

SUNSTONE

MORMON MATERIALISM

REFLECTIONS

ON

MORMON MATERIALISM

BY

JOHN DURHAM PETERS

WHEN YOUR KIDS DON'T

WANT

TO BE A MORMON ANYMORE

BY

CAROL LYNN PEARSON



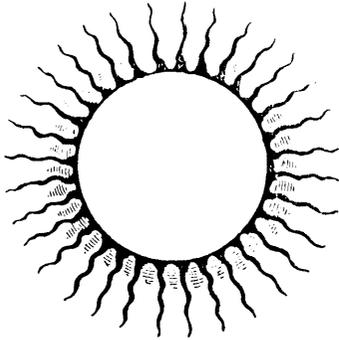
SUNSTONE

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READERS' FORUM

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THE ROLLING STONE

WHAT GIVES? At my study group some one noted that a few issues ago without fanfare SUNSTONE switched the *O* in the masthead on the cover from leaning to the left to leaning to the right (SUNSTONE 15:6). We got out old issues for several years and analyzed the changing content of the magazine, and some concluded that SUNSTONE has pulled back from the hard-hitting, truth-telling, controversial articles for which it is known. Is this subtle, unannounced, unexplained, and apparently permanent change on all future covers an intentional symbolic message of a new conservative slant in editorial philosophy to appease the right-leaning critics of SUNSTONE? Say it isn't so!

JEANNETTE TWITCHELL
Salt Lake City

Editor's reply:

We value our careful readers, but *O* so many conservatives and liberals read the worst possible motives into innocent gestures. Several years ago when Daniel Rector and Elbert Peck succeeded Peggy Fletcher Stack as publisher and editor, then SUNSTONE art director Connie Disney and I decided to redesign the look of the magazine. We amusedly observed how the *A* in *Atlantic* magazine's masthead playfully leaned left, right, and settled straight up. We decided to be a tad playful ourselves and created our new masthead with the *O* slightly tilted; Connie slanted it left because that was graphically easier to do and looked better. A year ago, when SUNSTONE hired Linda Jean Stephen-

son as its publisher, we decided to again mark the leadership change in the masthead by quietly switching the *O*'s slant. The only rigorous debate in the office was not about editorial content but how inclined the slant should be (I thought it was a tad too much, but was outvoted). With Linda Jean's departure in December 1992, we'll probably rearrange the *O* once again. Since the first issue in 1975, SUNSTONE has had seven mastheads, each reflecting the graphic styles of the time rather than editorial philosophy. Whatever the typeface and design, we will continue to celebrate the wide spectrum of Mormon experience, scholarship, issues, and art that I hope at times will comfort and irk readers who lean to the right and the left.

AN APOLOGY

IN CONNECTION WITH your report of events and publicity last August concerning the Strengthening Church Members Committee ("Church Defends Keeping Files on Members," SUNSTONE 16:2), I offer an apology and an invitation.

I am sorry that I spoke out so rashly and angrily—and before I learned more about the Committee or spoke privately to its members about my concerns. My main objection to the Committee (which I wrongly understood to be an ad hoc group of Church employees) was that as a result of its reports people were being punished or at least intimidated without being confronted directly and privately by the offended parties—a process that both our democratic and our Mormon Christian ideals call for (see D&C 42:88 and Matthew 18:15).

Yet in my accusations I violated those same ideals—with what I recognize now was a desire for revenge on those whom I thought had hurt people I know. I have apologized privately and now do so publicly: I regret what I said and the spirit in which I said it.

I also invite all of us to find ways to deal with our differences of opinion, even our offenses, directly and privately—in such a way that both offended and offender can express fully their concerns and hear full explanations and, when necessary, apologize or repent. I invite my colleagues at BYU—and all in the Mormon community as a whole—to refrain from criticizing our leaders and each other in ways that violate that ideal.

I also invite all who are involved in or affected by the actions of the Strengthening

Church Members Committee, including local leaders, to work toward the ideal of open, patient, and direct exchange. I suggest we all report in detail to Committee Members Elders James E. Faust and Russell M. Nelson what is happening to us and those in our care as a result of their Committee's actions, so they can assess those results.

EUGENE ENGLAND
Provo, UT

THE TRUE CHURCH

SO NOW I'M aware of a committee of grown men who, with better things to do, are nonetheless wasting time "monitoring" for the existence of attitudes and activities threatening the health of the institution.

I agree with Eugene England as reported in your news story, whose writings were influential in easing much of the anger and frustration I've come to feel in the past few years, that a committee such as the SCMC will inevitably do more harm than good.

The use of section 123 of the Doctrine and Covenants as justification for the "need" and activities of the committee makes the Church guilty of the same sort of thinking that has been part and parcel of anti-LDS rhetoric for years: finding something

"scriptural" with which to don a cloak of integrity to justify faulty reasoning.

The larger issue is, of course, the attitude seemingly prevalent among the general leadership of the Church that the membership must be censored and discouraged from publicly expressing any attitude contrary to the Church. According to *U.S. News & World Report*, the LDS church is at the point of becoming a major world religion with a projected future membership of hundreds of millions. If that is so, then the censorship and suppression are not only a sad commentary on real attitudes of the top hierarchy but probably unnecessary.

