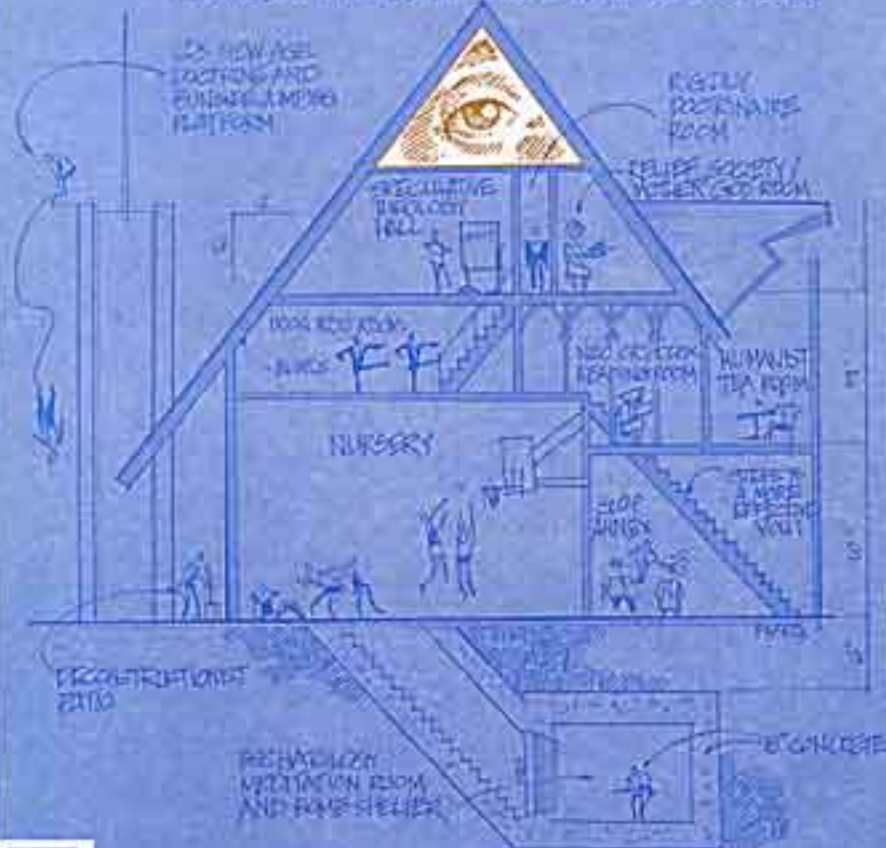


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# SUNSTONE

TREK VIEWS ON ALTERNATE VOICES IN WHITESMITH SPRING



## THE PERSISTENCE OF MORMON COMMUNITY INTO THE 1990S

BY MARIO S. DEPILLIS



# SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, AND ART

September 1991

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## READERS' FORUM

### REFLECTIVE LETTERS

AT THE END of this year SUNSTONE will have completed publishing fifteen volumes of the magazine (although it took sixteen years to accomplish). Early next year we will commemorate that event with a special issue which will include the following sections: a history of content of the magazine and symposiums; a complete listing of the table of contents of each issue; a combined author/subject/title index of SUNSTONE and the late *Sunstone Review*; a scripture index of both publications; and a listing of all symposium presentations with publication references and cassette recording availability.

The Readers' Forum section will feature subscriber reflections on SUNSTONE's history and contributions. Letters should not exceed 500 words and must be received by January 1992.

THE EDITORS

### RHYME AND RHYTHM

I APPLAUD SUNSTONE's call for Mormon limericks, even if your motivation is to have a short text to fill those spaces at the end of articles which are too small for a poem or a cartoon. It is a fun idea and I hope you get many submissions and run three or four in each issue. Here is my first contribution:

A statement came out from the Quorum,  
Saying, "Symposia? We abhor 'em!"  
They're discussing the garments,  
Those miserable varmint!  
The *Ensign's* the only true forum!

ALAN CANFIELD  
Salt Lake City

#### *Editor's note:*

We were pleased by the response to our limerick contest (SUNSTONE 15:2) and hope to make them a tradition. We still need to prime the pump to get submissions, so we'll give a Sunstone T-shirt for each rhymers who has an entry accepted before January 1992.

### R-RATED ARTICLES

AFTER READING THE issues sent to me after recently subscribing, I am writing to cancel my subscription. Scott Kenney's "God's Alternate Voices" (SUNSTONE 14:2) completely misses the point of Elder Oaks's May 1989 *Ensign* discourse on "Alternate Voices." Kenney thus falls into one of the very traps Elder Oaks warns to avoid—alternate

voices who seek "property, pride, *prominence*, or power" (emphasis added).

The decision to cancel my subscription was problematic because there is also good in SUNSTONE. Elder Oaks recognized this dilemma when he asked, "To what extent can one seek the benefit of something good one desires when this can only be done by simultaneously promoting something bad one opposes?" After applying these guidelines, I must cancel for two reasons.

First, Elder Oaks provides a bright-line rule: "In my view a person who has made covenants in the holy temple would not make his or her influence available to support or promote a source that publishes or discusses the temple ceremonies, even if other parts of the publication or program are unobjectionable. I would not want my support or my name used to further public discussion of things I have covenanted to hold sacred." The May 1985 Decennial issue (SUNSTONE 10:5) contains the article "The Mormon Temple Experience: A Non-Mormon Look at a Latter-day Saint's Most Sacred Ritual." I believe that Elder Oaks's counsel applies to this article.

Second, with a universe of information sources, SUNSTONE's strange mix of informative, destructive, and babbling messages does not merit support. While I welcome the enlightenment it provides, one of the adversary's most effective tools is the half-truth. For this reason, we are counseled not to watch R- or X-rated movies, despite the fact they may have some redeeming value.

RICK N. BRYSON  
Phoenix, AZ

### MORMON CHRISTIANS

I READ WITH interest the letter from Laurie Newman DiPadova ("The Legacy of our Manuals," SUNSTONE 15:2) concerning her distress that the Presbyterians went on record as not recognizing the Mormons as Christians. This is a game that has been going on for years.

As a convert to the Church of thirty-two years, I gloried in the differences that separated us from the mainline Christian churches. I sought no accommodation with historical Christian doctrine or definitions. There seems to be a current trend for many Latter-day Saints to emphasize and exaggerate LDS similarities with the various Christian churches. This ecumenical spirit is

philosophically attractive, but it is naive in the context of a divine restoration. The historical problems in the RLDS church are classic examples of this accommodation being carried to its most ridiculous extreme (see "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," *SUNSTONE* 14:3).

Simply put, the evangelical Christian churches emphasize that the Mormons are involved with a different Jesus than the true Bible-believing Christian. They are not impressed with any amount of good works or devoutness to Jesus on the part of any Latter-day Saint. If we are devout in our love for the Savior and serve others in a spirit of Christian love, it should be for the principle itself and not because the Presbyterians recognize our Christianity.

DAVID L. MCMONIGLE  
Middleville, MI

## SONIA'S CONTRADICTION

MY EXPECTATIONS OF finding any "truth" in Linda Sillitoe's exhaustive and exhausting apologia for Sonia Johnson's brand of feminism ("Off the Record: Telling the Rest of the Truth," *SUNSTONE* 14:6) disappeared

when Sillitoe failed to distinguish between the mindset of a Mormon irrationally pock-marking the meetinghouse walls with a few bullet holes and that of a Mormon picketing a stake conference in an planned act of political provocation. All that is clear to Sillitoe is "how much consideration" Mark Hofmann received from the Church in contrast to how much was done "to provoke excommunication," when Johnson had done nothing more than "picket a stake conference."

Sillitoe's casting of Johnson-as-Mormon-martyr suggests the melodramatic but vacuous nobleness of E. M. Forester's claim that he would choose to betray his country rather than his friend (or the ideological equivalent), to which Malcolm Muggeridge replied, how can you betray one and not the other? When Johnson picketed the stake conference, she was engaging in an act of self-contradiction. It is, after all, difficult to picket a stake conference and attend it at the same time. Her excommunication was simply a matter of the Church asking her get her priorities straight.

EUGENE WOODBURY  
Provo, UT

## WHY WE DISAGREE

WHY HAS EUGENE ENGLAND'S article "On Trusting God, Or Why We Should Not Fight Iraq" (*SUNSTONE* 14:5) produced so much negative response, along with some positive reactions, from his fellow Mormons? The answer lies in our dual nature.

We are all aware of the Apostle Paul's distress over his being subject both to the flesh and to the spirit—"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24). We are all similarly possessed. There is the ego that is motivated by fear, and there is the spirit that is motivated by love.

When we are possessed of the spirit, we have complete trust and faith in God—motivated by love, we have no fear of attack. We have no inclination to condemn others or to harm them in any way. Under such circumstances there are no wars because there is no enemy, and we are completely defenseless. This is the ideal situation that England writes about in his article.

When we are possessed by the ego, we are fearful. We build defenses, expecting attack from our enemies. The possibility of war is constantly on our minds. In these circum-



stances, the best we can do is to urge restraint until we are under attack, and then defend ourselves to the best of our ability. This is the second, less desirable, condition that England talks about. If we become fearful enough, we will find reasons to attack our enemy and eliminate the threat before he attacks us directly, like what the United States did in Grenada, Panama, and the Persian Gulf. England discourages this option.

“What is God’s Will concerning war?” In the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon there are numerous instances in which God apparently supports war and where he even brings about destruction himself. If God was at one time supportive of war as a means of getting rid of the wicked, why would he not be today? Didn’t we receive God’s blessing in going to war against Hitler? And shouldn’t we for Saddam Hussein?

Our answers to these questions hinge upon our interpretation of Christ’s mission. If we believe that Jesus came to teach us how to transform ourselves from an ego-dominated state to a spirit-dominated state, won’t we also expect such a transformation to bring about a change in our perception of others? Prior to this transformation we should feel an obligation only to our friends; after this transformation we should feel a brotherhood with all of humanity. I believe that the Old Testament and the Book of Mormon are directed primarily toward those who can live only under the law of Moses and are not yet ready for the full transformation taught by Jesus. This is why there is so much controversy over whether Jesus’ teachings on love and forgiveness are practical. Many are not

yet ready to practice unconditional love.

Of all the major religions, Buddhism is the only one that has not actively promoted war at some period in its history. When countries with large Buddhist populations were invaded, they (the Buddhists) were subjected to much persecution, considerable torture, and widespread massacre. This was the case in India, China, and more recently in Tibet, where several million were killed by the invading Chinese. The Dalai Lama, who was—is—the religious leader of that country, escaped to northern India. Since that time, never to my knowledge has he expressed hatred toward the Chinese, nor has he supported any kind of armed rebellion. He has consistently taught love, compassion, and kindness toward everyone. I suspect he would rather give his life than hurt another.

Jesus was also this kind of person, but we have severely misrepresented him in order to serve our own militaristic inclinations. In the Garden of Gethsemane he apparently could have called hosts of angels to his defense, but chose to go meekly to his crucifixion and death. We do an injustice to God when we bring him into our wars. God is one hundred percent love. Love and hatred cannot co-exist; therefore, there is no hatred in God. While the theologian and mystic Williams Law, among others, concluded from this that the religious wars and acts of destruction promoted by God were somehow done out of love, I think it is more reasonable to conclude that God remains totally clear of this whole insanity. Wars are an ego function—an example of our humanness—that he neither helps nor hinders. We go it on our own and

then suffer the consequences.

THOMAS L. DAVIES  
Orem, UT

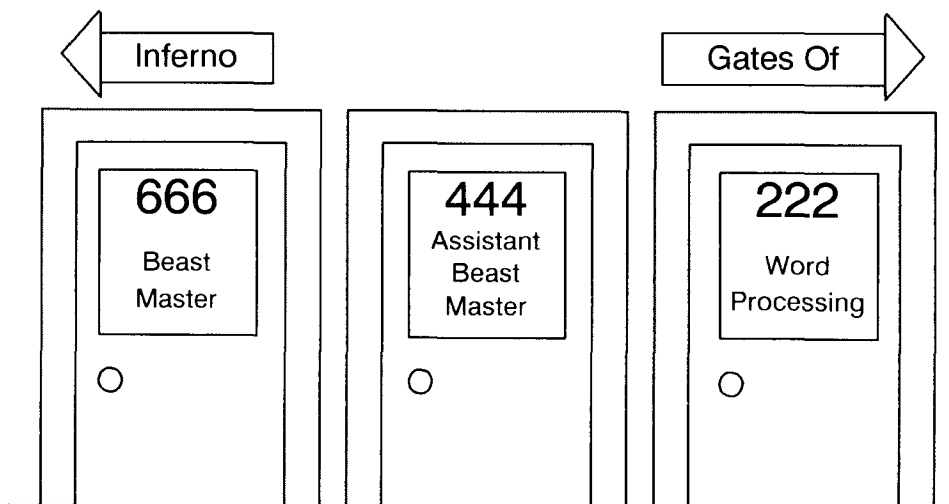
## REVISIONIST PRIDE

NOTHING THAT I have written warrants the conclusion that I advocate either what Wayne Sandholtz calls “Disneyland history” or “Kremlin history” (SUNSTONE 15:2). My attempt to suggest some of the possible implications and applications of Peter Novick’s findings to the recent professionalization of Mormon history (see my review essay of Novick’s *That Noble Dream: The “Objectivity Question” and the American Historical Profession*, “The Myth of Objectivity: Some Lessons for Latter-day Saints,” SUNSTONE 14:4) does not go beyond what Novick said about the history profession generally. Would Sandholtz be justified in imagining that because Novick, like many others, rejects the myth of objectivity he thereby advocates that historians write either “Disneyland history” or “Kremlin history”? Such an assumption would be preposterous. Why then imagine that I have such a desire, since I go no further than did Novick? All I did was summarize Novick’s findings, contrast them with the celebratory accounts written by insiders to the Mormon history establishment, and then suggest ways in which his examination of the role of the “myth of objectivity” could be applied to the writing of Mormon history, which has also been at least somewhat dependent upon the same myth.

I am, of course, pleased to discover that Sandholtz feels “moved to gratitude and wonder that God can work through frail and imperfect people” in his Kingdom. And I like accounts of the Mormon past that are three dimensional in that they do not avoid confronting human frailties. What troubles me is the assumption that in order to write competent Mormon history one must be detached from the categories of the faith, that one must tell the story on the assumption that the gospel was not restored, that one must employ naturalistic explanations of the causes of revelation because a presumed need to be objective, neutral, balanced, or detached somehow requires that one devise ways of explaining away the prophetic elements in the Mormon past.

Whereas Sandholtz has failed to understand a word of my review of Novick’s book, Gary James Bergera (“The New Mormon Anti-intellectualism,” SUNSTONE 15:2) in three paragraphs managed to paraphrase my position reasonably well. For that he is to be congratulated. He does not, however, accept

## HELL INCORPORATED



my argument that Mormon faith depends upon the Book of Mormon being true, both as history and in what it teaches. Instead, he complains of the arrogance and dogmatism he sees in my position. But I am not advancing some radical new understanding of the relation of faith and history in the Mormon setting; I am only setting out what I believe to be the received opinion on such matters. If I am mistaken on what constitutes the received opinion on such matters, then Bergera should have focused attention on setting out the correct relationship.

But Bergera, who seems to be the revisionist on these matters, seems to think that it is a terrible mistake to see the Book of Mormon as either ancient and true or modern fiction and false. And hence to hold, as I do, that the faith depends upon the Book of Mormon being what it claims to be is, for Bergera, to "set up countless members to reject the Book of Mormon entirely if they should happen to discern modern elements in it." Such an argument could be used (and in the case of the RLDS is being used) to remove much if not all the contents of the faith, which is then replaced with an alien content borrowed from Protestant liberalism. For example, to insist that being faithful, that is, being a genuine Latter-day Saint, and hence more than merely a cultural Mormon, involves holding that Jesus of Nazareth atoned for sin, or was resurrected, may also lead some to reject the faith in spite of whatever sentimental attachments they may have to family or to the Mormon community. So be it. It may be better for a few to see themselves and be seen as outside than for the lines between inside and outside to be entirely blurred.

To explain the Book of Mormon as Joseph Smith's fiction that was somehow generated out of his need to find surcease for his own and others anxieties, and hence as a book drawn from ideas floating around his environment, clearly reject it as history. And to do that radically alters the faith. Those few who desire to reconstruct the faith along such lines ought to be forthcoming about their intentions, and not strive to appear that they are doing nothing out of the ordinary. They ought not to complain, as Bergera does, about what they see as the arrogance and dogmatism of those who prefer their faith essentially the way it has always been.

From the standpoint of most Latter-day Saints, the terms arrogance and dogmatism would perhaps better describe those few revisionists who mimic RLDS liberals, that is, those cultural Mormons who have compromised the core of the faith and who want to transform the faith along liberal Protestant

lines by reducing both its grounds and contents to a "Mormon myth" that does not identify an historical reality or authentic divine special revelations. My feeling is that fiddling with the grounds and contents of faith is a mistake precisely because we are not confronted with a merely human manufacture. It is a mistake to adjust the faith to suit our personal inclinations or to conform to the fashions and fads of the world.

We must have empathy for those who struggle over the question of whether the Book of Mormon is true or whether the gospel has been restored. And there is a place in the kingdom for such as these. But it is a rather different matter when someone proclaims that their unbelief must become the norm for the believer and that the Church must now begin to conform to their whims.

LOUIS MIDGLEY  
Provo, Utah

## TO DEBATE IS GOOD. . .

THE DILEMMA FACED by Gary James Bergera in his review of *To Be Learned is Good If . . .* is nicely expressed by author Lee Nelson. He states that it is difficult to get an accurate review of Mormonism because the nonconverted have not experienced the conversion process, and the converted seldom evaluate themselves objectively.

Much of the intellectual debate expressed in the pages of *SUNSTONE* is written by sincere Mormons and Mormon watchers. Some of these writers have never received a personal witness that God's foremost apparatus for bringing about the eternal progression of the human family is the Church as it was restored through the Savior's prophet, Joseph Smith. Bergera seems to believe that if the skeptics do not understand it, then it is not-understandable.

*To Be Learned is Good, If . . .* was written

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by believers for believers—indeed, the very title implies that education is a virtue unless it becomes a false god unto itself and destroys faith in the true God. One need not be a skeptic and a doubter to be intellectual.

CLIFFORD M. PESHELL  
Salt Lake City

## LETTER FROM BYU, TOO

IT IS NOT necessarily the dawning of a new day at BYU, despite the rosy tone of BJ Fogg's "Letter from BYU" (SUNSTONE 15:2).

While Rex Lee's bantering charisma wins the hearts of most students, I think his popular public Q&A sessions are more contrived than most think. If you look around the room during one of Rex's evasive replies, you'll usually see one or two administrative sycophants mouthing the words along with Rex—evidence of rehearsal. Not to be left speechless by some students' tough questions, Rex always has a reply of some kind, making the Q&A more of a P.R. stunt than a genuine feedback period.

Some faculty also feel passed over. With

Bruce Hafen as the provost, BYU is run by two lawyers. They're good lawyers, but they're not undergraduate educators. What effect this has on education at BYU is uncertain, but I feel that someone like David Gardner, president of the University of California, who specializes in the history of higher education, would provide a vision for BYU that we do not now enjoy.

In spite of these factors, I think Rex is doing a decent job. From what I understand, he doesn't respond to anonymous mail and he doesn't let radicals from the right or left ruffle his feathers. He talks more of the Board of Trustees' line than he did when he started, but I guess that's to be expected.

Fogg played up the [s]election of Amy Baird as BYUSA's new president because she is a woman. Although *USA Today* thought it was news, most people around here think that the BYUSA yes-man has only been replaced by a yes-woman. In fact, most students probably have no opinion: only 15.7 percent voted in the election (not counting a small contingent for Bart Simpson). I see BYUSA as a glorified youth pro-

gram, those who work for BYUSA see a tuition waiver, and the administration sees a group of students eager to do its dirty work.

As for the new honor code, the trustees did make some concessions: knee-length shorts, the "no-sock" look for men, and no mention of the "no-bra" look for women. As for restrictions, beards and earrings are still banned for men, and there is a new requirement that everyone wear shoes. However, the most important change is the institution of honor code councils which will take place this fall. These will be largely student-comprised councils that will hear cases involving minor infringements of the honor code and the dress and grooming standards. In conceding shorts, socks, and bras, the trustees got increased enforcement. I smell Gestapo.

Fogg noted the tolerance exhibited by the administration for the peace movement. I think that is the one clear sign that the winds might be changing. Fogg didn't mention the increased administrative intolerance for the independent student paper, *Student Review*. The new vice president of Student Life, R. J. Snow, whom *Student Review* originally heralded as a potential breath of fresh air, now forbids any department under him from advertising in *Student Review*. That includes BYUSA and Athletics. Who knows which way the wind is really blowing?

Fogg concludes, "In retrospect, the 1990-91 school year appears to have been one of increased dialogue and pluralism." There are fewer strictures on who can talk and what they can say, but amidst the din of debate, policy power remains at the top.

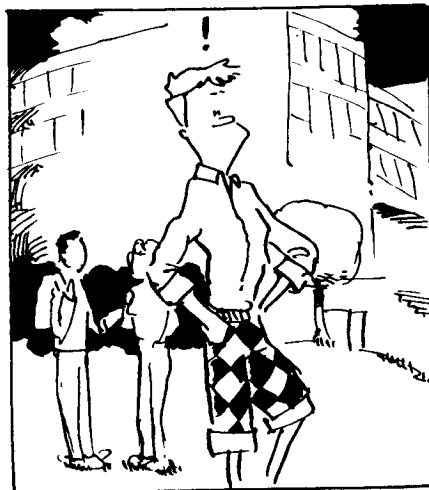
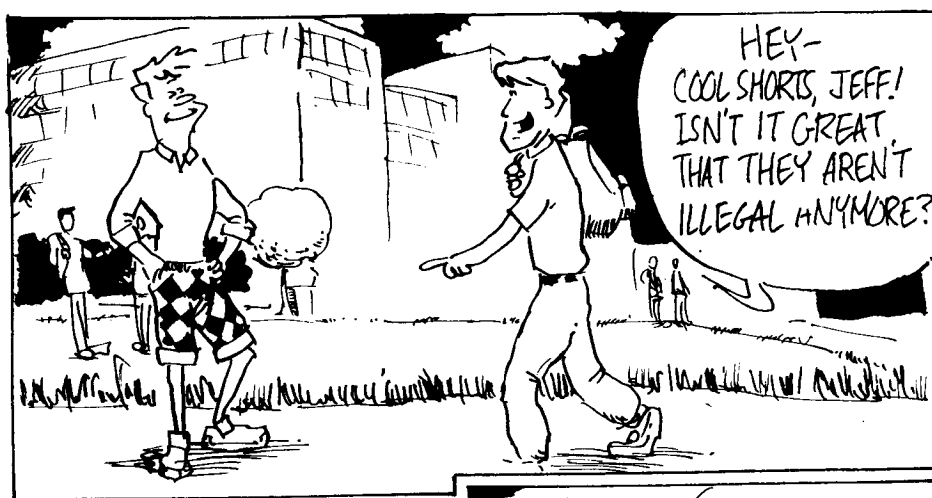
JOHN M. ARMSTRONG  
Provo, UT

## TO THE SUNSTONE

(With Apologies to Joyce Kilmer)

I think that I shall never see,  
A poem as lovely as, "A Tree,"  
(Because of its simplicity)  
In publications like thee.  
Its symmetry and rhyme is sin  
To "learned" readers, who find therein,  
No complexed phrases; Nor truth to pin  
In memories, grown sterile and void;  
Of child-like faith destroyed;  
By pride and self-esteem decoyed.  
John Milton's classic, "Paradise Lost,"  
By thee, would in the trash be tossed.  
So likewise, works of Robert Frost.  
"Rhymes are made by fools like me,  
But only God can make a tree."  
Alas, even he, is absent from your poetry.

JOSEPH F. WYSON  
Las Vegas



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## ORTHODOXY & REVELATION

I READ WITH both interest and appreciation the articles by Janice Allred and Todd Compton which stress the importance of personal revelation in understanding the gospel and the duty of Church leaders to at least respect, if not actually foster and encourage, members to seek out personal inspiration and interpretation ("Do You Preach the Orthodox Religion" and "Counter-Hierarchical Revelation," *SUNSTONE* 15:2). I would have felt more comfortable if they had addressed the following critical issues.

First, the concept of orthodox religion discussed by Allred seems to have two dimensions. One dimension is the relatively small body of doctrine actually approved by the First Presidency, acting in unison, which the Church accepts as the word of God to his church. In this sense, truly "orthodox" LDS theology is quite minimalist, typically focusing on basic principles such as faith, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Ghost, and refusing to directly address much else. In this sense, orthodox doctrine, as approved by the First Presidency in unison, is so sparse that God clearly is demanding each member of the Church to pray and ponder to fill in the blanks. Thus one can argue that true orthodox doctrine is exactly what Allred states it is not—its sketchy nature demands faith and personal revelation; it frustrates intellectual absolutism because so little doctrine is confirmed; and it keeps the individual interpretations of Church leaders in a humble perspective.

However, Allred argues for a second dimension of orthodox religion, the cultural precepts of LDS members which accept the teachings of individual general authorities as true gospel doctrine, despite the fact that their writings, such as Elder Bruce R. McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine*, have never officially been given that status. Concerning that second dimension, Allred's analysis of the "orthodoxy" of unofficial, culturally defined doctrine which bases assumptions of truth on false standards of authority and power, is right on. Nevertheless, her analysis is one sided, focusing strictly on the dysfunctions of the "conservative" or "reactionary" Mormon cultural orthodoxy. What about the dysfunctions of the "liberal" Mormon cultural orthodoxy? An unrighteous liberal orthodoxy, also based on principles of unrighteous dominion, control, and power allows its believers to disregard the teachings of Church leaders and set their supposed

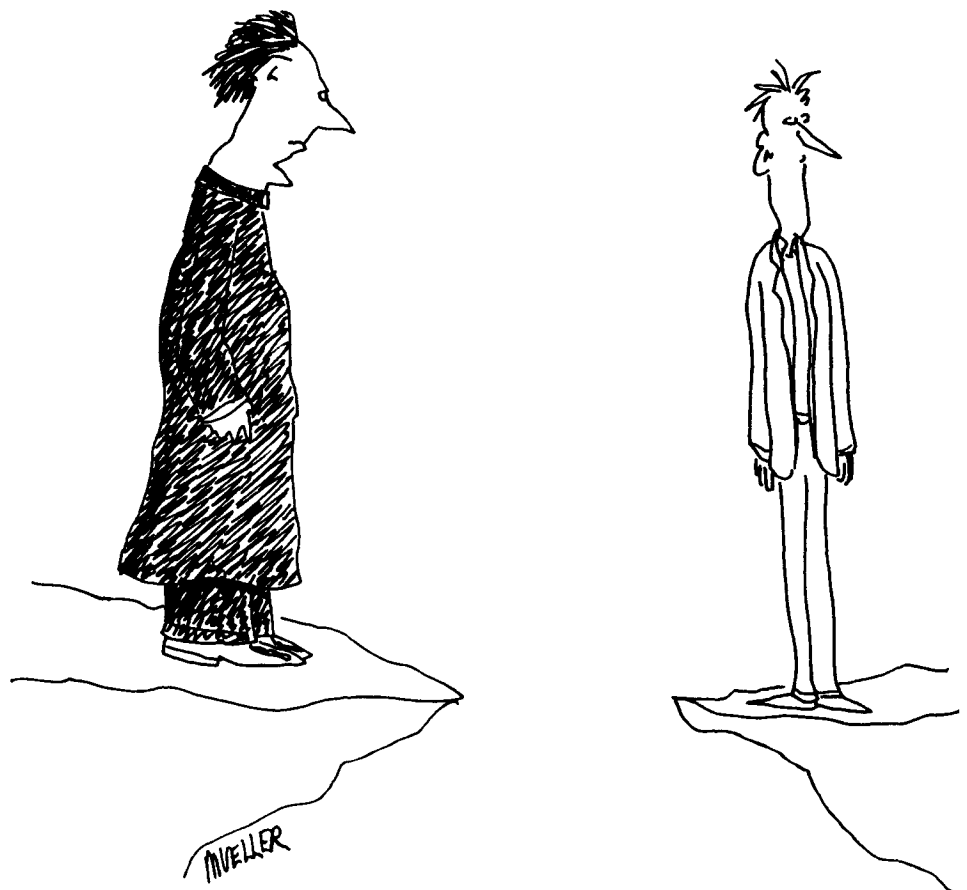
spirituality above that of the prophet; seems to substitute a combination of pride and secular knowledge for the Spirit; generates the arrogant conviction that their understanding and spirituality are superior to those of everyone else; results in extreme condescension, since all those who do not appreciate their views are regarded as ignorant and unenlightened; and denies the authenticity of any spiritual impression or feeling that can not be convincingly articulated in intellectual terms.

Finally, both essays present personal revelation, inspiration, and interpretation in glowing terms, as though it were completely compatible with an harmonious Christian community. The problem with personal revelation and interpretation is that it can be, and often is, false to some degree. Genuine, sincere, devout Mormons can be deceived, can follow the wrong Spirit, and can arrive at incorrect theological conclusions, all the

while being firmly convinced they are inspired by God. Personal revelation is a tricky thing, and for every case of genuine, impressive inspiration I have witnessed, I can also recall more questionable ones. I remember a friend who claimed LSD was a vehicle of the Spirit, that it was in the apples eaten by Adam and Eve, and that its use led to his conversion. Or the former member I met who entered polygamy. Or the classmate who became so caught up in apocryphal doctrines he left the Church, convinced he had advanced beyond it, and is now praying to be resurrected before his death, as he believed Christ was.

This is the dark side of personal inspiration, and one that always threatens to corrupt our understanding of the gospel and pull apart our Christian community. The centralizing and stabilizing nature of Church authority is, at worst, a necessary evil to counterbalance the destabilizing and frag-

### THE SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STAN.





menting nature of individual revelation. This is the paradox which must be dealt with, but went unrecognized. I think this is God's way of demanding absolute humility when dealing with these topics. There are no easy answers, and whatever solution or position one advocates carries its own set of problems just as serious as those it seeks to remedy.

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## WHAT IS TRUTH?

JANICE ALLRED'S PIECE on orthodoxy was not only intellectually stimulating, but said some things about orthodoxy that really needed saying. It is unfortunate that such a fine piece of writing had to be marred by a flawed discussion on the nature of truth.

Simply put, Allred's arguments to establish this alleged relativity of truth only demonstrate the relativity of the individual perceptions of truth. It is not correct to say that "truth is located in language; where there is no language, there is no truth." Existential or relational facts exist independently of any words that might be used to describe them.

Does a tree crashing in the forest with no observer present make sound? Yes. The tree's collapse initiates a series of vibrations in the air at certain frequencies that create an audible signal. Does the crash, however, make noise? No. "Noise" is a subjective interpretation in a process of discrimination that differentiates between "noise," "music," "cacophony," "harmonies," and so forth. Different people would choose different words to describe what they experience when they hear a given sound. Truth, like the nature of the sound, doesn't change, only the perception of the various observers does.

There has been a trend in the past few decades to believe that what an individual perceives as truth is true for that person. This, unfortunately for those so confused, is baloney. The old tale of the five blind men and the elephant is still useful in illustrating this error: one man grasps the tail and concludes that an elephant is a hanging rope with a tassel, another hugs the leg and decides that an elephant is some species of tree with rough bark, while yet another pushes against the elephant's side and is certain that it is a towering wall. It nevertheless remains

the case that the elephant is an elephant, and not a rope or a tree or a wall.

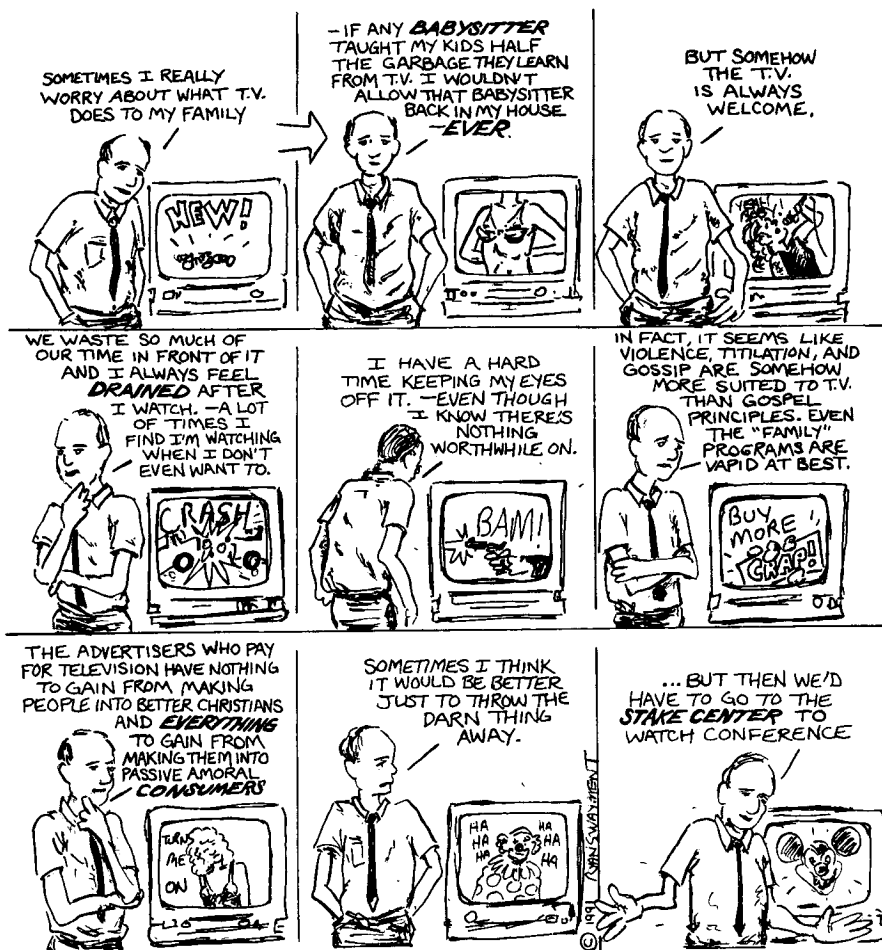
When Allred talks about the Navajo language "ordering reality differently than English, forcing some distinctions that English ignores while ignoring some distinctions that English makes," she is falling squarely into the blind-men-and-the-elephant trap. "Reality" is not ordered differently by language, but only the observation and expression of it. Arabic, for example, has several more words for sand than does English. This means only that the Arabs have more knowledge of sand, not that sand itself is different for Arabs and English-speakers.

It is intellectually dangerous to accept this idea of relative truth. If truth really were relative, there would be no point in trying to refine one's understanding of it—truth would simply be whatever one thought of it at the moment. This would be akin to paleontologists of the nineteenth century being completely satisfied with the model of a dinosaur they had extrapolated from a few leg and jaw bones. New pieces of information could be freely discarded if they conflicted with individual interpretations of what the truth was. Completely to the contrary, the whole thrust of science is based on a concept very similar to absolute truth—that by continually readjusting and refining the perception and interpretation of the facts as more information is obtained, a conceptual model can be achieved that approaches ever closer to what nature truly is.

Indeed, as the histories of both science and religion have shown (each with its own particular orthodoxies), it is not the belief in an absolute truth that creates orthodoxy, but rather the belief that a final truth has been arrived at.

Still, it is important to understand the relativity/subjectivity inherent in our communication of truth. From the Nag Hammadi codices, the Gospel of Phillip states: "Truth did not come into the world naked, but she came clothed in types and images; one cannot receive the truth in any other way." We must unfortunately rely almost exclusively on written and spoken symbols and analogies to convey to one another thoughts, ideas, and discoveries concerning truth. But this leaves humans vulnerable to certain risks of distortion in trying to convey these truths.

This truth is further screened by the receiving person's biases, experiences, and already existing knowledge base. It's a wonder that even partially accurate information is ever passed. Nonetheless, the original truth remains the same, though its image in the minds of those involved in the commu-



nications process might be another matter entirely.

It is not a belief in an absolute truth that defines orthodoxy, but a refusal to accept purer truth or newly discovered or revealed truth. This is, after all, the bankruptcy shared by both Islam and orthodox Christianity—the belief that the canon is closed, that no additional revelation will follow. But we must be careful in assessing just what we castigate as orthodoxy. Often our accusations are leveled not because the individual or group about whom we complain refuses to accept new truth, but because they refuse to accept our version of the truth.

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## ROOTS OF REVELATION

I THOROUGHLY ENJOY the thoughtful ideas presented in *SUNSTONE*. I had ample ideas to study and pray about after reading Todd Compton's article. One of the examples he uses, however, perhaps oversimplifies the role Emma Smith had in the coming forth of the "Word of Wisdom" revelation announced on 27 February 1833.

The revelation addresses considerably more subjects than just the chewing tobacco that Emma reportedly found inconsistent with the School of the Prophets. This fact alone suggests that Joseph Smith had other issues relating to health and wisdom that he tried to determine the Lord's will about. If all Emma objected to was tobacco, why did the revelation also include wine and strong drinks, grains, hot and cold beverages, herbs, and counsel about eating flesh?

Since virtually nothing is known about the origins of the revelation except what was related thirty-five years later in the reflections of Brigham Young, can we authoritatively say that Emma's comments were the sole (or even the primary) basis for Joseph's inquiry of the Lord? Was it pure coincidence that the date of this revelation coincided to the day with the carefully planned activities of temperance societies throughout New England to commemorate the creation of the congressional Temperance Society? This fact would suggest that the dominant subject of the revelation in Joseph Smith's mind was not tobacco, but alcohol.

