sleep through

Sacrament (and other meetings). There is the clever update of one-upmanship in "Power Plays" lingering like a message on an answering machine, to remind us each time we take it up how phony are our pretensions. (And a reminder in "Three for the Holidays" of how empty our post-tensions are.)

In all these essays—wry, funny, sly, outrageous, clever, witty, dry-eyed, in *memoriam*—Elouise Bell releases the tensions that we all feel, sometimes with gales of raucous laughter, sometimes with punctures to our pride, sometimes with a clean surgical swipe. The tickling we feel in the aftermath is the itch of healing, the healing of the wound made by that large spear.

AN AWARD IN POETRY

Loretta Randall Sharp

"Doing It", *SUNSTONE*, 14:2 (issue 76), April 1990

"The Table", *SUNSTONE*, 14:3 (issue 77), June 1990

"Blood Poem", *SUNSTONE*, 14:4 (issue 78), August 1990

"The Slow Way Home", *Dialogue* 23:3, Fall 1990

"In Late September"¹ *Literature and Belief*, 1990

In an impressive year for published verse by Mormons—a great deal of it, all of it at least competent, much of it more than that—Loretta Randall Sharp is a very impressive winner of this award. Her voice is clear, individual and very direct; the confidence with which she controls it is the confidence of having something needful, something both timeless and contemporary, to say. It is a woman's voice addressing women's concerns so that we are all involved, men and women. She lives entirely in the contemporary world and her language and her landscape are those of our time. Yet—in "The Slow Way Home" for example—she is completely at ease in the old, unhurried world of India, her compassion and understanding wide enough to acknowledge the ancient customs of that land, aware of the presence of the old and necessary gods. And "Going Home," which I think the finest of this group of striking poems, exhibits a daughter's love and understanding for a sick father, with a lack of sentimentality at once healing and refreshing. It allows the poet to create a poem which shows we can all be "caught / by fear palpable as salt bring, each / yielding to the inexorable season of love."

Perhaps the greatest of her gifts is the sense of balance achieved by this poet. Hers is at artful and sufficient eloquence, her music is there to accompany her narratives, if they are narratives. Certainly there is a narrative line in every piece under consideration here. Her skill is to seem to have so natural a voice that we are startled after reading poem by its quiet aptness. It is a memorable accomplishment and one which deserves wide recognition.

1. Also published, with differences, as "Going Home," *Dialogue* 23:4, Winter 1990.

AN AWARD IN THE SHORT STORY FOR 1990

Walter Kirm

My Hard Bargain

New York: Knopf, 1990

In Walter Kirm's debut collection, *My Hard Bargain*, his stories come of age in ways that are unique in Mormon literature—they simply sail boldly toward the edge of the known world and refuse to drop off. Because of this daring, they cannot be ignored. They are stories about falling away and falling toward—about the adolescent whose

sexual sins marked out on his bishop's chart shine radiantly like the stars in a planetarium (they resist the object of the object lesson); they are stories about conversion, where the violence of domestic life is suddenly mellowed by the gospel beyond all the gospel clichés; and they are stories about the healing maternal touch of Vicks VapoRub.

Neither moralizing or "de-moralizing," each story transcends conventional expectation because Kim carefully fashions detail, but always relinquishes authorship to the reader at just the right moment. Indeed, it is the story that matters, not Kirm's long-standing personal view, pet peeves, or convictions. He gives himself up to whim, the moment of the story, the telling. One time he is a bankrupt farmer, preparing his bankrupt farmer speech. At another he is the keeper of deadman's curve, waiting for wrecks so that he can make his living on the salvaging of used parts. Walter Kirm's stories are about being alive in a world where "being human" is neither an excuse nor a revelation, but a wonderful fact. He is a master of the modern short story where fiction is multi-textured, variegated, and hard to pin down. He is someone the rest of us will have to deal with, literally speaking, for some time.

AN AWARD IN THE NOVEL

Franklin Fisher

Bones

Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1990.