Does claiming to be the "One True and Living Church on the Face of the Earth" bring with it a responsibility to suppress any activity within the Church that is contrary to that proposition? If any institution holds status as the official instrument of deity, that institution could justifiably rely on divine sanction in surviving on the earth without having to worry about what is said or done by anybody, not just opponents. I would like an honest and forthright explanation from the leadership on why suppression, albeit gentle, loving, and spiritual, is good for the souls of the membership.

What is there about God's plan that en-

courages the notion that in the world are many "weak" and "vulnerable" testimonies that might be forever damaged by the questioning or dissent from other members? What sort of God would permit such a thing to occur? Although I don't believe that members who consider themselves "strong" and "established" in the Church have any mandate to speak their minds without responsibility for what they say, I certainly question the notion that one member has the persuasive power to endanger *eternally* the spirit of another. I am accountable for what I say and do, and if another accepts what I say without ever questioning and testing my words, then that person is ultimately accountable. Otherwise, the interweaving of guilt and responsibility for all our social intercourse over our lifetimes creates the vision of a judgment day so complicated that it is absurd.

A "true church" that is threatened by the dissent of some of its members perhaps ought to rethink the implications of its self-perceptions—and evince a greater trust in the strength of the testimonies of those who dissent because it takes a strong testimony to remain in the Church when doubts arise.

ART RUGER
Vancouver, WA





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NEW MORMON HYSTERIA

NEAL W. KRAMER'S letter (SUNSTONE 16:2) demonstrates how the discussion of New Mormon History by its critics has been "rancorous, paranoid, and deliberately slanderous" (his words). Kramer claims that the New Mormon Historians regard "the weakness of Traditional Mormon History is its unwillingness to adopt these [modern historical] standards and to wistfully rely on talk about the supernatural. Instead of relying on physical evidence and the rules of reason, the Traditionalists inject metaphysics into their work." He claims that "New Mormon Historian counterparts" oppose "Mormon history that openly supports, or at least accepts as legitimate, traditional claims about God's role in the restoration and building of the kingdom."

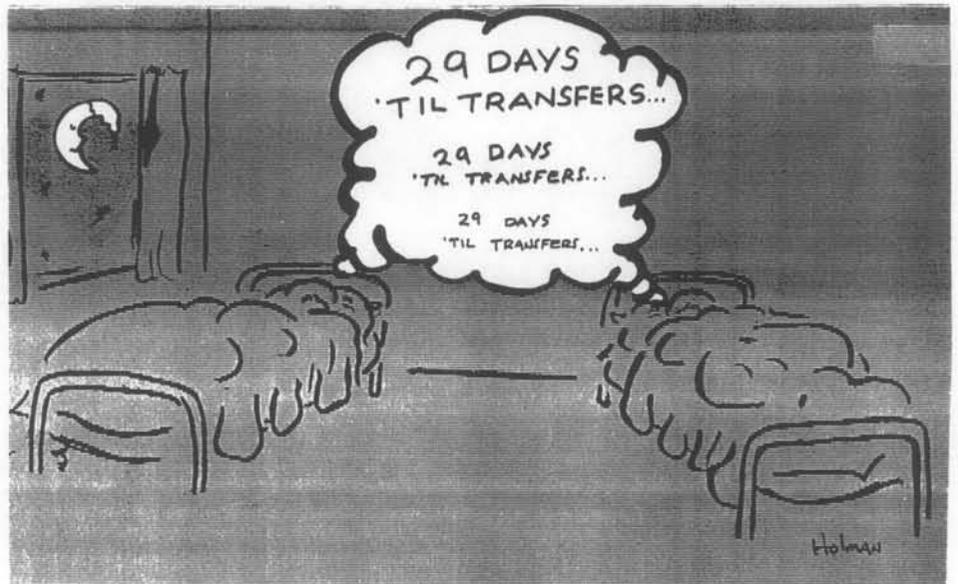
This is the familiar drum-beat and false dichotomy of Louis Midgley, David E. Bohn, Neal W. Kramer, and others that New Mormon Historians reject the revelatory, visionary, and metaphysical in the New History's reconstruction of the Mormon past. The other side of their false dichotomy is that New Mormon Historians criticize Traditional Historians for making affirmations of faith and for including supernatural events and explanations in traditional history of Mormonism. Traditional Historians are a diverse bunch, as are New Mormon Historians. However, the Midgley-Bohn-Kramer dichotomy falsely stigmatizes most of the New Mormon Historians I know.

To name prominent examples within the New Mormon History, matter-of-fact references to Joseph Smith's vision of God and Jesus, the appearance of Moroni and other angels, the gold plates, or other metaphysical

events are in revisionist histories by Lavina Fielding Anderson, Leonard J. Arrington, James B. Allen, Daniel W. Bachman, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Davis Bitton, Richard L. Bushman, Jill Mulvay Derr, Reed C. Durham, Andrew F. Ehat, Ronald K. Esplin, Kenneth W. Godfrey, William G. Hartley, Donna Hill, Marvin S. Hill, Richard L. Jensen, Dean C. Jessee, Stanley B. Kimball, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Dean L. May, Linda King Newell, Max H. Parkin, Charles S. Peterson, Grant Underwood, Ronald W. Walker, and David J. Whittaker.

Even my revisionist examination of the esoteric and occult dimensions in Mormonism's origins affirmed the reality of the metaphysical events in Joseph Smith's experience. However, because I explored those little-known circumstances surrounding foundational events of early Mormonism, Kramer's fellow travelers dismiss as irrelevant my affirmation of the reality of Joseph Smith's visions and the Book of Mormon's historicity. They class me among their *bete noir* revisionists.