Was Joseph Smith unaware of the rather radical concepts of appropriate personal consumption habits espoused in the theological seminaries at Oberlin and Amherst in 1830 and those of Sylvester Graham and William Alcott? If he knew of these teachings, his pleas to the Lord would have sought answers

to these issues as well, and omissions the Lord made in the revelation might be subject for discussion (including exercise, cold water cures, baths, abstinence from tea, coffee, fish, pepper, gravy, and butter).

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## CORRECTION

PLEASE INFORM YOUR readers of the following correction: The correct title of Jerold and Sandra Tanner's analytical comparison of various stages in the development of Mormon temple rites is *Evolution of the Mormon Temple Ceremony: 1842-1990*, not *1920-1990*, (see *BOOKNOTES*, *SUNSTONE* 15:2). The 1842 date is important not only as the year Joseph Smith initiated the endowment (*History of the Church* 5:1-2), but for the context of this event which was discussed in his prayer circle. Commentary on early temple matters can be found in the journals of William Clayton, Joseph Smith, and Wilford Woodruff.

GEORGE D. SMITH  
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## FERTILITY, RIGHT?

SO JOHN KUNICH says that a population increase of 2 percent a year is "unheard-of" ("Multiply Exceedingly: Book of Mormon Population Sizes," *SUNSTONE* 14:3). I think he should have waited for the latest report of the U.N. Population Fund (*Los Angeles Times*, 14 May 1991, A-4). According to this agency, the population of the Mideast is expanding at 2.8 percent per annum, South Asia at 2.3 percent, and Africa at the really unheard-of rate of 3 percent. Nigeria will increase from 109 million to 281 million in the next 35 years! This will happen "even though the percentage of married couples using contra-

ceptives in developing countries has grown from less than 10 percent in the 1960s to 51 percent." We should remember that this will occur in a continent rife with war, disease, and starvation. It is estimated that in Ethiopia alone 3 million people will starve to death next year. In my mind it is just perhaps possible that the people of Nephi did "multiply exceedingly."

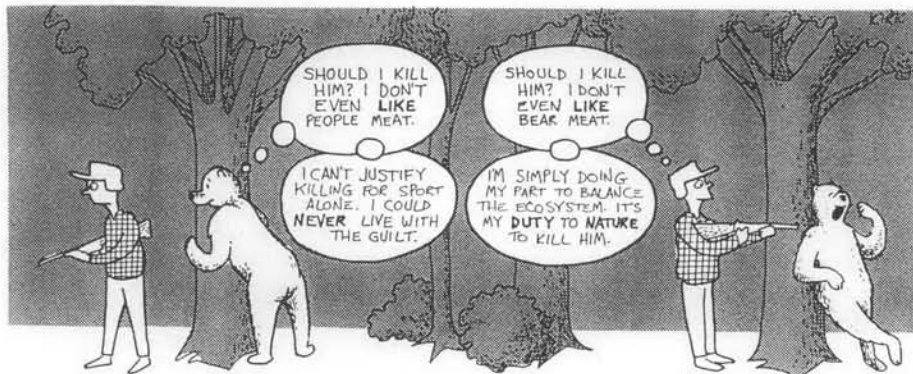
DAVID W. DODDRIDGE  
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*John Kunich replies:*

Doddridge neglects to consider that short-term spurts such as the present-day Third World examples he cites are indisputably (1) brief and (2) the product of conditions totally different from those described in the Book of Mormon.

Only when a population both receives the multiple advantages of late-twentieth-century breakthroughs in medicine, technology, food production, etc., and temporarily persists in maintaining the high birthrate of the previous agrarian, high-mortality period, are such increases possible. No society has ever continued in such a pattern for long, because a large number of children surviving infancy are a burden rather than a boon when skilled workers, not more field hands, are the primary need. The war, disease, and starvation Doddridge notes in these explosive-growth regions are in fact evidence of what happens when a society is struggling to equilibrate its rate of population increase with its rate of economic increase.

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What separates Man from the animals is his capacity to rationalize.

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## FROM THE EDITOR

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# GIFTS OF PROPHECY



By *Elbert Eugene Peck*

I LOVE general conference! There, God calls me to live a truer Christian life, and I feel him sustaining the Church. There is goodness and strength when these yokefellows gather. Through the prophetic words of our leaders, the Spirit quietly, but firmly and justly, calls me to quit some actions and begin others. It is good that one's religious life is lived in dialogue with a believing community, which constantly asks you to compare, explain, and change your thoughts, beliefs, acts, and priorities to the norms of others similarly committed. Sometimes you defer, other times you dissent, reconsider, accept, or learn. But in all these ways, you root the grand conversation that engages your whole life in the household of faith. General conference affords such primal tête-à-têtes.

For example, Apostle Marvin J. Ashton's call for Church service to "strengthen the feeble knees" of fellow Saints thankfully assaulted my recent slippage in Church attendance (a pattern single adults too easily adopt) and anewed my soul in an on going conversation. His and others' concerns about the weakening effects on the community of relentless criticism, controversy, and unorthodox ideas prompted serious ponderings. "Constant criticism can wear one down and weaken knees," Elder Ashton said. "As we look closely at family members, friends, and leaders, we will see their human limitations." He's right about the cancer of skeptical criticism, but upon reflection it seems to me that such toxic criticism is not necessarily the same thing as observing human failings in Church policies and policymakers. As with family and friends, knowing leaders' humanness allows me to be more understanding, forgiving, and helpful. When I regard general authorities as I do bishops and stake presidents I am less judgmental—seeing them as flawed humans doing the best with what God gives them to accomplish the incredible things he asks of them. But down-scaling expectations can also result not only in char-

ity but in a doubting cynicism. To be constructive, this human knowledge requires that honest evaluation happen concurrently with the celebration of the divine in the work; that combination is a sophisticated task, but not impossible. Hence, in the local Church, it is easy to shake your head at some silly thing your bishop does and later in the same day seek his counsel or be fed by his inspired sacrament meeting talk. In fact, knowing a bishop's limitations allows one to truly sustain him by compensating for his shortfalls, as ward members charitably do weekly. Similarly, many aspects of general Church administration require an acknowledgement of the human and political aspects in order to prevent dismissing the divine along with the mortal. This omnipresent humanness recommends a more open and participative leadership style as a check for Church policies and programs.

But at general conference our leaders preach more than they administrate. There, they are prophets more than presidents, and God is in their exhortations. The role of prophets is usually not to foretell events but to call the current generation to repentance. They take the received covenant and make it fresh for their time. With one hand they present God's standards, with the other a mirror of our society, and with their mouths they compare and call us—and themselves—to change. Conference, of course, is not unique. Every Sunday in classes and over the pulpit, women and men speak with this same prophetic voice. I felt it in good measure this October. There the Spirit called me to pray more deeply, to abandon material pursuits (including brand-name jeans) in order to aid "the homeless, the hungry, and the destitute," to mend an old friendship, to marry intellectual analysis with spirituality, and to come unto Christ by listening *and* feeling in still meditation his piercing whispers. I was challenged and rebuked, but I felt refreshed and liberated, leaving with a desire to be better

and with a hope that I could be.

Counseling the local congregations of his day, the Apostle Paul said that if a member at church "prophesies, he is talking to men and women, and his words have power to build; they stimulate and they encourage. . . . [I]t is prophecy that builds up the Christian community." (1 Corinthians 14:3-4, Revised English Bible for all scripture quotes.) I was encouraged and built up when our prophets and one visionary prophetess called us to be more Christlike. Interestingly, this same chapter also requires latter-day readers to confront the human limitations of prophets, because blended in with that beautiful and expansive definition of prophecy is also Paul's famous and very culture-bound statement about women:

As in all congregations of God's people, women should keep silent at the meeting. They have no permission to talk, but should keep their place as the law directs. If there is something they want to know, they can ask their husbands at home. It is a shocking thing for a woman to talk at the meeting. (1 Corinthians 14:33-35.)

After hearing Sister Aileen Clyde's deeply moving address on Christian love and the suffering it requires—which was obviously partially informed by her human *female* experience—what is shocking is not that a woman spoke, but that only one with that background blessed our conversation. Sadly, the prophetic visions and perspectives women share each Sunday are not similarly reflected in our all-Church gatherings. Mormons proudly quote these futuristic and democratic scriptures: "I wish that all the LORD's people were prophets and that the LORD would bestow his spirit on them all!" (Numbers 11:29), and "The days are coming, says the LORD when I shall . . . set my law within them. . . . No longer need they teach one another, neighbour or brother, to know the LORD; all of them, high and low alike, will know me." (Jeremiah 31:31-34.) With such a theology where everyone can speak prophetically, even if limited by their humanness, Paul's counsel for us to deliberate about prophecy makes a lot of sense: "Of the prophets, two or three may speak, while the rest exercise their judgement upon what is said" (1 Corinthians 14:29).

And so my conversation with our community of prophet-leaders and prophet-followers goes on daily. My life is richer for those who with piquing regularity call me to journey beyond my current station. Thank thee, O God, for prophets and prophetesses. ☞

## IN MEMORIAM

# CHARLIE BROWN

By Robert Macri

“CHARLES Edward ‘Charlie Brown’ Artman, the first true hippie to confuse Utahns, died on April 15, 1991,” wrote Joseph Bauman in Charlie’s *Deseret News* obituary. And it was true.

Charlie represented the best of the early sixties’ intellectual ferment of the Berkeley free-speech movement—freedom and individuality, the ability to tell in truth.

Charlie wore an attention-getting, one-piece black uniform with a large cape lined with psychedelic material. Around his neck, he wore an Egyptian symbol for eternal life, a self-forged, large brass ankh. He was a national-selling recording artist, having produced “Teton Tea Party” for Broadside Records in New York. He often lived in tepees on public land and originated the Temple of the Rainbow Path International, a service religion. He never wore shoes, even in winter, and went everywhere in his bare, calloused feet. After a winter snow, Salt Lake residents knew where Charlie had walked.

When Charlie arrived in Salt Lake City in 1968 as part of a national lecture tour on the coming counter-culture, Federal drug agents were waiting to seize his vehicle, copy his address book, and hold him incommunicado in Salt Lake County Jail. He filed a civil rights action suit. In the months consumed by the suit, Charlie was arrested twenty-one times, though never found guilty of anything.

During this time, my wife and I let Charlie park his school bus/home with its twinkling Christmas lights in front of our house. We took Charlie to a ward dinner where he became exposed to Mormon beliefs. Eventually he concluded that Mormonism was the Truth, and began a fifteen-year fervent quest for baptism.

Charlie’s urge to be baptized consumed his life in the early 1970s. He spent ten to fifteen hours a day in the genealogical library researching his ancestors. At a stake president’s request that he not be so conspicuous and ostentatiously outfitted in his black costume, Charlie sewed a new costume.

Charlie was moral, fair, caring, giving, and charitable. He never dreamed of accumulating wealth, but only wanted to share with



others and promote ecological rescue of the planet. He preferred homemade peanut butter on Clinton’s wheat bread. After that first ward dinner, Charlie went to the bishop and asked if he could have all of the leftovers that were destined for the garbage. Nothing could ever go to waste when Charlie was around.

Known at the University of Utah for his counter-culture lifestyle, he organized a love-in at Storm Mountain in Big Cottonwood Canyon in 1968. When Charlie ran for the Salt Lake City Commission in 1971, he declared, “The present government panders to the rich and powerful, granting them such requests as blocking their streets to [through] traffic . . . while refusing to consider the problems of the poor.” Regarding his campaign, he said, “I don’t want to pollute your personal environment with a bunch of political hard-sell garbage. I will be available to speak to any groups. That’s all the campaigning I’m going to do.”

His repeated requests for baptism were denied. During the Summer of Love in 1970,


Charlie worked through the Alameda Street Church to help troubled, lower-classed persons in Salt Lake City. He ran a few experimental programs at the church, including the first Utah Drug Foundation meetings. Charlie developed them to the point where perhaps 150 persons a night were staying at the church. He was serving meals to hundreds, signing some up for food stamps, and putting the stamps in the communal pot to feed larger and larger numbers.

In 1974 on our way back from a bookselling tour in New York where we had sung at the Electric Circus in Greenwich Village, we met Guru Maharaji, the fourteen-year-old living master who claimed to be Krishna himself. Charlie was fascinated and stayed for three years with him to study and play with Guru Maharaji and to drive the Blue Aquarius Orchestra bus on concert tours and love trips.

Charlie’s later efforts and travels to Scotland, Hawaii, and Los Angeles all included the LDS warehouse and continuing petitions to be baptized. His dream was realized on 5 May 1985 in Northern California. He spent the last six years of his life years going to the Oakland Temple for the sake of his ancestors.

Charlie was a tangible promise of the ideas which have come to fruition: ecology and harmony. Charlie was living proof that there must be opposition in all things. As Richard Menzies observed, “Some of us were surprised to learn that Charles Edward Artman, the Madonna of the Movement, the most outrageous character ever to tweak the nose of the Salt Lake establishment, had died a Mormon elder in good standing and was laid to rest in temple garb. The undertaker, a fellow by the name of Buzz, was surprised to hear that Charlie had ever been anything other than straight.”

Accompanying himself on an autoharp, Charlie sang on his album “Life is Like a Mountain Railway”—that if your eye is on the rail, and your hand is on the throttle, and you have Jesus as your engineer, you will enter the kingdom of heaven. Charlie’s life was a sacrifice to his God.

Dear Charles, thanks for the memories. Hare Krishna. 

## TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

David C. Knowlton

# OF THINGS IN THE HEAVENS, ON THE EARTH, AND IN THE CHURCH



DAN DAMM OLSEN

*If we attempt to insulate our testimonies from the rough rigors and hard facts of our past and our present we create weak, naive, insecure, and frightened testimonies. We flee and hide from serious engagement with the world, from putting our faith to the test, and deny the very validity of our testimonies, their ability to raise us to salvation.*

I SPEAK TO you with tremendously mixed feelings. I feel angry, frustrated, hurt, troubled, and afraid. When I was hired at BYU, I enquired carefully about the problems with intellectual freedom that I was told existed there. In my interview, Associate Aca-

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dem Vice President Dennis Thompson promised me that as long as I taught and researched as best I could the material of my field the university would stand behind me and support me. He also said that I should develop a thick skin because I might receive calls from concerned apostles, but not to worry because I would have the university's backing.

Furthermore, when Elder John Carmack interviewed me as part of the employment process, he spent a lot of time assessing my feelings about various intellectual subjects, such as archaeology and the Book of Mormon. I had the pleasure of letting him

argue against the Book of Mormon from the perspective of mainstream archaeology—something that is not in my area of expertise since I am a social anthropologist. While he argued that there was no archaeological support for the Book of Mormon, I simply stated that one should take the promise in Moroni 10:4-5 seriously: if one has a spiritual confirmation of the value of that standard work, the empirical details of its production have only a secondary importance.

I suspect he was a little flabbergasted by my approach. It seemed that he was looking for a good argument, as his brother is a prominent anthropologist who has left the Church because, Elder Carmack asserted, of the weakness of empirical claims for the Book of Mormon. Elder Carmack reviewed BYU's honor code with me and then informed me that I should simply do my best in my field, knowing full well that at times the truths of the social sciences will enter into conflict with any secular or religious ideology. In fact, the sociology or anthropology of knowledge is so powerful that it even relativizes and undercuts the truth claims of the rest of the social sciences.

To practice social science is to make a Faustian bargain. On the one hand, social scientists enjoy the tremendous pleasures of engaging the fundamental questions and processes of human life—how we create ourselves and how our many entrenched and often sacralized platitudes justify our social existence. Although many of us are confirmed humanists, dedicating our professional lives to valuing and comprehending our fellow beings and their way of life, our work makes humankind seem tiny indeed. As a result, our own way of life becomes relative and contingent, just one of many possible ways of being human. This is one of the costs. The psychological price is at times so great that we flee it and build barriers to the full development of our scientific reasoning because it undercuts the simple security of unreflected and untrammelled existence.

If this is an existential difficulty for us social scientists, it is even more an issue for the communities which host us. Last year, under the sponsorship of the Fulbright commission, I taught a graduate anthropology seminar in the sophisticated and urbane city of Buenos Aires, Argentina. This program was formed to help replace the generation of scholars who disappeared in the dirty wars from the late sixties through the early eighties. Many scholars and students learned how threatening social science had become to a social order which attempted to defend itself by force and repression, rather than by argu-

ment and discussion, when they heard a terrifying dry knock on their doors at night.

Social science is dangerous, both to its practitioners and its hosts. But can we afford, in this complex and modern world we inhabit, to live without it? I think not. Even if it is problematic, it provides us with the means to cogently approach our problems and to understand ourselves. But we must build our testimonies of self on solid foundations, as solid as possible, to withstand its gaze which will also magnify our faults and the unstable foundations of our faith. We could decide to stamp it out inside our community, but it will continue outside our boundaries and then will appear to us all the more devastating because we have not learned to use its double-edged sword for our benefit.

MY phone rang dryly, early one Thursday morning this August. I hazily answered and was suddenly awakened fully by the tight voice of my stake president. He said, more or less, "The general authorities have asked me to interview you concerning your recent Sunstone symposium presentation. Will you meet me at my offices on Sunday morning, and will you bring your paper so that we might discuss it?" Although I felt like saying no, because I deeply feel that the request was illegitimate and an abuse of power and authority, I agreed to comply.

We argued gently and respectfully about the benefit or harm Sunstone creates, and about public discussion of the temple, even though I have yet to do a public analysis of the temple service, something which definitely falls within my professional purview and should be covered by the guarantees both Vice President Thompson and Elder Carmack provided me. When we arrived, in the course of our long and, at times, emotionally tense conversation, at my talk of terrorism and the Church in South America, neither my stake president nor I could understand why the Brethren were troubled by what I had said. We parted amicably, even though I informed him that as a professional anthropologist, I could not ethically accept any order of blanket censorship. I was and am willing to consider particulars, which because of specific sensitivities might be better left undiscussed for a certain length of time. But cogent justifications must be presented to me and those do not include the favorite "because I told you so" of threatened parents when faced with an obstinate child's, "Why?"

I still do not know why the Brethren were

concerned with my presentation. I would like to know. I am, however, concerned that they have not answered my queries for information; I am also concerned about gossip which reports they were very angry at my requests, saying, "when the Church has spoken that should be the end of it." This is a delicate situation because there is a tremendous national lobby supporting the academic freedom of professors. Further, it is simply a bad habit for authorities to engage in generalized

Social science is dangerous, both to its practitioners and its hosts. But can we afford, in this complex and modern world we inhabit, to live without it? I think not.

intimidation, such as having people called to discuss their academic works in an ecclesiastical forum. This behavior damages both BYU and the Church because it triggers the attention of the press and the external lobbies and only gives us a black eye nationally.

I have no difficulty with the Brethren's sphere of authority. They lead the institutional Church, not I. They speak prophetically to the entire Church, not I. They bear the responsibility of carefully seeking inspiration to deal with the enormous problems of a world-wide church, not I. Furthermore, I support them in their callings and responsibilities. I gather that we differ as to what the word "support" means. For me, any doctrine that argues for apostolic or prophetic infallibility, or which calls for automatic, blind obedience, is unacceptable and inherently illegitimate. That is not the Mormonism I inherited from my parents and ancestors, nor that which the Spirit whispers to my soul. I do not see this view as in any way challenging the Brethren or being disloyal or un-supportive. It merely reaffirms the free agency we all fought for in the War in Heaven.

I agree with Elder Boyd K. Packer's October general conference address on the dangers

of measuring the Church with the intellect without leavening our discourse with testimony. If space allowed, I could develop a long anthropological argument in support of his statement. But the converse—testimony without intellect—is also dangerous. Testimonies and intellect must constantly challenge and stimulate the other as alternate ways of knowing. Without both, our faith can never grow; without both, we open ourselves to all the critiques Christ makes in the New Testament of empty, formal orthodoxy. Furthermore, as in the case of Elder Carmack's Book of Mormon, if we allow our testimony to accept uncritically all the nonsense common among us, about this or that so-called "proof" of the Book of Mormon, then we set ourselves up for a fall. Any well-trained secular archaeologist can devastate our "testimony" because we have set it up on sand.

While there are serious epistemological and existential difficulties in holding religious faith and scientific rigor simultaneously, nevertheless, the hollow dualism—the contrast between science and religion that is all too common among us—is unnecessary. Our fears stem from not taking our faith and testimony seriously enough and from not accepting the challenge of intellectual examination of our presuppositions.

Empirical truths—dubious though that word may be philosophically, it is less dubious, logically, than our ritual affirmation of the "truth" of the Church—like those hidden in the First Presidency vaults, merely stimulate our search for testimony. They raise questions which simultaneously encourage our search for learning and enable our testimonies to grow. I agree with Malcolm Muggeridge that faith requires doubt. To paraphrase the Apostle James, faith without doubt is dead, in that it is unexamined, static, hollow, and insecure. If we attempt to insulate our testimonies from the rough rigors and hard facts of our past and our present, or from the challenges of our intellects, we create weak, naive, insecure, and frightened testimonies. Like hothouse flowers, they will never survive the storms of natural life. We flee and hide from serious engagement with the world, from putting our faith to the test. Thereby we deny the very validity of our testimonies, their ability to raise us to salvation.

I disagree strongly with the notion that we intellectuals form some kind of "alternate voice." The term alternate suggests that we occupy a similar space with that of the institutional Church, perhaps, or form a competi-

tive voice with the Brethren. We do not! We are a different voice, operating in spaces appropriate for us. Thereby we enrich the community. Were it not for Mormon intellectuals who taught me that it was okay to ask questions, that it was not necessarily devastating to one's testimony to feel doubt, that it was okay to think and to stand proudly but humbly as an intellectual, as someone who has to think because it is simply a part of the makeup of his soul, I would have long since been forced out of the Church by the rabid anti-intellectualism I experienced growing up and continue to experience.

As I told my stake president, I wish you could sit in my office at BYU and hear the heart-felt struggles of young students who come upon questions, who arrive at doubt, who try to accommodate their testimonies to the rigor of academic life. I wish you could sense the pain, the emotion, the worry, the fear, the anguish, particularly when so many of their teachers and peers see their feelings as illegitimate or apostate. The first thing they usually tell these students is, "I am worried about you." These are ominous words for struggling young Mormons.

THE Church comprises at least two distinct things. There is the institutional Church, with its authorities, bureaucracies, and procedures. And there is the body of believers. Each has different, although conjoined, interests and responsibilities. They co-exist in a creative and dynamic tension. While the institutional Church includes, perforce, hierarchy, authority, and exclusivity, the body of believers should be an open, inclusive, egalitarian community of individuals who stand before God as imperfect, searching, striving, struggling souls.

The institution is like a multinational corporation, with its own ends, purposes, and needs. These are seldom identical with those of its members. The Church as a community is a society where people learn to live together, to place their faith into practice, to share the joys and sorrows of existence with others. While the institution has the obligation to carry to the world the gospel, whatever that vague word may yet come to mean, we, the community, have a somewhat different set of obligations, namely to live, to have joy, to be fruitful, to love one another, and above all to love the Lord. We also have the scripturally based right and duty to grow and learn through thought, soul searching, and prayer. To be sure, from an institutional point of view

this seems anarchic. Therefore, institutions like our church, the behemoth Catholic Church, and others place limits and constraints from the institution's perspective on doctrinal and mystical development, lest it challenge the teaching and organizational authority of the institution.

Yet the Catholic theologian Gustavo

Any doctrine that argues for apostolic or prophetic infallibility, or which calls for automatic, blind obedience is unacceptable and inherently illegitimate. That is not the Mormonism I inherited from my parents and ancestors, nor which the spirit whispers to my soul.

Gutierrez has written that ultimately theology belongs to the people. I agree. In the final analysis, our doctrine, our history, our lives belong to us as children of God. We alone bear the responsibility for acting within our societies to understand life and eternity and ultimately to attain exaltation. Nevertheless, we have checks and balances. We have prophets to speak to the community and constrain it. We have an institution to force us together and remind us of our eternal responsibilities. We have a world of voices to push us and pull us in multiple directions. We finally have the anarchy of spiritual yearnings and private thoughts. Together these work to keep us moving forward. But if any part of the system of checks and balances refuses another, then the whole complex system is thrown out of whack.

When we think of the Church as a family community of sisters and brothers, we conceive a society where everyone has different

talents, and the development of those talents makes a contribution to the whole. We thereby envision a public domain where artists, intellectuals, and writers of all sorts can act meaningfully, as part of the community, to enliven and enrich as well as challenge and stimulate its life. We also have a world of numerous occupations and lifestyles, fads and fashion, pompous, pretentious, and quiet, humble people, each with a different perspective and position, who challenge one another with their differences. These differences enable us to ask how we all can be children of God and sanctify our lives, even though our opinions and styles inherently challenge each other's shibboleths. In sum, we have a complex society, like God intended us to have, whose richness cannot be measured by simple canons of narrow orthodoxy, but by its diversity and love, that is, by its ability to meet the challenge to love one another no matter what.

I WONDER why we are afraid of the truth. Philosophically, that word is extremely difficult. Anyone who thinks the truth has the simplicity and concreteness of a rounded river stone should read epistemology, where the stone may become a chimera when challenged by the starchy paper of cautious reasoning. Nevertheless, we should embrace all things, even the problems and difficulties of our past and present.

I further wonder why criticism is often seen as disloyal and contentious. Doesn't Proverbs say something about harsh words from a friend being more faithful than the kisses from an enemy (Proverbs 27:6)? Following that line of reasoning, the highest form of flattery is not brown-nosing sycophancy, but engaging criticism and debate. We intellectuals have an important role to play, both within the Church as community and as institution. We raise issues, comfortable and uncomfortable ones, for public discussion and debate. We provide a forum for loyal criticism, for the floating of trial balloons for the escape of tensions, and for the flow of information through multiple channels. But we must do so humbly, always realizing the tenuousness of our thought, its inherent imprecision, and social instability. Let the prophets speak dogmatically. Let us take their words into consideration and speak with all the humility and caution required by the intellectual life.

I further wonder why so many hold that if you are not "one-hundred percent for us you're agin' us." By letting ourselves become

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thus polarized we do away with the critical middle ground which keeps us from alienation and isolation. When groups are under pressure they frequently create an enemy to unite their fractious populace. Often this tactic is a sign of desperation, particularly when they attack friends instead of dealing with the real, concrete problems afflicting their community. We should actively avoid and refuse polarization.

WE intellectuals should furthermore stop looking over our shoulders to see if the Brethren are going to disagree with us, call us to repentance, hassle us, limit our access to information, or challenge us. In many ways that is their job—although it is indeed ours to critique all those actions. It is also our job to protect ourselves and argue for what we think important. We should act with security of purpose as thoughtful people who have a necessary role to play within the Church as community. Someday historians will explore the development of Mormon letters and the cross fertilization between them and the official Church. Someday people will quote with reverence the ancient texts from *Dialogue*, *SUNSTONE*, the *Journal of Mormon History*, *Exponent II*, the Mormon Women's Forum, the B. H. Roberts Society, *BYU Studies*, *F.A.R.M.S.*, and the *Ensign*, among others. These will become our treasure, our challenge, our heritage, and our wealth. We have an obligation to past and future generations to magnify and expand our talents and our thoughts.

We further should act with security vis à vis our peers in the non-Mormon academic world. Mormon studies is as legitimate as any other area of intellectual endeavor. Not only do I do Mormon studies, I also work in Bolivia. No one would question Bolivian studies. The bookstores and libraries of La Paz are filled with a wide variety of studies, essays, and stories about Bolivia. Yet there are probably more Mormons in the world than there are Bolivians. We need no one to give us permission, nor are we self-appointed. The reflection on our community and its experience is our birthright both as human beings and as members of the community.


Some may try to use Church disciplinary councils, as Church spokesperson Don LeFevre is reported to have intimated, to silence independent voices which dissent, disagree, or even differ. Let them. They only weaken themselves by such silliness. One recently elected Latin American president said, when he spoke to his beloved people,

"My advisors tell me I shouldn't mingle with you or speak openly to you from this balcony. They say the terrorists might kill me. I say so what! If someone knocks me from the bicycle of state, another will rise up, mount the bike and continue riding it down the path we have chosen."

The days when an (un)holy inquisition was politically or socially feasible or acceptable are long past. The horses of Mormon studies are long loosed from the stable and now wander grazing and galloping far abroad. We do not need permission nor official acceptance. Some facts may make life difficult for us, but we should go forward, secure in the knowledge that we have done nothing wrong. Our ponies will carry us on a tremendous exploration and adventure through our society, no matter what others opine. It is too late by at least twenty or thirty years for us to be silenced.

One final point. We intellectuals face the temptation to surround ourselves and glory in the trappings of intelligence and learning. All too often we forget faith, testimony, and spirituality. I agree with Elder Packer; the one can never replace the other. We further need never apologize to our intellectual peers for having faith or for choosing to believe in God or for belonging to the Church. Those who would have us do so are philosophical fools and are easily challenged with the tools of the sociology of knowledge. Nor need we apologize for thinking and questioning what others set off as sacrosanct. We merely need cope with the tensions this will produce and proceed forward with honesty, integrity, rigor, and lots of humble prayer. In sum, we need merely clothe ourselves in the vision of section 88 of the Doctrine and Covenants, particularly verses 76-80:

Also I give unto you a commandment that ye shall continue in prayer and fasting from this time forth. And I give unto you a commandment that you shall teach one another the doctrine of the kingdom. Teach ye diligently and my grace shall attend you, that you may be instructed more perfectly in theory, in principle, in doctrine, in the law of the gospel, in all things that pertain unto the kingdom of God, that are expedient for you to understand; Of things both in heaven and earth, and under the earth; things which have been, things which are, things which must shortly come to pass; things which are at home, things which are abroad; the wars and the perplexities of nations, and the judgments which are on the land; and a knowledge also of countries and of kingdoms—That ye may be prepared in all things when I shall send you again to magnify the calling whereunto I have called you, and the mission with which I have commissioned you.

And the ever fresh thirteenth article of faith: We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—We believe all things, we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things. 

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#### THE LORD'S SUPPER

He said, do this in memory of him.  
But when I tear this loaf my heart withstands  
Its duty and, like water, streams in prim  
Images of the housekeeper whose hands  
Carefully rolled a snake of dough in flour  
And fired the stone oven, swept out the ash,  
Who sang hallels as she split ripe and sour  
Palm dates and figs into a bowl of mash,  
Into which two at once could dip their hand.  
How could this woman have known what would come  
Of this, how she would nourish a command  
To contemplate what God exacts of some:  
A ceremony of clean cups and trays  
And then the hard vigil of grief and praise.

—MICHAEL HICKS



How should we as a Church respond to critics, whether “pessimists” or “devotees”?  
 With persuasion, with long-suffering, with gentleness and meekness;  
 with love unfeigned, with kindness, with pure knowledge.

## FREEDOM OF SPEECH IN THE HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH

*J. Frederic Voros Jr.*

I GREW UP IN A HOUSEHOLD OF FAITH. I WAS reared by my mother, who was a professor of speech, a college debate coach, and a biblical literalist. We argued often: about politics, about religion, and about social issues. But in our home, argument was never viewed as a means of merely triumphing over your opponent or of causing division, and certainly not of belittling or harming another person. So that while my mother and I argued often, we never quarreled.

Later each of us joined the Church because we were convinced that Joseph Smith was a true prophet and that the gospel and the Church were restored through him. It never occurred to us that the presence of revelation, either through him or through later prophets, should entail the absence of open discussion.

And yet many Mormons seem to believe that. And they claim authoritative support. In the April 1989 general conference, Elders Russell M. Nelson and Dallin H. Oaks delivered addresses<sup>1</sup> which many Mormons read as hostile to open discussion of Mormonism within the Church. I do not read them so broadly, especially in view of Elder Oaks's statement, “Members of the Church are free to participate [in] or to listen to any alternate voices they choose. . . .”<sup>2</sup> I believe those talks can best be understood as offering guidelines for exercising our freedom to speak, not as prohibitions against speaking. I cannot believe that God would have his saints check their right to speak at the door of the household of faith. And although several doctrines of the restored gospel are frequently cited in support of that view, I believe that none offers much support, and most actually militate against it.

### CONTENTION

SOME maintain that disputation, especially doctrinal disputation, is inherently evil. This view is sometimes supported

with reference to scriptural passages such as 3 Nephi 11:28-29, which both Elder Oaks and Elder Nelson cited in their talks. It reads:

And there shall be no disputations among you, as there have hitherto been; neither shall there be disputations among you concerning the points of my doctrine, as there have hitherto been. For verily, verily I say unto you, he that hath the spirit of contention is not of me, but is of the devil, who is the father of contention, and he stirreth up the hearts of men to contend with anger, one with another.

At first blush, this scripture seems inconsistent with the many instances in the ancient and modern church of apostles, prophets, and saints reasoning, disputing, even debating.

For example, disputation was the Apostle Paul's stock in trade. In Thessalonica, “Paul, as his manner was, went in unto them, and three sabbath days reasoned with them out of the scriptures” (Acts 7:2). In Athens, he “disputed . . . in the synagogue with the Jews, and with the devout persons, and in the market daily with them that met with him” (Acts 17:17). In Corinth, “he reasoned in the synagogue every sabbath, and persuaded the Jews and the Greeks” (Acts 18:4). In Ephesus, “he went into the synagogue, and spake boldly for the space of three months, disputing and persuading the things concerning the kingdom of God” (Acts 19:8). And this, we are told, is how “all they which dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks” (Acts 19:10).

There are also notable examples in this dispensation. For instance, in 1870 a Methodist minister named the Reverend Dr. J. P. Newman traveled to Salt Lake City and challenged President Brigham Young to debate the topic, “Does the Bible Sanction Polygamy?” President Young responded,

If you think you are capable of proving the doctrine of “plurality of wives” unscriptural, tarry here as a missionary; we will furnish you the suitable place, the congregations, and plenty of our elders, any of whom will discuss with you on that or any other scriptural doctrine.<sup>3</sup>

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After considerable preliminary maneuvering, a debate was finally held between Newman and Orson Pratt. It lasted two hours a day for three consecutive days. Attendance on the final day was estimated at 11,000 people.<sup>4</sup>

But the most interesting example is Jesus himself. By his own statement, he sat daily teaching in the temple (Matthew 26:55). And as he sat there, he fielded subtle, difficult, even insincere questions. And while the hypocrisy of his critics angered him, he never intimidated that they should not question or even argue with him. He answered all, and sometimes thunderously. Consider this diatribe from the Prince of Peace:

Now do ye Pharisees make clean the outside of the cup and the platter; but your inward part is full of ravening and wickedness. Ye fools, did not he that made that which is without make that which is within also? . . . But woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye tithe mint and rue and all manner of herbs, and pass over judgment and the love of God:

these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone. Woe unto you, Pharisees! for ye love the uppermost seats in the synagogues, and greetings in the markets. Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye are as graves which appear not, and the men that walk over them are not aware of them. (Luke 11:39-44.)

The passion of this passage becomes even clearer when we turn it upon ourselves. Consider this paraphrase, which I offer solely for purposes of illustrating tone:

You self-righteous Mormons have a clean public image, but your hearts are greedy and dark. You fools, don't you see that you have to be clean clear through? Woe unto you, for although you scrupulously pay a full tithe, you act unjustly and do not love God. You should act justly, love God, and pay your tithing, too. Woe unto you, who love to sit on the stand at church and be recognized in the business community. What hypocrites! You are like underground toxic waste dumps, invisibly contaminating unsuspecting passersby.

Now, I do not believe God wants us to talk to one another in

this tone. God may know another's heart, and he may call an occasional wild man, such as an Isaiah or a Samuel the Lamanite, to rebuke Israel, but most of us should converse in the spirit of the parable of the mote and the beam. Still, the passage is instructive as an illustration of acceptably "contentious" speech.

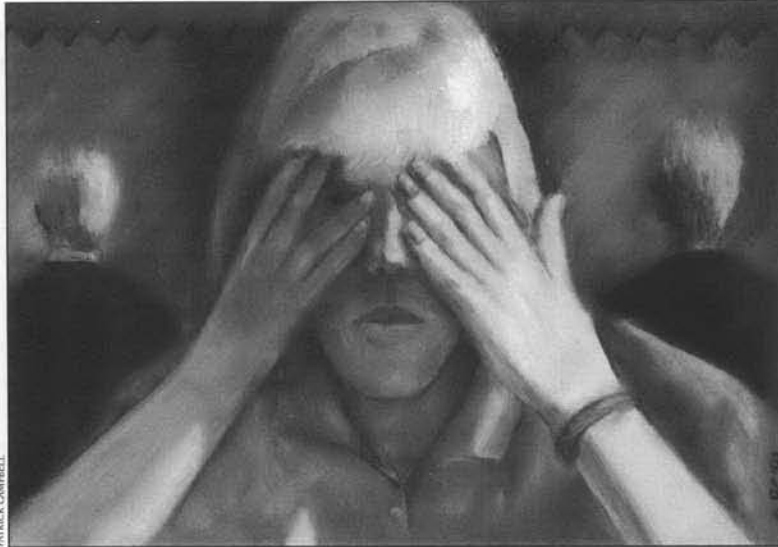
These examples, typical of hundreds more, do not violate Third Nephi. That passage speaks of "the spirit of contention," which is the desire to stir up people's hearts in anger against one another. It is, as Elder Oaks teaches, the spirit of wrath, strife, and reviling.<sup>5</sup> Conversation in that spirit, even if polite, is evil; in contrast, disputation whose purpose is to get at the truth, and which is couched in a spirit of love, is not condemned, however contentious it may sound.