Bones skillfully weaves numerous colorful narrative strands into an intriguing whole. In Lorin Hood, Franklin Fisher has created a complicated protagonist with a rich mystical, sensual, and artistic spirituality that meshes only uneasily with traditional Mormonism. His character develops sympathetically and deeply as he moves from adolescent doubt through phases of faith and self-discovery. This complexity is illustrated in descriptions of Lorin's painting, such as this one of a crowded pod of peas: "The peas themselves were of various densities. Some were solid and rough, with irregular bumps and knobs like asteroids, others were hard and smooth like pool balls, still others were shimmery and indistinct, and occupied the same spaces with the solid ones, overlapping like a double exposure. It had been an experiment in mixing modes of reality—how many peas from how many planes of existence could cohabit in the same canvas, much less the same pod?—and he had made it an experiment in simultaneous perspectives as well" (243). The narrative starkly contrasts passages of straightforward description of common objects and events with dreams and visions that render all experiences uncommon. Fisher also succeeds in juxtaposing different emotional and intellectual approaches to Mormonism and in creating characters with varying levels of maturity in encounters with issues of universal spiritual significance. The novel is splashed with evocations of Mormon culture and folklore that are both frankly comic and insightful, as when Lorin sees himself as a thirteen-year-old Joseph Smith: ". . . he watched himself creep down the wooden steps with their curls of green paint, cross the yard and push open the wagon-wheel gate and follow the dirt path up past the stock-dam, and then he joined himself. He was looking for a quiet place to pray for a revelation" (218). Lorin Hood's rites of passage as an artist, a Mormon, a sensualist, and a mystic are fascinating, controversial, disturbing and rewarding.

ONE FOLD

GALLUP TALKS OF SPIRITUAL NEEDS OF "COMPOSITE" AMERICAN

IN A talk given at Princeton Theological Seminary in December 1990, George Gallup, Jr., who, for fifty-five years has surveyed Americans on a wide range of topics, stressed that Americans are more easily characterized by their religious life than by any other criteria.

Gallup said, "Over the last half-century we have learned a great deal about the breadth of religion, but relatively little about the depth, about the inner life of humankind. The fact is that most social scientists have tended to turn their backs on explorations of the inner life, dismissing it as a subjective realm and therefore not worthy of study. Yet if one were to select the most important dynamic in the life of Americans that explains our uniqueness and character, it would be, not politics, not educational level, not region of the country, but the religious dynamic."

After recognizing the limitations of surveys attempting to define the inner life, Gallup nevertheless outlined six basic spiritual needs of Americans and explored whether churches are relating to those needs.

Gallup's first spiritual need: 70 percent of Americans believe it is very important that life is meaningful and has a purpose. Two-thirds of people interviewed believe that "most churches and synagogues today are not effective in helping people find meaning in life."

Second, Americans feel a need for a sense of community and deeper relationships. Society has become highly mobile, experiences high divorce rates, and fosters megacities, multinational corporations, and bureaucracies. As a result "radical individualism" has taken hold in the religious lives of Americans, and the large majority of Americans now believe that one can be a good Christian or Jew if one does not attend church or synagogue. Gallup noted that a consequence of this individualism is loneliness. He said one-third of persons surveyed say they have been lonely "for a long period of time" in their lives, with half of these people saying this experience has affected their thoughts "a great deal." Gallup suggested that faith communities can combat individual loneliness by encouraging corporate worship as well as participation in small groups. He thinks that small groups, rooted in prayer and Bible study, may be the best hope for a renewed church in the 1990s.

Third, Americans feel the need to be appreciated and respected. As many as one-third of the American people have a low sense of self-worth or self-esteem. Significantly, he said, "we have discovered that the closer people feel to God, the better they feel about themselves. They are also more satisfied with their lives than are others, more altruistic, enjoy better health, and have a happier outlook."

Fourth, Americans want to be listened to. Americans overwhelmingly think the future of the church will be shaped to a greater extent by the laity than by the clergy. Not only do they think it will happen, they believe that it *should* happen. Gallup defined lay involvement as mostly administrative which frees the clergy to listen to people's religious needs and to provide spiritual counseling and inspiration. In one survey, when the unchurched were asked what would most likely draw them back into the community of active worshippers, the lead reason was, "if I could find a pastor, priest, or rabbi with whom I could share my religious needs and doubts."