In like manner, Midgley-Bohn-Kramer class Richard L. Bushman as a "good guy" Traditional Mormon Historian, even though his *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* concluded that the Prophet organized the Church in April 1830 before the visit of Peter, James, and John. Thus, Bushman disputes the 1829 dating of this priesthood restoration by every traditional Mormon account from B. H. Roberts to Joseph Fielding Smith to the current *Church Almanac*. Bushman's analysis means that the divinely restored LDS church existed for a time without the Melchizedek priesthood and without the authority of the apostleship. If Bushman's book is not a revisionist history, then I don't know what could be. However, I also know



Richard Bushman is a devout believer whose faith permeates his every publication about Mormon history.

In my experience, the New Mormon Historians I've listed do not criticize Traditional Mormon History for accepting "as legitimate, [the] traditional claims about God's role in the restoration and building of the kingdom." Instead, we regard as inadequate and distorted the following examples of Traditional Mormon History.

Official LDS history presents the Missouri persecutions of 1838 as the acts of irrational anti-Christians. Traditional Mormon Historians usually fail to note that Mormon bloc-voting overpowered the non-Mormons politically, and that Joseph Smith published Sidney Rigdon's sermon that dared mobs to attack the Mormon community. The pamphlet even threatened Missourians with "a war of extermination . . . for we will carry the seat of war to their own houses, and their own families. . . ." Governor Boggs was not first to use the word "extermination."

New Mormon Historians also criticize: biographies of Brigham Young that fail to even mention that he had plural wives; Church histories that assert that Apostles John W. Taylor and Matthias F. Cowley were solely responsible for fourteen years of new plural marriages after the Manifesto, when the First Presidency actually authorized the new marriages; discussions of Brigham Young's "so-called Adam-God doctrine" that claim he gave only one talk that was misunderstood, when in fact he repeatedly preached this controversial doctrine for the last twenty-five years of his life.

In sum, New Mormon Historians have criticized instances where Traditional Mormon History sanitizes the Mormon past of human infallibility, ignores topics obviously relevant to the subject of discussion, portrays events contrary to the available evidence, fails to acknowledge even the existence of "controversial" evidence about the subject under discussion, or posits that "the hand of God" is the only needful explanation for any event in the Mormon experience. Contrary to the implications of Midgley-Bohn-Kramer-and-company, New Mormon Historians do not argue with the bulk of Traditional Mormon History, which affirms divine events, faith, sacrifices, and heroism that New Mormon Historians also affirm.

I have always opposed those who present the Mormon past from a perspective that excludes the possibility that there is objective reality to divine revelation, visions, and angelic manifestations. However, exclusion of metaphysical realities is not what character-

izes the massive New Mormon History; there has been a consistent fraud on the part of Midgley, Bohn, Kramer, and others who assert or imply that the New Mormon History excludes the divine.

D. MICHAEL QUINN
Salt Lake City

CODE WORDS

IN YOUR SUNSPOT on "Mormon-Correct Language" (SUNSTONE 16:2), you could have noted other LDS terms that have been changed. For example, *premortal life* replaced the illogical *pre-existence* (how can there be something before existence?). And you neglected the most contemporary and obvious new terms: SUNSTONE and its symposiums (to use Elbert Peck's modern plural form) are never mentioned by name by Church leaders—they always use the code-words *alternate voices* and *symposia* (the Latin plural used in the [in]famous Statement [SUNSTONE 15:4], perhaps showing Elder Dallin Oaks's legal hand in its drafting). Someone needs to supplement Scott Card's *Saintspeak* with a compilation of recently coined terms, many of which are really euphemisms to

avoid acknowledging the unpleasant rather than updated phrases that better convey current correct thinking.

SAMUEL BARNARD
San Jose, CA

ANOTHER LOOK

ROBERT A. REES is undeniably one of the most articulate and compassionate of the Church's apologists. His "Forgiving the Church and Loving the Saints: Spiritual Evolution and the Kingdom of God" (SUNSTONE 16:1) was a cooling zephyr across the torrid landscape Joseph F. Wyson and his ilk stake out in their zeal to purge SUNSTONE of all heterodoxy (see letters "Children of Light," SUNSTONE 15:3, and "A Narrow Gate," SUNSTONE 16:1). Nevertheless, an apologist Rees remains, and apologia, despite its soothing timbre, is sometimes more disquieting than diatribe. While it is easy to take issue with the likes of Wyson, the Mormon apologists invite a more thoughtful response. I offer the following observations.

Rees begins by acknowledging diversity and complexity and by confessing his own struggles—reassuring words to SUNSTONE



readers yearning for something, anything, beyond the simplistic formulas offered up from the pulpit and the Church's captive press. But he quickly (and I think unwittingly) slips into the facile moralism he purports to eschew. For example, after observing that we sometimes judge others "for not abiding by our personal view of what the Church should be," Rees proceeds to do precisely that—albeit in sugar-coated terms. Adopting a dubious, arbitrary moral hierarchy, Rees seems to say that spiritual progress involves nothing more than increasing fealty tolerance, but he finds it hard to conceal his judgment of those (such as his long-time friend and the member of his former congregation) who choose not to stick with the Church's program. We are left with the impression that they are now utterly without hope, drifting aimlessly through lives of suffering toward eternal misery. But, for all we know, they could be perfectly happy and finally at peace with themselves and their god. Rees's barely concealed judgment reinforces the notion (which Wyson at least declares unequivocally) that only the straight and narrow path leads to such happiness and peace, here or hereafter—a judgment directly contrary to the moral of the stories and anecdotes Rees cites. When Rees finally gets around to the point that spiritual evolution ultimately consists of growing in one's desire and ability to love, he first trivializes it by citing pop psychology, and then reduces it once again to a matter of simple obedience to the Church and the commandments. Rees thus remains squarely within the comfortable confines of the "limited point of view" he says we should strive to avoid.