Joseph Smith drew the following distinction after observing "an interesting debate of three hours or more" on the topic, Was it Christ's design to establish his gospel by miracles? Joseph recorded:

I discovered in this debate, much warmth displayed, to much zeal for mastery, to much of that enthusiasm that characterizes a lawyer at the bar, who is determined to defend his cause right or wrong. I therefore availed myself of this favorable opportunity, to drop a few words upon this subject, by way of advise, that they might improve their minds and cultivate their powers of intellect in a proper manner, that they might not incur the displeasure of heaven, that they should handle sacred things verily sacredly, and with due deference to the opinions of others, and with an eye single to the glory of God.<sup>6</sup>

Notice that he did not forbid debating, or even suggest that to do so was inconsistent with the gospel or his own prophetic calling. He decried the perverse and egocentric attitude that would place a higher value on victory than on truth. To avoid this "spirit of contention," he offered some "advice" for improving the debates: handle sacred things sacredly, respect others' opinions, and act with an eye single to the glory of God.

Elder Nelson offered similar advice in April 1989. He counseled to "bridle the passion to speak or write contentiously for personal gain or glory" and to esteem others better than ourselves, which, he suggested, "would then let us respectfully



Unfortunately, in Mormonism there seems to have emerged a false dichotomy: there are loyal members, who avoid difficult issues and express only praise of the Church, and there are its enemies.

disagree without being disagreeable."<sup>7</sup> This statement echoes Joseph's declaration that "equal rights & privileges are my motto, and one man is as good as another, if he behaves as well, and that all men should be esteemed alike, without regard to distinctions of an official nature."<sup>8</sup> This should indeed be our goal. What a glorious day it would be if each Latter-day Saint, whether apostle or prospective elder, single or married, male or female, wealthy or on welfare, east side or west side, esteemed others better than himself. Surely this is the best foundation for loving, truth-seeking disputation.

## REVELATION

**C**ONTINUING revelation is probably the most commonly cited ground for condemning open discussion within Mormonism. Some would say that the heart of Mormonism is continuing revelation; that it is the specific role of the apostles and prophets to bring forth and promulgate that revelation to the general Church; that the concomitant role of ordinary members (those not sustained as apostles and prophets) is to obey this revelation and those through whom it comes; and therefore, that open discussion of a Church doctrine or policy is unnecessary at best and, at worst, tantamount to denying the faith.<sup>9</sup>

One danger in this position is that it subtly invites the saints to equate revelation and infallibility, an equation which finds no basis in Mormon doctrine. In fact, Brigham Young denounced the concept of the infallible leader as a false secular notion and warned against importing it into the Church. In contrasting the kingdoms of this world to the kingdom of God, he stated:

No matter what the king does, we as his subjects must say that the king does right and cannot do wrong. That you know very well to be the feelings and teachings of the nations of the earth. The king cannot do wrong, and of course he is not to be rebuked. And when he sends his princes, his ministers, his messengers, to perform duties for him, they say to the people to whom they go—"The king can do no wrong; his agents can do no wrong." . . . These are the feelings and these the teachings and belief, and not only the belief, but the practice. *It is not so in this kingdom; it must not be so; it cannot be so; it has not been so; . . .*<sup>10</sup>

Recent statements by general authorities reiterate Brigham Young's position. "We who have been called to lead the Church are ordinary men and women with ordinary capacities," declared Elder Boyd K. Packer,<sup>11</sup> while Elder James E. Faust asserted, "We make no claim of infallibility or perfection in the prophets, seers, and revelators."<sup>12</sup>

Revelation and discussion play different roles in the household of faith. The president of the Church is less like the king who can do no wrong than he is like the speaker of the English House of Commons. The speaker was not called the speaker because only he spoke while everyone else remained silent, but because he traditionally acted as the "common mouth" of the

House in speaking to the king. And, of course, he would convey messages from the king to the House.<sup>13</sup> His presence did not end debate; as often as not, it instigated it.

If Mormonism has a message for the rest of Christianity, it is that human thought is no substitute for revelation. But in proclaiming that truth we must not lose sight of its converse: revelation is no substitute for thought. Those who think this, in my opinion, betray their own relative disinterest in revelation. For those with a hunger for the word of God, a new or newly discovered revelation doesn't end the discussion, it starts it. Like youthful kisses, revelations stimulate more than they satisfy. A person with a passing interest in the First Vision may be satisfied with a single account, but a true disciple wants to read all the accounts, compare them, and contemplate them. Joseph Smith himself was such a person. "If I have sinned, I have sinned outwardly," he declared, "but surely I have contemplated the things of God."<sup>14</sup>

It is of course a settled tenet of Mormonism that only revelations received through the earthly head of the Church are binding upon the general Church, subject to the consent of the membership. But to a seeker after truth, the statement that it is the prophet's role to bring forth revelation for the Church is less a reprimand than a promise. Such a person subscribes to the word of the Lord through Jeremiah: "If a prophet has a dream, let him tell his dream; if he has my word, let him speak my word faithfully" (Jeremiah 25:28, Revised English Bible).

Furthermore, that true principle does not exclude the possibility of some rather inspired braying from a Balaam's Ass or two in the midst of the flock. In fact, that is precisely what the gospel program contemplates. In the first section of the Doctrine and Covenants, the Lord announced:

The weak things of the world shall come forth and break down the mighty and strong ones, that man should not counsel his fellow man, neither trust in the arm of flesh—But that every man might speak in the name of God the Lord, even the Savior of the world. . . . (D&C 1:19-20.)

In other words, God's plan for the household of faith is not to have one prophet and many followers, but to have many prophets, each speaking in the name of the Lord. In this spirit, when Moses was told by an agitated young man that two men were prophesying in the camp, Moses ignored Joshua's counsel to forbid them and responded, "Enviest thou for my sake? would God that all the Lord's people were prophets, and that the Lord would put his spirit upon them!" (Numbers 11:27-29).

Can it possibly be the Lord's plan to make all his people prophets but prevent them from speaking? Your sons and your daughters may prophesy, your old men may dream dreams, and your young men see visions (Joel 2:28), but who will know? And who will be edified? Are we of the household of faith to shut ourselves up in different rooms, without sharing whatever insights may come to us, including those from the Lord?

Of course, we cannot know in advance who will speak in the name of the Lord and who will merely speak. This is why

Joseph insisted that “every man has the right to be a false as well as a true prophet.”<sup>15</sup> But we do know that if none speak, none will speak in the name of the Lord.

#### CRITICISM

ANOTHER reason given for limiting free speech within the Church is the idea that discussion implies criticism, which implies disloyalty, so that people who discuss a doctrine, policy, or historical event may be dismissed as enemies or critics. We who are of the household of faith must be loyal to the Church. But loyalty can take many forms. Unfortunately, in Mormonism there seems to have emerged a false dichotomy: there are loyal members, who avoid difficult issues and express only praise of the Church, and there are its enemies. As a friend of mine once remarked, “the Church recognizes only two modes of address: attack and panegyric.”

If this is true, we have not thought carefully enough about criticism. The audacious Christian G. K. Chesterton divided critics into three types: the pessimist, the optimist, and the devotee. “The evil of the pessimist,” wrote Chesterton, is “not that he chastises gods and men, but that he does not love what he chastises—he has not this primary and supernatural loyalty to things.”<sup>16</sup> We might call this pessimist the enemy of the Church: he desires not to heal, but to hurt.

In contrast, the optimist can love only by denying all faults: “wishing to defend the honour of this world, will defend the indefensible. He is the jingo of the universe; he will say, ‘My cosmos, right or wrong.’” Consequently, the optimist “will be less inclined to the reform of things; more inclined to a sort of front-bench official answer to all attacks, soothing every one with assurances. He will not wash the world, but whitewash the world.”<sup>17</sup> This is the Mormon who denies all doctrinal ambiguity, all inconvenient historical events, all institutional problems, all social concerns.

Finally, there is the devotee, who loves in spite of faults:

The devotee is entirely free to criticize; the fanatic can safely be a sceptic. Love is not blind; that is the last thing that it is. Love is bound; and the more it is

bound the less it is blind.<sup>18</sup>

Mormonism has its devotees, Saints who discuss Mormonism out of loyalty to it. Anyone who does not see the Church’s problems cannot love it very much.

I attended a Mormon Women’s Forum presentation on women and the priesthood, and I heard quite a few comments and questions from audience members, women and men alike.

Some were very angry at the Church, and one or two had even left it. I heard comments which, coming from enemies of the Church, would have made me angry. Coming from its children, they made me sad. I heard many people who loved the Church but felt that the Church did not reciprocate their love.

The temptation is to lose patience with people like this. They are not really at odds with the Church, but always seem to be at cross purposes with it. I’m sure we who gather at the Sunstone Symposium to talk and talk and talk must appear to some Church leaders as unruly children who can’t keep focused on the task of



I’m sure we who gather at the Sunstone Symposium to talk and talk and talk must appear to some Church leaders as unruly children who can’t keep focused on the task of living the gospel.

living the gospel. But amazingly, some of our talking may be of practical benefit to the Church. The bedeviling fact is that sometimes the critic actually has a solution.

We learned this in our family. Every Sunday night we hold a family council.<sup>19</sup> After the opening prayer, each person gives a sincere compliment to some other family member. After we have a devotional presentation and plan the coming week’s events, we come to the guts of the meeting: the agenda. Anyone who has a grievance about how something is being handled in the family, or the way they are being treated, writes it on the agenda during the week. In our meeting we discuss each agenda item until we reach a consensus.

One week an agenda item was “milk.” My oldest son, who rises early, was leaving the milk out on the kitchen counter, so that everyone else had to eat their cereal with warm milk. I suppose I could have said, “Look, I am the father of this family. It is my right to get revelation for the family. You must obey. When I speak, the discussion ends. And I say: whoever gets the milk out puts it back.” But instead, in keeping with our rules, we respectfully disputed.

I began. “Look,” I said, “there are only two options: either the person who got the milk out puts it back, or the person

who used it last puts it back.” This was the voice of one who does not actually eat cereal in the morning. No, they said, neither rule works: if the person who gets the milk out has to put it back, he will put it back even if his brother or sister is standing beside him, and then that person will have to get the milk out again and so on down through all of us: not an efficient result. On the other hand, if the burden is on the last person to use it, it will never get put away, since everyone will claim they thought someone else hadn’t eaten breakfast.

Then my ten-year-old son Christopher said, “Here’s what I think we should do: the person who gets the milk out has to put it away, unless someone else is there and asks to use it. Before giving the milk to that person, the first person asks, ‘will you put it away?’ If the other person says he will, then it becomes his responsibility.” This is now the rule, and the milk is (almost) always put away.

My wife and I haven’t abdicated authority over our children; they know the ultimate authority is ours. What we have done is give them a voice in its exercise. And we have noticed improvements in the family. One is that the family runs more smoothly. Another is that the children feel better about the family because they know, at least once a week, their views and feelings, regardless how critical, will be respectfully considered. The desire to be heard is inherent in the human spirit, and it is not evil.

Some things are dangerous to ignore. Pain is the body’s feedback system. It tells you which member needs help. You ignore your own pain at your peril. Criticism is institutional pain. Any institution, whether family, church, or nation, that suppresses feedback from its own members is unhealthy, and likely to stay that way.

An excellent recent illustration of this phenomenon is the pre-1989 Soviet Union. Eugene Methvin, in a 1987 article entitled “Soviet Dystopia,” wrote:

Gorbachev is trying to cope with the ultimate source of the crisis of any totalitarian system: Soviet feedback channels are clogged. One cannot have the benefits of independent critics without conceding some immunity to those critics, and accepting some limits on the government’s power to silence them. The utility of free speech is evident, it seems, to Gorbachev. But “the fleas come with the dog.” One cannot enjoy the fruits of freedom without freedom, or its efficiencies without its discomforts. . . . This is Gorbachev’s dilemma, and it is insoluble: he cannot be both infallible and informed.<sup>20</sup>

The Soviet Union has traditionally punished public criticism under a pernicious law condemning “anti-Soviet behavior.” This law ignores the fact that most Soviet dissidents are not anti-Soviet at all, but patriots trying to improve their country and, with it, their own lives.

Obviously, the fact that loyal critics exist does not mean that disloyal ones do not. There are people, and some may even be Church members, who seek to undermine its doctrines and leaders and subvert its mission. And in our not-too-distant past, the attacks launched by such people were literally

murderous. It is understandable that we Mormons would be sensitive to anything that even slightly resembles persecution.

So, how should we as a Church respond to critics, whether “pessimists” or “devotees”? The Lord has already told us: with persuasion, with long-suffering, with gentleness and meekness; with love unfeigned, with kindness, with pure knowledge; by reproof with sharpness only when moved upon by the Holy Ghost, and by showing thereafter an increase of love toward that person. Our spiritual authority depends on it.

## UNITY

ANOTHER reason frequently given for restricting free speech is that it destroys unity.<sup>21</sup> The Lord has said, “if ye are not one, ye are not mine” (D&C 38:27). However, if people disagree in their hearts, and are only silent by command, they are not truly united. They may have the image of unity, but the mere image of unity can hardly be what the Lord desires for us.

The Christian psychiatrist Scott Peck has made a study of community, within both Christian and religiously diverse groups. He describes a group seeking the image of community as a “pseudocommunity.” He writes:

Pseudocommunity is conflict-avoiding; true community is conflict-resolving. . . . In pseudocommunity it is as if every individual member is operating according to the same book of etiquette. The rules of this book are: Don’t do or say anything that might offend someone else; if someone does or says something that offends, annoys, or irritates you, act as if nothing has happened and pretend you are not bothered in the least; and if some form of disagreement should show signs of appearing, change the subject as quickly as possible—rules that any good hostess knows. It is easy to see how these rules make for a smoothly functioning group. But they also crush individuality, intimacy, and honesty, and the longer it lasts the duller it gets.<sup>22</sup>

I’m sure you have known Sunday School teachers who ran their classes according to Peck’s book of etiquette, and with the result he predicts.

Needless to say, true community is impossible so long as we are satisfied with pseudocommunity. And a group intent on avoiding disagreement at all costs condemns itself to remain a pseudocommunity. Similarly, true unity will continue to elude us so long as we insist upon the appearance of unity. True community, true unity, must be based upon mutual respect and a willingness to accord to each group member an equal right to speak his or her heart and mind, even though the responsibility for a final decision reposes in the priesthood authority.

## PERSONAL PROGRESS

THE most deceptive misconception about free discussion is that it inevitably sidetracks spiritual progress. Admittedly, free discussion has its perils. Intellectual inquiry may be

dangerous to your faith. Scholarship requires a detachment that is at odds with the passion of the disciple. Imagine a careful historian assiduously recording each detail of the crucifixion—the construction of the cross, the location, size, and nature of Jesus' wounds, the name and rank of each Roman soldier—while John and the Marys weep in anguish. Such a scholar would, as T. S. Eliot wrote, have “had the experience, but missed the meaning.”<sup>23</sup> Even God can be reduced to an artifact, and his saints to specimens.

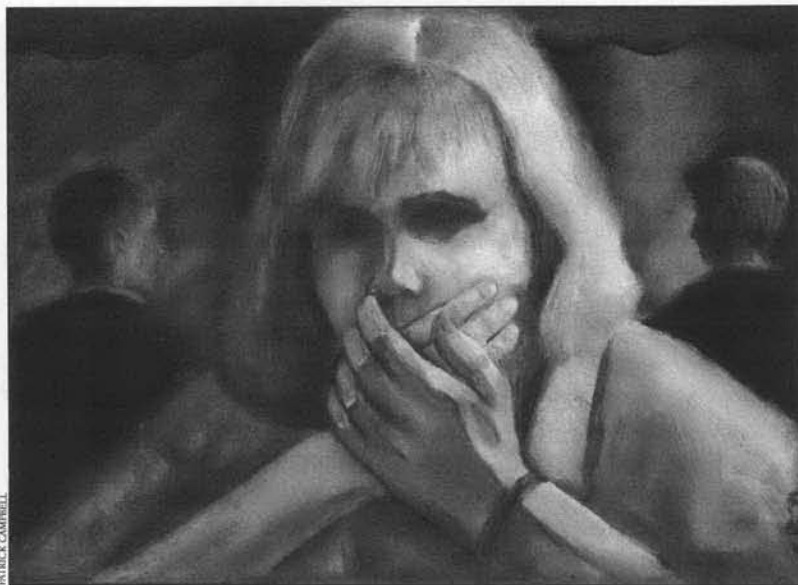
Although we may idealize the scholar's dispassionate search for truth, scholars are as arrogant as any group, probably more so, and as prone to abuse their special status and power as anyone else. I recall a tale about Hans Küng, the Catholic theologian who achieved notoriety by debunking the notion of papal infallibility. Finally, Pope John Paul, fed up with Küng's constant carping, called him in and offered to abdicate and make Küng the pope. “Thank you, your holiness,” replied the scholar, “but I prefer to remain infallible.”

On the other hand, each of us is counseled to “work out your own salvation with fear and trembling” (Philippians 2:12). It is not the purpose of the Church to ensure our salvation. All the household of faith can provide is a loving and supportive community within which we each struggle with that issue.

The term “household of faith” comes from chapter four of Paul's letter to the Ephesians:

And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love, may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ. (Ephesians 4:11-15.)

Paul's metaphor is significant. We are born as children into an earthly household with adult parents who take care of us. As infants, we are dependent upon them for our survival. Later, though we may be able to feed and dress ourselves, we are still not fully capable of making mature judgments and decisions. Finally, we reach adulthood, which is the proper end of our childhood and youth.



**True community, true unity, must be based upon mutual respect and a willingness to accord to each group member an equal right to speak his or her heart and mind, even though the responsibility for a final decision reposes in the priesthood authority.**

Of course, many adults are also not fully capable of making mature judgments and decisions. Their participation in the maturing process was arrested at some point. But no healthy parent desires this for his or her child. My child, though I hope she will always value my counsel, cannot be a slave to it except at the price of remaining forever a child.

This process of maturation is the basis of Paul's analogy. Each Saint is to be perfected, which is to say, made complete and whole. That process begins when one is born into the household of faith, or spiritually reborn. According to the Book of Mormon, the Saint then becomes a new creature (Mosiah

27:26), a child of Jesus Christ (Mosiah 5:7; 27:25), and, conversely, Jesus becomes that person's spiritual father (Mosiah 16:15). Rebirth is, spiritually speaking, the starting point in the process of becoming like God.

Paul stresses that the end of this growth process is to be as spiritually mature as Jesus: to attain “the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.” We are to “grow up in him in all things.” We are, he says, not to remain children, so spiritually unsophisticated that cunning men may deceive us.

But we cannot complete this maturing process if we delegate to someone else the function of thinking and speaking for us. We cannot grow up “in Christ” simply by following the tail of the sheep ahead of us. We cannot delegate to another the right to make our decisions on spiritual issues without stunting our spiritual growth. It is not the gospel plan for us to become spiritually dependent upon our leaders. Doing so will keep the Saints forever suspended, like so many Peter Pans, in the Never-Neverland of spiritual childhood, never to grow up in Christ.

Admittedly, some will use their freedom, as Peter Pan did,

to remain children, and vicious children at that. Freedom offers no guarantees. But surely the solution is to help them exercise this gift, not to urge them to relinquish it.

Someone once tried to deprive us of our freedom, to make us a race of automatons, doing only good, speaking only praise, never contentious, always obeying and therefore perfectly united, ever dependent upon himself. His proposal was rejected in part because he coveted God's glory, but I believe in the main because it is a metaphysical impossibility to compel humans to godhood. Goodness not freely chosen is spiritually irrelevant.

Of course, I do not mean to suggest that anyone now can rob us of our God-given agency, even with chains and prisons. We may always choose among the options available to us. Nor do I mean to suggest that choosing to obey authority, whether heavenly or earthly, is to renounce freedom. It is not; it is an exercise of freedom. He gave us agency with the intention that we would choose him, our Father (Moses 7:32-33). My point is that obedience to the Gospel of Jesus Christ should not and does not entail silence on religious issues.

So, in the spirit of Paul, Joseph, and Jesus himself, let us keep talking, and arguing even, without regard to distinctions of an official nature, not for personal gain but in the search for truth, in the spirit of love, with due deference to the opinions of others, and always with an eye single to the glory of God. ☪

#### NOTES

1. Russell M. Nelson, "The Canker of Contention," *Ensign* (May 1989), 68-71; Dallin H. Oaks, "Alternate Voices," *Ensign* (May 1989): 27-30.
2. Oaks, 28. He stressed that we should exercise that choice in a sophisticated and prayerful way.
3. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, 5:290.
4. Roberts, 287-93.
5. Oaks, 29.
6. Dean C. Jessee, *The Personal Writings of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1984), 90.
7. Nelson, 71.
8. Jesse, 166.
9. See, e.g., Orson Scott Card, "Walking the Tightrope," *SUNSTONE* (April 1989): 41.
10. Brigham Young, *Journal of Discourses* 8:364-65, emphasis added.
11. Boyd K. Packer, "Revelation in a Changing World," *Ensign* (November 1989): 16.
12. James E. Faust, "Continuous Revelation," *Ensign* (November 1989): 11.
13. See R. W. Chambers, *Thomas More* (London: 1938), 200-03.
14. Joseph Fielding Smith, ed., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book, 1972), 322.
15. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Provo, UT: Religious Studies Center, Brigham Young University, 1980), 349.
16. G. K. Chesterton, *Orthodoxy* (Garden City, NY: Image Books, 1959), 69.
17. Chesterton, 69-70.
18. Chesterton, 71.
19. See Jane Nelsen, *Positive Discipline* (New York: Ballantine, 1987), 144-59, for information on this type of family meeting.
20. Eugene H. Methvin, "Soviet Dystopia," *National Review* (4 December 1987): 45.
21. See, e.g., Nelson, 70.
22. M. Scott Peck, *The Different Drum* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1987), 88-89.
23. T. S. Eliot, "The Dry Salvages," *The Four Quartets* (New York, NY: Harvest, 1971), 39.

#### ON THE GROUNDS OF THE MANTI TEMPLE

Lovers' hearts incised in snow—  
Ephemeral—should blur with heat  
And melt and fade to gritty scabs  
Of ragged snow across  
Dead winter's wounds.

But here they melt by day and freeze  
Again by night—and snow-heart ridges  
(Ice beneath a froth of snow)  
Outlast cold drifts beneath  
Blue-shadowed pines.

—MICHAEL R. COLLINGS

#### THERAPY

The hour was almost up. She said  
it was not my job to watch  
the clock. All those past due  
notices, the threat of losing  
what little Dave and I had left.  
Walking back, I fought the weight  
of loneliness as the elevator  
descended into the underground  
parking lot, painted arrows  
and dim fluorescent lights leading  
me out with just enough change  
in the ashtray to pay the attendant  
who flashed her smile of gold.  
Love is not less because of loss.  
Reaching out, she took my coin  
and waved me into the light.

—TIMOTHY LIU

#### LADY OF LIGHT

Lady of Light at the top of the stair,  
You stand and beckon me up.  
Your hair is as white as the white-hot flame.  
In your hand is the victor's cup.  
But the stair that leads up is of molten fire  
And I'm not sure you're aware  
The pain it will cause me to bring myself up  
For, Lady, my feet are bare.  
And the way that leads up is a pillar of pain  
Amid the rude furnace blast.  
While the way that leads down is pleasantly cool  
Though dark and awful at last.

Oh! Lady of Light at the top of the stair,  
You stand and beckon me up.  
Give me the courage to face the flame  
And reach for the victor's cup.

—INGRID T. FUHRIMAN

## Pillars of My Faith

# THE PATTERNS OF MY FAITH: SURPRISES OF THE SPIRIT

By Richard Cracroft

I STOOD BEFORE THEM, at the end of a large *Bierstube* on an upper floor of the Munichholz Hotel in Steyr, Austria, enjoying once more the kind of spiritual surprise which has startled my life and faith with refreshing frequency. "As all have not faith," I suppose the Lord determined in my case, "let us allow this mortal—and his faithless kind—occasional jolts of joy. Otherwise, they'll never make it!" (1 Cracroft 1:2).

So there I stood, on that wintry Sunday morning in 1957, presenting a message on Jesus Christ in my eight-month missionary German to a small assembly of Austrians in a chilly, cluttered barroom, carefully observed by a black-leather-coated, expressionless Austrian *Geheimpolizist*.

In the midst of my presentation on the need for a Savior in our lives, I was overwhelmed (not for the first time in my brief mission) by the sheer beauty of the gospel I was outlining, by the wondrous nature of the Savior's mission, and by the monumental significance of his sacrifice for me and everyone in the room (including the cop). Suddenly I was undergoing an experience which I can only label as transcendent—an

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"O that I were an angel!" experience in which I felt the impress of the Holy Spirit in the thrill up the spine, the cool moisture on my forehead, the tremor of joy—the shock of recognition—throughout my being. By then I know the signs, all of which affirmed that I was, at that moment, a kind of prophet (albeit very minor), a testator of Eternal Truth, a witness for Jesus Christ.

Then, just as suddenly, I entered into another, new stage of transcendence. Even as I looked at my minuscule "congregation" and saw the confirming Spirit working on each face (I'm not sure about the cop)—I (or some part of me) was out of my body, at the back of the room, elevated into the corner,

watching the whole event at a remove. Part of me was actually looking at the backs of my Austrian friends, seeing *me* standing before that attentive group, while the other *me* in the rear corner was filled with a wondrous confirmation that what the young Mormon missionary was saying, in fervent but labored German, was true.

That other, somehow spiritually objective *me* was filled with amazement at the changes which those truths, spoken about with the authority of deep conviction, had wrought upon that same young man who, a year earlier, was struggling with himself and drifting, frustrated and aimlessly, in and out of the gospel net. At that moment I realized Joy. Like Enos or Alma or Paul, I knew that it was but a type of the joy which comes to every man and woman who, through the ministrations of the Holy



Ghost, *realizes* Jesus Christ, and God, and the Restoration and the vision of the spiritual life.

Then, in a moment, I was back in my earth-bound body, looking again through my own eyes into the faces of the little congregation. I knew, more than ever, that all of those truths which we encompass by the term, "The Gospel," were *really* Truth with a capital T; *Truth* in a sense far beyond what I had hitherto comprehended; *Truth* in the sense of becoming, as my mission president, the late Jesse R. Curtis, always said, "truer by the minute." I began to understand that such *Truth* is accessible by tracing the unchanging spiritual patterns by which our God deals with his mortal children, patterns which I call Surprises of the Spirit—road signs and course correctors on the way to eternal lives. Those close encounters of the nearly third kind, spiritually gathered, pondered, and treasured, can sweep one beyond *faith* to a certitude which has enabled me, at least, to take a firmer grip on the Iron Rod of life, especially when the fog gets thick and the rod becomes slippery.

## II

SUCH Surprises of the Spirit have become pillars of my faith ever since my mission—and earlier. Excited from my early youth by books, and predetermined before the foundations of this earth, and by inclination and influential siblings, to the parlous life of an LDS English major at the University of Utah, I attached myself, at East High School, to some very bright young men and women and a brilliant English teacher and, despite forays into football and student government and fascination with the opera, began to enjoy long, albeit one-sided after-school chats about literature and philosophy. I enjoyed these heady introductions to audacious new and heretical ideas and thoughts, and I felt myself stretched beyond my capacities.

These intellectual adventures prepared me for college and my particular company of brilliant young men and teachers who, in endless late-night, after-date discussions fanned my skepticism through their articulate, reasoned and burning disbelief and intellectual independence, and utter disdain for the Church. They introduced me to bit draughts of doubt (and a few other draughts, too), and I began a short-lived rebellion against the Church and familial standards. But the more I warmed my hands at their intellectual fires, the chillier I grew, and I began to learn by my own spiritual discomfort just how cold and dark life can become without the presence of Light. I gradually learned that gospel standards had become *my* incontrovertible standards, by which I gauged my own happiness and success. Night after night I would lie abed and run through a catechism about the existence of God, purpose in the universe, the divinity of Jesus Christ, the calling of Joseph Smith, Jr., about the origins of the Book of Mormon, and Blacks and the priesthood. And night after night, I found myself concluding the catechism by kneeling in prayer, feeling like a world-class hypocrite (though even there I fell wonderfully short), and asking God for comfort, hope, direction, and peace of mind.

I continued to attend Church meetings where an understanding bishop overlooked my temporary confusion and called me to responsible positions, which I performed scrupulously and thus kept a fingernail grip on the outward Church even as I was probing my inward beliefs and private heresies. It was a dangerous tightrope walk.

Eventually I decided, as most believers seem to, that my questions could not be resolved by the intellect; I would have to opt for faith. I soon realized that opting for faith was impossible without making a commitment. I asked the Lord for strength to change my course; he began to unfold his pattern for me by wrenching me from my slough of despair through creating an upheaval in my personal life which enabled me to start anew. Seizing the moment I made the decision to opt for faith, to test the Lord by taking some definite though tentative steps toward him. Within a few days, I felt the burden of doubt and rebellion lift and watched the lights go on, as God took some giant steps toward me. I was amazed how soon I felt so well. A few Sundays after my decision, I was asked to offer a benediction in sacrament meeting. For me it was a symbolic reaffirmation, and I pondered the occasion and prayed about it. To my surprise, I was filled during the prayer with power and joy and warmth and happiness. I had learned the major truth about faith: when we take one small Father-may-I step toward him, we may expect a giant Yes-you-may step toward us. A few months later I learned that Paul had summed up what I had learned in his words to the Romans, since emblazoned in my soul: "For to be carnally [worldly] minded is death; but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (8:6). It is so.

It was only a matter of weeks before I knew that part of my commitment to faith would be volunteering myself for missionary service. The new-born Christian within me shouted "yes." But the carnal man groaned, for that part of me dreaded the calling, which seemed to stretch before me like thirty months of twenty-four-hour-a-day seminary classes (all due respect to the CES). Both sides of me resolved to go, as a lamb to the slaughter, with my conscience full of offense, for I knew that accepting a mission call was, in fact, put up or shut up time for me. I went in faith, though I frankly did not expect very much out of the missionary experience. But, I reasoned, if faith precedes the miracle, I'd better see a miracle or two before long.

## III

THE miracles weren't long in coming. I was called to the Swiss-Austrian Mission and went determined to place hard work on the altar. To my surprise, hard work with sympathetic companions led to increased faith and, increasingly, to nurturing Surprises of the Spirit, to the promised miracles, as the Lord stepped toward me and more than met the conditions of his promise. My first mission (I have waited thirty-three years to use that humble-sounding, self-aggrandizing phrase) became a marvelous unfolding of my spirit, a time of discovering the

patterns of joy which have marked my course ever since. I date my life from that mission.

I learned that as I took my finger from my own pulse and became “anxiously engaged” in the work of the ministry, I found my true and original Self and seemed to enjoy more and more Spiritual Surprises, shoring-up of the faith. I delighted to find that my companions and I could actually teach others the pattern.

One example is Karl Lederhilger, a leader of the Seventh-Day Adventist congregations in Upper Austria. Invited to meet him by his wife, who had attended one of our Tuesday lectures, we armed ourselves with Sabbath-day scriptural references and, fasting and fearful, rode our bikes to his home. As we had feared, our lesson on the Godhood was immediately challenged, and we were soon futilely arguing about the Sabbath. In the middle of the conflict, however, my companion, inspired, sent me to my bicycle saddlebags to fetch my outline of the Plan of Salvation, and I taught the Plan to the Lederhilger family, a bit fearful that I was feeding meat where the menu called for soup. But I was wrong, and I was filled by the Spirit and watched as Surprises of the Spirit began to occur. Karl, his face keen with interest, began to supply from memory the supporting scriptures—even some we hadn’t thought of. He would gently interrupt and clarify for his family various aspects of the Plan, affirming the points as he talked. The Spirit of God gradually filled the room until it was almost tangible. When I broached the need for vicarious baptism for the dead, Karl suddenly leaped to his feet, tears springing to his eyes, and recited, from memory, I Corinthians 15:29, “Else what shall they do which are baptized for the dead. . . .” “I have studied for years,” he cried, “to find out what this scripture means, and now these two young men make it all crystal clear. This gospel is true, Mutti, these young men have brought us the truth.” Surprise: the chill up the spine, the cold sweat on the forehead, the trembling through my soul—only this time everyone in the room shared these manifestations. The family was baptized a few weeks later. They had stepped in faith toward God, and he had drawn near and given them the greater perspective, before which their earlier concerns about the Sabbath paled into relative insignificance.

With many others, they had learned that God’s patterns are not so mysterious after all, for if he does move in “mysterious ways/ His wonders to perform,” he clearly “plants His footsteps on the sea/ And walks upon the storm.” And, from time to time, he allows us to watch him walk. And shout hosanna.

#### IV

SO I believe, in part because I have watched God’s patterns at work in my life and in the lives of others. I know, because the patterns have been proven trustworthy. It is a simple pattern: The individual makes a gesture toward belief and faith; the Spirit bears witness; the Mighty Change experienced and described by Alma the Younger follows; then the Surprises of

the Spirit crop up from time to time to remind the believer that though he or she is twenty or forty or sixty years out from Home, our mutual Father will blow across the coals of our Spirits, spark a surprise or shock of recognition in our souls, as if to say, “Here, my child, is a whiff of truth, an essence of remembrance, a tangible something to remind you that I’m here; that you’re on course; that your feet are still treading, however imperfectly, the paths which will lead to joy in mortality and in eternity.” It is a simple pattern. As the old Shaker song, “Simple Gifts,” puts it,

’Tis the gift to be simple  
 ’Tis the gift to be free  
 ’Tis the gift to come down  
 where you ought to be.  
 And when we find ourselves  
 in the place just right  
 ’Twill be in the valley of  
 love and delight.

Although the pattern is simple, keeping my life simple, in harmony, attuned to ever new Surprises of the Spirit, is more complex. In my own post-mission life, I seemed to become more earthbound as a student, husband, father, professor. I learned, at three universities, the appropriate skepticism; I learned to revel in the pursuit of *truth*, lower case. I learned I had to labor to keep my spiritual equilibrium, my equipoise. I learned that everyone else undergoes the same struggle.

In my attempts to balance my “in the world” inclinations with my “not of the world” desires, I have found that my religious life was not described by either of the categories identified by Richard Poll as “Liahona” or “Iron Rod.” Intellectually, I felt I should be a card-carrying Liahona Mormon, grounding my faith in reason and empirically verifiable experience, confessing that I have only what Poll has called “a somewhat tenuous connection with the Holy Spirit.” On the other hand, I felt that inasmuch as I saw the Church as the visible and tangible earthly arm of our presently invisible God, I was close to the Iron Rodder’s two basic, institutionally-centered tenets, “Follow the Brethren” and “Obedience is the first law of heaven.” But besides my own discomfort with Procrustean beds or pigeonholing, I simply felt that neither category defines my more than tenuous connection with the Spirit.

I am, I recently discovered, a member of a group called, for want of a better term, “Charismatics.” At least that is what Jeffrey C. Jacob calls my kind of Latter-day Saint in his article.<sup>2</sup> Jacob defines the Charismatic group as Latter-day Saints who “take a less mediated approach to religious experience by elevating the place of the Holy Spirit in their lives, not simply to confirm Church directives, but as an independent source of guidance and inspiration.” Falling somewhere on the continuum between the reason and experience orientation of the Liahona and the faith orientation of the Iron Rod, the Charismatics rely on personal inspiration and “quietly endure uncertainty rather than systematically engaging doubt.” In pursuing truth they seek a “personal relationship with Christ” and turn “to cultivating a sense of God in their lives,” seeking “the

presence of the divine,” confident that God “is not remote and uninvolved in our lives.” Hurrah, I said to myself, “I’m charismatic,” “No,” said my wife, “you’re enigmatic—and a Charismatic groupie.” “Whatever,” I whispered, charismatically.

## V

OF course, true Charismatic that I am, I do not pretend to understand the reason behind the pattern of God’s hand in our lives, but I know that he monitors and often gives guidance to our actions, our lives. Unquestionably, he answers prayers, he gives comfort and direction. He prompts and directs. And when I tally up instances of his interventions in my life, his outright manipulation, I gave thanks. He told me moments after I met her that Janice was to be my wife (though I played fair and didn’t force that knowledge on her until much later). He told that same woman and me that we were to cancel building plans and move to our present home. He commanded me at a very critical juncture, through my wife, to command our daughter to be healed, and she was. He cheated for me by telling me, on the morning of my final Ph.D. examination, the wording of the major bibliographic essay for the day—and I studied that material and aced the examination. He responded to my plea to help me find spiritual balance amidst my Ph.D. studies at the University of Wisconsin by having bishop Arval Erekson call me, the very next Sunday, to serve for one year as the seminary teacher, thereby urging me to a renewal of gospel studies. He told me, in a startling daytime vision, not only that Elder Thomas S. Monson would call me as stake president of the Provo Utah East Stake, but also showed me my two counselors and which high counselors I should release and which men I should sustain. And it scared me to death, but I had no doubts, for the pattern was clear. It was exactly the same pattern he had followed in showing me, in great detail, my calling to the bishopric of the East Twenty-Seventh Ward; in showing me that I would become the bishop of the Provo Bonneville Ward; and that I would become the president of the Switzerland Zurich Mission. And when it came time to call Relief Society presidents, Young Women leaders, quorum presidents, some twenty-five bishops, and to make monthly transfers of young missionaries, he has given me, time after time, Surprises of the Spirit.