Fifth, Gallup said Americans have a need to feel that they are growing in faith. Seven Americans in ten say they have experienced a change in faith during their lifetimes. He said churches need to pay close attention to the passages people experience in their faith lives and to religious experiences which often change the course of one's life.

Sixth, Americans need practical help in developing a mature faith. "We read the Bible, but we are a nation of biblical illiterates," Gallup said. "We pray and believe in the power of prayer, but do not give our prayer life the attention it deserves. We believe the Ten Commandments to be valid rules of life, but we are unable to name many of them. We would be hard pressed to defend our faith because we are uncertain about what we believe, let alone why we believe." Gallup said churches need to work toward closing the gap between belief and practice—to turn professed faith into live-out faith.

After expostulating the spiritual needs of Americans, Gallup said he saw the challenges of religious communities being two-fold: "To reach as many people as possible, and to reach them as deeply as possible, to broaden the church itself and deepen it." (*Emerging Trends*)

CATHOLICS, PROTESTANTS ABANDON "JUST WAR" TRADITION

IN RESPONSE to the recent Persian Gulf War, mainline Protestants are changing their positions regarding their support of fighting just wars, according to the evangelical magazine *World*. Neoconservative critic George Weigel says that much of the formal mainline religious leadership in the U.S. has eschewed its traditional just-war teaching and become "functionally pacifist" in its condemnation of the use of American military force in foreign conflicts. He argues that the mainline religious leaders' pacifism is not what he calls "principled pacifism," but rather it is restricted to the opposition of American use of force.

In Catholic quarters, the Vatican Jesuit journal, *La Civiltà Cattolica*, stated in a recent issue: "In reality, war today—except in the case of defending oneself from a grave aggression underway—is morally unacceptable, whatever the reasons given for its justification." The journal doubts whether a war can be "limited"—which is one of the just-war qualifications—since modern warfare and weaponry escalates conflict to affect the rest of the world and the environment. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

U.S. POPULACE PRAYS FOR PEACE

OVER HALF of the U.S. populace (58 percent) reported they prayed more than usual after the beginning of the Persian Gulf War. A similar percentage (59 percent) believe their prayers can be very effective in a situation like the one faced in the Persian Gulf. An additional 22 percent say they think praying can be fairly effective.

While tending to pray more, Americans did not attend church more regularly after the tensions increased in the Mid-East. The percentage attending church in a typical week remained at the highest level recorded in nearly three decades, but that level is a modest upward trend that has been building over the past four years. (*Emerging Trends*)

THAT'S THE TICKET

MOST WESTERNERS are annoyed by having to pay parking tickets, but in Toronto, Canada, Chaintanya Kalevar's tickets frustrate him for a different reason. A devout Hindu, Kalevar neglects his tickets precisely in order to go to trial, having made it his mission to replace the Canadian law that offers only the Christian Bible for swearing in witnesses with a practice of asking what holy book the witness prefers (for Kalevar it's the Bhagavad Gita). But the Canadian courts, reluctant to tackle this sensitive subject, have three times thrown out Kalevar's case before it came to trial, claiming they "lost" the tickets. Even if his crusade is unsuccessful, Kalevar at least gets choice parking spots. (*The Secular Humanist Bulletin*).

LIFE IN THE FAST LANE

SALT LAKE has been ranked as having the fourth fastest lifestyle in the United States. Only residents of Boston, Buffalo, and New York City outpace Salt Lakers. Robert V. Levine, a psychology professor at California State University, Fresno, ranked a number of cities using four criteria: the speed at which bank tellers fulfilled a request for change, the walking speed of downtown pedestrians, the talking speed of postal clerks, and the proportion of people wearing wristwatches. The "north-eastern United States is fast-paced," said Levine, "whereas the West Coast is a little more relaxed." Californians were the most laid-back, boasting six of the ten slowest-paced cities.