I agree with Rees that many faithful, loving, striving Latter-day Saints are frustrated and often in great pain. Could it be, however, that this is not merely because some individuals in the Church's patriarchal hierarchy appear racist or sexist or homophobic or

otherwise intolerant and unloving? Could it be that the institution itself, in its doctrines, dogmas, organizations, and practices, insidiously reinforces racism, sexism, homophobia, and other attitudes contrary to all but the most narrow interpretation of the Judeo-Christian tradition? Rees seems afraid to ask, let alone answer, such questions.

Rees also speaks of those "who have been physically, psychologically, and sexually abused and who because of this often have an impaired sense of moral reasoning." Could it be (as Rees hints, but again seems afraid to say) that the Church itself is in many cases the perpetrator and perpetuator of such abuse and impairment? Mental health professionals and others (including compassionate LDS bishops) who must try to unsow the seeds of self-loathing can attest to the pernicious ways the Church can become rooted in the conscience. The Mormon apologists, unable or unwilling to analyze the root causes of spiritual devastation, prefer to view the Church as part of the solution rather than part of the problem. It is time to have another look.

I agree with Rees that love—not fear, not the need to please, not obedience—drives spiritual evolution. In my favorite metaphor, love is a stone dropped in a vast, calm ocean, a ripple in the individual heart and soul that radiates outward in ever-widening concentric circles to embrace lovers, family, friends, neighbors, strangers, and eventually would-be enemies, to fill the limitless expanse. Unfortunately, by twisting self-abnegation into self-loathing, by creating a bizarre hierarchy of values that exalts pharisaical form over substance, by perpetuating the myth of an infallible gerontocracy, by creating and then attacking perceived enemies under the cloak of committees to strengthen the Saints, by ultimately becoming an end in itself rather than a means to an end, and in a thousand other ways large and small, the Church often

impedes rather than conduces to such love.

STEPHEN C. CLARK
New York City

FAMILY VALUES

I AM AMAZED that the fictional story "Prodigy" (SUNSTONE 16:2) left me so cold, nauseated, and sick at heart. I am even more amazed to think that I am protesting, in writing no less, the spiritual emptiness of a fictional character; perhaps it too has the "Murphy Brown" dimensions.

At any rate, the awfulness of its spiritual implications are akin to the unexpected appearance of a serpent or an unbidden glance of pornographic material. Electrifying, yes, but it leaves a sickening, unclean feeling in its aftermath.

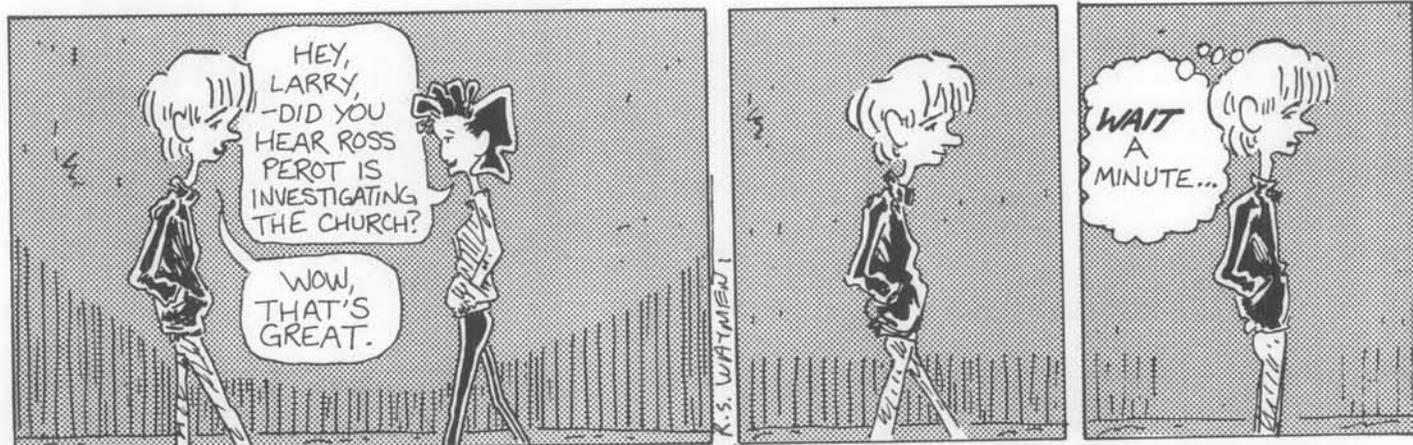
I am protesting only one character in the story. The antics of a foolish and even a very wicked young girl can be understood and pardoned. Obviously she has never read the Book of Mormon. But the shallow uncertainty of a father who had just risen from a prayerful encounter with the book itself is another matter. I defy any knowledgeable reader who has had a more-than-casual bash with the Book of Mormon and, even more especially, a prayerful experience to thereafter successfully refute the authenticity and divinity of the book.