No two revelations were the same, but the patterns were similar. It is left to me to take the initial steps, humble myself, plead with the Lord, and then await, with patience, the inexorable Surprise. In his own good time, in his own good way, the Lord makes his will known, and I have been able to say, “Thus saith the Lord.” The pattern works.

This joy of the Lord pressing near is so rewarding and refreshing that I have slowly learned to shun the spiritual bruising which I inevitably receive when I allow my mortality to assert itself and venture into ark-steadying, criticism of the Church and her leadership, questioning doctrine, carping about Church policies, programs, and my fellow mortals. After indulg-

ing in such—and who doesn’t?—I inevitably sense a withdrawal of the Spirit, a cessation of faith and growth and peace, and I feel the need to hasten back to the pattern of renewal, to spiritual growth and refreshment on which I have come to rely. Though my spiritual life is only partially dependent upon the outward Church below, I know that the Church is the arm of the Lord, the deliverer of his ordinances, a schoolmaster for my soul, an afforder of opportunities to serve and be served by others, and its leaders are his anointed. I find that harmony with Christ’s Church is essential to my spiritual well-being.

## VI

THE same pattern holds in the mission field. Over the past three years, I have watched as elder after sister has learned to climb up out of finger-on-pulse self-centeredness to lose him- or herself in the hard, bruising, tough, but character-sculpting and Christocentric work of the ministry to be rewarded by those Surprises and gifts of the Spirit—those spiritual promptings, insights, flashes of intelligence, dreams, visions, healings, witnesses of the divinity of the Book of Mormon and the Restoration, miracles of conversion—which seem to the missionary to occur only occasionally, but which appear to the mission president, as Chief Gatherer, Correlator and Reporter, as almost overwhelming manifestations of the intricate involvement of the Lord in the lives of these young men and women and older couples as he manipulates them into position to render service to and beget change in the lives of his children. Day after week after year, large and small events take place, as the elders and sisters make their Father-may-I steps into the twilight zone of faith only to learn that God is immediately behind the veil, and that here is a moment which affirms Truth and strengthens purpose and “holds up the hands when they hang down.” I have often wished that there were a central recording facility at Church headquarters to which the Saints could call in their Surprises of the Spirit. These experiences, indexed and printed as a modern “Magnalia Christi” or “Remarkable Providences,” would, I am confident, fill many volumes yearly and stem any talk as to whether the Spirit is lively in the Church of Jesus Christ.

As a mission president, I was likewise lifted, from time to time, above the routine concerns with the health of the missionaries, with numbers of baptisms, companionship problems, and the handful of missionaries who are always paddling around in the belly of the whale. The pattern held.

Typical is an event that occurred just over a year ago, while several of us attended a performance of Verdi’s *Rigoletto*, at the Luzern Opera House. Following the first act, the manager approached me and explained, “Miss Marina Jajic, our soprano, has become seriously ill and will not be able to continue her performance. Herr Montgomery [a Latter-day Saint and our host who was performing in the title role] has requested that the Mormon mission president give Miss Jajic a blessing. Follow me, if you will be so kind.”

Surprised and a bit apprehensive, my assistants and I accompanied the manager backstage to the women's dressing room. There, slumped in a corner chair, was Marina Jajic, collapsed and deathly pale and looking like a Gilda who had prematurely fallen victim to the assassin's dagger. We introduced ourselves, learned that she spoke little German but passable English, and established that she had faith that Christ could heal her, and that she desired a blessing. So there, amidst the hubbub of a dressing room full of partially-clad but heavily made-up singer-actresses, a Mormon mission president and two Mormon elders recently pulled from their pleasant opera boxes, administered in English to a deathly ill Roman Catholic soprano from Yugoslavia who desperately wanted and needed to be made well.

Then the Surprise of the Spirit occurred. I was suddenly able to shut out the confusion of the dressing room, and, filled with peace and conviction, knew exactly what the Lord wanted me to say. I gave expression to the feelings which somehow surged up from some flowing well within my soul, and I said things which surprised all of us, given the obvious condition of this woman. "Be healed! You will begin to regain strength immediately," I heard myself saying, "and you will recover and will not only continue your performance this evening, but you will sing magnificently. And as you reflect on this later, you will know that this blessing comes from God, through Jesus Christ. And you will want to learn more about Christ's desires for you." We concluded the administration. She thanked us, her eyes still partially closed, her face pallid. As we left the dressing room, I felt a confidence and calm which belied her appearance, and my rational self admitted that the fulfillment of my blessing seemed unlikely. Assuring the hand-wringing manager that we would not object if the house doctor looked at her, we made our way back to our seats, reassured the others in our party, and began praying, hard, that the Lord would indeed grant the very specific promises of the blessing. After a fifteen-minute wait, the manager, who had already appeared on stage to inform us of Miss Jajic's illness, reappeared to proclaim, "I am pleased to announce that Miss Jajic is feeling better and will be able to continue in her role as Gilda." Moments later we enthusiastically applauded Marina's reappearance on the stage, but I was also applauding our Father for stretching his finger into our lives and granting a special request. In accordance with the blessing, Marina performed magnificently, as did our Mormon baritone. It was a memorable evening—made even more memorable in the last scene, wherein Marina gave a very convincing portrayal of Gilda's lingering death.

The encore to that evening made it even better. Marina, understanding the miracle which had happened, began to question her colleague, Brian Montgomery, a returned missionary. She repeatedly accepted invitations to attend church and church socials. A few weeks later, the Montgomerys invited her to their home for dinner and a meeting with the missionaries. She accepted the invitation and began a rich and productive relationship with the sister missionaries, which culminated in her baptism in June 1988. The Lord had moved in not-so-

mysterious ways to urge another of his children into his kingdom.

## VII

SUCH spiritual manifestations, repeatedly reinforced, have affirmed that opting for faith in 1956 was, for me, the right course to belief and testimony and increased faith. I know that I am a common man, a scene-sweller at best. But I also know that I am a child of God striving to become a man of God; and I know that God monitors my life and cares about me, even in my relatively insignificant ministry, tucked away in Provo, Utah, or Zurich, Switzerland.

He cares about me and he cares about you and he will show it, though I don't presume to know why or when—nor do I agonize about it anymore. I don't know why a Provo man with inoperable brain cancer was instantly healed and remains well while another Provo woman with cancer and a few weeks to live was promised and given only two years to live and to accomplish her mission. I don't know why, during the blessing of a shattered alcoholic, his mother, six months dead, was permitted to enter the room and pour out, through my mouth and to the surprise of my counselor and me, a tender blessing and warning which changed her son's life. I don't know why the recently deceased mother of a young lady missionary appeared to her husband during the setting apart, nodding and smiling at him over my shoulder—and subsequently effected a total change in her husband. I don't know why the Lord intervened in these instances, while in other, perhaps similar instances there was no apparent intervention. I have learned merely to "confess his hand in all things," and shout hosanna.

I do know that such events are faithful realities which affirm the simple pattern of faith and make vivid the actuality of the world of the spirit. When I pause to recollect them, to count my blessings, they overwhelm me, and make it easier to be nourished by the experiences of an Abraham, a Moses, an Enos, an Alma, a Paul, or a Joseph Smith, Jr. The testimonies of innumerable men and women who have left a record of their witness, of their Spiritual Surprises, live anew in each occurrence where our God presses close, for they spring from the Great Pattern. When they are heeded by the faithful, who place themselves in God's hand, these Surprises of the Spirit, these occasional draughts of joy, become Living Water, which will always flow forth to nourish and transform, to witness and testify. It is God's way. Hosanna—and Amen! ☞

## NOTES

1. Richard Poll, "What the Church Means to People Like Me," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Winter 1967).
2. Jeffrey C. Jacob, "Explorations in Mormon Social Character: Beyond the Liahona and Iron Rod," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* (Summer 1989).

The development of the family as the central institution of Mormonism, has, together with the local ward, enabled the formerly communitarian Mormon church to create a contemporary basis for community.

## THE PERSISTENCE OF MORMON COMMUNITY INTO THE 1990S

By Mario S. De Pillis

DICTIONARIES ARE CURIOUSLY DELINQUENT IN defining the word *community*. *The American Heritage Dictionary*, for example, gives as the first meaning of community, “a group of people living in the same locality and under the same government.”<sup>1</sup> Scholars know that “community” means a good deal more than place, group, and government. All the cliché titles that we have heard since the 1950s—for example, “The Search for Community”—clearly connote a close emotional network of people, a group of ungoverned hearts, if you will. This indeed has been the usage of sociologists, philosophers, and historians from Ferdinand Tönnies earlier in this century down to Rosabeth Kanter and Marshall McLuhan in our own time. Thus, for most Americans, and perhaps for other English-speaking peoples, community is both a state of human relations and an object of yearning.

For twentieth-century Americans the word has special philosophical overtones, most of them positive. Thus, in May 1990, when Yale President Benno C. Schmidt Jr., awarded an honorary doctorate of humane letters to Wilma P. Mankiller, chief of the Cherokee Nation, he praised her as “a model for others” who was keeping alive “a spirit of community which too many others have lost.”<sup>2</sup> Given the positive connotations of the word, everyone tries to exploit it. Even a feminist group in conflict against male oppressors and simultaneously in conflict among themselves may try to call itself a “community of feminists” or a community of “those oppressed by men.” Attacking this feminist usage, literary critic Helen Vendler

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noted that “the utopian and ‘touchy-feely’ use of the word ‘community’ deriving from the intimacy of small groups meeting for discussion or living together can give an outsider the creeps.”<sup>3</sup> Many other interest groups, of course, exploit the positive connotations of the word.

It is difficult to find any social and historical sense in the welter of self-interested, undefined, and often nonsensical usages of “community.” And using sociological theory as an escape route often bogs one down in trivial sociological data about such criteria as “ideal size.” At the same time, one must also avoid the loose, macro-historical use of “community” as a mere settlement of people held together by money and a mayor: Daniel J. Boorstin, for example, celebrated the American, moveable, “Everywhere Community.”<sup>4</sup>

### A. DEFINITIONS OF COMMUNITY

WE can distinguish some categories of community that may help slice through the fog and prejudice surrounding the word. The following four classes of community represent, I believe, historical realities: (1) the *philosophical-ethical*, which despite its abstractness frames all American discourse on the subject; (2) the *socio-political*, a community of self-interest, like the familiar, everyday American small town; (3) the *religious community* that often helps define peoplehood (as it does for the Mormons); and (4) a community of *special People of Zion, Chosen by God*, a community that is almost always utopian or communitarian in its thrust: the chosen Jews have had their *kibbutzim* and *moshavs*, the chosen Mormons their *Ordervilles*.<sup>5</sup> For the sake of clarity I am excluding from these general categories the special case of utopian communes like the Shakers or the Mormon United Orders or the secular Owenites; but I shall define these self-separated, “intentional communities” later.

## 1.

The Philosophical-Ethical Community:  
A Community of Neighbors

THE philosophical-ethical community is the one that we all want: *a place (but not always) of neighborliness, of relative peace, of what sociologists call face-to-face relationships in primary groups.* Americans sought community with a passion in the social anomie of the Jacksonian era and again in the social breakdown of the 1960s. The first sentence in Rosabeth Kanter's 1973 book on communes reads simply: " 'Community' may be the word of the decade."<sup>6</sup> Actually, it may be the word of the century.

We usually think of philosophical-ethical communities as small places, perhaps one in which we do not actually live. In its most idealistic connotation, a community is the place where individualistic, self-motivated Americans would *like* to live. Americans write books with titles like *In Search of Community*, and we speak of a local community "rallying together" in times of crisis. The philosophical-ethical community is thus in part a mental construct.

Politicians love to use the philosophical-ethical community for its positive connotations. In some Eastern states, for example, the politicians and mental-health administrators like to say that we should return the mentally ill to "their" local communities, where presumably they will be better off. It turns out that the local communities are not eager to have "their" mentally ill back. They do not want a house for the mentally ill in any of their neighborhoods, and sometimes neighbors have resorted to arson.

In speaking of the "community" as a safe haven, government leaders are clearly exploiting the good connotations of community as a friendly, somewhat small place, where primary relationships thrive, where residents know who lives next door. In this secular, non-religious sense of community the word has a philosophical-ethical content: a community as a place of caring human beings who know and help one another. In this sense, i.e., a place of human caring, we all seek community. Yet in the best of small communities we find serious conflict between people, and sometimes, in towns and cities demoralized by a generation of unemployment, we do not detect a desire for the public good, for the commonweal.

There is a way in which the Mormon people have made this idealistic, philosophical-ethical definition of community a reality, and I will allude to it again. But now I must turn briefly to the *socio-political* sense of community.

## 2.

## The Socio-Political Community of Self-Interest

CONFLICT points to a second sense of community: *the social-political group held together by self-interest, whether by money or by values.*

The myth of the ideal small town in America has obscured the conflicts and social changes that have revolutionized and sometimes destroyed any sense of community in small towns.

In the Northeast, for example, Bostonians and New Yorkers who want to escape the problems of their respective cities have been migrating to the idealized villages of Northern New England. Shortly after settling down they discover that these towns are socio-political entities with some of the same conflicts that could be found back in the big city. Still, those small towns are working socio-political communities. And as such, they resemble religious sects in their criteria for full membership; that is, the newcomer must acknowledge or at least make some public obeisance to local customs and beliefs. Thus, the New Yorker who resettles in South Peacham, Vermont, and complains at a town meeting about traffic back-ups caused by 150 cows ambling across a time-honored cattle crossing has transgressed against the social code and won't "fit in." Even when urban escapees do respect and conform to local mores, they remain "flatlanders," a term which native Vermonters apply to urban newcomers.

If industrious or well-heeled outsiders descend on a small town in sufficient numbers, they can totally annihilate it as a community, as did the followers of the Bhagwan Shree Rajneesh in 1981 in Antelope, Oregon, or as the Mormons did in 1831 in Jackson County, Missouri. To be sure, Independence, a frontier town at that time, was not much of a community for the Mormons to overwhelm; but the numerous local settlers had a very strong sense of their own economic and political rights, and, as they believed, their own religious superiority to the deluded Mormonites. The non-Mormon settlers of Jackson County thus formed a community of beliefs and customs; and these thousands of non-Mormons who were flooding westward, intended, like all settlers, to reproduce the beliefs and values of their cultural homeland in the upper South. Despite the helter-skelter nature of American frontier settlement, hundreds of small towns sprang up, all of them real socio-political communities, all replete with charters, town plats, and lots of lawyers. Like most of us today, the Missourians organized their self-interests around these socio-political communities. Similarly, the anti-Mormon settlers in the vicinity of Nauvoo, in Hancock County, Illinois, wished to organize their lives around the typical socio-political community of their day, a small-town way of life based on individual entrepreneurship, fervent post-Revolutionary republicanism, an acceptable mix of denominations, and minimal control of moral behavior. This order of life differed dramatically from that of the Mormons in what Robert Flanders called "corporate Nauvoo."<sup>7</sup> The Church permitted individual enterprise in Nauvoo, but corporate enterprise was more important. As for the mix of denominations so characteristic of the American socio-political community, that was irrelevant in a unified Mormon town. As a self-conscious, communal religious group, the Mormons of the City of Nauvoo could and did enforce a uniform morality.

In a few rare but supremely influential instances the socio-political community coincides with the philosophical-ethical community, such as Calvin's Geneva or the scores of Puritan towns, or "covenanted communities," of New England before the 1750s. This theocratic kind of town creates "outsiders,"

and thus the New England towns evicted Baptists and Quakers, and the Genevans banished Anabaptists and advocates of free agency and burned Michael Servetus. For a brief moment in Nauvoo the Mormons created what was very nearly a covenanted community. Tolerant of non-Mormons, they nevertheless got rid of troublesome outsiders by “whittling them out of town”<sup>8</sup> or by taking gentler, less frontier-like measures. Calvinists, both in Europe and America, not only kept out other Christians, but also punished insiders—i.e., believers adjudged guilty of sin. They did so in order to preserve what the leading historian of social control in such communities calls the “Eucharist community without sin.” Calvinists, at least up to the late eighteenth century, had to be “without sin on their soul or hatred in their hearts” in order to come to the table of the Lord. Neither now nor in the past have the Mormons ever used the Eucharistic “sin discipline” to maintain the boundaries of community.<sup>9</sup>

Most of us live in socio-political communities and most of us accommodate our lives to them. But the Mormon people have always kept a psychic distance from relationships of mere self-interest—somewhat like the present-day Catholic nuns who hold jobs and wear modern street clothes but return to a communal household at night. They are in the socio-political community but not of it. I am exaggerating the moral separateness of the Mormons to make a distinction between the Latter-day Saints’ community, which is religious and which is no longer tied to a place (like Missouri or Utah) and, on the other hand, the socio-political community, which is both secular and spatially bounded.

## 3.

## The Religious Community: Peoplehood

**L**OOSELY speaking, one can describe a religious community as a group of people who can find a common identity in religious membership. Anthropologists sometimes call this identity tribal: all the Lebanese Moslems in Detroit, all the Catholics in Northern Ireland, or even all the Mormons in Utah before 1890. As in the loose dictionary definition, the tribal identity is that of a group of people living in the same place under the same religious government but maintaining a strong consciousness of separation from, or even hostility toward, all immediate neighbors.<sup>10</sup>

Though useful for the general anthropology of religion, this definition is not very helpful for the social and intellectual history of Mormon community. To be sure, the pre-Manifesto (pre-1890) Mormons of Utah constituted a kind of tribe: 99 percent white, Anglo-Saxon, Protestant in background; endogamy separated them socially; a vast distance still isolated them spatially from the society of Jim Fisk and Boss Tweed; and polygamy burned a mark in their consciousness that strengthened the group. But after the 1890s membership in the Mormon community functioned only in part as a source of identity. As the Mormon Community persists into the 1990s, it bears two distinctive marks that make it a good deal more than a tribal or a religious group identity.

First, the Mormons still believe that Independence, Jackson County, Missouri, is the Center Place of Zion. To be sure, since the death of Brigham Young in 1877 no general authority has explicitly advocated a resumption of the Gathering unto Zion. We shall examine below whether this silence amounts to a betrayal of Mormon scriptures and whether it has weakened or destroyed the communalism of the Mormons.

Second, the Mormon people retain their tie to the “utopian” meaning of religious community: the millennial Zion (which includes the belief that Christ will come again)—even if today they are likely to speak of “Zion community” as a vague, ideal goal which fervent Saints always hope to reach. This “Zion” as a pious goal has gotten out of hand in recent years as a kind of Mormon HolyTalk (my term), even among educated Latter-day Saints.<sup>11</sup>

In these two ways Mormonism conforms in part to the strict communitarian sense of the definition of “religious community.” According to Arthur Bestor Jr.’s classic definition, a communitarian society or “utopia” is a society of people that has voluntarily separated from the world, is generally small, strives after perfection in its institutions, shares many things in common, and usually makes chiliastic claims.<sup>12</sup> This standard communitarian definition certainly applies to the original Mormon City of Zion of 1831 (and to the United Order of Enoch): the early Mormons in the Center Place of Zion were a small, property-sharing group of believers eagerly awaiting the second coming of Christ at a particular place. But by 1838 the quasi-communist economic basis for the City of Zion had changed into tithing by individuals, many of whom did not even reside in the Land of Zion.<sup>13</sup> This new law of tithing represented the first official Mormon departure from the Law of Consecration and a return to individual private property and capitalism. Gone now was early Mormonism’s version of “things in common.”

Also gone was the Bestor criterion of spatial isolation in a particular place. By 1847 the Latter-day Saints were no longer living together in one community isolated from the larger society but found themselves scattered throughout North America and Northern Europe. In this dispersion we find the beginnings of the later international community of Mormons, but because the Church still expected the Saints abroad to gather unto Utah, dispersion remained just that, and not real internationalization. Foreign Saints did not remain at home and build wards, because the Church was still preaching the millennial doctrine of the “Gathering” to a sacred place in the United States.

During the administration of Brigham Young (1847-1877) the Gathering remained in place, and the Saints kept fresh their faith in the Millennium; but after the death of Young, the Church began to downplay the communitarian heritage and the Gathering,<sup>14</sup> not just in the economic sphere, but also in the minds of the Saints. Thus by the 1890s, Mormon end-time expressions became less urgent and fearful; by contrast with the 1830s, we read no sermons about planetary catastrophe (maybe tomorrow!), no reports of blood falling from the skies. Few Latter-day Saints were planning their lives around the

imminent arrival of Christ. In 1990 Saints say loosely that Zion is “the pure in heart,” which avoids locating it in Jackson County, Missouri. Zion-in-the-heart HolyTalk obscures the related but truthful statement that Zion as an ideal and a doctrine does in fact survive in the minds and hearts of the Saints, from which place the voice of Zion repeatedly reminds them of their forgotten Order, inspiring them to help the poor (Welfare Plan), to seek equality (tithing, new plan for equality in ward budgets), even to invoking the need to return to Missouri. As noted below, Zion truly resides in Mormon hearts and minds, not as HolyTalk, but as a real understanding that somehow Mormons still expect Christ to come again—in America.

By the late 1980s the Church was no longer a small society. Now a huge international organization of about 7 million members, the Church has had to downplay, if not discard, the small-scale communitarian (utopian) ideals of their old Jacksonian Zion. But the Mormon people have found new ways to separate themselves by institutional and psychological boundary maintenance. Unlike Jews and Catholics, for example, who try to maintain endogamy through the coercion of talmudic and canon law, the Mormons have created techniques like single adult wards (for unmarried adults) and celibate missions (with a marital reward at the end) that make in-group marriage less a legal requirement than a natural event favored by the odds. “Temple work,” too, exerts a unifying power unimagined by non-Mormons. This pedestrian Mormon phrase conceals emotion-laden activities like baptism for the dead, administering various ordinances, sealings to one’s family, and so on, all carried out in the “House of the Lord.” Latter-day Saints consider their temples extremely sacred places, so sacred that very few reliable concrete details about interior arrangements and secret ordinances are available to the public, and only members with a written “temple recommend” may enter. Once inside, the Saint can feel a powerful, even sensual connectedness with other Mormons both living and dead.

The most ordinary Saint can see and touch the alabaster and the gold of the temples in Washington, D. C., and Salt Lake City, or admire the giant mosaic and the free-form Art Deco concrete of the Honolulu temple, and can feel himself or herself transported. Every devout Saint can feel renewed in his

**Now a huge international organization, the Church has had to downplay, if not discard, the small-scale communitarian ideals of their old Jacksonian Zion. But the Mormon people have found new ways to separate themselves by institutional and psychological boundary maintenance.**

or her consecration and loyalty to the group in ways that neither Catholic cathedrals nor Buddhist shrines can rival. Many women, who do not hold the priesthood, can feel quite “equal” and powerful in the temple.<sup>15</sup>

Strict dietary rules, very ancient in the history of new religions, represent still another source of group solidarity. In the course of the twentieth century, Utah developed from a curious byway into a modern urban state, and the Church burst the confines of the American West and confronted a world of mammon, individualism, and urban decay. The Church’s need to maintain the boundaries of the Mormon people reached emergency levels, so it required strict compliance with the Word of Wisdom, which prohibits coffee, tea, alcohol, and tobacco. Nineteenth-century Mormons drank wine, beer, and coffee; but twentieth-century Mormons need to identify with one another and maintain a boundary between themselves and the Gentile world.<sup>16</sup>

Finally, need one repeat that tithing—that faint shadow of early Mormon property sharing—forms another internalized fence that keeps the Saints in and the goats out? By drawing precise boundaries the Latter-day Saints can at least remind themselves of the perfectionism, of the millennial sense of economic justice, and of Zion’s original ideal of social equality. Ironically, some recent converts, reading Mormon scriptures for the first time, have in fact repeatedly tried to revive the old communitarian, United Order ideals of spatial separation and sharing of property. Mormon dissident groups, historically always spatially segregated, have invariably turned to some version of the United Order as their basic communal, organizing principle.

How, then, can one reconcile the character of the Mormon people today—growing, prosperous, capitalist, numbering in the millions, and as respected as any mainline church—how can that be reconciled with a definition of community based on the superseded conditions of the City of Zion way back in the agrarian period of American history? After all, didn’t LDS Professor Louis C. Midgley rightly puncture a lot of balloons filled with airy talk of “Zion” when he pointed out that “we have only a toe in Zion, but a whole foot in Babylon”? How can I possibly imply that Mormons are really saints, sequestered from the sins of the Me Generation? I shall perform that miracle in a moment. First we must take note of some history.



B.  
THE SAINTS SURVIVE THREATS TO  
MORMON COMMUNITY:  
1860S TO THE 1960S

MY theme is this: How did the Mormon culture of Utah in the 1850s, 1860s, and 1870s survive the arrival of hostile Gentile settlers, the coming of the transcontinental railroad, and the onslaught of anti-Mormons? How is it that the Mormon people did not disperse and dissolve with the invasion of the United States Army in the 1850s, followed by the in-migration of thousands of non-Mormons after the Civil War, then more federal persecution for polygamy in the 1880s and 1890s, and, finally, after a period of relative isolation, the influx of tens of thousands of non-Mormons during and after World War II? Why didn't the Mormons escape to out-of-the-way farming areas, as did the German pietists who went to Uruguay or the Utah polygamists who fled to Mexico and Canada?

Clearly one explanation is that by the 1950s the thoroughly urbanized Saints no longer had the option to move. The wartime influx of non-Mormons and of heavy industry had thoroughly urbanized Utah's Wasatch Front, the line of cities running from Ogden in the north through Salt Lake City to Provo in the south, and permanently altered the dominant Mormon tone of daily life. Moreover, having finally attained acceptance in American society, the Latter-day Saints did not feel that the Mormon way of life was in dire jeopardy. What a contrast with that other postwar year of 1868! In that year, just a few months before the transcontinental railroad was completed through Utah, Brigham Young and other leaders deeply feared the corrupting power of incoming Gentiles and began preparing for the worst.<sup>17</sup>

In contrast, the Mormons of the 1950s felt supremely confident about the future of their church and way of life. They had finally won acceptance, even a certain admiration among their fellow Americans, and it was more than symbolic that Ezra Taft Benson, current Church president, became one of the first Mormons to hold a cabinet-level position in American history.<sup>18</sup>

Notwithstanding all the peace, stability, and self-confidence in the Church of the 1950s, the historian is always looking for, and can always find, seeds of trouble. And the troubles did come to the Mormon community in the 1960s, just as they did for every major non-Mormon institution. Black Mormons wanted the priesthood; students and intellectuals were questioning Mormon history and doctrine; old timers wondered about the wisdom of discontinuing ward and stake farms in favor of vast agricultural enterprises based on hired labor; a flood of new, sophisticated scholarship authored by Saints poured off the presses, deeply disturbing some general authorities; and between 1962 and 1972 three Church presidents<sup>19</sup> had to restructure the entire Church. Although many Saints might have found fault with the manner in which the Church carried out the restructuring program, some kind of serious revision of the norms of worship and the administra-

tive apparatus of the Church was overdue. The restructuring of Church government had already begun in the 1930s to meet the stresses of the Great Depression and to deal with signs of renewed vitality in the life of the Church and in its foreign missions. The number of stakes had grown from 100 in 1928, to 137 in 1940, and to over 700 by 1975. Technological change after 1940 forced the Church to face the power of television, and Mormons were among the first religious denominations in the country to learn how to use television and to invest heavily in broadcast media and later in audio and video cassettes. Economic changes during and after the war forced it to reconsider the nature and function of its large agricultural holdings. As a response to these and many other changes, various presidents, beginning with Heber J. Grant, began a policy of restructuring that dealt brilliantly with the new challenges to the Church's economic policies and outreach (media) techniques.<sup>20</sup>

President Heber J. Grant, during the second decade of his administration, carried out what the Church called "consolidation" and "correlation." For example, it combined publications that duplicated one another's functions, like one magazine for young men and one for young women. As membership began to expand into non-Mormon areas such as California and the Pacific Northwest, the Church established stake missions and attempted to "coordinate, consolidate, eliminate, simplify and adjust the work of auxiliary organizations." These measures relieved the overburdened general authorities of extra assignments (such as president of the Young Men's Mutual Improvement Association). In 1941 the Church set up the first high-level administrative cabinet called Assistants to the Twelve (five in 1941 and over twenty-four by 1980). The Assistants were later assumed into the quorums of the Seventy. Many Saints believe that the Correlation Movement, which gained momentum in the 1960s, has been overdone, especially since the establishment in 1975 of an officious new Correlation Department headed by a new Correlation Executive Committee (consisting of the senior members of the Council of the Twelve Apostles). The Committee's decisions have altered the order of Sunday worship, revised orders of scriptural studies (a serious weekly activity for all active Mormons), suggested changes in architectural policies, and in general has re-routed sensitive currents of everyday Church life. Understandably, this powerful revision of long-standing ways rankles many Saints, and Correlation is a favorite topic for cartoons, jokes, and general muttering.

In a separate action, the First Presidency inaugurated the Church Welfare Program (or Plan) between 1933 and 1936 to help the poor and unemployed in the Church. The politically conservative general authorities realized that they were getting dangerously close to the "socialist" communitarianism of "Enoch's city of Zion," so they felt compelled to deny repeatedly that the Welfare Plan had anything to do with reestablishing the United Order. Nevertheless they felt pride and gratification in the program. In the words of First Presidency Counselor J. Reuben Clark, "We shall not be so very far from carrying out the great fundamentals of the United

Order.”<sup>21</sup> Through these and other changes, the confident Mormonism of post-World War II obviously managed to preserve its fabled doctrinal integrity and its Church unity—and even a smidgeon of its ancient communitarian root. Like polygamy, that root has refused to die.

C.

POST-WAR AFFLUENCE: A THREAT TO MORMON  
COMMUNITY

WHILE granting the gleaming success of the thirty-year period from 1945 to 1975, I believe that most faithful Latter-day Saints and informed non-Mormon observers would agree that since 1945 two developments have posed particularly dangerous threats to the integrity of Mormon religious community. One is the widespread affluence, materialism, and hedonism of America since World War II. The other threat lies in the spatial dilution of the Mormon community as it expanded from “The Valleys” of Utah throughout North America, and then in the 1970s throughout the world. The Church, of course, has faced more than two major problems including (but not detailed in this essay) the wholesale revision of American mores in the 1960s and the unrest arising among blacks, Native Americans, and women in the Church. In other words, just as the Church was reaching a new pinnacle of Weberian bureaucratic rationalization in 1975-76, it had to confront problems much less pleasant and simple than organizing growth or arguing about new names for old stakes.

Confronted with the first of these two threats—four decades of rampant materialism and hedonism in Utah and in all their main American missionary areas, with glittering malls from Salt Lake to Seattle, the ongoing sexual revolution of the 1960s and 1970s, the seduction of post-World War II American youth with cars and prosperity, and so on—the Saints have demonstrated a remarkable ability to maintain their nineteenth-century zeal and commitment. Fawn M. Brodie certainly would not have seen much of a challenge to Mormon spiritual integrity in consumerism and big corporate money, because Mormonism is (she would have said) already a materialistic religion and not an ascetic one.<sup>22</sup> Nevertheless, the pages of serious publications like *Dialogue*, *SUNSTONE*,

*Exponent II*, and BYU’s famous (or infamous) *Seventh East Press* and its successor *Student Review* are filled with articles and letters struggling critically with a perceived loss of Mormon spirituality. In an editorial containing typical criticisms of materialistic trends among the Saints, a student writes:

Although at BYU we are probably as preoccupied with sex (or the lack of it) than we are with money (or the lack of it), I think that when we look at Mormons in general, matters of the wallet are more intriguing

and more controversial than matters of the heart. In some ways our cultural identity as Mormons in society is defined by our wealth. . . . More interesting than how the world perceives our prosperity is the internal conflict wealth causes within Mormon society. . . . Perhaps the reason that we are so obsessed with wealth is that Mormon scripture deals so heavily and repeatedly with the problem of wealth. This is particularly true of the Book of Mormon. I can think of few themes which are presented more clearly and more forcefully in the Book of Mormon than the danger of wealth. . . . How we acquire and use wealth is central to the challenge of living in the world but not of it.

I am afraid, however, that as a people we are not doing so well at this. And the prophets “ancient and modern” support my observations. . . .<sup>23</sup>

New views of sexual identity and behavior have also become popular items for discussion.<sup>24</sup> The revolutionary “course correction” announced by the First Presidency in January of 1990, while presented as a new and more equitable “budgeting procedure” (centralization of Church finances), was in fact a response to affluence and hedonism; for the general authorities defended it as a spiritual antidote for “the expensive, even extravagant, activities to which we have become accustomed.”<sup>25</sup> The conservative first counselor in the First Presidency, Gordon B. Hinckley, defended the loss of local financial autonomy by harking back to the tithing revelation of 1838. He noted the requirement of the old tithing revelation that “the Presiding Bishopric” (a term associated with the old United Order) shared with the First Presidency the responsibility for insuring the principle of economic equality.

In the twentieth century  
the Church burst the  
confines of the American  
West and confronted a  
world of mammon,  
individualism, and urban  
decay. The Church’s need  
to maintain the  
boundaries of the  
Mormon people reached  
emergency levels, so it  
required strict compliance  
with the Word of Wisdom.

And, he added pointedly, in allocating funds, we have not distinguished between so-called affluent wards and so-called poor wards. We have allowed an equal amount to all, and this same principle should govern in the allocations made by you.<sup>26</sup>

President Thomas S. Monson, second counselor in the First Presidency, expressed the concern more trenchantly:

To measure the goodness of life by its delights and pleasures is to apply a false standard. The abundant life does not consist of a glut of luxury. . . . No one has learned the meaning of living until he has surrendered his ego to the service of his fellow men.<sup>27</sup>

#### D.

#### STAKES AND WARDS: THE ANSWER TO SPATIAL DILUTION

THE other great postwar threat to Mormon religious community was the challenge of spatial dilution. This may have been an even greater danger to Mormon community than American materialism and hedonism.

The threat here is not merely sociological, but scriptural, affecting the integrity of two fundamental communitarian teachings: the Gathering and the Center Place of Zion. Here we have a challenge that all the restructuring of Church bureaucracy in the 1930s, 1960s, and 1970s cannot meet; and the Church may well find itself turning, quite unconsciously, to protective devices and attitudes forged by the first generation of millennial Mormons.

This sudden spatial dispersion and diffusion of the Mormon people throughout the planet has posed the greatest of all the challenges to Mormon community: how could the Mormons preserve their peoplehood when, as late as the 1950s, they were no longer concentrated in what they loosely called then "The Valley" (around Salt Lake City) and now called "The Wasatch Front"? Although the state of Utah remains about 70 percent Mormon in 1990, it no longer counts as the heart of what Wallace Stegner and others called "Mormon Country" or what Leonard Arrington termed "The Great Basin Kingdom." Mormonism and the Mormon people expanded in every direction and in every place. This kind of spatial dilution endangered the social unity of the Mormon people and the administrative integrity of their church.

While the influx of Gentiles has been steadily weakening the concentration of Mormons in Utah for about a century, the sudden and dramatic spread of the Church throughout the world since the 1940s has also contributed to a spatial thinning out of the Mormon population. The Mormon community had always been overwhelmingly Anglo-Saxon Protestant American in culture and religious style. Thus, global dispersion presented the dangerous possibility of *cultural* dilution and conflict as the Saints moved into exotic areas like Lagos, Nigeria, Jackson, Mississippi, and even Wallingford, Connecticut. The explosive growth of the Church in the U.S. South, in Latin America, in Europe, and in Africa has astonished

students of American religion. After considerable success in Japan, Korea, and Hong Kong, Mormon missionaries are now trying to penetrate the People's Republic of China, and will doubtless succeed, as they did, spectacularly so, in the defunct Eastern-bloc police state of the German Democratic Republic. By the 1970s, Mormons were beginning to grapple with new cultures light-years removed from their Anglo-Saxon Protestant heritage, like the Islam of West Africa and the Catholicism of Southern Europe. By 1990 the Mormons were no longer a racially and culturally homogeneous people concentrated in one place. Scattered throughout the world since World War II, Mormon peoplehood could no longer be defined by place.

But one old Mormon institution proved more than equal to the task of forestalling the dilution of Mormon community: the early Mormon system of wards and stakes. In 1955, for example, the Church administered all of New England through its most embryonic level of bureaucratic classification: the New England Mission. Back in the early 1950s Mormon missions were like the Louisiana Purchase; central authorities back in Utah drew a line around it, but didn't know exactly what was in it. By the 1970s the rapid growth of membership in New England allowed the Church to start dividing New England into regular stakes and wards.

Significantly, the Church earlier assigned this key role to the wards and stakes at two moments of crisis and adaptation to the secular world: 1877-80 and 1890-1914. In the earlier period, Brigham Young had begun assigning heavier religious duties to the ward, and after the wrenching Manifesto of 1890, the general authorities began to see the ward as the basis of the communal life of the Church, making it the locus of Scouting, athletic programs, drama, dance, genealogy, as well as prayer and worship. The First Presidency increased its printed instructions to the wards from practically nothing in 1890, to a distribution of guidance materials to all ward bishops by 1893, to a vast and uniform apparatus of instruction by 1913, that included fifty-page instruction handbooks for the ward-level administration of records, recommends, ordinances, buildings, quorums, transgressions, and the teaching of classes.<sup>28</sup> By 1914 the new standardized ward was more than equal to the task of supplying some of the communal solidarity lost with the abandonment of polygamy in 1890 and the decay of the Orderville before that date; and now, in the late-twentieth century, that communal cohesion seems further threatened by the success of Mormon internationalization and the spatial scattering of Mormons at home in North America.