Levine had no explanation for Salt Lake's hurry when compared to other western cities. He did note that Salt Lakers don't suffer from coronary heart disease in the same proportion that residents of other fast-paced cities experience. He attributed their health to the low proportion of smokers. He also noted that Salt Lake residents don't demonstrate what many researchers consider the most important characteristic of stressful behavior: hostility. Besides not harming their health, Timothy Smith, a psychology professor at the University of Utah, notes Utahns "get a lot done."

A MARVELOUS WORK

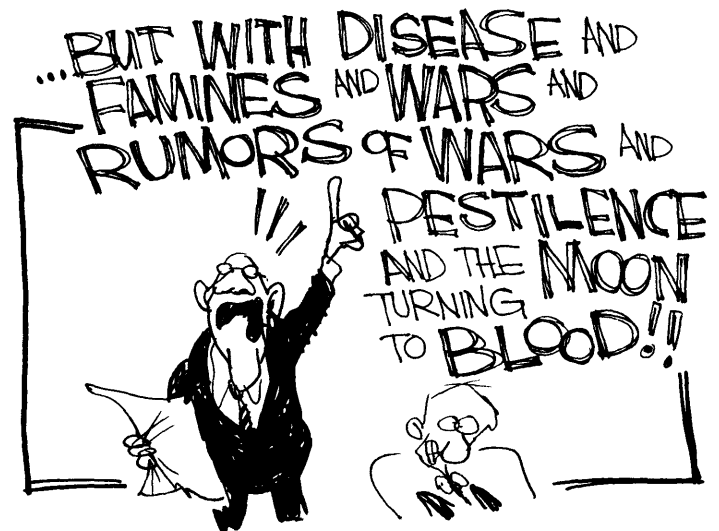
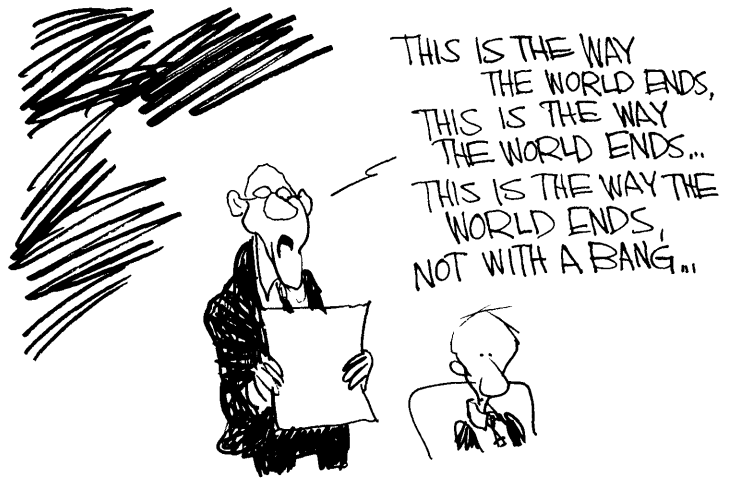
THE Elvis Up Close Museum across the street from Elvis Presley's Tennessee mansion, Graceland, features, among other things, a selections of books he read; well, he owned. Tomes include the *Collected Works of Kahlil Gibran*, one on the assassination of John Kennedy, one about Chinese karate movie star Bruce Lee, and, interestingly, the LDS seminary text, *The Restored Church*. If Elvis hasn't yet done his own temple work, and if, perhaps, he read the book, he will be more receptive to the missionaries' message on the other side, assuming he really is dead.

EVANGELIST FIRMS UP FLABBY FOLLOWERS

THE Rev. Joe Florence is trying to entice throngs of walkers, bikers, and joggers to join him for worship services on Sunday morning; he then joins them for exercises afterward, according to a recent Associated Press story.

"Active Worship for Active People" is what Florence calls his new service at White Rock United Methodist Church in Dallas, Texas. Meeting in a church gym and using bleachers as pews, worshippers attend in their sweat pants and work out together after the sermon.

"Our goal is to get to the baby boomers," said Florence. "They don't like to dress up."



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