MAX RAMMELL
Rexburg, ID

THE BOOK OF MALAY

FOR OVER a century we have searched the Americas for the Book of Mormon peoples. We have found little (if any) evidence. Perhaps it is time to look somewhere else.

But where? Mormon's general description of the land suggests that they lived in a place narrow from east to west and long from north to south. From south to north the lands were



Nephi, Zarahemla, Bountiful, and Desolation. Each of these extended from the sea on the east to the sea on the west. The Lamanites lived in the southern most Land of Nephi and were unable to expand their territory. In addition, the entire country was nearly surrounded by water except for a narrow neck of land on the border of Bountiful and Desolation that led into the north country. This description suggests that the Land of Nephi was at the southern end of a north-south trending peninsula. The peninsula was sufficiently narrow at the border of Bountiful and Desolation for a person to walk from the east to the west in a day and a half (see Alma 22:27-34). In addition, it was narrow enough at the border of Nephi and Zarahemla for General Moroni to build a line of defensive outposts from the east sea to the west sea (see Alma 50:7-13).

A few crude measurements suggest the general size of the peninsula. For example, Alma and his community walked from the Land of Nephi to the Land of Zarahemla in thirteen days (Mosiah 24:20-25). If they covered fifteen miles a day, their journey would have been about 200 miles. Yet, the entire extent of the peninsula from the Land of Nephi on the south to Desolation on the north was not great enough to preclude an expedition from going and returning in a reasonable time (Mosiah 8:7-11).

Where should we look for a north-south trending peninsula (connected at the north) several tens of miles wide and several hundred miles long? Florida is a possibility, so is Baja and Kamchatka. However, the most compelling is the place the ancients called the Golden Khersonese (Golden Peninsula)—the Malay Peninsula. Consider the following:

1. When Lehi sailed east from the coast of Southern Arabia across the Indian Ocean, his first landfall would have been the Malay Peninsula, a journey of over 3000 miles, a few hundred miles more than that of Columbus or the Mayflower.

2. The peninsula is of a size commensurate with the few distances given in the book, and water completely surrounds it except for a narrow twenty-four-mile wide neck of land at the Isthmus of Kra.

3. There were large bodies of water in the Land of Bountiful (see Alma 50:29). There are still large bodies of water today—Thale Luang and Thale Sap Saugkhla.

4. The Kalantan river system runs north from the central peninsular highlands and empties into the eastern sea. Anciently they called it Sidon.

5. The Jaredites lived in the Land of Desolation, north of the narrow passage. The Nephites held them in awe because they had tamed the elephant (Ether 9:19). To this day the countries to the north of Kra—Burma and Thailand—use the elephant in their national crests.

6. Mormon refers to the south as up and north as down (the Lamanite attacks always came down from the south). This had nothing to do with the elevation of the land, but with the orientation of their maps. The Nephites drew their maps with the south at the top, the same way other ancient Asian cultures drew their maps.

7. The Lamanites had two favorite attack routes—one down the eastern sea shore and the other down the Sidon River valley into the heart of Nephite territory. Why not down the western sea shore? The east coast of the peninsula is smooth and easily traveled, but the west coast is broken with many inlets.

8. Hagath built his ships at the border of Bountiful and Desolation and launched them into the western sea (see Alma 63:4-6). Why west? At the Isthmus of Kra is an estuary about a mile wide, and ten miles long that leads into the west sea, a perfect place for Hagath to build and launch his ships.

9. Archaeologists identify two waves of immigration into the peninsula—the Proto-Malays about 2500 B.C. and the Deutero-Malays about 3000 B.C. If the Deutero-Malays can be associated with the Mulekite-Nephite-Lamanite peoples, then the Polynesians are the true Lamanites of today.

10. Living in the Golden Khersonese the Nephites were not isolated from the Old World, as we generally assume. Consider:

A. Mormon tells us that in the first century B.C. the Nephites were building synagogues after the manner of the Jews (see Alma 16:13). The Jewish synagogue did not arise until after their return from exile—long after Lehi had left Jerusalem. How did the Nephites know how the Jews built synagogues? Being widely traveled and greatly dispersed, the Jews were living among them. The Nephites saw how synagogues were built.

B. That Jesus' teachings in 3 Nephi so closely parallels those in Matthew has led to criticism of the Book of Mormon. I suggest a copy of Matthew's work came into Mormon's hands, who, in turn, used it.

C. Lastly, I suggest that the Magi were Nephites. The Nephites knew what the star meant; they knew where to find the new King; and it would have taken them about one year to make the journey.

What does all this mean? If people are interested in finding the ruins of old Zarahemla, they might try looking along the west bank of the Kalantan somewhere in the vicinity of the present village of Daborg.

MAYLIN DITTMORE
Brentwood, CA

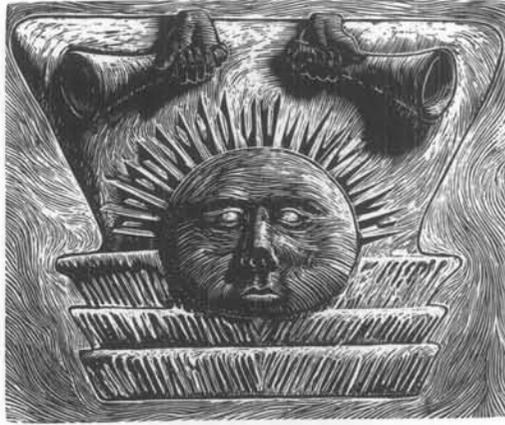
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"We've come such a long way! Now we can pray in sacrament meetings, speak in general conference, and go home teaching with our husbands."