Equally dramatic were changes in the daily life of the wards. Once a partly secular division for convenience in governing the first planned Mormon city of Nauvoo, much like the political wards of other cities, the local wards had by the 1940s become something like communes. While they did not share meals or property, ward members did enjoy intense personal interaction and interdependence. The general authorities could not have foreseen what might be called the Psychological Ward of the Church: the place for meaningful personal relationships as well as for study and worship.

Thus in the wards of Paris, provincials, African blacks,

Parisians, and Americans can all meet together and feel at home. Children of newly arrived families quickly make friends in the Church Primary program and in organizations for other age groups. Parents (fathers) may have to learn to conduct a sacrament meeting in French; they may have kind words for another recent member, a divorced mother of six, who sits uncomfortably in a husband-male dominated round of lively meetings for worship and study. In short, the Mormon ward community tames a possibly hostile alien culture.

No sooner had it begun to flourish than the Psychological Ward met a possible nemesis: the flood of non-English speaking converts that began to affect ward life in the 1950s and which came to a head in the 1980s. At first the general authorities made the right theological assumption: all races are equal and wards should be integrated; and thus by the 1960s "multi-cultural" wards appeared in stakes from Utah to California, mixing Hispanics, Anglos, Asians, Americans, and Europeans. Inevitably frictions arose and the Church has yielded considerable ground. In recent years some self-segregated black wards have arisen in places like Charlotte, North Carolina, but in general Mormons have succeeded much better than either the mainline churches or the sectarians in amalgamating with "different" ethnic or cultural groups: consider the

standard Catholic ethnic parishes, the Korean Baptist churches, or the white lower-middle-class Assemblies of God.

Unlike the Catholic Church, the only other church professing to be the universal church for all peoples, the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been trying for thirty years to deal with the difficulties presented by ethnic wards. The Catholic Church can appoint a minimally paid priest to minister to the needs of a parish, but Mormonism depends on the leadership of each and every member of a ward or branch. Thus, for a small ethnic branch to become a real ward, the foreign converts in that branch must have a minimal cadre of "priesthood leadership" trained in Mormon scripture, ordinances, administrative rules, and ways of life. Ethnic wards composed of untrained, non-English-speaking converts cannot take on regular ward duties until they build up the minimum of skills needed to staff a bishopric. By integrating converts into Mormon ward culture, the Church had some hope of preserving the unity and cooperation needed for

peaceful communal life. Unlike the hundreds of Catholic ethnic parishes, many of them moribund, the LDS church has living, teaching wards that can acculturate foreigners. This ultimately strengthens Mormon peoplehood, a trait essential to the definition of Mormonism. The Catholic Church enjoys no such sense of peoplehood; it uses the common Christian phrase "People of God" only in a theological sense.

But the sudden influx of a huge number of Asian and Hispanic converts has forced the Church to compromise its

goal of close fellowship and uniformity. In somewhat the same manner, the U.S. Catholic Church, without worrying much about community, had to accommodate the arrival of millions of Catholics during the New Immigration of 1865-1921. The Catholic Church faced a less daunting challenge. She did not have to deal with Asians and African Catholics, since none were allowed entry after the increasingly harsh exclusion and quota acts of 1886-1924. She did not have to teach basic doctrines, since newcomers had presumably learned the basic articles of their faith in their countries of origin. She did not have to train every boy to be a priest and a missionary, as do the Mormons, since the Roman Catholic Church had never accepted even a modified version of the Reformation doctrine of the "priesthood of all believers." The difficulty for the

Catholic Church lay not so much in its polity as in the sheer numbers of new Catholics (millions as compared with some tens of thousands of Mormon converts) and inter-ethnic rivalries between differing national Catholic traditions, most notably the Americanist controversy.<sup>29</sup>

Moreover, since most recent Mormon converts were not Euro-Americans but non-English-speaking peoples of color, the LDS church found it much harder to integrate these more exotic groups into the daily life of a Mormon ward life than, say, the Catholic Church did in trying to incorporate Europeans like the Poles, Irish, and Italians who made up the ethnic parishes of Catholicism. Finally, the Mormons had to face a historical coincidence that had never disturbed the Catholic polity based on parishes-in-a-diocese: the explosive growth in foreign Mormon converts came at the height of a resurgence of American ethnic-group nationalism (the white "rise of the unmeltable ethnic" and the African-American "black nationalism") between 1972 and the late 1980s. Hispanic,

**Since 1945 two developments have posed threats to the integrity of Mormon religious community. One is the widespread affluence, materialism, and hedonism of America since World War II. The other is the spatial dilution of the Mormon community throughout the world.**

Native American, and African-American members of the LDS church were particularly conscious of their rights as minorities in relation to the white majority dominating their church. In fact, in 1989 the Church had to formally excommunicate its first Native-American general authority, Elder George P. Lee, who had protested the alleged racism of an oppressive Caucasian majority.<sup>30</sup>

It was partly, no doubt, in response to wounded ethnic pride and troublesome ethnic rivalries—tiresome old stories in American history from which Mormons are not immune—that the Church began, bit by bit, to yield on the ideal of integration. In California, for example, the burgeoning number of converts among Tongans, Laotians, Vietnamese, Samoans, Cambodians, and Hispanics have forced the general authorities, willy-nilly, to go along with ethnic branches and wards, at least for the time being. Pressure from non-Caucasians in the United States, West Africa, and South America also reportedly prompted the “black priesthood revelation” in 1978, and the quiet expunging (as “misprints”) from Mormon scriptures and religious discourse phrases like “white and delightsome.” Catholicism was not burdened with such scriptures.<sup>31</sup>

The many new ethnic wards represent a *de facto* reversal of policy, though reversal may be too strong a word for the weak implementation of integrationist policies. At first it was the Church itself that suggested separate wards: in 1961-62, at the first flush of internationalization, two of the Twelve serving on the Church’s Indian and Foreign Language Committee strongly favored a new policy of separate ethnic congregations (wards and branches) in the American West. The Church clearly intended to show respect for ethnic pride and cultural autonomy—certainly not to segregate in the racist connotation of that term. But in 1972 the First Presidency began transferring Lamanites (Native Americans) and persons of color back to geographically defined units (wards and stakes), adding special programs and high level encouragement to help with acculturation and religious education.<sup>32</sup>

Since the early 1970s the Church has vacillated between a compassionate understanding of converts’ needs by allowing ethnic branches and wards and, on the other hand, the Mormon ideal of integrated wards: the community of like-minded, more-or-less equal Saints. More often than not, this vacillation has ended up letting ethnic convenience prevail over the ideal of a multi-cultural, integrated branch or ward. Thus, even a German branch that the Church organized in 1963 as a “temporary” unit in Salt Lake City—and which it could easily have integrated with other white groups—has remained German to this day.

The main arguments for ethnic units are (1) that they allow foreign converts to be “comfortable” with their own and (2) the desire of ethnic nationalists to object to assimilation and loss of inherited language and culture. Neither argument comports with the Mormon tradition of self-sacrifice and uniform subordination to authority. But such arguments may well justify the self-segregation of African-American wards, because African-Americans have an extremely powerful American subculture permeated by a special Christian tradition that is older

than Mormonism.<sup>33</sup> Ironically, Mormon elders face an easier task excising Buddhist beliefs than in challenging African-American religious beliefs—whose late-eighteenth-century Protestant roots they share and whose Christian fervor they can view with ready empathy.

For all the vacillation and compromise, the communal ideal of integration persists. As recently as 1988, Elder Paul H. Dunn, then a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy, forcefully expressed it, asking, “Do you think when we get to the other side of the veil the Lord is going to care whether you came from Tonga or New Zealand or America? . . . No. . . . The color of skin, the culture we represent, the interests we have are all quite secondary to the concept of the great eternal family.”<sup>34</sup> It is entirely possible that in some multi-ethnic metropolitan areas like the one covered by the Oakland California Stake, the far larger stake organization will act as the integrating unit for ethnically defined wards. But the stake, a large unit comprising up to a dozen wards, cannot be the basic unit of Mormon community, for it intrinsically limits the number of direct face-to-face relations. In the meantime, while the Church’s roller-coaster policy on the issue of ethnic-ward-or-integrated-ward continues, the wards are still working as communal social units from the South Pacific to eastern Europe.

Some historical perspective on Mormon ethnic groups suggests that what seems to be vacillation is in reality a kind of American pragmatism. Mormon ethnic wards are not new, having emerged among the thousands of Scandinavian converts before the Civil War—almost as early as Catholic ethnic parishes. Although the Anglo majority did not perceive the earlier groups, like the Danes, as shockingly different, they did condescend to them as “ugly ducklings” in the Church, but still light-skinned birds of a feather.<sup>35</sup> In sum, the LDS church, measured against its own communitarian ideal of total communal integration and judged in the light of the ethnic crises of the 1970s, from the Mormon converts in Lagos to the Mormon converts among the thousands of Laotians in Fresno, had achieved a great deal more socially and religiously for its members than did the well-established Catholic Church.

The collapse, beginning in the 1960s, of the old Euro-Catholic ethnic parish throws light on the unique nature of the Mormon ward-and-stake system. The great difference between a so-called Mormon ethnic ward and the old Euro-Catholic ethnic parish was communitarian and religious. In the 1980s, the Catholic ethnic parishes, vibrant social centers for more than three generations, suddenly died a death caused less by apostasy and dearth of priests than by the success of immigrant sons and daughters, who “made it” and became super-Americans. During the 1980s, just when Mormon ethnic wards were multiplying, the archbishops of New York, Detroit, Chicago, and other cities were closing down scores of old ethnic parishes representing hundreds of millions of dollars in property and echoing with the sweaty lives and sacrifices of millions of immigrants. In June 1990 the Archdiocese of Chicago closed down twenty-eight parishes and eighteen schools. A few elderly grandparents, left behind in the flight to suburbia

of the post-World War II years, sat weeping in pews already up for auction. They protested and even took back statues bequeathed by their forbearers.<sup>36</sup>

The so-called "Euro-village" had served a primarily *social function* superbly, but failed as a religious institution. As I have already noted, since the Mormon ward achieves community—not through ethnic identity or by organizing mutual help (Euro-parishes) in a hostile society but through *communal religious activity* conceived in 1831 in Zion and grounded in a communitarian concept, however deeply betrayed, of shared or justly distributed wealth—it is hardly surprising that in the late 1980s converts among poor Lamanites (Native Americans) and some Third World branches have "discovered" Zion's old Law of Consecration and Stewardship by reading Mormon scripture, and have tried to put the old utopian economic plan into practice!<sup>37</sup> Unlike Catholic parish boundaries, Mormon ward geographical boundaries can be, and are, redrawn *ad libitum* because the community of ward *members* and not the geographical lines define the local unit. Geographical lines are matters of administrative convenience, changing immediately when the addition of many new ward members pushes the envelope. At that point a natural, unforced mitosis begins. This mitosis, or splitting off, also occurs at the lower "branch" level; thus, when a branch of newly converted Laotians in Fresno becomes large enough and well enough versed in doctrine and Church rules, it becomes a ward.

In short, the Catholic parishes were socio-political communities which expire when social self-interest ceases; whereas Mormon wards are communal societies which die their deaths only when religious activity ends.

**G**IVEN the transportability of the ward-and-stake system throughout the world and its effectiveness in creating communities of culturally variegated members, the Mormons no longer need a Gathering or concentration of Saints in the American West or even in the traditional "Mormon Villages," which have been called the "progenitors of the ward."<sup>38</sup> In contrast to utopian religious communitarians like the Hutterites who must continually face a search for new places of isolation and separation from "the world," the Mormons no longer need to escape to the geographical isolation of McGrath,

Canada, or any other spot on the earth. They no longer need Utah or places like "Mormon Country." They can simply export the ward, and use it to bring different kinds of people together, face to face. The fears of a dozen years ago that the ward might be too American to be exported or that its communal functions might conflict with the Church's new emphasis on family life have proved groundless.

The early Mormon institutions of the ward and its ward bishop can bring the Saints together, face-to-face. Africans,

Parisians, and Americans in a Paris ward. Tongans, Hispanics, and Anglos in a Salt Lake ward. As it enters the last decade of the century, the Mormon community can survive without resorting to a sacred Mormon geography and without spatial isolation, because the locus of Mormon community is now in their hearts and minds and because it has inherited certain institutional devices to cope with growth.

Now a huge ecclesiastical corpus known as The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, the Mormon community seems to have discarded the need of the early Church to segregate itself spatially and seems to feel little need in this day of individual wealth to share many things in common. But as we shall see, even these two ancient elements of communitarian life—segregation and sharing—have survived in

not entirely vestigial ways. Moreover, the Mormons have expanded and perfected old institutional devices like the local ward system (as a way of preserving a good deal of their old face-to-face community) and the Church welfare system (as a way of sharing material things). Thus they have managed to keep a separation between themselves and outside "tribes." Anthropologists and sociologists call this institutional and psychological "boundary maintenance."

Above, I posed the question of whether the silence of the general authorities on the resumption of the Gathering to Missouri represented a betrayal of Mormon doctrine, and whether cessation of the Gathering and the world-wide dispersion of the Saints represents a dangerous dilution of the Mormons as a people or community. Doubtlessly the cessation of the Gathering to Zion (or even to Utah) in this century has weakened the communalism of the Mormon people, but it has not destroyed it. For one thing, the Mormons still teach the coming Millennium. For another, all the Saints realize that a

**O**ne old Mormon institution proved more than equal to the task of forestalling the dilution of Mormon community: the early Mormon system of wards and stakes.

coming Millennium. For another, all the Saints realize that a massive return to Missouri was impossible after the murder of the Prophet in 1844, given the rabid anti-Mormonism of the period up to the abandonment of polygamy in 1890 and given the growth of the huge non-Mormon metropolitan area of western Missouri during the twentieth century. A scriptural solution for this seeming betrayal of the revelation of the Lord commanding the Saints to gather at the Center Place of Zion may eventually be found in the Mormon doctrine of continuing revelation.

In the meantime, the Mormons have been remarkably successful in maintaining their communal sense, their peoplehood, their community, without the emotional support of the doctrine of Gathering to the Center Place of Zion; for during the twentieth century and especially since 1945, the Mormon community, while maintaining a separation from the world, has become independent of place—either of Utah or the City of Zion. In fact, placing the Center of Zion in the United States seems embarrassingly ethnocentric to many internationalist Mormons. Still, no student of Mormon history and culture must ever forget that Jackson County, Missouri, remains a sacred Mormon place. In converting Catholics, Asians, or African Moslems, the Church has sometimes faced challenges to its teachings—like the embarrassing query of African Moslem polygamists about the Church's refusal to permit polygamy. And the almost unmanageable growth of conversion throughout the world has blindsided the Church to centrality of its millennial Center Place in the pedestrian state of Missouri, the Place that Jesus Christ may, any day, come to inhabit—with almost no Saints to greet him. But despite these theological problems the Church has so far preserved its feeling of community. It is the first post-Reformation religion to combine global extension while preserving primary relationships, doctrinal orthodoxy, and the psychological group-consciousness of being a special people. Thus, in a very real sense the Mormonism of 1990 has remained communitarian.

But the question now arises: Will the Church be able to preserve the kind of primary relationships and peaceful consensus that are characteristic of very small religious groups and utopian socialist societies? Having more or less survived the corrosive materialistic and moral currents of the Sixties, can the Latter-day Saints continue to safeguard their sense of peoplehood and community into the 1990s?

#### E. THE PERSISTENCE OF MORMON COMMUNITY INTO THE 1990S

**H**ISTORIANS are not time doctors or prophets, but they can perceive in past patterns of Mormon success certain devices and institutions that promise much for the future. The ward and stake system is only one of several such devices and institutions. The perceived loss of spirituality and the spatial dilution of the Mormon population are probably related; at any rate, both will benefit from the safety nets that imaginative

Saints are weaving from the threads of their communitarian history. What are those threads?

In searching Mormon history, especially from the last years of Brigham Young to the 1950s, I conclude that the best hope for the persistence of Mormon community into the 1990s lies in the re-invigoration or creative recycling of that old set of institutions and attitudes inherited from early Mormon communitarianism, that is, from the City of Zion and its related United Order of Enoch. The City of Zion and its Order are of course practically defunct, but institutions and attitudes stemming from those millennial roots are deeply embedded in Mormon history and tradition. The old millennial mind emphasized the community of a saved people, a rough equality of status, and a burning faith in Zion.

I do not wish to exaggerate the influence of certain communitarian remnants, especially in light of the legendary Mormon reputation for prowess in the anti-communitarian world of business. No identifiable religious group in the United States loves capitalism more and succeeds at it better than the Mormons. How, one might ask, can the Mormons be communal and capitalistic at the same time? The answer lies in their ability to compartmentalize, to distance themselves from the greed of everyday business life and retain community among themselves. And they could never have retained that life of community were it not for the survival, almost 160 years after the founding of the City of Zion, of certain attitudes and institutions.

To fathom the strange survival of Mormon Peoplehood into the 1990s, we must return to that third and most ancient definition of community and then see how it helps explain how the social inventions of the Mormons have kept them together as a cohesive people. For those of us who study utopian communes like the Shakers, the Harmonists, the Benedictines, or the Mormon United Orders, the meaning is much more specific: Utopian communities are intentional communities, usually isolated, and often sharing a community of goods. Arthur Bestor Jr.'s standard communitarian definition of religious community depends on four notions:

(1) The *isolation from the larger society*, achieved at an earlier period by spatial isolation in Missouri, in the City of Nauvoo, in the far-off Utah desert, can now be achieved by various devices of boundary maintenance, like socializing and marrying within the Mormon group and enforcing the dietary laws known as the Word of Wisdom. Before the 1890s the geographical isolation of the Saints in the Great Basin guaranteed the preservation of primary group relationships, but that became increasingly difficult in the twentieth century. One central solution, or surrogate, for geographical isolation was the ward headed by that key to Mormonism, the local bishop, and designed both architecturally and in size of membership to facilitate primary group relationships. I am confident that the extraordinary vitality of the ward system will insure face-to-face relationships within the Mormon community well into the twenty-first century.

(2) A second aspect of the definition of Mormon community is *shared ideas about salvation and life on earth: particularly*

for their *commitment* to belief and their loyalty to the Church that teaches them; Rosabeth Kanter's well-known analysis of the longevity of certain utopian communities rested largely on the level of commitment,<sup>39</sup> as does the famous thesis of Dean Kelley, to explain why the conservative churches, including Mormonism, were growing during the 1970s, while the mainline churches were declining.

(3) The third criterion is some attempt to *share wealth or property*, however unequal the sharing may be. One of the modern Mormon remnants of this ideal is tithing.

(4) And finally, people belonging to a utopian community, like the Shakers after 1784 or the Mormons in the 1831 City of Zion, *regard themselves as a saved, elect, special people, chosen by God*—much as the Jews were chosen.

In highly modified form these four criteria may be applied to late twentieth-century Mormonism.<sup>40</sup>

#### 1.

##### Isolation and Primary Relationships

**I**F we begin with the first of these principles—*isolation and primary relationships*—and if we attempt to apply it to present-day Mormonism, one may justly ask: How can seven million people enjoy close primary relationships, especially if many live outside the United States?

I have already suggested one answer: all Latter-day Saints live in highly-controlled wards. In that sense, Mormonism conforms to Bestor's definition of a small, isolated society. As small social units, Mormon wards are roughly comparable to the hundreds of small Hutterite communes of 100 to 400 persons. Like a Hutterite commune, the Mormon ward can never become just another half-dead, mainline Christian parish. Like the Hutterite communes, Mormon wards are not permitted to become too big for face-to-face relationships, as happens in the more successful evangelical churches of the South. Thus, the 10,000-member Hyde Park Baptist Church of Austin Texas, while wealthy and numerous, is, compared to the Mormon ward, a non-communal enterprise. To preserve group solidarity and community, the LDS church wisely limits the size of local wards, splitting them off like old Hutterite settlements when they get too big. The general authorities have not assigned a strict numerical cap, but there have been few wards of over a thousand members for any period of time

before being divided. Similarly, the general authorities, having accepted inequality as one of the less happy side effects of capitalism, make no attempt to equalize wards. With the mushrooming of affluent suburbs after World War II, many Mormons now live in wealthy wards (jokingly called "good wards") with few working-class members. Increasingly, Mormon wards do not always preserve that "rough equality" of the earliest Mormons, and this incipient socio-economic stratification of wards is not a good omen for the future of Mormon community. But the ward and its hardworking bishop remain the backbone of Mormon community. In the words of one Mormon historian:

The Mormon ward seems to be somewhere between the casualness of a congregation and the totality of a monastic order. It carries out the basic functions of most Christian congregations. . . . But there are essential communitarian functions also—the fellowship, the communion, the association. The ward has a distinctive Mormon mix that is beyond a congregation.<sup>41</sup>

There are of course several crucial differences between ward-level Mormonism and strict, old-style religious communitarians like the Hutterites, most notably asceticism and the common life. The Hutterites stress plain living and practice "consumptive austerity." While robustly comfortable in some 350 colonies in the western United States and Canada, they do not permit fancy houses or apartments in their communes. They steadfastly resist the temptation to enjoy the luxuries so readily available with their accumulating wealth. Mormons, of course, do not reject comfortable living. The Hutterites, numbering over 36,000 souls in North America, live in spatially bounded communes and take all their meals together; the last Mormons to live this way were the United Order members of late nineteenth-century Utah. The four main boundary maintenance devices of the Hutterites are spatial separation, distinctive dress, a modified German language, and uncompromising beliefs with internal consistency. Mormons have given up geographical isolation, but their speech and literature is permeated with a special rhetoric and vocabulary, they have always had some kind of moderate dress code (the most obvious to outsiders is the well-known Mormon missionary attire), and their beliefs are

**W**ill the Church be able to preserve the kind of primary relationships and peaceful consensus that are characteristic of very small religious groups and utopian socialist societies?



as rigidly uncompromising as they are logically consistent. Not surprisingly, Mormon boundary devices have always found their strongest expression in their Orderville and other communes.<sup>42</sup>

THE everyday life of a Mormon ward compensates in part for the loss of the bygone ways of the United Order. Ideally, members of a typical ward all know one another (at least all the active members), though with the transient American culture there are always some who don't know everyone. Listening to testimonies given on Fast Sundays, ward members may even be privy to intimate and (rarely) to sinful behavior. Testimonies are almost never significant "confessions" in the sense of revealing personal sins, but they come close by indication. A teenager may, with much weeping, state that she has been nasty to her mother but that in spite of difficulties she is "grateful to the Lord for all his love." A testimony of love and gratitude may go on for ten emotion-laden minutes, with the speaker naming the names of those she loves and often sobbing. More ritualized than most Latter-day Saints realize,<sup>43</sup> a testimony invariably ends with a standard phrase, usually some variant of "And I know this gospel to be true. . . ." Public confessions of love and, less often, of shortcomings strengthen group feeling and loyalty, and thus become an effective instrument of Mormon community. Kanter calls such expressions of emotional loyalty to group teachings and to other members of a cohesive group "affective commitment" and views them as a way of maintaining social control and group solidarity. Public confession (the word "confession" is perhaps too strong for what the Mormons do in testimony meetings) may also prove to be a constructive outlet for hostile feelings that may otherwise lead to extremism and conflict—as Boyer and Nissenbaum have shown in the history of Puritan witchcraft and the Great Awakening.<sup>44</sup> Mormon scholars may find examples of such emotional expressions as far back as the 1830s in the Far West Record, which contains the minutes of the High Council from 1830 to 1839. More than once they are related to the resolution of conflict among members and end with "extending the hand of fellowship."<sup>45</sup>

Mormonism dispensed with Protestant revivalism (as in the Great Awakening) with its public mourner's bench and its converting experiences. Since Mormons consider themselves a saved community, such revivalist practices were and remain meaningless. The nearest thing to a revival is the semi-annual, all-Church general conference. "Conference time" is a very exciting and faith-promoting event for pious Latter-day Saints.

Similarly, Mormonism, because it has other ways of resolving individual guilt or conflicts with authority, has nothing like the Shaker or Catholic practice of requiring the personal confession of sins to a leader. Nevertheless, Mormons do have a psychological parallel in their commonplace practice of meeting privately with the ward bishop to discuss ("confess") sins (or "problems") ranging from hatred and drinking to sexual transgressions and murder. The bishop, a "judge in Israel," has to power to "forgive sins for the Church" or to impose some kind of discipline ranging from informal proba-

tion (which might forbid taking the sacrament) to initiating a formal proceeding which can result in disfellowshipment or excommunication. This practice reinforces affective commitment and comforts the individuals involved, who, nevertheless, must also seek a personal revelation of forgiveness from God. Additionally, temple-going members must annually meet with the bishop and answer affirmatively a series of "worthiness" questions in order to continue attending the temple.

Theologically, Mormonism views really serious sin as a kind of apostasy that requires the full-blown formal ordinance of "baptism [or re-baptism] for the remission of sins." Baptism is, then, the formal procedure or "sacrament" for the expiation of sin. Historically, baptism has been both a rite of entrance and a way for the candidate to have his or her sins remitted. Twentieth-century Mormons get re-baptized only after being tried and excommunicated: the Church tries women and lower ranking men (who do not hold the Melchizedek priesthood) at the lower, ward level (bishopric), but men who hold the Melchizedek priesthood must stand trial before the high council (stake level). But for nineteenth-century Mormons, re-baptism served to heal individuals; earlier Saints often sought re-baptism as a common form of re-commitment (repentance) and even used it as a mode of blessing-seeking (e.g., re-baptism for their health). No rigid court system; just the communal cement of simple folk faith. In the twentieth century, as Mormon isolation in Utah broke down, the Church became increasingly formalistic, and re-baptism turned into a form of boundary maintenance.

The primary relationships that one can observe in Mormon wards resemble those that prevail in utopian communities, including those of the early Mormons. But the relationships are much less intense. The Church also helps maintain the uniformity that reinforces community by providing standard interior ward chapel plans. Mormons may thus travel to almost any corner of the globe and feel at home in a new ward. In this way the Church recognizes that uniform architecture can influence behavior in a positive way. Interiors are businesslike, devoid of decoration. In the words of a Church official long responsible for church architecture, "we turn people over so quickly" in wards that there is no need of decoration. Thus by its cheap but useful chapel design the Church dissociates the chapel's pragmatic function as a convenient set-up for committee meetings, testimonies, sacrament meetings, and scripture study—the maintenance of community—from mere location. The Catholic Church ties its parishes to sacred church buildings which often survive empty and without function. When, in the 1960s and 1970s, the highly-mobile population of Saints expanded and moved, the Mormons sold off their old chapels with little of the agony of Catholics who were simultaneously losing their inner-city Euro-churches.

The pragmatic policy of requiring colorless, replaceable ward chapel buildings stands in stark contrast to the lovingly constructed temples, sacred spaces designed to bind all Saints in one or more stakes to the larger, eternal community of the deceased, particularly relatives, with whom one can rejoin

after death. The Saints view their temple not as a businesslike jumble of meeting rooms but as a sacred space.

Faced with impossible funding demands of momentous growth in the 1990s, the Church has been using sub-standard chapels in third-world countries, not to accommodate to foreign cultures but to cut back in expenses. As Mormonism moves into other cultures like those in Africa or Asia, the look-alike architecture designed in Utah seems to have presented problems, at least to aesthetically-minded Mormon intellectuals. But given the pragmatic function of the ward chapel in Mormon community, neither the loss of architectural uniformity preferred by Church bureaucrats nor the bland and boring designs decried by Mormon intellectuals present any serious problem. In fact, there is evidence that the grass shack chapel in Samoa and the ugly storefront in Guatemala may actually help the image of the Church. Recently, in developing missionary areas, the Church has been experimenting with the "basic unit" plan which creates local units small enough to meet in members' homes. Some leaders speculate that the primary buildings the Church may build in these countries will only be temples.

**W**ARD organization, ward chapel design, the practice of public confession (called "testimony bearing") at ward sacrament meetings, the watchfulness of the bishop over the daily lives of the Saints, and distinctive church architecture are but a few of the dozens of Mormon communal customs, organizations, and institutions that provide partial but effective surrogates for the face-to-face relationships of living together in the pioneer utopian communities. One could mention, for example, the various social groups for different ages and genders, the family home visits, the single adult wards, and even a ward containing over 300 widows. In each ward women are assigned as "visiting teachers" to other women. Their responsibility is more than a monthly visit where they pray or expound scripture; they also may bring food to a reclusive ward member or help find a job for another. Similarly, paired men are "home teachers" to assigned households. A teacher is one of the offices in the priesthood and is the ubiquitous assignment of all adult males. In these outreach duties, men are representatives of the ward bishop and their priesthood quorum leader, women of the Relief Society president.

**The only group that comes anywhere near the Mormons in providing primary relationships at the ward level are the Jehovah's Witnesses. But compared with the Mormons, the communal achievement of the Witnesses is unimpressive, simply because they have not had to confront the variegated social and economic mix so striking in the Mormon church since World War II.**

Since Mormonism has no local paid clergy, all members are asked to accept assignments or "callings." Both men and women form bonds working with others in the various institutions of the ward, e.g., in Scout leadership, teaching youth or adult classes, or serving in a three-person presidency of an organization. All local callings are temporary so there is a constant rotation of personnel up and down the hierarchy; it is not uncommon for a president of an organization to be released and called as a subordinate Sunday School teacher. No

Mormon feels this to be a demotion or loss of status in the Church. In this way it closely resembles the "release" of a Ph.D. manager of a typical Israeli kibbutz from "business manager" (leader) to kitchen duty in the kibbutz dining room. Experience in these support networks provides personal support and friendship, strengthens faith, and builds community.

The fundamental changes in the rhythm of Mormon life ordered by the general authorities in January 1990 for the upcoming decade may reduce the intensity of all this extra-familial interaction. These new rules for the "use of time" in the 1990s remind the historian of the preoccupation of the Mormons' Puritan ancestors with the "misspence of time." The general authorities hope to reduce the number of weekend hours spent in Church activities and increase the amount of

religious energy expended within the family "where it belongs."<sup>46</sup>

The only group that comes anywhere near the Mormons in providing primary relationships at the ward level are the Jehovah's Witnesses. But compared with the Mormons, the communal achievement of the Witnesses is unimpressive, simply because they have not had to confront in their narrow demographic makeup the kind of variegated social and economic mix so striking in the Mormon church since World War II—a rich diversity of classes, races, and nationalities, and a high level of humanistic education—all characteristics of the Mormon people that make it hard to maintain community.<sup>47</sup> A sensitive historian of the Mormon ward has rightly concluded that "the Mormon ward embodies a communal religion that is utopian in many ways, even if it is not as millennial as it used to be."<sup>48</sup>

## 2.

## Shared Ideas Like Perfectionism and Millennialism

A SECOND criterion in our definition of a religious community of chosen people has to do with shared ideas, e.g., the continual striving after *perfection* in their institutions. And certainly the Latter-day Saints are legendary strivers. To avoid the confusion that attends the use of *perfection* by historians and theologians of American Christianity, one may make a distinction between a *spiritual perfectionism* of the soul (sought by John Humphrey Noyes or the Shakers; a state of sinlessness) and a new kind of *behavioral perfectionism* (striven for by Mormons and by the liberal reformers of the 1830s who believed that Christians could perfect the behavior of the larger secular world). Behavioral perfectionism strives not for a state of sinlessness, but a sense of the power of free agency to change or better oneself and the society at large. Free agency is a powerful Mormon belief rooted in the second of the thirteen articles of faith.

To cite three Mormon examples: First, in their justly renowned missionary program the Latter-day Saints have tried to perfect their methods by exploiting all the latest techniques and devices in the mass media and by perfecting and expanding (since the 1950s) the superbly administered Missionary Training Center—probably the most effective institution of its kind in the world. Second, they have committed themselves with renewed fervor to find every conceivable means for preserving the integrity of the family by reemphasizing eternal temple marriages and the centrality of family life; by reinvigorating (since 1965)<sup>49</sup> the institution of Family Home Evening, and by expanding both visiting teaching (by women) and family home teaching (by men). Third, they have nurtured the Mormon mentality of individual perfection (within community) by means of dozens of customs and institutions, particularly the effective system of indoctrination from Primary in early childhood, through Cub and Boy Scouts, then the Young Men and Young Women auxiliaries (from 1875 to 1970 the Church officially called these two important organizations, in perfectionist style, Young Men's *Mutual Improvement Association* and Young Women's *Mutual Improvement Association*), and, finally, reaching that ultimate morally and intellectually demanding stage of perfection, the Melchizedek Priesthood (except for women). Each of these stages includes some form of progression *within* the stage. Particularly important is the transition from the three lower Aaronic priesthood orders (males age 12 to 18) to the full Melchizedek priesthood (ordinarily 18 and older); and even here the Church, in 1970, planted a little future-oriented perfection into the "lesser priesthood" (the Aaronic Order) by renaming its adult members "prospective elders" instead of "adult Aaronic." For young adults, there is the Pursuit of Excellence goal-setting program. For all adults the Church has outlined six areas of personal and family preparedness, supported by Church programs and publications, for which members are encouraged to set goals.<sup>50</sup>

The most powerful of the shared ideas of the early

Mormons, their *millennialism*, is no longer the powerful source of communal cohesiveness that it once was. (I will discuss this below in Section 4, "A Special People of God.")

## 3.

## Sharing Wealth or Property

A THIRD and problematic part of my definition of Mormon community is social and economic equality. It must be emphasized that neither Joseph Smith nor the original revelations setting up the Law of Consecration and Stewardship contemplated absolute economic equality among the Saints. Still, individuals were supposed to faithfully manage their stewardships to create a surplus which would be given to the bishop who would use it to set up others in self-sustaining stewardships. Certainly a kind of rough equality was intended, even to inviting poor converts from the Eastern states to receive their free, landed inheritances in the City of Zion—until too many began arriving to claim their small equalized farms.<sup>51</sup>

In most utopian communes, economic and social living arrangements are approximately equal. Individual "income," usually in the form of a personal cash allowance, is very rare; if earned outside the community, the salaried income is handed over to a common treasury. Members of the community share meals and living space. Wherever possible they share communal work. One may distinguish between economic and social expressions of communal equality. The modern Mormon surrogate for the social aspect of equality has been partly the large family and partly contributions of labor to the Church Welfare Program. The Church also uses egalitarian titles to soften the strong hierarchical structure of Mormon governance.

Turning to the first of these surrogates—the family—it may be postulated to anyone who has lived in a large family that is tied together by strong religious faith that such families become a mini-commune. If one connects this mini-commune-family to the powerful doctrines of eternal marriage, of countless spirits of unborn human beings clamoring for tabernacles of flesh; if one takes note of the fact that every married Saint can expect the reunion of his or her family in the afterlife; and if, finally, one recalls that social and emotional ties *between* families can prosper through a social system based on home and visiting teaching and other ward responsibilities, one realizes that the Latter-day Saints have created a *community* of families tied to one another in a complex network woven by ward chapel interaction and by "family home teaching" and "home visits." Even Mormon missionary companions thousands of miles from "Mormon country" get adopted by local Mormon families who give them moral support, provide meals, and share prayers—very different from the typical mainline Christian missionaries. The missionaries stay in the network by attaching themselves to the local ward and its families. So, in a sense, the Mormon families, bound together both here and in the afterlife, can, arguably, supply the same communal function of the old eating- and living-together

nineteenth-century United Orders. When President Spencer W. Kimball advised husbands that they must not rule their families but “preside” over them, he was assuming the need for father-husbands to take governing responsibility over his family-commune, for in the afterlife he will be king of a family kingdom. Nowadays most general authorities would include the word “queen” in speaking of the celestial kingdoms.

The analogy between large families and utopias is strained, but consider more closely the institution of family home teaching. This distinctive institution entails regular visits by two male members (often a father and son) to another ward family with whom they may not even be closely acquainted. They do not visit merely for chit-chat over non-alcoholic drinks but seek a prayerful meeting of minds over gospel truths and “watch over” the family as God’s appointed shepherds; the intention is to help strengthen faith, to preach Christian living, and to improve knowledge of Mormon doctrine and scriptures. Often home teachers provide emotional support for dealing with family problems or depression over the loss of a job. The visitors are not acting as social workers for the Church, but they can often direct a suffering Saint to Church-sponsored help in dealing with an absent father or a wayward daughter. What the Germans used to admire as the typical American’s *Hilfsbereitschaft* (immediate readiness to be of help) surely survives among the Mormons, who have added a religious dimension to it.

Granted, home teaching visits are often missed or are perfunctory, and other friendships and relationships in the Church are more significant, but the intimate contacts in family home visits bespeak the communal need to unite with and care for fellow members, to share with persons for whom the teachers may, in fact, have no natural affinity. Their religion and not their mutual pleasure brings them together and creates a network of bonds between dissimilar persons, a communal task that utopians accomplished more effectively by sharing daily meals or sharing property.

The respect for social equality is also reflected in titles. Except for the three members of the First Presidency, Mormons address all ranks in the priesthood down to the lowliest, newly-ordained nineteen-year-old as “Elder” or “Brother.” All women, no matter what they’re president of, are “Sister.” Even

the president of the Church—the prophet, seer, and revelator—feels quite comfortable being addressed as Elder or Brother.

The development of the family as the central institution of Mormonism, has, together with the equalitarian local ward structure, enabled the formerly communitarian Mormon church to create a new social basis for community.

**T**HE Latter-day Saint surrogate for rough economic equality is far easier to argue than social equality, and with recent events the trend appears to be toward increased economic equality.