FROM THE EDITOR AND PUBLISHER

A CORNUCOPIA OF THINGS



By Elbert Eugene Peck

RECENTLY I READ *U.S. Catholic*, the *Ensign* for American Catholics. That issue featured: "Will the Real Catholic Church Stand Up?"; "Does the Church Mishandle its Cultural Treasures?"; "The New Catechism: Will It Play in Baltimore?"; "Just Do It: How to Jump Start Your Prayer Life"; and "Jesus Saves. But How?" I considered how our Church magazines could benefit from featuring similar self-critical articles and how *SUNSTONE* would benefit from more how-to religious articles. Similarly, after reading the Christian peace and social justice magazines *Salt* and *Sojourners*, I feel we need to champion and explore applied Christianity as much as we do history and theology.

I have been thinking a lot about *SUNSTONE*, its readers and authors, its potentials and shortcomings, its roles and contributions, its histories and goals, and, most recently, its operations and finances. Every category is plural—a wide spectrum of needs, expectations, and standards that compete and frequently conflict with each other. The balance that is eventually struck rarely totally pleases anyone, fortunately.

Now, since Linda Jean Stephenson stepped down as *SUNSTONE* publisher in December 1992, after serving for a year, and the board of trustees appointed me editor and publisher, my thoughts have not only been about contents and readers but also about budgets and promotions: How to write an effective and educational renewal letter. How to solicit donations without succumbing to flattery. And how to cheaply print an inside full-color, lavishly illustrated magazine on

post-consumer recycled, archival quality, acid-free, coated paper. Well, one's reach must exceed one's grasp! Like my expanded job, this editorial reports and explores both the mundane means and sublime ends of *SUNSTONE*, and provides inside information you may never have wanted.

On our front office wall all the *SUNSTONE* covers are hung in chronological order, inviting one to interpret its history. I frequently use them to conduct a visitor on a thumbnail history tour of *SUNSTONE*. New staff members quickly learn the pivotal junctures: volumes two and three, where the philosophy and design of the magazine changed three times in three consecutive issues; volume nine, the dark days, when we put out only two issues; volume seven when the *Sunstone Review* split off with the book reviews and news, which were replaced with columns; volume ten when all were remarried into one magazine with a larger scope. *Sunstone* is a living, growing, adapting organization.

A decade ago, when I worked as managing editor of the *Review*, for one staff meeting each person drew on the same large piece of butcher paper their interpretation of *Sunstone*. When we were done, there was a vivid collage of abstract and representational magic-marker drawings that, after discussion, revealed as many views of our organization as there were employees—visionary, cynical, expansive, myopic, frustrated, social, theological, committed, disinterested, fragile, financial, familial, and bureaucratic. I was startled at how people who day-by-day occupied that same drab but mysterious old

office could see the organization, its services, workings, and clients, so divergently. Now I celebrate that diversity and enjoy learning from others "What *SUNSTONE* Means to People Like Me," as one long-ago article put it.

Sometimes, however, a subscriber's quirky expectations elicit chuckles. Such as the perennial telephone request to be connected to the "subscription department," as if we were *Time* magazine with a room of "specialists" like Judy on late-night TV, each with a high-tech headset. Conversely, visitors are sometimes surprised by our suite of rented offices with a *paid* staff. What were they expecting, Eugene England's basement staffed only by idealistic student volunteers? *SUNSTONE* serves two kinds of readers: For some it is a cause to champion; for others it is but another magazine purchased for information and entertainment, like *U.S. News* or *TV Guide*. I value both kinds.

For the record, suite 206 comprises nine rooms—five offices, plus conference, mail, symposium tape, and receptionist rooms. We're in the Carpenter Building, which is a renovated old industrial building that now houses architects, graphic designers, computer companies, the famous Benchmark Books, and Fashion Scents, a door-to-door discount perfume sales company that employs high school-age students who unexplainedly and fruitlessly search for room 350 on our second floor. Each day its owners hype up their sales staff with a series of loud cheers and gimmicks that would make the most brazen missionary zone leader blush and that make us feel mainstream.

Technically, we're not on the wrong side of Salt Lake's tracks, we're between them—just across the street from the Rio Grande railroad depot that now houses the Utah State Historical Society and the Amtrak station, whose late-night departures keep the scary street filled with taxis and patrol cars.

Mingling with business clients and travelers are the people Jesus loved, the homeless and destitute. The rescue shelter and the Salvation Army, both on our street, house and feed them, and Pioneer Park on the next block east, site of the original Mormon settlement, is their daytime address. Confronting them daily continually calls me to love without condescension and to treat all with indiscriminating dignity and regard.

Early one summer morning while walking to work, I silently nodded to a homeless man as we passed in the alley on the north side of our building. After a couple of yards he turned and yelled at me, "Well, I can be offended, too!" I contemplated that rebuke all day. I wasn't the one who apparently had

told him that he, or his grooming, was offensive. I nevertheless felt chastised. How long had that put-down haunted him in a conversation that cycled in his mind? How many times had he come to that lonely conclusion of his own humanity that exploded like a volcano at me, a symbol of the uncarving society? Yes, I did collude in the processes that alienated him from the rest of us. I was guilty, but I also felt trapped like him. That passage from Isaiah that we sing in Handel's *Messiah* now had a second meaning for me: "He hid not his face from shame and spitting" (see Isaiah 50:6) meant not only that without reproach did Jesus accept the hate and spit of his persecutors, but also that he did not avert his gaze and attention from those whose lives are called shameful. He confronted the poor, the leper, the whore, the heretic, face to face in an egalitarian conversation of acceptance and esteem.