Everybody knows about Mormon tithing. From its inception tithing has served as a test of loyalty, faithfulness, and commitment. When introduced in 1838, tithing was supposed to be a temporary, less-perfect law of the Lord—the minimum surplus amount one was expected to consecrate to the Lord. If the networking that goes on in family home visits speaks to the social aspect of communal equality, then tithing stands at the very center of the economic aspect of equality.<sup>52</sup> Tithing has enabled the Church to protect group integrity against the aggrandizement of particular families or against class jealousy, and no other group has ever made tithing succeed for so long, or on so a large scale, as the Latter-day Saints.

As noted above, the Prophet Joseph Smith instituted tithing in 1838 as a simpler, easier, and more individualistic version of the Law of Consecration.<sup>53</sup> While tithing did not demand the giving of all of one’s possessions, as did Consecration, it *has* required enormous sacrifices from millions of Latter-day Saints for over the last 160 years. Tithing monies cannot be retained by the local ward for its needs. Bishops must send all monies to the central administration, which now allocates operating expenses to each ward mainly on the basis of “active” members, as defined by sacrament meeting attendance. This recent innovation of financing all ward budgets equally through general tithing funds has significantly reduced the disparities between the richer and poorer ward activities while at the same time shifting the overall cost to the wealthier Saints.

In addition to tithing, ward members are expected to contribute additional “offerings” for missionary work and welfare, so that many Latter-day Saints contribute well over 10 percent

**When freewill offerings are added to tithing, and much more offerings are expected from the rich than the poor, the overall funding system becomes progressive and redistributes monies from the rich to the poor.**

of their income. Recent changes in the financing of full-time missionaries shows a increased sensitivity to economic equality: the monthly cost of supporting a missionary is now the same Church-wide, whether he or she is assigned to London or to an Indian village in Bolivia. As with the equalized ward budgets, this means that richer Saints will subsidize poorer ones, especially since bishops are responsible for collecting the funds from the missionary's savings and family, and from donations from ward members. Clearly the burden of supporting missionaries is being shared more equally.

Besides sharing wealth through tithing, however incompletely, Latter-day Saints have also shared goods and services through their famous Church Welfare Program (which is subsidized by tithing donations), and until recently many have contributed the labor of their hands to local Church farms and canneries.<sup>54</sup> These economic arrangements have reinforced the Mormon sense of community and peoplehood, and the Church of 1990 has been restructuring its "Welfare Program" with a certain measure of pride.<sup>55</sup> The program has its roots in the Law of Consecration and Utah's United Orders, which required the relinquishing of surplus property in a millennial, egalitarian society with "no poor," in the phrase of Mormon scripture. Nowadays, it has the air of a bureaucratic program—only one that "takes care of its own." Even in its innocuous form of philanthropy for other Saints, the Welfare Program does contribute to community. Under the revolutionary new method of centrally-controlled funding inaugurated in January 1990, President Hinckley envisioned the expansion of current sources of individual freewill "fast offerings" outside of the structural requirement of tithing.<sup>56</sup>

In one sense, this renewed emphasis of special freewill offerings for the poor differs little from the eleemosynary practices of the mainline Christian churches and can be seen as indicating a weakening of the corporate order of Zion. From another perspective, however, it can be seen as an expansion of the collective economic order. Under the Law of Consecration and Stewardship, those with more would give a greater surplus to help "exalt" the poor than those with less. Since tithing is a "flat tax," the poor actually feel its pinch more than the rich—it cuts into their necessities but only into the rich's luxuries. However, when freewill offerings are added to tithing, and much more offerings are expected from the rich than the poor, the overall funding system becomes progressive and the redistribution of monies from the rich to the poor becomes a major result.

## 4.

## A Special People of Zion, Chosen by God

ONLY one element of the old definition of utopian communes has fallen into disuse among the Mormons, and that is the fourth and final part of my definition of Mormon religious community: LDS millennialism. The chiliastic claims of early Mormonism, a vivid belief that the latter days were truly at hand—at any moment, perhaps tomorrow—provided the early Mormons with unlimited source of energy. As late as

the 1960s, pious Saints prepared for the Last Days by stockpiling food and water in their basement shelters; and while general authorities still preach food storage (as prudent home management), most Saints are perhaps more worried about their mortgages.<sup>57</sup> The many injunctions of early revelations in the Doctrine and Covenants—"Wherefore, stand ye in holy places, and be not moved, until the day of the Lord come; for behold, it cometh quickly" (D&C 87:8)—have lost most of their urgency. The old "warnings" now inspire little more fear than the lukewarm eschatology of the mainline Christian churches.<sup>58</sup>

Still, one could even make a case for the continuing vitality of Mormon millennialism. Aside from the continued practice of food storage, I refer the reader to the return in the 1980s of many Utah Mormons to Zion, to that sacred Center Place of the Last Days, now surrounded by Independence, Missouri. They are also settling in other historically Mormon areas of Missouri abutting Zion, like Clay and Caldwell counties. In recent years, both individual Mormons and the Presiding Bishopric of the Church have purchased considerable amounts of land in Missouri. This is not part of a grand economic conspiracy of the Mormon church—nobody's going to get rich buying land in western Missouri—but it is evidence of that last crucial element of the definition of a primitive Christian community: the coming of the Lord. Unlike other American millennialists, the Mormons located a particular place as Zion: Independence, Jackson County, Missouri. The practical-minded Samoan converts, by some peculiar decisions, may be reminding their fellow Saints of their millennial roots; having studied Mormon scriptures that designate Independence as the place where Christ will come again, some Samoans have been settling not on the U.S. West Coast, but in Jackson County. They believe that they won't have to travel very far to reach the Center Place when the world comes to an end.

Today, as the Mormons disperse to the deepest recesses of Nigeria, to the once hostile East Germany and Sicily, and even to the most sacred precincts of Jerusalem itself, they can rely on the concrete location of Zion, the New Jerusalem, in Western Missouri, to give focus and definition to a scattered people. The old faith in the real Center Place of Zion in Missouri, however weak today (but still distributed on missionary cards bearing the slightly re-edited tenth article of faith<sup>59</sup>), still helps Latter-day Saints maintain the strength and unity of their enjoyment of religious community in a world torn by corrosive moral forces and unforeseen demographic changes. The existence of a tangible place of Zion to which to gather in some distant future gives focus to the Mormon feeling of being a chosen people in these corrupt latter days, just as the real Jerusalem of Israel is for dispersed Jews both a concrete goal and the focus of chosenness. Nevertheless, Mormons have customized the doctrines of Gathering and establishing Zion to the international Church. The Gathering is, and some say always was, to temples, and now that temples dot the globe the gathering place for Koreans is in Korea, Australians Australia, and so forth.<sup>60</sup> Similarly, President Spencer W. Kimball reiterated his belief that the mission of the Church was to

establish Zion as a precondition to the Second Coming. While he didn't counsel the Saints to form United Orders, he told them to eliminate selfishness, to cooperate completely, and to sacrifice whatever is required to help the kingdom of heaven come.<sup>61</sup>

In this matter of chosenness the Jewish People have had some experience. For millennia their special Chosen People theology, sharpened by relentless persecution, has served to hold them together as a people, if not as a community. A Jewish theologian pointedly notes that a disproportionate number of Jews in every country are lukewarm in their commitment to Zion: "Since they find their Zion everywhere, they are at home nowhere."<sup>62</sup> The scattered Mormons, mostly white, no longer cemented by persecution, and now widely respected (despite occasional snide remarks and smiles), still manage to survive as a people and as a community of Saints. Since they find their Zion in ward life, they are at home everywhere.

F  
CURRENT THREATS TO  
MORMON COMMUNITY  
AND  
PROSPECTS FOR THE  
FUTURE

**T**HE Mormon community is not immune to internal and external challenges to group solidarity. In the wake of the 1960s, every U.S. member of the Mormon community has had to face many fundamental changes in American society and intellect. Among the many new dangers, most of them shared by other American social institutions, we may briefly single out just a few: the demands of "marginal" groups for more power, an overly conservative leadership, the lure of Mammon, and—peculiar to the Mormons—a decline in the old anti-Mormon persecution that drew the Saints together for so long.<sup>63</sup>

At the beginning of the 1990s, the most notable sources of strain and conflict can be found in four restive groups: the Native Americans, African Americans, liberal intellectuals, and women. Consider for a moment only the women. Even though the Church incessantly heaps praise on them as wives and mothers, women may in fact be the most angry and frustrated of all four groups. During the great spurt in Mormon growth between the 1960s and the 1990s most converts were teenagers or young adults, and female converts outnumbered

male converts almost two to one.<sup>64</sup> These young women, many now in their thirties, represent a leashed power, a reservoir of repressed energy, that will endanger Mormon community unless the Church can soon harness it. In the words of one professional woman in 1975, the first year of a decade of Mormon liberalism, "The Mormon work ethic has created very strong women with nowhere to go. . . . This is not a Sunday religion: it's a way of life."<sup>65</sup>

Gerontocracy may pose another serious threat in that age

tends to be slow in addressing new realities. In 1985 the average age of the fifteen top leaders, including President Kimball, his two counselors, the president of the Quorum of the Twelve (Benson), and the Twelve Apostles, was sixty-six; and the top four leaders averaged eighty-five years of age. In this respect the Church seems to be emulating the only other comparable gerontocracy, the Church of Rome. The high average age of the Pope and the College of Cardinals has created a generational conflict between aged leaders and, below them, the younger, progressive Third World clergy and the young of all European nations. It can hardly be advantageous to resemble the present lumbering and ill-informed governing body of the Roman Catholic Church at a time when the Latter-day Saints are expanding at breakneck speed.

Then there is mammon, or

money—always a danger to any spiritual entity or any socially cohesive group. For two generations the Latter-day Saints have enjoyed an unprecedented material well-being based on friendly cooperation with the military-industrial complex and on acceptance of the modern consumer culture. California and New York stand first and second in the number of federal military dollars received, but Utah, with its Morton-Thiokol aerospace industry, its military-funded Novell software company, its famous nerve gas installation, and its Air Force base, certainly rivals these two imperial states when it comes to per-capita military income. A relative abundance of money has always imperiled community. Because of some conservative but admirable cultural values, like good education, the veneration of the work ethic, and family stability, Mormons have been better prepared than other Americans to take advantage of the economic opportunities of the 1960s and 1970s. Will Mormons living in the affluence of the American West use the extra time provided by the new, "easier" Church meeting

**A relative abundance of money has always imperiled community. Will Mormons living in the affluence of the American West use the extra time provided by the new, "easier" Church meeting schedule to go skiing in Alta? Or will they continue the strong tradition of collecting money for the poor on Fast Sundays? Latter-day Saints seem to be holding mammon at bay, but just barely.**

schedule to go skiing in Alta? Or surfing at Laguna Beach? Or will they continue the strong tradition of collecting money for the poor on Fast Sundays—and even return to using Sunday afternoons for the study of scripture? As of 1990, the Latter-day Saints seem to be holding mammon at bay, but just barely.

Finally, I have briefly mentioned the near-disappearance of any serious anti-Mormon enemy. After about 130 years, the decline and disappearance of persecution may weaken that old cement of Mormon community: paranoia.

Even this long article must scant these and other sources of danger to community, most notably an erosion of millennial faith. Many pious older Saints think they can detect a decay in Mormon community. But from my outside historical point of view, for the moment most Mormons can afford to be optimistic. They still use many of the community-building institutions and practices inherited from the past: their ward-and-stake system, their ambitious and demanding system of in-church social and religious education, their continued faithfulness in tithing, and so on. The communitarian inheritance of the past may prove equal to the task of defending group integrity in the future. Also, the Latter-day Saints have developed several other community-building devices. Particularly worthy of mention are two indispensable, historic supports for Mormon commitment and community: (1) missionary zeal and (2) the doctrine of continuing revelation.

As for missionary zeal, it is clear to every observer that the Missionary Training Center in Provo and the subsequent experience of two lonely years of proselytizing, with only rare contacts with parents, are legendary supports for internal loyalty and interdependence.

The power of continuing revelation is less obvious to outsiders. It was the doctrine of continuing revelation, for example, that made it possible in 1978 for President Spencer W. Kimball to receive divine guidance to admit blacks to the priesthood. This crucial revelation defused the incipient conflict with African-Americans in the United States, silenced the internal criticism of liberal intellectuals, and opened up the entire African continent to new missionary triumphs. Moreover, on the popular level, traditional Mormon racist attitudes like the notion that the skin of colored converts will gradually turn white after conversion are rapidly disappearing under the impact of a new Mormon willingness to recognize the injustices done to blacks in American culture.<sup>66</sup>

The nature and function of these two community-building institutions, missionary zeal and continuing revelation, cannot be described and analyzed in detail here, but students of Mormonism have hardly begun to comprehend the way in which they nourish loyalty and assure continuity in the Church.

The historian of Mormonism could catalog a host of other Mormon institutions and practices that have helped the Latter-day Saints preserve a strong sense of community till this day—the long history of economic cooperation, youth groups, family life, modes of indoctrination, and so on. Above all, I have not examined some of the newer social inventions of the Church. These cursory allusions to other instruments of

solidarity must suffice for the moment, awaiting the completion of a much larger work.

In the meantime, I make bold to suggest that late twentieth-century Mormonism, for all its American capitalism and consumerism and materialism, still approximates the utopian religious definition of community; and that the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has been able to survive as a people and not just another religious organization. It remains a people in part because it has inherited a wonderfully effective set of social inventions from the early Mormon communitarians and also in part because it has become a fourth major religious tradition centered on Jerusalem. The continued institutional inventiveness of the Church, especially since 1890, will certainly insure the persistence of the unique peoplehood of the Mormons into the 1990s.

But no mere institution, no social device, can equal in power the primeval and still viable millennial Center Place of Zion and its attendant doctrines of 1831. Like forgotten seeds, ideas from the springtime of Zion may very well sprout again and enable the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints to survive and prosper as a community of minds and hearts well past the two-hundredth anniversary of the birth of Joseph Smith in the year 2005.

## NOTES

1. *American Heritage Dictionary*, Second College Edition (1982).

I found the Plotting Zion conference horrifyingly instructive in its terminological confusion about community. Participants used the two fundamental terms that defined the nature of this whole conference, "Zion" and "community," in the most varied and undisciplined manner.

The best introduction to the definitions of community and to some of the historical realizations and failures of community in the United States is Robert V. Hine's *Community on the American Frontier: Separate but Not Alone* (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1980).

2. *New York Times*, 29 May 1990.

3. Helen Vendler, citing with approval Iris Marion Young's brisk scrutiny of the use of the word "community" among feminists, in "Feminism and Literature," *New York Review of Books*, 31 May 1990, 21. Vendler goes on to say that:

Anyone brought up in a tightly knit religious or ethnic community or who has had experience of an intense political group knows the xenophobia that is endemic to homogeneity [in small-town life]. Young's repudiation of the false pastoral of "community" is a necessary questioning of the historical idealization of its value in America, from Brook Farm on.

For the hard-nosed New York critic, community is a bit of fake agrarian sentiment to be sneered at and feared.

4. Daniel Boorstin, *The Americans: The Democratic Experience* (New York: Random House, 1973), "Book One: Everywhere Communities."

5. My use of peoplehood is not to be equated with "ethnic group" definition of the Mormons persuasively argued by Thomas O'Dea and Dean May. See Armand Mauss, "Mormons as Ethnics: Variable Historical and International Implications of an Appealing Concept," 5, in B. Y. Card, Herbert C. Northcott, John E. Foster, Howard Palmer, and George K. Jarvis, eds., *The Mormon Presence in Canada* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 1990, and Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 1990).

6. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, ed., *Communes: Creating and Managing the Collective Life* (New York: Harper & Row, 1973), xi. In 1990 the aging advocates of the counter culture were still searching for community. See, for example, the topical issue of the *Utne Reader: The Best of the Alternative Press* (May/June 1990) on "Roots: A Restless Nation Searches for a Place to Call Home."

7. Until recently no one has dared to defend the non-Mormon socio-political community. In most writings all non-Mormons merge with all anti-Mormons. The first reasoned analysis of the non-Mormon political culture in the Nauvoo

area was that of John E. Hallwas, "Mormon Nauvoo from a Non-Mormon Perspective," originally a paper delivered, courageously I think, before a largely Mormon audience and published in the *Journal of Mormon History* (1990): 85-100. The leading participants in the persecution of the Nauvoo Mormons were the five hundred citizens of Warsaw in Hancock County. Examining sympathetically for the first time the ideas of this "non-Mormon public," Hall rightly pointed out that the people of Warsaw did not react to Nauvoo simply "out of religious bigotry, political frustration, community competition, or frontier belligerence," but also out of their own passionately-held democratic ideals (87). The nub of the conflict lay in their conviction that the good society arose not through a covenant with God that created a people, as at Nauvoo, but through a contract among individuals that created a government (89).

Flanders saw "corporate Mormonism" as a new, more political, and less orthodox form of the New Jerusalem, a less simple form of Mormonism that went to Utah and became dominant. Robert Bruce Flanders, *Nauvoo: Kingdom on the Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1965), vi.

8. This was the practice of intimidating a troublemaker by standing around him silently while whittling wood with large knives. See Thurmon D. Moody, "Nauvoo's Whistling and Whittling Brigade," *BYU Studies* 15 (Summer 1975): 480-90.

9. Heinz Schilling, "Sin, Crime, and Social Discipline in Calvinist Germany," a lecture delivered at a conference on "Constructing the Community: Colloquium on Early Modern Germany," University of Massachusetts, Amherst, 20 April 1990, to be published in English under the title "Church Discipline" in a special issue of four Schilling articles "Calvinism and Social Change in North Germany and the Netherlands," *The Sixteenth Century Journal* (Kirksville, MO). As part of his well-known investigation of social control in such communities, Schilling, of the University of Giessen, has done an exhaustive, sin-by-sin, quantitative analysis of Calvinist Emden from 1558 to 1825.

Schilling's findings on the relation between sin and community are instructive. The Calvinists defined the area for sinning far more extensively than the Mormons, including under "luxus," for example, what the Puritans called un-Christian "conversation" (behavior), including dancing, pleasure, intoxication, and so on. The Calvinists of Emden efficiently punished single women. While Schilling does not supply details on the fate of unchaste single men, the usual double standard prevailed in the meting out of punishment. The Calvinists from the same area who went to settle South Africa continued to use religion and whips to uphold apartheid and punish blacks as well as behavior among their own kind.

Mormons, on the other hand, have long taken pleasure in song, dance, and theater. In the matter of sexual sins, Mormon strictness in upholding the practice of chastity before marriage, together with the prevalence of polygamy before 1890 and low rates of pre-marital pregnancy and illegitimacy, reduced the need (which they rarely felt, anyhow) to punish single women. As for intoxication, all active Mormons obey the Word of Wisdom, a set of dietary rules which prohibits alcohol and thus precludes the sin of drunkenness in the first place. Although Mormons wryly boast of their church's efficient guilt mechanisms, they enjoy a general freedom from the sin-and-punishment syndrome of Calvinism. The Mormons have had other devices for preserving community.

10. Even Harold R. Isaacs's *Idols of the Tribe*, an influential piece of historical anthropology published in the 1970s in the heyday of "conflict theory," granted that religion has always "bonded people together in their many groups and cultures" and has always supplied "the strong cement of traditionally shared beliefs." Reacting like historians and other social scientists of his time against the deadening "consensus" views of the 1950s, Isaacs reduced all "tribal" activities to instruments of oppression and death. He described the ways in which differing tribes have justified conflict and killing: nationalism, skin color, language, and so on. See Isaacs, *Idols of the Tribe: Group Identity and Political Change* (New York: Harper & Row, 1975).

11. At the Plotting Zion conference I jotted down what seemed to me to be a record number of vague but well-intentioned uses of the term Zion. To cite just three: Zion is a good person, a "Zion person"; there is a "Zion concept of behavior"; Zion is feminism; Zion is the cessation of hierarchy. In the light of Mormon history and scriptures, such usages are at best HolyTalk, at worst silly. Back in 1954 the LDS historian William Mulder saw that with the abandonment of the doctrine of Zion the place in the late nineteenth century, Zion had come to mean "the pure in heart," a people and a condition, and it meant the place where the pure in heart dwell [Utah?]. See Mulder, "Mormonism's 'Gathering': An American Doctrine with a Difference," *Church History* 23 (Sept. 1954): 259.

In a passionate sermon of 1973 against the surging greed for property and wealth, Hugh Nibley, the highly respected Mormon cultural critic, noted the

final degradation in the usage of Zion as a label (as in Zion's Real Estate) but still uses it in the sense of "pure," or moral: a "type" of human existence, just as Babylon is the type of "evil." Brigham Young was the first to locate Zion "in the heart of each person" as well as in Independence, Missouri. See Nibley, "What is Zion? A Distant View," *SUNSTONE* 13 (Apr. 1989): 22, 30. Professor Lyman Tower Sargent of the University of Missouri—St. Louis has written a definitive survey of definitions of utopia and community, forthcoming first in Italian, then in English in 1992: "Political Dimensions of Utopianism with Special Reference to American Communitarianism."

12. Arthur Bestor, Jr., *Backwoods Utopias: The Sectarian and Owenite Phases of Communitarian Socialism in America, 1663-1829* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania, 1950), 3 and first three chapters.

13. The tithing revelation came on 8 July 1838. President Gordon B. Hinckley has called tithing "the Lord's law of finance." The key passage provided that the Saints "shall pay one-tenth of all their interest annually, and this shall be a standing law unto them forever. . ." (D&C 119:4). See Hinckley, "Rise to a Larger Vision of the Work," *Ensign* (May 1990): 96.

14. See William Mulder, "Mormonism's 'Gathering': An American Doctrine with a Difference," 259. This article, vague in conceptualization, imprecise in its dating, and operatic in tone, nevertheless rests on primary sources and hits the main points. Mulder implies that the Gathering ceased somewhere in the latter part of the generation 1851-91 (259-260), attributing the cessation to a general decline in the literal interpretation of millennial scriptures and to less fear of Gentile persecution. He rightly concludes: "The great events which had seemed so imminent retreated into a future comfortably remote, and Mormonism settled down to an indefinite postponement of prophecy." And by making the Gathering a matter of individual convenience, the Church reduced the doctrine to something "most characteristically American."

15. Temple rites are so fundamentally important in Mormonism that fundamental changes made in temple ceremonies in April 1990 (according more equality to women and making oaths less gruesome) made front-page national news. In the Nauvoo Temple, women, under the leadership of Eliza Roxey Snow Smith, regularly performed fundamental temple ordinances and exercised priest-like rights. Some feminist Mormon women are now trying to recover these rights. One orthodox woman historian has written: "I believe it is impossible to overestimate the significance of temple work in the lives of early Mormon women." Carol Cornwall Madsen, "Mormon Women and the Struggle for Definition: The Nineteenth Century Church," one of three B. H. Roberts Society lectures, 24 September 1981, published in *SUNSTONE* 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1981): 10.

I am indebted to various Mormon friends for helping me recognize, if not completely grasp, the centrality of the temple in their lives, let alone the "high" that they experience in that sacred place.

16. Though he might be less naturalistic than I in drawing conclusions, Thomas G. Alexander documented the increasing strictness in the enforcement of the Word of Wisdom during the twentieth century in his indispensable work, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890-1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), ch. 13.

17. The standard textbook history of the Church devotes a sub-chapter to the leaders' apprehension "that the railroad would bring a flood of non-Mormons who would undermine Latter-day Saint principles and attempt to destroy the Mormon way of life." See James B. Allen and Glen M. Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976), 327-34.

18. Appointed by Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953, Ezra Taft Benson served as Secretary of Agriculture for eight years. Despite the staunch Republican faith of the Mormons, the real toleration for them as a group came from the Democrats, who promoted J. Reuben Clark Jr. (1871-1961) to high offices in the New Deal. Clark had worked in Washington since 1906 under six presidents. Franklin Roosevelt also appointed another prominent Mormon, Marriner S. Eccles, first as Secretary of the Treasury in 1934 and then almost immediately to the chairmanship of the Federal Reserve Board, where he served until 1951.

19. David O. McKay (1960-70), Joseph Fielding Smith (1970-72), and Harold B. Lee (1972-73).

20. The basic facts may be found in Allen and Leonard, *The Story of the Latter-day Saints*, ch. 20.

21. Richard O. Cowan, *The Church in the Twentieth Century* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), ch. 9, "New Strides in Church Activity," provides a good summary of consolidation and correlation; the Clark quotation is on 153. See also Allen and Leonard, 628-629. A generation after Clark's death one could find similar laudatory expression in a 26 May 1990 *LDS Church News* feature article.

22. Fawn M. Brodie, *No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the*



*Mormon Prophet* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945). "Mormon theology," she wrote, "was never burdened with otherworldliness. There was a fine robustness about it that smelled of the frontier and that rejected an asceticism that was never endemic to America. . . . Wealth and power [the Saints] considered basic among the blessings both of earth and of heaven. . . ." (187-88). And: "[Joseph] created a book and a religion, but he could not create a truly spiritual content for that religion" (403). Brodie thought that there may have been some plain living demanded of the Saints before 1840, but "much of the asceticism of the Kirtland era disappeared in Nauvoo" (288).

23. *Student Review*, 23 November 1988.

24. For example, SUNSTONE, certainly faithful to the Church, devoted most of a recent issue to changing views on polygamy, homosexuality, and male gender role expectations. See SUNSTONE 14 (Feb. 1990).

25. Boyd K. Packer, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, in the Member Finances Fireside of 18 February 1990 and officially published as "Teach Them Correct Principles," *Ensign* (May 1990): 89.

26. Gordon B. Hinckley, "Rise to a Larger Vision of the Work," *Ensign* (May 1990): 97. President Hinckley did not name names, but in concrete historical terms he meant that a rich ward on the East Bench of Salt Lake Valley (from Federal Heights in the north through Sandy in the south) will get the same allocation as the working class wards of Salt Lake City or a depressed copper-mining ward of Magna, Utah. Or again, a densely packed two-block, middle-class ward in Salt Lake City will receive the same number of dollars as the ward of western Massachusetts that covers two whole counties (Hampshire and Franklin).

27. Thomas S. Monson, "The Lord's Way," *Ensign* (May 1990): 93.

28. Douglas D. Alder, "The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community?" *Journal of Mormon History*, 5 (1978): 69-70. I had constructed my argument that the ward is the fundamental current expression of Mormon community before making the happy discovery of Alder's thoughtful article arguing essentially the same thesis.

29. See Robert T. Handy, *History of the Churches in the United States and Canada*, Oxford History of the Christian Church (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 314 ff.

30. *New York Times*, 3 Sept. 1989; *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 Sept. 1989.

31. Though it ignores West African pressures on the Utah church, Roger Launius's recent survey of African-Americans in the early Mormon church and his own Reorganized Church provides an objective summary. The more liberal RLDS church faced the same problems of the "new ethnicity" of the early 1970s and established a special Ethnic Ministries Committee to deal with the problems of racism, segregation, congregation, assignment of preaching duties, etc. See Roger D. Launius, *Invisible Saints: A History of Black Americans in the Reorganized Church* (Independence, MO: Herald Publishing House, 1988).

32. See Jessie L. Embry, "Ethnic Groups and the LDS Church: The Role of Culture in a Religious Community," 3-4, ms. article to be published in *Dialogue*. I am much indebted to Embry's sensitive studies covering the new ethnic dimensions of Mormonism in the United States.

33. See Jessie L. Embry, "Developing an Integrated Community: The Experiences of African-Americans in the LDS Church," paper delivered at the "Plotting Zion" conference, audiotape available from the Sunstone Foundation. Parts of this paper appeared under the title "Separate but Equal? Black Branches, Genesis Groups, or Integrated Wards?," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 23 (Spring 1990): 11-37. After careful descriptive analysis Embry comes down on the side of integrated, multi-cultural wards (34). If I were a Mormon, I'd also favor integration.

It is conceivable that the Church may be yielding unconsciously to another taboo argument for "comfort" or convenience, one made not by the minorities, but by Euro-Americans: the danger of intermarriage. Embry mentions one instance in the Oakland Stake of that old, familiar, interracial sexual rivalry between white and non-white youths at an interracial dance ("Ethnic Groups," 15-16). Such incidents may reinforce the common desire of parents to uphold racial endogamy.

34. Quoted in Embry, "Ethnic Groups," 4.

35. On the mild prejudice against Scandinavians see William Mulder, *Homeward to Zion: The Mormon Migration from Scandinavia* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1957), ch. 5.

36. The *New York Times*, 9 July 1990, attributed the Chicago closings to "a \$16 million deficit and a shortage of priests." Journalists must deal first with the facts; but they as well as social historians know that deficits of money or of religious leadership are mere surface expressions of inadequate commitment.

37. See BYU Professor of Organizational Behavior Warner Woodworth's stimulating and highly idealistic paper, "Third World Strategies toward Zion,"

delivered at the Plotting Zion conference and printed in SUNSTONE 14 (October 1990): 13-23.

38. Douglas D. Alder used these words to characterize the ward in his article, "The Mormon Ward: Congregation or Community?," 63. Actually, the "convenience" ward of Nauvoo discussed above predated the standardized Mormon Village of the Great Basin, but Alder is right in seeing these village versions of the Plat of the City of Zion as stemming from the millennialism of the earliest Mormons: ". . . a heaven on earth." The villages, he noted, represented the Mormon "concept of Zion as a tangible network of communities . . . [but] the ward has become a more expandable unit than the village," 64, 65.

Romanticized between the 1930s and 1950s, the Mormon Village as a homogeneous economic and social unit was by then already disappearing. The survival until the 1970s of the last existing Mormon Village of Laie, asleep on the north coast of Oahu, was a freak accident of history. Established as a nineteenth-century outpost of Utah, Laie awoke in the 1980s to find mainland urban America crawling up the beach with fangs bared. In the late 1980s the Church reacted, divesting itself of its ownership of land and utilities there.

39. Rosabeth Moss Kanter, *Commitment and Community: Communes and Utopias in Sociological Perspective* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), chs. 3 and 4. Kanter also collected a standard set of essays on modern communitarianism in her *Communes: Creating and Managing the Collective Life* (New York: Harper and Row, 1973).

40. A serious defect in the Bestor definition is the omission of institutions or beliefs for the control of what most historians loosely term "sexuality," i.e., reproduction and family polity, elements so fundamental to human societies that every utopian attempt to revamp the dominant society has made reproduction and family polity the prime objects of change. All communitarians have strictly controlled or drastically altered sexual behavior and marital structures: Shakers, Harmonists, and Benedictines were all celibate; Mormons were polygamous; kibbutzim removed food preparation and child care from the parents; Oneidans practiced complex marriage.

41. Alder, 63.

42. I am indebted to John A. Hostetler's well known works for all references to the Hutterites. In particular, his 8 October 1989 address to the annual meeting of the members of the National Historic Communal Societies Association, under the auspices of the Hutterites of Yankton, South Dakota, titled "Lessons We Can Learn from Anabaptist Communities," represented the summation of a lifetime of research.

In 1990 the mean size of North American Hutterite colonies was 94 persons per colony, and the maximum allowable size was 140.

43. See David Knowlton, "Belief, Metaphor, and Rhetoric: The Mormon Practice of Testimony Bearing," SUNSTONE 15 (April 1991): 20-27, for a discussion of the ritualistic aspects of testimony bearing and fast and testimony meetings.

44. Paul S. Boyer and Stephen Nissenbaum, *Salem Possessed: The Social Origins of Witchcraft* (Harvard University Press: Cambridge, 1974), 215-16. Perhaps expressions like *self-accusation* and *self-rededication* are more accurate expressions, since Mormon testimonies are rarely explicit about the expiation of sin. Rather, LDS testimonies usually express affirmation and rededication ("I know this Church is true" is the ritual refrain in almost all testimonies). Accusing oneself is a way of forestalling the accusations or hostile feelings of others. Both confession and *self-accusation/rededication* provide some of the psychological glue needed for true community and thus perform a function similar to that of confession.

Richard L. Bushman, cited by Boyer and Nissenbaum (216, note), has analyzed with acute sensitivity the unburdening of guilt and anxiety in the conversion experiences of the Puritans (Congregationalists) during the Great Awakening in *From Puritan to Yankee: Character and the Social Order in Connecticut, 1690-1765* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1967), 187-95. But Bushman was dealing with a much grander process than the local, emotional testimonies in the communal setting of Mormon ward chapels. He pointed out that for pre-Revolutionary Puritans the external society and its rulers were religiously and culturally one with the local churches; thus, the Puritans "did not separate earthly clashes with authority from sins against God." To find a closer analogy with Mormonism one would have to examine the records of late eighteenth-century, local Puritan (Congregationalist) churches which required the confessions of wayward members.

45. Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, eds., *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1983).

46. See the formal addresses by Elders Hinckley, Monson, and Packer cited above. The emphasis on the family as the main locus of church activity, espe-

cially on weekends, is from Elder Boyd K. Packer, "Teach Them Correct Principles," 90. See also Elder Packer's follow-up address, "Let Them Govern Themselves," and three commentaries by James B. Allen, J. Lynn England, and Marie Cornwall, in *SUNSTONE* 14 (Oct. 1990).

47. Alder, 77, provides an eloquent summary of the complex human interaction in the daily life of a ward.

48. Alder, 77.

49. For the renewed emphasis on Family Home Evening see R. Scott Lloyd, "Family Home Evening: A Tradition of Praying, Playing Together," *Church News*, 25 Aug. 1990, 5.

50. The six areas are: (1) Literacy and Education; (2) Career Development; (3) Financial and Resource Management; (4) Home Production and Storage; (5) Physical Health; (6) Social-Emotional and Spiritual Strength.

51. For more detailed explanations of early Mormon communitarianism, see Leonard J. Arrington, Feramorz Y. Fox, and Dean L. May, *Building the City of God: Community and Cooperation Among the Mormons* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1976); Lyndon W. Cook, *Joseph Smith and the Law of Consecration* (Provo, UT: Grandin Book Company, 1985), and Dean L. May, "The Economics of Zion," *SUNSTONE* 14 (Aug. 1989): 15-23. See also May's article, "One Heart and Mind: Communal Life and Values Among the Mormons," in Donald E. Pitzer, ed., *America's Communal Utopias: The Developmental Process* (Forthcoming; Madison, Wis.: University of Wisconsin Press, 1992).

52. Many other Christian groups have recognized that the institution of the family can coexist all too happily with the grossest inequalities of capitalism, and that families do not freely share their goods even with fellow believers. Families tend to seek their own economic self-interest. Long before Marx, Engels, and the utopians, the Pilgrims of Plymouth Colony recognized the conflict between the commonweal and the self-interest of families when they tried economic communism for the first few months of their existence. In 1623 Governor William Bradford and the Colony did away with "that conceit of Plato's." See Samuel Eliot Morison, ed., *Of Plymouth Plantation, 1620-1647* (New York: The Modern Library, 1967): 120.

53. Doctrine and Covenants of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Salt Lake City; many editions), Section 119 (8 July 1838).

54. The Church still assigns a few Saints to cannery work, but clearly the trend is away from supplying the welfare storehouse with Church farm and cannery goods.

55. See the feature article in the *Church News*, 26 May 1990.

56. President Hinckley hoped first for more generous fast offerings as a way of providing for "the poor and the needy—not only of the Church, but many others as well." Secondly, he noted that these monies could be augmented by "large and generous gifts from faithful people who have contributed freewill offerings far beyond their tithes. We hope that there will be no diminution of such giving." This contrasts with the corporate, United Order financial policy of Zion, where the poor shared equally in the general surplus created by consecrations and distributed through the bishop's storehouse—administered up to the 1980s by the Church's "Welfare Program."

Hinckley expressed the belief that two other sources could also be enlarged. First, all faithful Saints could work to expand the general missionary fund of the Church for families too poor to support their sons on missions; and, secondly, he noted that "less-active members and non-members have generously contributed through the LDS Foundation to assist various Church programs." See Hinckley, "Rise to a Larger Vision of the Work," 97. A few wards still independently support the missionary sons of poor families. This will become increasingly difficult now that the new "budgeting procedure" has eliminated the ward budget.

57. Up to about the early 1980s, wards held a separate Welfare Services session early on Saturday mornings. Since the early 1980s the general authorities have been silent on storing food to prepare for the Last Days.

58. The Mormon scholar Hugh Nibley tried to remind his fellow Saints that the end of this world of Babylon and the Second Coming were the "main message" of the Book of Mormon. But even his conservative appeal is less a voice of warning that the End is near than a passionate exhortation against materialism. See "Last Call: An Apocalyptic Warning from the Book of Mormon," *SUNSTONE* 12 (Jan. 1988): 14-15, 25, also in John W. Welch, ed., *The Prophetic Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1989), 498-532. Based mainly on the sermons of Brigham Young, this article provides an extremely useful compendium of Young's teachings on materialism, greed, and idolatry.

59. "We believe in the literal gathering of Israel and in the restoration of the Ten Tribes; that Zion (the New Jerusalem) will be built upon the American continent; that Christ will reign personally upon the earth; and, that the earth will

be renewed and receive its paradisiacal glory." *Articles of Faith*, 10, *The Pearl of Great Price*, 1981 edition.