What does this have to do with the operations of SUNSTONE? Besides my desire for more articles on doing justice, it illustrates our main perquisite: to legitimately ponder such religious things *at work* with a delightful group of like-hearted friends. Such deliberations color our responses to Mormon issues and cause us to regularly reevaluate what SUNSTONE is and is about.

"What is the difference between SUNSTONE and *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*?" is perhaps our most-asked question (next is "Do you have a testimony?"). The primary and defining difference is that *Dialogue* is an academic journal and SUNSTONE is an intellectual magazine.

Academic journals, often quarterlies, are usually edited by professors who are given time by their university to do the task for a certain period. Article submissions are "refereed"—critiqued—by a board of qualified editors to ensure that they add new knowledge to the field, meet that discipline's scholarly standards, and thoroughly cover and document the topic. Very important, academic journals do not pay for manuscripts—publishing is part of the academic's university job. This is a tradition both SUNSTONE and *Dialogue* honor; our authors write out of passionate interest and service.

With important differences, *Dialogue* was organized and is run on the academic model. It is a refereed, quarterly journal of the interdisciplinary Mormon studies—history, theology, sociology, arts, humanities, science, etc. Its editors have five-year paid terms, which they fulfill while otherwise employed. It also has a small, paid staff that supplements its volunteer editorial board. It has the luxury of publishing long, heavily footnoted,

ground-breaking articles, of which the extreme example is Mike Quinn's ninety-six-page treatise on post-Manifesto plural marriage. As former *Dialogue* editor Mary Bradford told me, "*Dialogue* doesn't rush to print with the first article on a topic; it takes the time to publish the definitive article, to get it right." Fortunately, *Dialogue* is more than an academic journal; it also features personal essays and opinion pieces.

In contrast, at its core SUNSTONE is an intellectual *magazine* of ideas and issues. That framework affords it a broader, more popular appeal to the college-educated generalist reader. Its graphic design, with illustrations and call-out quotes, makes it more accessible. While its scholarly articles are often sent to readers for review, it also features strong opinion, humor, and contemporary issues and trends that are rarer in journals. Then, too, it has its unmistakable magazine departments, such as news, cartoons, and columns. SUNSTONE is a blend of the journalistic *Newsweek*, the opinionated *New Republic*, and the literary *New Yorker*. I have heard Jan Shipps describe SUNSTONE to non-Mormons as a Mormon *Atlantic*.

It will take time and added resources to completely realize its magazine model, but SUNSTONE's future is structured by it. That means paid, permanent, career employees in various departments, just like other periodicals. What a service to Mormonism to have an independent, established organization to host the reporting and discussion of issues from a wide spectrum of perspectives that extend beyond the Church's appropriate narrow sanction. This full-scale magazine vision was best articulated when the incredible Peggy Fletcher edited two simultaneous Sunstone publications. The staff then had several full-time editors, a news *department*, a business manager, advertising and circulation employees, two art designers, a typesetter, and a book review editor—all paid. It was a New York-style magazine with all the departments in embryo. Peggy's vision outpaced financial realities, and SUNSTONE drastically cutback (the dark days of volume nine). Now, we operate with a skeleton crew that doubles-up on responsibilities. I hope within a year to employ a full-time journalist to cover contemporary Mormonism—there are important stories to tell. As it is, our news now primarily summarizes the reporting in other media, providing an invaluable service for readers off the Wasatch Front.

In the unchartable future, I'd like to hire a graphic designer to make the look more creative and interesting. I'd like the luxury to identify a topic that needs examining and to

commission (pay) a thoughtful observer. I see SUNSTONE becoming a monthly with timely news and commentary. Now it comes out six times a year—a fact some don't realize, due to its irregular publication schedule. My interim goal is to put the magazine out eight times a year. Years ago, Peggy gave an interview to the *Seventh East Press* that was titled "Always a Little Hungry." That vision of unrealized dreams still describes SUNSTONE. But with growth I don't want to lose the chummy, interwoven familiarity that now exists with writers and readers.

As nice as it is to dream, our office life consists of juggling the nitty-gritty tasks that can be overwhelming. Here is how we are organized. As a non-profit organization, the Sunstone Foundation is not owned by individuals. It is directed by a board of trustees that meets several times a year to give general oversight and to hire and receive reports from the full-time, salaried executive director (the publisher-editor).

The business side is coordinated by a full-time business manager (Kimberly Kolan) and a part-time assistant (Carol Quist) who adeptly surf the relentless waves of subscriptions, renewals, address corrections, orders, bookkeeping, deposits, payroll taxes, advertising, and promotions.

The editorial side has a full-time managing editor (to be hired) and a part-time associate editor (Marti Esplin) who edit, proofread, arrange for artists, and coddle authors. Our full-time production manager (Margery Mullin) corrals the cows of desktop publishing, magazine layout, and truant yearlings—like getting those pesky end-of-article sunstones straight.

All assist our symposium chair (Greg Campbell) in conducting the unwieldy and unrehearsed orchestra of the annual symposium in Salt Lake City.