60. See Bruce R. McConkie, "Come: Let Israel Build Zion," *Ensign* (May 1977): 115-18.

61. Spencer W. Kimball, "Becoming the Pure in Heart" *Ensign* (May 1978): 79-81.

62. Pessimistic Jewish scholars question even whether American Jews remain "a people," given their intermarriage, their non-commitment (the non-observance by even nominal synagogue members), and their lack of readiness to gather to Zion (Jerusalem, Israel). See Seymour P. Lachman and Barry A. Kosmin, "What Is Happening to American Jewry?" *New York Times*, 4 June 1990; and Henry Feingold, "Rootless Cosmopolitanism: Defined and Defended," *Jewish Studies Network* (Dept. of Judaic Studies, Brooklyn College, N.Y.), 2 (Fall 1988): 1-7. These two short pieces stirred considerable debate among Jews.

Writing from inside the Mormon faith, Douglas D. Alder has compared the Mormon ward with the post-World War II Jewish "synagogue centers," replete with gymnasiums, youth groups, and the like. See Alder, 72. Alder saw the synagogue centers serving the same community-building functions as the Mormon ward, but in the dozen years since he expressed that view the mainline Jewish community has continued to decline: a meeting place with "activities" is not enough. Real community must be based on the kind of spiritual bonds that Alder skimmed over all too quickly with the words: "the traditional activity of study and worship by Jewish men that dominated synagogues for centuries has given way . . . to synagogue centers." Study and worship still dominate Mormon wards, and that is why they are still living, growing units. As Feingold points out of today's Jews (well supplied with comfortable "centers"): "Since they find their Zion everywhere, they are at home nowhere. They are Zionists who cannot settle in Zion, since their rootlessness denies them a sense of home from which they are exiled" (1).

Armand Mauss has persuasively refuted Keith Perry's arguments that Mormons may be defined as an ethnic group and has also cogently criticized facile parallels some writers like to make between Jews and Mormons. He offers a strong counter argument noting the ways in which Jews closely conform to the definition of ethnicity, while Mormons do not. See Mauss, 5.

63. I am of course aware of the ongoing murders of Mormon missionaries in Latin America, but while persecution of missionaries has drawn the Mormons closer together as a community, its communalizing effect has been tiny compared with the massive persecutions of the nineteenth century.

64. Howard M. Bahr and Renata Tonks Forste, "Toward a Social Science of Contemporary Mormonism," *BYU Studies* 26 (Winter 1986): 92.

65. *New York Times*, 28 October 1975.

66. Eugene England has noted that as late as 1989 some traditionalist Mormons still believed that a black convert's skin gradually turned white because of her spiritual change after she joined the Church.

In 1947, when a leading scholar, Lowry Nelson, complained about the Church's racial policies, the First Presidency wrote to him that racial intermarriage "has heretofore been most repugnant to most normal-minded people." But since 1978, when President Kimball promulgated the revelation admitting blacks to the priesthood, the Church has abandoned the old notion that God had cursed certain groups with dark skin because of their sins—even to the extent of altering the text of the Book of Mormon. Nor is there any implication in the doctrine of pre-existence that God was busy "grading" souls before they were born into bodies on earth. England, "Are All alike unto God? Prejudice against Blacks and Women in Popular Mormon Theology," *SUNSTONE* 14 (Apr. 1990): 18-19.

Under the aged but surprisingly responsive leadership of the Church, popular racist notions are also fading, and under the impact of multi-cultural, non-racist instruction in the Missionary Training Center, the younger generation should be relatively free of racist attitudes.

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When deciding which show to go see,  
The word from the Brethren's "PG."

So to friends I declare,  
"To obey is my fare!"  
(The "R" I'll soon see on TV.)

LLOYD V. CASTLETON

## A Short Story

# A DRESS FOR CHRISTMAS OR THOU SHALT LOVE THY NEIGHBOR

By Maurine Whipple

GRANDMA STAPLEY SMOOTHED THE FOLDS OF the black knitted shawl nervously—John's and Maggie's present a year ago. This year it was to be a dress. She was sure the package contained a dress. Had not John in his last letter (almost three months ago, it was, but she must not forget her boy was very busy) said that Maggie would "go shopping . . . and find her a nice dress for Christmas." She remembered the exact words. She had never had a real pretty dress all her life. The early years had been too full of building a place to live in and growing food to think of fancy clothes. But the later years had been hard, too; they seemed as they stretched behind her, one eternal wash day. She did not regret the washings, though, because they had helped to keep John in medical college. Her fine big John, so famous and so busy. And now he was sending her a dress. She hoped it would be black silk, or maybe grey, or brown silk; she wondered, would she be too daring if she wore blue? She could almost see it, with its soft lace at her

throat to cover the wrinkles.

Well, the time had come when she ought to have something she did not actually need; she was eighty. A new dress would make her look younger, too, she thought complacently.

"Do not open until Christmas." The package had come three days ago. How she had counted the hours! But the time was here at last to cut the string, and her fingers ached in their eagerness. Would Maudie ever come! They had dreamed and planned together, ever since Maudie first started to bring the milk in the mornings, and now Maudie must share the joy.

All morning while she worked she had been conscious of the Christmas sounds outside in the street: sleigh bells, the sweet caroling of young voices in the frosty air, calls of boys on new skates to other boys on new sleds, excited little girl voices clucking in maternal solicitude to new dolls in new buggies. All the happy, happy Christmas sounds.

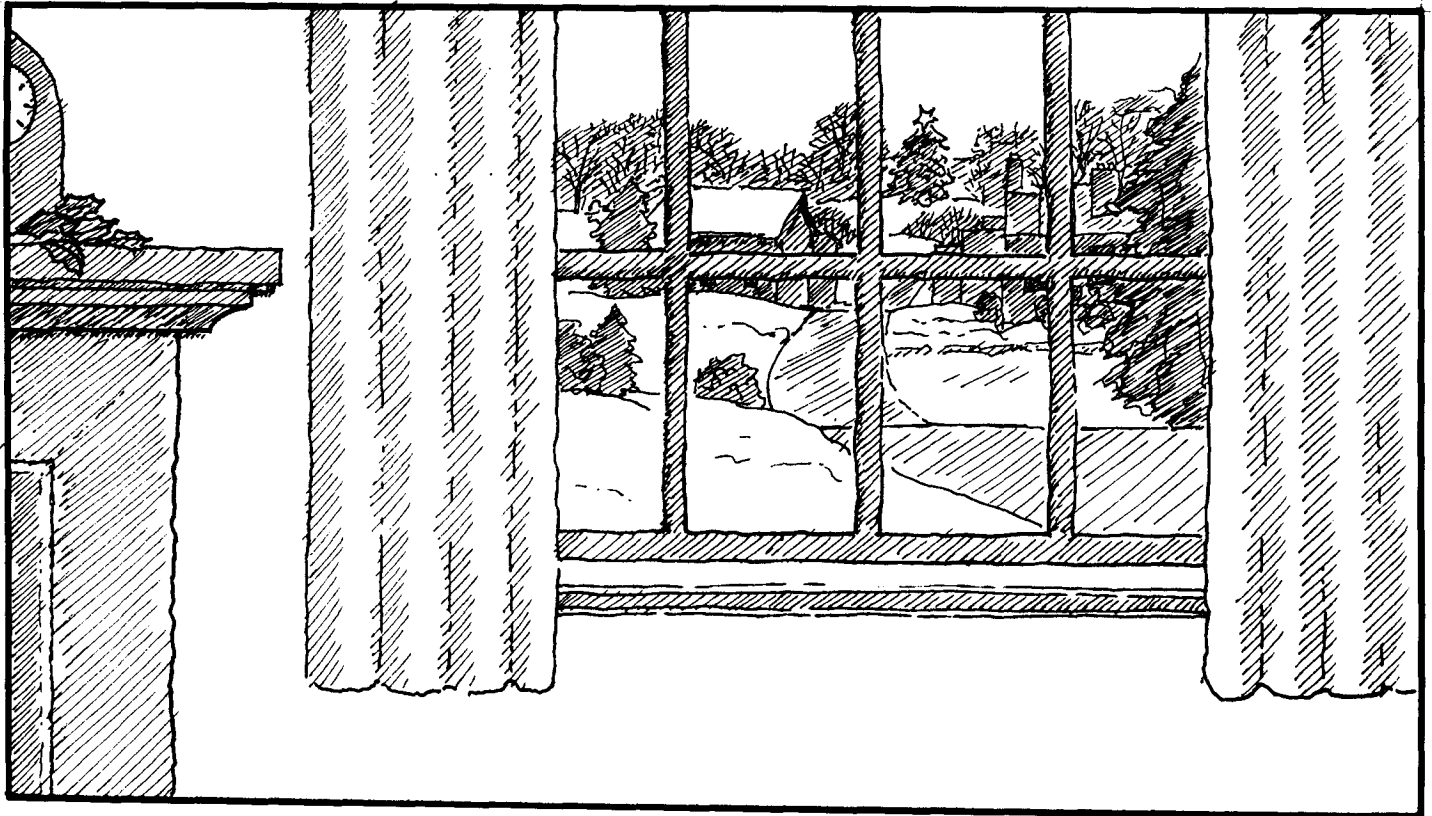
Grandma Stapely undid her apron strings and retied them again carefully. With the tortoise-shell comb from the back of her white hair she brushed up the scolding locks and anchored them more firmly. She took out her handkerchief and surreptitiously scrubbed at her cheeks, which were already as softly glowing as withered apples. For the hundredth time she moved the spray of holly on the mantle from in front of the china shepherdess back to the clock, and for the hundredth time studied the effect critically, her head on one side like an enquiring sparrow.

With an impatient sigh she turned to the window and flattened her nose against the pane and stared up the frosty street. No sign of Maudie yet. She could just make out the star on top of the big spruce Christmas tree over on the village square. Last night that tree had been alive with lights, and a hearty Santa Claus had seen to it that every child in town shared in the Christmas spirit. The children had had such a good time around the tree, shouting, laughing, singing. She wondered suddenly why it seemed so hard for people to remember the child that might also dwell in an old lady's heart.

The sounds of Christmas. She turned away from the window and sank into the comforting cushions of her rocker. So

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MAURINE WHIPPLE was born 20 January 1903 in St. George, Utah. After graduating with honors from the University of Utah, she taught school at various locations in Utah and Idaho. In 1937 her novella *Beaver Dam Wash* attracted the attention of Ford Maddox, who introduced her work to the editors at Houghton Mifflin. They later published *The Giant Joshua*, which was envisioned as the first in a trilogy. It won rave reviews in the Eastern press, but was reportedly suppressed by some Mormon leaders. She never published another work of fiction, but went on to write features for *Life*, *Look*, *Collier's*, and other journals. In 1991, over 400 manuscript pages of her later fiction were found—some at the BYU Archives, but most in a box at a neighbor's home. The neighbor's cats had been using it as kitty litter for years. Included in the box was "Cleave the Wood," the unfinished sequel to *The Giant Joshua*. Veda Hale, who discovered the manuscripts while researching Whipple's biography, has compiled them for Aspen Books, which will publish them as *The Unpublished Fiction of Maurine Whipple*, later this year. This story will appear in *Christmas From the Hearth*, a collection of Christmas stories from major LDS writers.



She wondered suddenly why it seemed so hard for people to remember the child  
that might also dwell in an old lady's heart.

So many women that day with big homes and large families who would cry out before the day was done over the children's noise. She thought there was nothing she would not give to turn back the clock to a young John shrieking with a Christmas puppy on the floor. Sounds of Christmas!

She wet her lips and piped forth a brave but tremulous note into the silence of the room.

"Jingle bells! Jingle bells! Jingle all the . . ."

But somehow she couldn't make her own old voice sound like a real Christmas sound.

No matter. Maudie would soon be here. She mustn't moon. After all, children had their own lives to lead, she couldn't expect—

**A**T a quarter past eight the timid knock came and the old lady rushed to open the door.

"Merry Christmas, Maudie," she quavered breathlessly.

She took the quart bucket of milk from the girl's hands and unfastened the safety pin which held her coat together.

"Did you get a present, Maudie?"

The girl smiled aimlessly.

Grandma Stapely bustled around her visitor and got her seated on the low stool in the warm place behind the stove. She wiped from the child's red and chapped chin the saliva which was always drooling there, and took gently from her mouth the thread-wound end of the tight braid which she was always biting between her teeth.

"Did you get a Christmas present, dearie?"

"I got these mittens, Grandma Stapely. Be you goin' to open the package now?"

"Yes, dearie. But shall we have our usual singin' first, and shan't we have just a wee prayer cause it's Christmas? Then we'll see—"

Grandma Stapely sighed. She should have had better sense'n to have mentioned the music now. Seemed like a body couldn't get much real satisfaction out of visitin' with Maudie because her brains could only hold one thought at a time. And when it come to singin'! Funny, too, with Maudie's voice so queer-like. Real short-sighted of the Lord to give a body such an itch to do a thing and then forget to put in the means to do it with!

Maudie's dull smile had taken on sudden meaning. She stood by the old organ in the corner and looked back at Grandma expectantly.

"All right, dearie. You can have your way. I guess we can wait to see what Maggie and John have sent all the way from the City. If it's a new dress I'll put it on this afternoon and you shall come back over and we'll eat Christmas dinner together like we been plannin'."

Grandma gave the organ stool a turn or two and settled herself before the worn keys. Her feet shoved at the stiff pedals.

"You sure don't have to be at the hotel all day t'day, do you?"

Maudie's pale stare wavered, lowered, and her slack lips puckered together.

"Well, there, there, child, you come down anyway and I'll tell Andy Roberts just what I think of him for makin' you work on Christmas."

The old organ wheezed, bent fingers found the notes to "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," and Grandma's reedy voice piped the words.

"Let me hide myself in Thee," contributed Maudie. The incredible monotone of her voice rasped on in a sort of exalted fervor. Her wizened little face was shining now and something in the depths of her eyes brought an ache to Grandma's throat. Weeks and weeks of effort. The child listening painfully to each note of the hymn and trying so patiently over and over again. Herself cheering the hurt in the pale eyes.

"Don't you worry, dearie. We'll have this song learnt by Christmas, you wait and see! 'Rock of Ages' by Christmas, and if you've got one song learnt real good, it'll be easy to go on t'the others!"

Grandma knew Maudie had taken to saving her money lately for real singin' lessons. A'course it wan't no use but you couldn't tell Maudie that. The old lady pedaled with all her might and shouted at the top of her lungs as if she'd make Maudie sing by sheer force.

"Free from sin and make me pure!"

They finished and Grandma Stapely whirled briskly around.

"Why, child, you're gettin' better 'n better. When we first tried to sing you couldn't even say the words and now you can go through a whole song without stoppin'. A'course, you don't allus get the tune right, but that'll come. Now you pray, and then fer our package!"

Maudie's whole body wriggled with dumb but adoring gratitude as she turned from the old lady and knelt on the floor. She clasped her hands and turned her pasty face with its dim smile upward.

"Our Father who art—who art—"

"In Heaven," prompted Grandma, kneeling beside the girl.

"Make everybody—be good to—Maudie and Grandma—because this is Christmas—and let Grandma's dress be a purty one, please—"

"Amen!" Grandma came to the rescue. "That's enough. I'm sure he'll understand. And now—"

The moment had come. Christmas had come! Grandma took the package down from the mantle and held it an instant, savoring the thrill of opening it. There was her name in bold, black ink. She imagined Maggie choosing the dress carefully and wrapping it tenderly and addressing it lovingly. Because they had not forgotten her. Because they did love her.

She pulled the string and took off the brown wrapping paper and sank into the rocker with the gaily wrapped box in her arms. Maudie knelt beside the chair and chewed the string and stared at the box. Such wonderful, shiny paper! All patterned with the cheerful red and green of holly wreaths. Such beautiful red ribbon with that rosette of a bow where the four ends met.

"Ain't it—oh, ain't it purty, Maudie."

Her fingers trembled until she could hardly untie the ro-

sette. But at last she pushed off the ribbon and opened the crinkly holly paper and drew out the brown pasteboard box underneath.

"See?" said Grandma. She traced the letters with her fingers. "It says, 'Marshall-Field, Chicago'."

She caressed the box with her hand.

"See, I told you they'd not forget me! Didn't I? Didn't I?"

She stared defiantly at Maudie who chewed on her braid and stared back.

Eagerly Grandma lifted the lid and raised the box to smell the fragrant newness. A thrill to part even the fine tissue paper—

Some of the expectant joy left her face as she saw the light tan color and the thinness of the silken fabric. She shook out the dress and, standing up, held it to her shoulders.

Impossible to hide the quaver in her voice.

"Maudie, dear, do you suppose the clerks made a mistake?"

But, no, there was the card; no mistake. She measured the sleeves, elbow length; she measured the neck—low, even on a girl. Instead of real lace trimmings there was ribbon, bright green ribbon, caught in little whorls on waist and skirt. Her startled eyes measured the length—hardly below the knee; and tried to account for the shirring that encircled the waist and rising to a point in front that so plainly revealed the bosom.

Grandma avoided Maudie's gaze and walked to the window and tried to swallow the ridiculous disappointment that choked her throat. Silly tears. What ailed her? It was—was a real purty dress. Just a mistake. Anybody might've made it. Maggie'd just forgot she was so old. Too old. The world had no room for the old. She shook her head and smiled brightly.

"I—I'm afraid they forgot I am such an old, old person, Maudie—"

These foolish tears! That was the trouble with being old. You couldn't manage yourself the way you used too.

Maudie's pale gaze focused intently on the tan dress. Her clumsy brain beat frantically against a real problem.

"I know, Grandma Stapely! It's 'cause they don't care about you no more!"

"Oh no, child," she exclaimed fearfully. "You mustn't say that! Why, when John was going to school he was allus sayin'—" (Maudie knew the time-worn assurance by heart) "—'Some day, Mom, I'll send for you to live with me in a fine, big house and we'll spend all our Christmases together!'"

But no matter how she tried, the day had lost its flavor. She was almost glad when Maudie got up to go.

"Be sure and come back t'dinner dearie." But she thought, I can't help it, I won't want to eat it. It ain't like Christmas, somehow. I won't be hungry. She sat by the window and listlessly watched Maudie shuffle through the snow up the street.

**M**AUDIE, eyes unseeing on her trudging feet, was squaring around to her problem. Grandma Stapely was the only friend she had ever known, the only human being who had ever tried to understand or help her, and Grandma Stapely felt bad; she knew Grandma felt awful bad no matter how hard

she tried to pretend. Grandma Stapely could not live much longer. She needed folks, she needed folks *now*. That was it. If her famous doctor son understood he would come and make her happy. Maudie knew in the vague, chaotic jumble of her mind, in the tag ends of ideas that made up her thoughts—he'd come, if only he understood.

At the hotel Maudie walked straight through the lobby and pushed open the swinging doors into the kitchen without once raising her head. Andy Roberts, behind the desk, grinned and then frowned. You never knew what to expect with the Bigler kid. Rum little mutt. You'd think, being s'late on a busy day like this, she'd say something instead of barging through like she owned the blamed joint. But that was what you got for hiring a nut. Of course, the only reason he'd got a kid like that in the first place was because she'd begged so hard. He usually had some boy to do the chorin' around, but for all this kid wasn't more'n ten or twelve, an' a half-wit at that, she got more work done'n any dozen boys.

Andy Roberts chewed a toothpick reflectively and ruminated on the whims of a capricious fate. Family smart as all git out, and that poor kid slinkin' amongst 'em like a scairt pup. An' her bein' off on singin' now! Put that in your pipe and smoke it. Her folks had even hadter take her outta school because she got to be the laughin' stock of the town. Jumped up to sing every chance she got. Darn near die laughin', yerself, at sight of her in church with her mouse-colored braids stretchin' tight the skin on her skull, her big crooked teeth pokin' a hole through her daffy grin, an' that raspy voice of hern plowin' a straight furrow through the up an' around pattern of the hymn.

Daft little beggar. There was the time she kept a-askin' him was there a real singin' teacher in town? An' did he think the perfessor could learn a body like her to sing, too? The kid a-hoardin' her money fer lessons! It beat all git out. A'course it wan't none of his business an' the fool town could laugh its head off before he'd give her away. Let her take lessons if'n she got a kick outta it. Besides, it didn't do to laugh too much at kids who was fey like this Bigler kid. If anybody wanted a thing so all-fired bad as she did, why who knowed, the good Lord Hissself might send her a tune t' carry!

Poor little devil. Let 'er go home early t'day—

Andy Roberts pushed into the steaming kitchen. The breakfast orders were all in and the place jangling with activity. Here was the warm, wet breath of soapsuds and the clink of jostled dishes. Layers of odors of many foods—the faint, tainted odor of last month's cabbage beneath the sharp strong tingle of today's fried steak. A familiar diapason of odors to Andy who chewed his toothpick and stared without interest at the bustle. The kitchen paused a moment to salute its lord and master. All but the dogged figure with mousy braids bent over the pan of potatoes. Andy sauntered over to her.

"Howya makin' out, kid?"

Maudie rested her pale stare on him briefly, chewed thoughtfully for a moment on the end of her braid, and went back to the paring knife.

Andy shrugged.

"Get off at two if y'wanta, kid, seein' it's Christmas."

Suddenly Maudie dropped the half peeled potato and without another look for the nonplussed Andy shuffled out of the room. He stood with his mouth agape and watched her go through the swinging doors.

"Well I'll be damned!"

Maudie had made up her mind.

THE hands of Nurse Howard's wristwatch were both exactly on the figure twelve. Christmas day was over, but out in the snowy city festive lights still blazed from hotels and restaurants and drawing rooms. Show windows still carried glittering trees, dolls, teddy bears, and bright toy trucks; behind plate glass, incongruous upon the busy street, the Christ child still slept beneath the ancient beneficence of the Star. Overhead lights traced an intricate network of red and green brilliance against the black sky. Everywhere neon signs filled the night with a kind of garish beauty. At street corners a few Salvation Army lasses still shuffled tambourines. Newsboys still hawked special Christmas editions.

But in spite of it all, Christmas was really over and Nurse Howard was glad. She clutched the chart she was studying in fingers numb with fatigue. Christmas was always a hard day, especially in the children's ward. But, she reflected drowsily, it had been a good day and she was glad they'd staged all that fuss for the kids even if there was a mess to clean up after.

She patted a yawn, adjusted her white cap, stretched her arms until the joints creaked, and got up from the desk to take up her periodic patrol of the long dim corridor with its rows of human freight stretching into the gloom behind her. Nurse Howard looked and listened and tiptoed. Here a cough, there a childish whimper, a sigh, or a small body threshing under the bedclothes. But every tiny sleeper clutching a Christmas toy. That had been her doing, and now, softly pacing in the murky quiet, she felt her heart throb with satisfaction. People said Doctor John had the finest hospital in the city. She hoped sleepily her small bit helped to make that true. Dear Doctor John—she knew the nurses called her the power behind the throne, but that was just silly.

At the other end of the ward she came to the huge tree they had had this morning for the kids. A shining star on its top, wreaths of popcorn and tinsel among its branches, and gifts piled at its feet. Now all the gifts were gone, but the tree with its trimmings still remained somehow forlorn in its holiday finery like an actress who had forgotten to wash off the grease-paint.

Extra work tomorrow taking out the tree, storing all the trimmings in boxes. A job to get everything straight again and routines and schedules running at normal.

Back at the desk, pressing fingers against aching eyelids, Nurse Howard mumbled to herself, "Yes, it means taking trouble. But just the same it'd break my heart if I thought there had been this day any child *without* a Christmas!"

Abruptly the shrill clamor of the telephone shattered the night. Oh, darn! She reached for the receiver.

"Yes?" She yawned and dug the receiver into her ear.

“Will you tell me that again? I’m sorry but I’m not— But you see, Doctor John’s busy and can’t be called— Well, yes, he’s attending an entertainment— But I couldn’t possibly disturb him!— Some other doctor— But it’s probably just a silly fancy of the child’s and I don’t want to call him unless it’s absolutely— I see. Funny she’d keep on calling him like that, I’m sure he doesn’t know her— But on *Christmas!* What on earth was a child running around alone on Christmas for in the first place?— Well, can’t you locate her people?— But how on earth— Of course, if it’s that urgent I’ll just *have* to call him. Bring the case over—”

When she finally reached Doctor John his voice sounded tired. She thought as she hung up that she was glad he’d had a good Christmas, at least a restful one. She’d simply insisted that he go to this party with his wife. Funny how he’d changed. Used to love to go to all the swell places with her when they were first married. Oh, well, Nurse Howard shrugged, the woman was obviously a fool. She was an orchid and real doctors had no room for orchids in their lives—unless the orchid learned how to be a cauliflower. But to have Doctor John on *any* terms! The gal he’d married had been a perfumed darling who couldn’t appreciate him; he’d worshipped her, and she’d tossed aside his love—

She got up and walked briskly to the far end of the ward beyond the tree. There was a vacant bed here, probably far enough away from the others not to wake them. Let’s see, she thought. Lights, and accident bed—screen it off completely—two of those tall ones should do the trick with the wall on the other side—because if the child’s dying. . . . Now the dressing cart wheeled by the bed; better get a new bottle of merthiolate. You never knew what Doctor John might want. For a good many years now she’d been doing just that—foreseeing his wants. That’s how she’d helped him. This year he’d even been mentioned by the AMA.

A little glow flooded her heart at the thought. The nurse from the emergency hospital at the other end of the line had been so nicely deferential—*we would not consider bothering Doctor John if the child weren’t so insistent . . . keeps calling for him over and over—they knew, you bet!* All the profession knew his worth.

She looked at her watch. One o’clock. Doctor should be here any minute. While she filled hot water bottles her busy thoughts ran on. If somebody could just do something with that wife of his. Surely she was *human*. Even with a perfumed hussy there must be *some* way to her heart! It was just that she wanted Doctor John to be happy—because, well, because he’d do so much better a job if he were happy!

The whine of the elevator. She rushed to hold open the swinging doors for the orderly and to help the tossing, crying figure from the stretcher on to the bed. The driver of the ambulance drew a hand across his forehead.

“Whew! That was some job. I’d rather handle ten men than a crazy kid like that!”

Nurse Howard stared at his red face and wide grin. He’d evidently had too much Christmas cheer. He answered her questions volubly.

“Yes, sir, we thought all the accidents for this holiday were done with, when this kid got run over. Ran right in front of the car, the driver said, though a’course they all say that. Seemed scairt pink and not to know where she was going. If she wasn’t so young I’d think she was one of the drunks!”

He tipped back on his heels and tittered.

“Blamest thing you ever heard! The nurse said she kept saying, ‘Fifteen dollars, all Maudie’s!’ Then she’d sorta light up and say ‘Fer singin’ lessons!’—Can you tie that!”

“But what did she say about Doctor John?”

“Oh, I ain’t told you the half! She’d moan and cry somethin’ about Grandma and then she’d shout, ‘Doctor John! Maudie must tell Doctor John!’ Then she’d rave about ‘real lace’ or somethin’, and once she sang Rock of Ages clear through. You shoulda heard it.”

Nurse Howard finally got him out the door and turned to her patient. The child was bandaged from neck to heels but she still writhed and moaned. Nurse Howard’s hand was cool on the hot forehead; she found herself looking into dim, light eyes behind whose vacant stare some kind of pleading beat.

“What is it, honey? Can’t you tell me what it is?”

For an instant the stare focused and tightened and the child cried, “Doctor John! Maudie must see Doctor John—it didn’t have real lace! Grandma wants real lace! Oh—Maudie tried and tried, but all the people—”

The words sank into low, heartbroken whimpers. The pale eyes darted like caged birds in the chalky face and the arms thrashed constantly under the covers. The room seemed filled with her struggle to breathe.

Nurse Howard daubed a bit of ointment over the red chapped place on the chin and burned with righteous wrath. A child like that out alone—what had her family been thinking of?

“There, there,” she crooned, “it’ll be all right. Nurse will make it all right!”

“You’d make the whole world right if you could, wouldn’t you, Howdy?”

She turned and smiled up at Doctor John. She never got over being a little breathless when he surprised her like that. Sometimes when he was tired or a case had gone wrong, a weary six-year-old looked out of his eyes and she longed to rest his head against her heart. So long-suffering, so patient, so tender; with a scalpel in his hand, such a god.

“H’m, is this the patient?” he was saying now as he stripped off his evening jacket. Deft fingers exploring, probing, taking pulse. Handing him gowns, instruments, gauze, rubber gloves, Nurse Howard was thinking, She might be the wealthiest patient in the world, so far as he knows—or cares.

But at last when everything was done Doctor John looked at her across the bed. He sighed.

“Just a matter of time.”

“They said she had something to tell you—”

“I can’t imagine what. I never saw her before.”

“Well, she kept calling and calling—”

“Oh, I’ll wait. She’s likely to come out of this any minute. I think she’ll come out of it, too, before—”

MAUDIE'S gaze questioned first the kindly face of the woman bending over her; but that face was strange. On the other side of the bed was a tall dark man who seemed somehow familiar.

Something flickered for an instant in the back of Maudie's mind. When she struggled to speak, and her crushed body strained against its bandages, her vague stare glazed over for a moment with the dumb hurt look of a wounded animal. But the flicker persisted. Briefly she fought the pain in her lungs for a deeper breath, closed her eyes and rallied the cumbersome machinery of her thoughts until the flicker ceased to waver and became a clear pin-point of purpose.

"Be you—Doctor John?"

The man nodded his head.

She fought harder up through the pain.

"She—wanted—real lace—"

The man turned to the nurse.

"Can't you find out what she wants for me? It's late and I—"

The hand on Maudie's forehead was soothing.

"Who was it, dear? Try to think. Who wanted real lace?"

Again the flicker for a moment burned clearly.

"Why, Grandma Stapely! She's good to—Maudie. She's good to—everybody. Please—the purty dress—it ain't right, it ain't got—real lace, it—"

Doctor John suddenly bent closer to the bed.

"Where do you live?"

His voice was strained and urgent, now.

"Tell me, where do you live? Is it in Three Oaks—Three Oaks?" He repeated each syllable carefully.

But Maudie merely continued her mumble.

"She said—Doctor John would come if he knew. She's lonesome—folks git lonesomer at Christmas'n any other time—Grandma's lonesome—"

Nurse Howard wiped the saliva from Maudie's chin.

Doctor John tried to hold the wavering pale gaze.

"Who did you say? Grandma who?"

He took hold of the child's restless hands.

"Try to think. Grandma who?"

Maudie's slack lips suddenly puckered and her tone became anguished.

"Fifteen dollars—fer singin' lessons! But Grandma's so good to Maudie—"

"Is that your name?" questioned Doctor John. "Maudie who?"

The child's eyes were filling with tears.

"She wanted—a dress—with real lace—"

The man looked across at the nurse in despair.

"Who wanted real lace?"

Suddenly Nurse Howard had an inspiration. Just a hunch, but she believed in hunches. She left Doctor John with the patient and walked down the corridor to the telephone. She kept her voice low but insistent. There were ways of handling Doctor John's wife, even if she *had* just got home from an all-night party. The voice at the other end of the line was chilly with indignation.

Back at the bed where Doctor John sat helplessly, Nurse

Howard waited with one ear alert for the elevator. When she heard it she went out in the hall to meet its passenger. This time the lady's aloof, blond beauty, her mink and orchids and exquisite perfume made no impression on the other woman whatsoever. "I know too much about you this time, sister," she said to herself as she led the lady back to the ward. "Too much about your carelessness and selfishness, your impatience, your indifference to an old lady's feelings. We'll just see now if you *have* got a heart."

Nurse Howard was very brusque and professional. She placed a chair by the Christmas tree where the first faint light of the winter dawn would gild its tinsel star and reveal all the cherished toys in the childish hands. She placed the lady so that she faced the screen around the bed in the corner. She motioned to the sleeping children and put her fingers to her lips.

"Wait here," she whispered. It was really a command. "Doctor John will see you in a moment."

The lady's eyes questioned her irritably, but Nurse Howard deliberately turned her back and tiptoed down the ward to the desk. She had played her trump. If I know anything about woman's curiosity it will work, too, she thought, and if that gal with the expensive looks has got the sense God gave little green apples she'll know what to do—

Nurse Howard folded her arms on the desk and pillowed her weary head on them. Only for a moment. She was dead for sleep—

Somewhere a pulse beat: "Real lace, real lace, real lace!" And the room was filled with a voice croaking, "Free from sin—and make me pure!"

The sound faded and became fainter and seemed to change and glow and dissolve into itself like colors running together.

Nurse Howard suddenly straightened and listened. Was she imagining things? But the echo of the childish singing that still hung on the air was as sweet and true as a Christmas bell. . . .

THE late afternoon sun streamed into the ward. Grandma Stapely closed up the wonderful story books and, patting into place the lace cuffs of her dress, smiled at the eager faces. John and Maggie would be waiting dinner—

"Will ya come tomorrow, Grandma Stapely? Say you'll come tomorrow!" The ward was filled with childish clamor.

Nurse Howard came in and smiled at the confusion.

"She'll come tomorrow, boys and girls. She always comes tomorrow!"

Walking out into the hall with the old lady she slipped an affectionate arm about the stooped shoulders in their fine black silk.

"You do them a lot of good, you know. You're so understanding."

"Laws sakes," said Grandma Stapely, "Folks *needs* understanding. Everybody used to say even Maudie was queer-like, but I allus thinks, people tapped their heads significant-like at Jesus, Hissself!"



TELL-TALE SIGNS OF BECOMING A MORMON INTELLECTUAL

DESIRING TO STUDY SCRIPTURE  
VERSES IN THEIR CONTEXT.



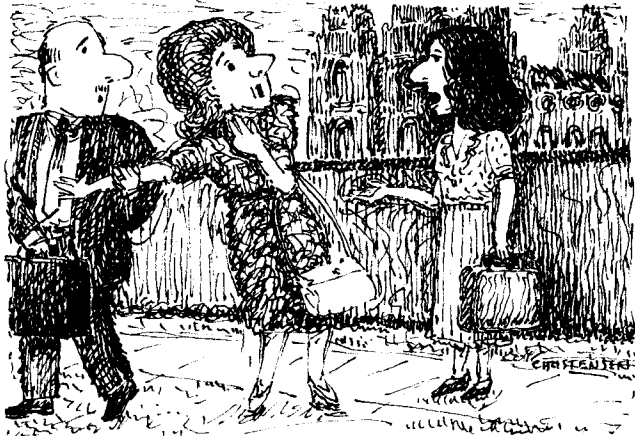
"I DON'T THINK JESUS' POINT IN THIS VERSE IS TO TELL US TO 'SEARCH THE SCRIPTURES.'"

REFUSING TO CARRY PATRIARCHY  
TO ITS EXTREME.



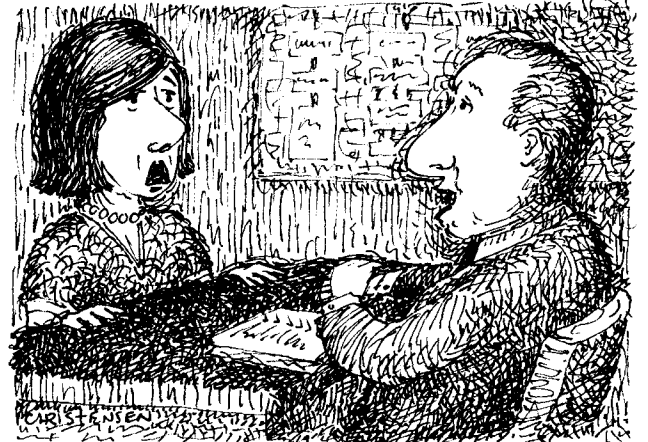
"WHILE I'M GONE, JOHNNY, MOMMY AND NOT YOU WILL BE IN CHARGE OF THE FAMILY."

TAKING THE TEMPLE CEREMONY LITERALLY.



"BUT IT SAYS WOMEN CAN PERFORM MELCHIZEDEK PRIESTHOOD ORDINANCES."

BEING RELEASED FROM TEACHING CALLINGS.



"SISTER MSWAIN, THE LORD WANTS YOU TO WORK IN THE NURSERY."

BEING FED UP WITH DISCUSSION-ENDING,  
CHEAP PUT-DOWNS.



"THAT'S NOT PERTINENT TO YOUR SALVATION!"

ABANDONING ATTEMPTS TO HARMONIZE IRRE-  
CONCILABLE GENERAL AUTHORITY STATEMENTS.



"WELL FLIP. I DON'T CARE WHETHER OR NOT GOD IS PROGRESSING IN KNOWLEDGE."

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## REVIEW

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# GRIT & INSIGHT

BREEDING LEAH & OTHER STORIES

By John Bennion

Signature Books, 1991, \$14.95, 157 pages



Reviewed by Tim Behrend

DESPITE THE EARLY contributions of such authors as Don Marshall and Doug Thayer to the spectacular growth of serious Mormon fiction in the 1980s, it has been a long while since a full-time faculty member at BYU has published a major work (or collection) of fiction to critical acclaim. Marshall's and Thayer's powers appear to have dimmed with their surprisingly correlated, didactic novels of the eighties, and new talents in the English department, particularly the much-decorated Margaret Young, seem intent on following their lead into the cheap, happy landscape of sentimentality and moralism. John Bennion's new collection, *Breeding Leah & Other Stories*, is all the more praiseworthy against this background. Bennion, a new member of the English department at BYU, writes with grit and insight about people coping with the disappointment of imperfect relationships as lived out in a morally ambivalent world. His characters, for the most part, are invested with the body parts, the passions, the ignorance and faults, the "haphazard selfhood" (93), the bale-and-wire clunkiness of thought and behavior that make their predicament real, memorable, relevant. With this, his first published collection, Bennion has earned for himself a place beside Judith Freeman, Levi Peterson, and Pauline Mortensen at the forefront of Mormon fiction.

Seven stories comprise the collection: "Dust," "A Court of Love," "A House of Order," "Breeding Leah," "The Interview," "The Last Wonder of Nature," and "Jenny, Captured by the Mormons"; of these, all but the last two have appeared elsewhere in

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TIM BEHREND is a member of SUNSTONE'S advisory editorial board.

print. The best of the collection is the trio of interconnected stories (the first three), which deal with the same set of characters—principally Howard Rockwood and his wife Sylvia—over a span of years. "A Court of Love" portrays Howard's arrival home from a mission to discover that his father has fallen in love and begun an adulterous relationship with a neighbor; "A House of Order," set several years later, describes Howard's struggles with intimacy and the weight of family tradition, including his father's disgrace and excommunication, against the emotional backdrop of a deeply disturbed marriage; "Dust," far and away the best selection in the book, leaps ahead fifteen to twenty years to show Howard in eremitic seclusion, living alone in the desert, still pondering the burdens and difficulties of heritage, relations, and life in modernity.

The setting for these stories is the dry, desert basin and range country around "Rockwood," a fictional town set vaguely west of Rush Valley, that was pioneered by Howard's violent, polygamous great-great grandfather. The harshness of the land around Rockwood is a metaphor for Howard's experience of life: given providential conditions and the right season, ditches gurgle with water and light breezes carry the sweet scent of alfalfa. But the alkali and sage desert remain the natural landscape, held at bay only by endless labor carried out under the looming shadow of "Joseph's Peak." Bennion's characters live in a "lonesome world" (92) in which human nature seems "bound to destructiveness" (61). Sexuality is an endless font of bitterness; the unbridgeables in human relations are absolute; idealism and romanticism (Belinda) are delusional traps. Even rudimentary awareness of these human realities engenders fear, and in

his desert ruminations Howard confesses to himself that "I can establish no relationship with any point or person secondary to myself in space which is as important as [that] fear" (10-11). Yet in the face of such deep pessimism, Bennion's characters continue to labor, holding the desert at bay; under the right conditions they remain capable of experiencing joy, of achieving wisdom, and of living, on some days at least, with full, intelligent humanity.

Not all the stories in the collection are of the same high caliber. The last two pieces, previously unpublished, are the weakest and the most lacking in psychological subtlety. In particular, "The Last Wonder of Nature," a surrealistic fancy that follows Linda Sillitoe and Michael Fillerup into Navajo country, is out of character with the better part of Bennion's writing. Among other faults, its dialogue is overloaded with wooden attempts at witty or sarcastic exchange that simply fall flat. Its silly dialogue is compounded by weak characterization, the narratively haphazard wandering of the author though his surrealistic plot, and the adventitious epiphanies on the last two pages.

"Jenny, Captured by the Mormons" is technically more satisfactory, but its narrative exploits the exoticism rather than the humanity of its characters and so fails to engage the reader in the way the Rockwood stories and equally sensitive "Breeding Leah" do. The final story in the collection, "The Interview," falls between these two camps, more interesting for its subject matter (homosexuality discovered mid-mission) than for its technique or characters.

Finally, a word of criticism for Signature Books on the graphics in the book. On the cover and in the titles at the head of every story, each word—sometimes each letter in each word—is printed in a different font and pitch. There is a mixed use of upper and lower case lettering, a distracting decorative reliance on variously thick and thicker dots and lines for margins around the titles, and a fortuitous admixture of boxed prepositions in negative relief that together create a jumbled, adolescent, cut-and-paste graphic impression totally out of harmony with the literary content of the book. What is the point of all this artistic busy-ness? I hope that the graphics in John Bennion's next book—and may it appear soon—will be less cartoonish, less festooned with pointless colors and confusion than is *Breeding Leah*. I hope, too, that Bennion will continue to write at BYU with the same intense honesty and insight that typified his work during the past years at the University of Houston. ☞

## NEWS

# CHURCH ISSUES STATEMENT ON "SYMPOSIA"

ON FRIDAY, 23 August 1991, two weeks after the Sunstone symposium in Salt Lake City, the LDS church released the accompanying "Statement" which expressed concern about some topics presented at unnamed "recent symposia."

Although the Statement didn't mention specific Sunstone sessions, most informed observers identified several sessions: "LDS Garments: A View From the Outside" by Colleen McDannell, the non-Mormon McMurrin professor of philosophy at the University of Utah; a widely-reported discussion of Church policies relating to the continuing problems of terrorism against LDS missionaries and chapels in South America by BYU assistant professor of anthropology David Knowlton; and John Sillito's paper on the excommunication of Apostle Richard Lyman, which also was reported

in the media.

In its reporting on the Statement, *Salt Lake Tribune* quoted a response by SUNSTONE's publisher and editor, Daniel Rector and Elbert Peck: "We are very sorry if some deliberations at our symposia gave offense or were interpreted as detracting from the mission of the Church. Our intent is to conduct thoughtful discussions of religious questions in a spirit of good will. We believe that, in the long run, an open and honest examination of the varied perspectives of the Latter-day Saints and their friends helps to build the kingdom of God."

The *Tribune* also quoted noted author and symposium participant Lowell Bennion: "We are asked to love the Lord with all our hearts and minds. It is a poor religion that can't stand the test of thinking."

Shortly after the Statement's

release, another *Tribune* story reported that David Knowlton had had an interview with his stake president about his symposium session on South American terrorists. Apparently, several parents of missionaries in South America contacted general authorities because they were concerned for their children's safety as a result of reading press reports of Knowlton's presentation. Knowlton felt that since the BYU board of trustees and the Church leaders were nearly identical, the interview was a form of academic intimidation. The story quoted from his letter to the general authorities.

In response to the Statement, letters appeared in both Salt Lake newspapers. Garold Kotter wrote to the *Deseret News* criticizing the *News's* journalism for simply running the Statement without providing context or seeking quotes from affected parties. "Although occasional remarks (not entire presentations) may have stretched the bounds of propriety," said Kotter about the Sunstone symposium, "I found the presenters well-intentioned and the presentations enlightening, thought provoking and

even, at times, inspiring in the testimony-building sense."

Robyn Knibbe's letter to the *News* said she moderated a symposium panel on divorce which was a "positive, uplifting and open discussion." She described the symposium as a "rewarding, testimony-building experience that nurtures and excites my intellect." "Because Sunstone is independent of the church, it operates without censorship. On rare occasions, presenters have been insensitive and have offended the church. I am sorry for those occasions, but what saddens me more is the attempt to divide the membership of the church rather than encircling all members to include the wonderful diversity in the LDS church."

Don S. Redd responded to Knibbe in a letter by saying that the Statement was only to "caution those who have gone out of bounds . . . not to silence them."

Then a story headlined "LDS Church Turns Up Heat in Feud With Intellectuals" by Associated Press reporter Vern Anderson appeared on general conference Saturday. "Consistently, from the beginning, the church leadership has always been uncomfortable

## STATEMENT

THE COUNCIL of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has issued the following statement to members of the Church.

Recent symposia sponsored and attended by some members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have included some presentations relating to the House of the Lord, the holy temples, that are offensive. We deplore the bad taste and insensitivity of these public discussions of things we hold sacred. We are especially saddened at the participation of our own members, especially those who hold Church or other positions that give them stature among

Latter-day Saints and who have allowed their stature to be used to promote such presentations.

We have a different concern about some of the other topics at these symposia. Some of the presentations by persons whom we believe to be faithful members of the Church have included matters that were seized upon and publicized in such a way as to injure the Church or its members or to jeopardize the effectiveness or safety of our missionaries. We appreciate the search for knowledge and the discussion of gospel subjects. However, we believe that Latter-day Saints who are committed to the mission of their Church and the well-being of their fellow members will strive to be sensi-

tive to those matters that are more appropriate for private conferring and correction than for public debate. Jesus taught that when a person has trespassed against us, we should "go and tell them his fault between thee and him alone," and if he will "neglect to hear" this private communication we should "tell it unto the church." (Matthew 18:15, 17). Modern revelation tells us that this last step "shall be done in a meeting, and that not before the world" (D&C 42:89). There are times when public discussion of sacred or personal matters is inappropriate.

Some of our faithful members

have doubtless participated in these symposia because they were invited to state or defend the Church's position on a particular topic. There are times when it is better to have the Church without representation than to have implications of Church participation used to promote a program that contains some (though admittedly not all) presentations that result in ridiculing sacred things or injuring The Church of Jesus Christ, detracting from its mission, or jeopardizing the well-being of its members.

THE COUNCIL OF THE FIRST PRESIDENCY AND  
THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE APOSTLES

with open forums that have been organized by the rank and file," Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn was quoted as saying. "In the 19th century, the leadership recognized the existence of a loyal opposition and the 20th does not."

The A.P. story reported Knowlton's interview with his stake president. It also reported that Christian Fannesbeck had written a letter to the First Presidency saying he was "puzzled" by the Statement. In response, Fannesbeck was called in by his stake president and relieved of his Church calling as a Blazer-B instructor. He said he was told the action was taken on instruction of high Church officials.

In addition, the story said Kim Clark was called in by his stake president for his *Tribune* letter and told that the president was undertaking an investigation that could result in disfellowshipment or excommunication.

Church leaders chose not to be interviewed for the story, but in a written statement LDS spokesperson Don LeFevre said dissent can be "conflict, discord, strife, objection, protest, rebellion, contradiction, or to differ, disagree or oppose. . . . Those members whose actions fit those definitions subject themselves to the possibility of church discipline, whether it be formal [a disciplinary counsel, formerly called Church court] or informal [private counsel and caution]."

In the story, SUNSTONE editor Elbert Peck said he viewed what goes on in the magazine and at the symposia as healthy and importantly independent—"they are the very things that go on in the foyer of every chapel, not necessarily what's said from the pulpit."

At the annual October general conference, several talks seemed to address Sunstone. Most explicitly, Apostle Boyd K. Packer said: "The natural man," Paul told us, 'receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they

are spiritually discerned.'

"Recently the Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles issued a statement alerting members of the Church to the dangers of participating in symposia which concentrate on doctrine and ordinances and measure them by the intellect alone.

"If doctrines and behavior are measured by intellect alone, the essential spiritual ingredient is missing and we will be misled. . . . There is safety in learning doctrines in gatherings which are sponsored by proper authority."

Apostle Marvin J. Ashton said, "Some of us may be inclined to study the word with the idea in mind that we must add much where the Lord has said little! Those who would 'add upon' could well be guided by the anchor question of, do my writings, comments, or observations build faith and strengthen testimonies? Oftentimes we can cause confusion and misdirection in our lives and in the lives of others if we promote the startling and unorthodox."

Speaking on testimony, Elder Charles Didier of the Seventy said, "Know by asking your Heavenly Father in the name of his Son Jesus Christ. Do not turn to public discussions and forums."

Clearly, the limits of independent discussion by, of, and for Mormons is an area whose boundaries are currently being refined.

## RESEARCH REQUEST

**JAMES STAPLES** is researching fundamentalist priesthood authority from President John Taylor. Correspondence with anyone holding such authority or with knowledge of one who does would be greatly appreciated. Mail to James Staples at 5 Marcia Way #67, Roseville, Ca. 95678.

## AWARDS

### JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION Awarded at 1991 annual meeting on 29 September 1991

Best Article

**LINDA SILLITOE**

"Off the Record: Telling the Rest of the Truth"  
SUNSTONE, December 1990

Best Book

**ROGER D. LAUNIUS**

*Father Figure: Joseph Smith III  
and the Creation of the Reorganized Church*  
Herald House

Special Citation

**CHAD FLAKE**

For his works on Mormon bibliography

### DAVID WOOLLEY AND BEATRICE CANNON EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD

THE ANNUAL \$10,000 Evans Biography Award was established to encourage the writing of biography in "Mormon Country"—the Intermountain West, Southern Canada, and Northern Mexico. Scholarly and professional biographies on persons playing a role in the history of Mormon Country are eligible for the next contest if printed or produced between January 1991 and March 1992. Entries are not limited to Mormon subjects. Contact: Evans Biography Award, Mountain West Center for Regional Studies, Utah State University, Logan, UT 84322-0735 (801/750-3630).

1990 Recipient

**WILLIAM DEBUYS AND ALEX HARRIS**

*River of Traps: A Village of Life*  
University of New Mexico Press

Judges' comments: "We were drawn to it because it is so evidently a work of art. The powerful and beautiful photographs match the beautiful writing. They combine to evoke a life in its entire cultural and natural setting. . . . Not a leading figure by any means, Jacobo Romero was representative of the extensive Hispanic culture in northern New Mexico. The book calls into being a place, a people, and a man."

1990 Runners-up

**S. GEORGE ELLSWORTH**

*The Journals of Addison Pratt*  
University of Utah Press

Judges' comments: "A grand achievement. . . . Ellsworth has not only chronicled the life in these sketches but interpreted it, showing how Pratt the faithful missionary in the South Pacific was never quite at home in the Mormon homeland of Utah."

**BRIGHAM MADSEN**

*Glory Hunter: A Biography of Patrick Edward Connor*  
University of Utah Press

Judges' comments: "A grim story of cruelty and conflict. . . . Madsen's extensive research illuminates the origins of oppositional politics in Utah of which Connor was the founder and preeminent leader for many years."

## SPEECHES & CONFERENCES

### PANEL DISCUSSES PRAYING TO MOTHER IN HEAVEN

ON 7 SEPTEMBER 1991, the Salt Lake chapter of the Mormon Women's Forum sponsored a meeting on "How Should We Worship God the Mother?" Panel moderator Lavina Fielding Anderson introduced the topic by reading excerpts from President Gordon B. Hinckley's address to the April 1991 regional representatives seminar where he instructed Saints not to pray to Mother in Heaven (see SUNSTONE 15:3). A few weeks after this meeting, President Hinckley gave the same counsel at the general women's meeting of the Church.

Carol Lynn Pearson, the first panelist and playwright/actor of *Mother Wove the Morning*, said that since a knowledge of God the Mother has been lost, all humankind suffers from a profound injury and are wounded children. "We will no longer be content to be without a Mother," she said. "The human family is crying out for Mother, inviting her to come home. . . . Having a wonderful father does not preclude the need for a mother."

Pearson said the most important work to do now is to reintegrate the feminine doctrine into the LDS religious experience. "The emergence of the feminine in a partnership between the sexes is a genie that will not be put back in. We will be more whole and holy, our vision of God will be more whole and holy, the equality of men and women will be more whole and holy" when this is done.

Rodney Turner, retired BYU religion professor and author of *Women and the Priesthood*, said that although the meeting's title presupposed that worshipping Mother is appropriate, there is no justification in the gospel setting for it. According to him, Heavenly Mother's "milieu is the realm of spirit and glory. Earth is not her immediate concern or responsibility." Motherhood is the ultimate sense of her calling and the premortal life is her personal concern. He said Mother worship has its roots in pagan sex and fertility rites and ritual prostitution. He said Moses spoke against it and that it reappeared in Catholic worship of Mary. If praying to Mother "is so important, why wasn't it revealed in the Restoration?" he asked.

He said that to reject the priesthood order is to reject the Father and to cut oneself off from Christ. Women are queens and priestesses but not gods. The Godhead, the "Presidency of Heaven," is a presidency of three male deities, similar to a stake presidency whose members each have wives who are responsible for domestic religious education but not ecclesiastical functions.

Turner said that to continue to pray to Mother after the prophet and the First Presidency have said not to is to "rationalize yourself to apostasy." "You can't get ahead of the prophet. . . . Satan will carefully lead you to hell, singing praises to our Mother in Heaven."

"These questions have ramifications far beyond women being comforted," he said. "It hurts the international Church and makes us look like a cult. The gospel is faith, repentance, and baptism, not this doctrinal esoterica."

He said that prayers to Mother for heightened spirituality were "desperate measures and unwise behavior." Agreeing with President Hinckley, Turner said there is no uncertainty in the scriptures about praying only to the Father in the name of the Son. "Is the female nature as unfathomable to God as to men?" he asked. "Do women have needs he cannot meet? Is any problem too difficult for him?"

"For Latter-day Saints to pray any other way is to pray in vain," he concluded.

Paul Toscano, co-author of *Strangers in Paradox*, spoke next and

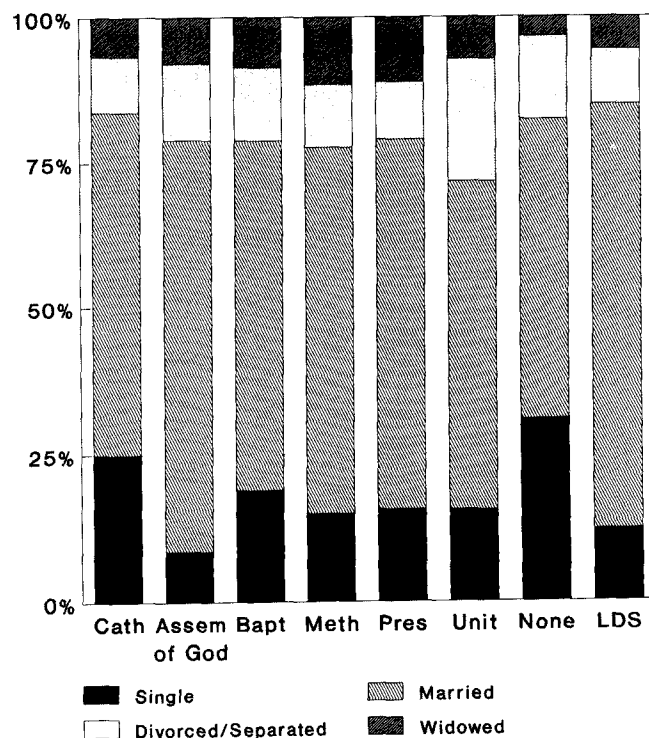
said that questions about Mother turn on her theological status. Citing a vision of Joseph Smith, recorded in Zebedee Coltrin's journal, where he saw the Father, Mother, and Christ, Toscano postulated that Mother was a member of the Godhead. He also cited Eliza Snow's poem/prayer "Invocation" (now titled "O, My Father") to both Father and Mother and the fact that Nephi's vision begins with the virgin Mary.

Toscano said the doctrine of Heavenly Mother empowers women, and "men are afraid of that." He said the scriptures do not say that men are to be providers and presiders and that women are to be nurturers. "If scriptures are silent, we cannot conclude the negative proposition," he said, citing latter-day examples of revealed doctrines on previous unmentioned points in scripture which the Church had misinterpreted. "The Restoration is not over," Toscano said, responding to Turner. "Prophets can be wrong."

## PECULIAR PEOPLE

### MARITAL STATUS BY RELIGIOUS DENOMINATION

AMONG TWENTY-SEVEN religious groups reported in the National Survey of Religious Identification, Mormons are reported as having the highest percentage of adults currently married. Corresponding to the high percentage married, divorced, separated, single, and widowed are comparatively infrequent among Mormons. Those with no religious preference are particularly likely to be single, while divorce or marital separation is more common among Unitarians. Overall there is substantial variation in marital status across major religious groups.



Source: National Survey of Religious Identification, Graduate School, CUNY, March, 1991

Toscano said equality of sexes is a message in the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, and that Section 132 of the Doctrine and Covenants says that when a man and a woman marry they become Gods of equal status. "The God revealed in the King Follett discourse is a male and female God. The worship of one is the worship of the other." Ultimate "priesthood is not on a man or a woman only but on both." Hence, Toscano concluded, it is not "wise to relegate Mother to obscurity or idolatry."

Concluding panelist Kathleen Woodbury, a science fiction author, said she was surprised to learn that the topic of praying to Mother had come up. "Are you implying he [the Father] can't be concerned with your problems?" she asked. "The idea that I can pray to Heav-

enly Father about *anything* is integral to my faith. I cannot think of another person." She noted that President Hinckley instructed Saints not to pray to Heavenly Mother but "he didn't say to forget about her." She said honoring and revering Mother without praying to her is the same thing we do with Christ. "Heavenly Father hasn't revealed much about her," she added. "I would like more information. It is a question we should be asking."

Woodbury said that praying to Father is an act of faith that he knows how to save all humans. "Heavenly Father is not like any male we know. Don't judge him by the men you know." "All he wants is for us to come back," she said, noting that he will not hold back any good thing from those who walk uprightly. "He will make it fair."

## SUNSTONE CALENDAR

**THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS** will hold its 1992 annual meeting at Westminster College in Salt Lake City on Saturday, **25 January 1992**. Contact: Bruce Jorgensen, English Department, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-3205).

**MORMON-L**, an electronic discussion group for Mormon studies, has been created on the BITNET network with the intention of providing a forum for serious academic discussion of topics relating to the LDS church, but it is open to all persons who want to engage in substantial discussion on such topics as history, literature, fine arts, theology, and Church life. The discussion will be minimally moderated to limit casual chatter, but not to suppress controversial topics. **MORMON-L** is not to be used for either pro- or anti-Mormon evangelism.

To join **MORMON-L**, you must have access to the BITNET computer communications network. For information regarding computer communications, contact the computer support center at your institution or a computer store. Most universities or large institutions are already linked to BITNET. Individuals may be able to send and receive **MORMON-L** postings through such services as CompuServe.

To subscribe, send the following message to **LISTSERV@BYUVM**: "Subscribe Mormon-L your name," leaving the subject header blank. Your name will then be added to the list.

To communicate directly with the list moderators without having your communication posted to the list, contact either of the two men below:

J. Michael Allen .....**HISJMA@BYUVM.BITNET**

William J. Hamblin .....**HISWJH@BYUVM.BITNET**

Mailed correspondence may be sent to the moderators at Department of History, 323 KMB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602.

**WASATCH REVIEW** is a new independent literary journal designed to explore the Mormon culture. *Wasatch Review* seeks short stories, poetry, and personal essays that honestly and creatively articulate the Mormon experience. Send manuscripts and SASE to: *Wasatch Review*, 635 North 100 West, Apt. F, Orem, UT 84057.

**ZARAHEMLA**, a forthcoming journal for poetry which deals implicitly with poems which are LDS in tone, theme, treatment, or content, is seeking submissions. Poems may be in any form, traditional or experimental, but individual poems should not exceed 60 lines in length. Three to seven poems typed may be submitted at one time, with SASE. *Zarahemla* will be published through Orson Scott Card's Hatrack River Publications. Pre-publication rate is \$14 for four issues. Contact: Michael R. Collings, 1089 Sheffield Place, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360-5353 (805/496-3032).

### SUNSTONE LECTURES AND SYMPOSIA

**1991 NEW TESTAMENT LECTURE SERIES** features a monthly lecture on the second Tuesday of each month. On 12 November **Stephen C. Walker** will be speaking on "Parables: Tales to Tilt the Soul." On 10 December **Eugene England's** is entitled "On Finding Christ the Merciful at Christmas." Lectures are held in the Social Work Auditorium at the University of Utah (the two-story building west of the Social and Behavioral Science tower).

**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).

**1992 SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM WEST** will be held on **6-7 March** at the Burbank Hilton. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Volunteers interested in helping organize the conference are needed. Contact: Steve Eccles, 1482 Winston Court, Upland, CA (714/982-4763).

**1992 WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM** will be held on **10-11 April** on the American University campus. Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted. Contact: Don and Lucinda Gustavson, 413 Clearview Ave, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

**1992 CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM** will be held sometime in **October 1992**. Contact: Becky Linford, 461 Elm Court, Naperville, IL, 60540-0348 (708/778-9551).

*Now in its third printing:*  
**For Those Who Wonder**  
by D. Jeff Burton  
Foreword by Lowell L. Bennion



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## ONE FOLD

### POOR GIVE MORE TO CHURCHES

PROPORTIONATELY, THE poor give more to their churches than do the wealthy, according to researcher Steven Hart, author of *Religious Giving: Patterns and Variations*. "The richest fifth of the population gives half as much, percentage-wise, as people in the lowest fifth of the population," Hart said.

From information collected by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago, Hart found the poorest fifth of church members gave, on average, 3.4 percent of their income, while the wealthiest gave 1.6 percent. The average amount of money given by the poorest members was about \$200 per year while the wealthiest gave a little more than \$1,000. By denomination, Mormons are at the top of the list, donating an average of 7.1 percent of their income; Unitarian-Universalists and Christian Scientists are at the bottom, giving less than 1 percent.

### ZONING RESTRICTIONS AFFECT MAINLINE CHURCHES

LEGAL AND zoning restrictions on the use of land for religious purposes may well be the biggest church-state issue of the 1990s, writes Lyle Schaller in *The Lutheran* magazine (17 July). Recent church-state cases have pitted religious organizations against their surrounding neighbors. In the middle of the century, Jewish congregations, Mormons, and the Jehovah's Witnesses often faced emotional opposition to the religious use of land. "Today the construction plans of Lutherans, Baptists, Roman Catholics, Methodists, Presbyterians, and other old-line religious bodies are being rejected or postponed by opponents who don't want the church in their neighborhood." Often planning commissions and city councils "pass the buck" by letting the courts decide the issue. Schaller notes that "an increasing number of municipalities" have required churches to have a "special use permit," while schools, golf courses, and other places of assembly in residential areas do not require such certification. The courts have "not provided consistent ruling" on whether such limits infringe on religious freedom. Often church land-use cases are decided on emotional grounds rather than on correct legal principles. (*Religion Watch*)

### SUBURBS CREATE NEW CATHOLIC STRUCTURES

CATHOLIC PARISHES are increasingly adopting new structures and strategies, often involving small group meetings, to meet the spiritual needs of members living in suburban areas burgeoning throughout the U.S., according to the Catholic newspaper *Our Sunday Visitor*. Because of the fast population growth in many suburban areas, some parishes can have upwards of 10,000 people and have been borrowing "concepts of small groups that meet regularly for Bible study, prayer, social ministry and other needs, concepts that were first popularized among the poor in Latin America [such as in the base Christian communities]." One large parish has divided into seventeen neighborhood groups each led by a parish coordinator. They emphasize welcoming newcomers "so that people feel connected." The article cites a recent Notre Dame Study of Catholic Parish Life, which showed that large suburban parishes "frequently exhibit signs of community which, paradoxically, are lacking in smaller urban or rural parishes." (*Religion Watch*)

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## MORMON MEDIA IMAGE

### CALIFORNIA MAGAZINE HIGHLIGHTS

#### LDS ETHNIC DIVERSITY

THE JULY issue of *California* magazine featured a two-page article entitled "Mission from Utah" which was about the new Mormon "world church." Author Joel Kotkin said that the California Saints are "creating a more cosmopolitan Mormonism, in sharp contrast to the reactionary, often-derisive, stereotypical 'white bread' image often held by the media and others." Kotkin outlined the growing diversity among the Saints and focused on how the impressive ethnic diversity in California's stakes is creating a microcosm of the entire Church where innovative programs are being developed.

#### NY TIMES FEATURES CHURCH

ON SUNDAY morning, 15 September 1991, Manhattan Saints were pleasantly surprised to pick up their *New York Times* and see Brigham Young and the Salt Lake Temple on the front page, illustrating a lengthy article entitled "Despite Growth, Mormons Find New Hurdles." *Times* religion editor and author of the article, Peter Steinfelds, noted that just as the LDS church had overcome its earlier negative reputation and finally fit into the American mainstream, its phenomenal world-wide growth is creating new challenges, including being stretched financially, bombings by Latin American terrorists, open debate and criticism by members, simplifying meeting schedules, the lessening of community, and adapting doctrines and Church organization. "This is a healthy exercise for us," Apostle Russell M. Nelson told the *Times*. "It makes us examine our own performance and assess our priorities."

The article was made available to other papers throughout the nation. The Church-owned *Deseret News* ran it the same morning as the *Times* did. However, with fourteen paragraphs deleted, including a brief history of the Church as well as unflattering sentences about the Church attempting to buy and hide embarrassing documents later discovered to be forged by Mark Hofmann, the *Arizona Republic's* estimate of Church revenue, a description of the Quorums of the Seventy as a non-policy setting supervisory group, and intellectual debate and discussion. In response to a letter criticizing its deletions, the *News* explained that it cut only historical background which its readers already knew.

#### UTAH CULTURE-SHOCKS ISLANDERS

THOUSANDS OF Pacific Islanders, trading their tropical paradise for a chance at the American dream in Utah, have found only disillusionment in the land of opportunity, notwithstanding that most are Mormon. According to an Associated Press story in the *Los Angeles Times*, state and religious leaders have taken few steps to ease the cultural passage for about 15,000 to 20,000 Tongans and close to 3,000 Samoans, a population that doubled during the 1980s. According to the article, the islanders confront numerous problems because they come from close-knit communities and are unprepared for the life of a minority in an almost all-white, individualistic society. Without the communal problem-solving of the islands, many parents are at a loss at child-rearing, and some teenagers join gangs such as the Tongan Crips or the Sons of Samoa. Many criticize the LDS church, saying it should do more to help them assimilate.

## UPDATE



### REPUBLIC OF RUSSIA LEGALIZES CHURCH

"RUSSIA RECOGNIZES LDS CHURCH" read the 25 June 1991 *Deseret News* headline. Although, in context of the opening of the Eastern Bloc, the news didn't have the end-time feel many thought it would when they contemplated the possibilities during the Cold War. The announcement was made by Alexander Dutskoï, vice president of the Soviet Union's Russian Republic at a banquet following the Mormon Tabernacle Choir's performance in Moscow's Bolshoi Theater. The recognition gives the Church a legal right to make requests to ministries of the Russian government.

### LDS CHURCH AND ACLU UNITE

THE LDS CHURCH has allied itself with the American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU) and 40 other groups to promote legislation that would prohibit the government from interfering with religious practices unless there is a "compelling interest."

The alliance resulted because of a recent Supreme Court decision which allowed Oregon to deny unemployment benefits to drug rehabilitation counselors who were fired for the sacramental use of peyote, a hallucinogenic drug, in Native American religious ceremonies.

The 42 concerned groups created the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion primarily to promote The Religious Freedom Restoration Act of 1991. The bill, being reintroduced by Sens. Orrin Hatch (R-UT) and Joseph Biden (D-DE), is designed to restore the longstanding test which requires the government to demonstrate a "compelling interest" in order to interfere with a religious practice. By this standard, no governmental authority is allowed to restrict a person's free exercise of religion unless (1) the authority can demonstrate the restriction is essential to further a compelling governmental interest and (2) the restriction is the least restrictive means of furthering that interest. "In the Oregon vs. Smith decision, the court swept aside such deference to religion as a luxury," said Mark Chopko, general counsel for the U.S. Catholic Conference.

While few religious groups support the use of hallucinogenic drugs, they fear for their own unique practices. Proponents of the bill say the Supreme Court's decision could jeopardize the use of ceremonial wine, the right of public school students to be excused for religious holidays, the practice of kosher slaughter, the right to wear religious garments such as yarmulkes or not to wear gym uniforms they believe are immodest.

### U OF U GETS FIRST NON-LDS PRESIDENT

ALTHOUGH THE University of Utah has the reputation of being the only real "gentile" university in Utah—with over half its faculty being non-Mormon, and some departments described as almost anti-Mormon—its president has always been a member of the religion of the university's founder, Brigham Young. Until now. This June the Utah State Board of Regents named Arthur K. Smith to replace Chase N. Peterson as president. Smith, 53, comes from the University of South Carolina where he served a year as interim president.

### Y LAW SCHOOL ATTRACTS MORE WOMEN

IN 1983 only 18 percent of BYU's J. Reuben Clark Law School students were women, a fact noted in its accreditation report to the American Bar Association: "The Mormon Church places a strong emphasis on education, but Mormon women are not oriented toward professional careers. Church teachings encourage women to stay home, raise families, etc." However, of this year's entering class, 38 percent are women. Nationally, the average female law school enrollment rose during the last decade from 34 percent to 42 percent. "Our applications among women students and minority students were up [last year] over 50 percent," the law school's associate dean of administration, Scott Cameron, told the *Daily Universe*. The increased enrollment is attributed by many to changes in LDS attitudes toward women and a change in law school recruitment philosophy.

### UTAH MORMONS FAVOR SCHOOL SEX EDUCATION

IN A poll conducted by Research Insight, Inc., for the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Utahns were asked the question "Should a woman have the right to choose if she has an abortion?", 46 percent of the LDS respondents answered yes. Eighty-two percent of the Utah LDS population agreed that sex education should be taught in public schools, but only 36 percent thought that "every public school student [should] be required to take sex education classes." In response to the question, "Should teachers be allowed to discuss the use of condoms as a means of birth control and/or safe sex?", 60 percent of Utah Mormons said yes. The poll prompted many letters to the editor challenging its accuracy, the wording of the questions, and the conclusions drawn on a controversial topic such as abortion from only one unnuanced question.

### SCOUTS ACCOMMODATE GAYS, WOMEN, & ATHEISTS

IN RESPONSE to legal challenges by a gay rights group and the United Way in California, the Boy Scouts of America created a youth program called "Learning for Life" that will allow homosexuals, girls, and atheists to join. The program will be separate from the traditional Scout program, but will be administered by local Scout councils that choose to offer it. The Provo, Salt Lake, and Ogden, Utah, Scout councils have each decided not to offer the new program "at this time." The LDS church has taken the program's announcement "under advisement." However, last June the *New York Times* featured a story on the Boy Scouts which discussed its connection with religious organizations, including the LDS church which is the largest single sponsor of Scout troops. In the story Elder Jack Goasling Jr., a Church liaison to BSA, speculated, "I am not the one who makes the decision, but we would withdraw from the Boy Scouts of America" if it included gays, girls, and atheists.



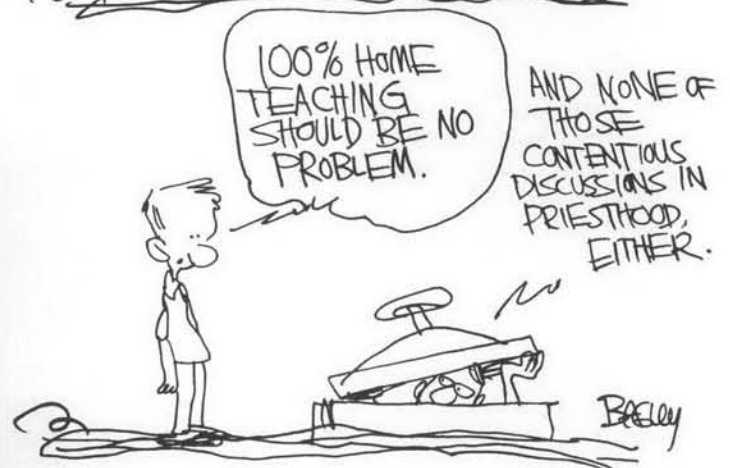


**PATRIOT MISSIVES**

THIS YEAR, Salt Lake's July 24 celebration of the Mormon pioneers entry into the valley featured a lengthy military contingent of armored personnel carriers, Bradley tanks, and tow missiles. As the parade of tanks and troops rolled down Main Street past the temple and around the Brigham Young statue (with his hand stretched out ironically reviewing the troops), it was hard not to consider the Mormon War and the occupation by Johnston's Army over a century before. The pioneer Mormons may have avoided conflict and sat out the Civil War, but today's Pioneer Stake float celebrated Utah patriotism with canon and missile. Most LDS ward and stake floats (whose themes are assigned by the Church) acclaimed LDS themes which had broad application, such as home evening or the freedom to worship.



THE LIGHTER SIDE OF  
**THE END OF THE WORLD**  
ACCORDING TO  
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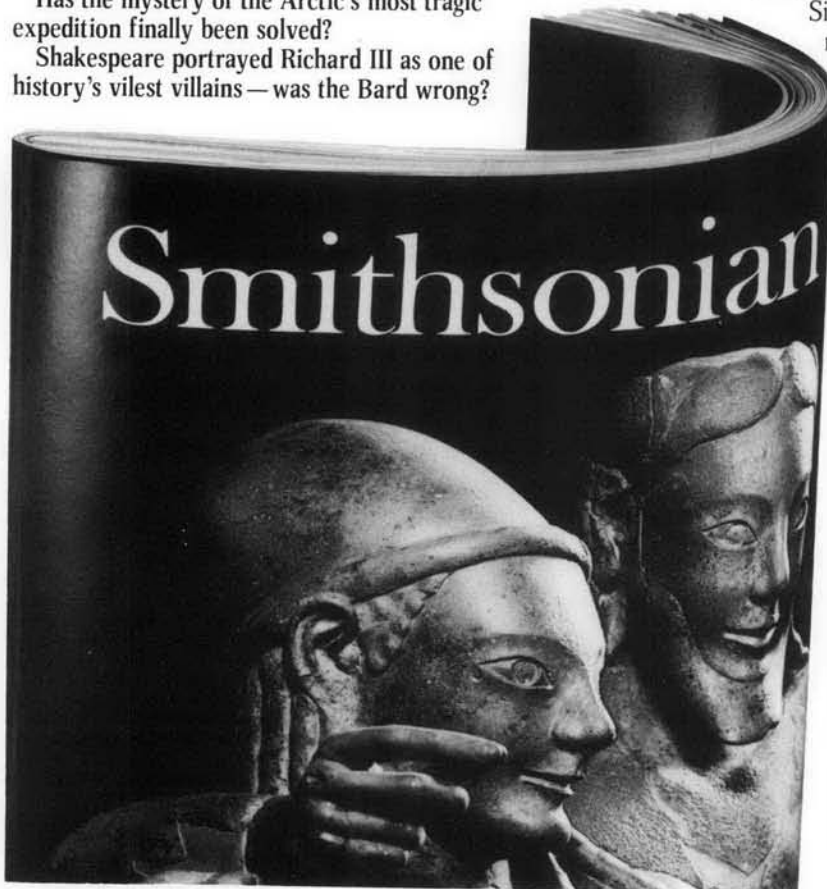
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