We few, we happy few, keep busy. Everyone takes telephone subscriptions and complaints, hosts drop-in visitors, and contributes to our philosophical conversations.

Notice how this rambling discourse bounces between visionary issues and production pragmatics—the two are inextricably connected. The realization of any vision depends on SUNSTONE's financial situation, which has always been tight. We live as most Americans do—hand to mouth, or to put it more kindly, within our means. To the surprise of many, subscriptions do not cover all the costs of SUNSTONE. In fact, one-third of our budget comes from donations. This is typical for small intellectual publications; almost all are subsidized by donations, an endowment, or institutional support (such

as a university, church, or foundation). But we need more than financial help.

We are darn proud of crossing the threshold of 10,000 subscribers, which is triple our 3,300 mark of six years ago. But it would take at least another 10,000 subscribers for SUNSTONE to be entirely supported by subscriptions and to attract advertisers in large numbers. Our dramatic increase is the result of promotional mass mailings that offer attractive premiums, and is also due to gift subscriptions. As our budget and content are linked, so are current and new subscribers. New mailing-list names come from old subscribers, so please share with us names and addresses. If you allow us to use your name, we'll send your referral a sample issue. (Use the convenient insert card in this issue.)

In addition, retaining current subscribers requires multiple renewal mailings. To glean those who need yet a stronger incentive, we're starting a project for which we need help. Two nights a month, volunteers will gather at the office to call individuals whose subscriptions have expired. For each hour volunteered, we'll give a complementary ticket to a session at the Salt Lake symposium or one cassette recording of a previous symposium session. We also need volunteers during weekdays.

After having confronted the insistent logistical demands of SUNSTONE, I understand why, when asked to distill from his life a rare gem for posterity, international hotelier Conrad Hilton reportedly said, "The shower curtain goes on the inside of the tub." In Hilton's self-interested tradition, here are five things I'd like subscribers to remember and to do.

1. The U.S. Postal Service forwards *only* first-class mail. SUNSTONE is sent by slow-boat, third-class mail. The words "Address Correction Requested" by the mailing label on the back cover instruct the postal service to tell us (for a price) where an addressee has moved; it does not include forwarding the magazine to you or returning it to us. Many subscribers miss an issue because they rely on letter carriers to tell us their new address.

2. Share your thoughts with authors, readers, and editors. If you discuss an article in a study group, if you distribute copies in a class, give a report to its author. Since we are really a small, interconnected group, it is surprising how little feedback authors get. The same is true for editors; you can now fax letters to the editor (801/355-4043). SUNSTONE does not give out authors' addresses, but we cheerfully forward letters addressed to them unopened.

3. SUNSTONE subscriptions are for a specific number of issues—not a specific length

of time (such as a year). To tell how close your subscription is to expiring, compare the expiring issue number on the mailing label with the one on the table of contents.

4. There is no such thing as a free phone call. SUNSTONE's "toll-free" 1-800 telephone number is not a WATS line. Many friends incorrectly assume that we pay a flat monthly fee for unlimited, incoming 800 long-distance calls, and use it for a friendly visit. We pay per call, and only advertise the number for official business, such as for credit-card renewal and subscription promotions. A call saved is a call earned.

5. Patronize stores that carry SUNSTONE. We're working to get more LDS bookstores to carry SUNSTONE. On page four we list those that do. Please encourage your local store to carry us and refer them to friends who want a copy of a particular issue.

As you can see, the sun doesn't set on the diverse work of the magazine. The image of the sun has been a rich metaphor for SUNSTONE: the radiating of light, truth, knowledge, and beauty; the democratic blessings of God to humankind; the dispelling of falsehoods and the uncovering of hidden truths; and the seeing of things by new light. In Mormon temple iconography, the sun is a symbol for the celestial kingdom, and the carving of it on the Nauvoo and Salt Lake temples created the fortunate compound of two primal words, sun and stone. SunStone, as an earlier SUNSTONE masthead combined them, fuses heaven and earth, the divine and human, the visionary and practical—all couplings that I think characterize the dynamic of SUNSTONE's processes and products.

There is a second image on the Nauvoo Sunstone that is often overlooked—the two cornucopia held by hands above the image of the sun. Like the sun that shines on both the wicked and righteous, the horns of plenty also symbolize the overflowing good-

ness of God to his children, the fruitfulness of a generous harvest, the gathering *and* sharing of all things good.

When I think of the cornucopia, I think of John Peters's article on perfection (SUNSTONE 11:3). In his exegesis, John showed that the Sermon on the Mount's summing command to be perfect is more accurately a command to live a life of overflowing goodness and fruitfulness than to be flawless. Through this constructive essay, the spirit has regularly called me to grow in charity, service, and nonjudgmentalness.

These symbols frame my thoughts of what SUNSTONE is about and help me assess its success. Our task to explore the interplay between the human and the divine is difficult, just ask a New Mormon Historian. No doubt the magazine sometimes overstates the human aspects of what it means to be the people of God. I believe we need to charitably confront the unpleasant, albeit incomplete, truths for solid growth, but at times I fear that we don't sufficiently celebrate the divine. How fruitful is honest exploration when it leads to cynicism, regardless of undeniable insights, as it occasionally does? But that doesn't mean we should abandon the quest for an examined religious life. In my spiritual journey I have found God through understanding the celestial dramas of others and myself. (One friend suggested that Starstone more accurately describes what kingdom we are exploring.)

I don't have final answers, but the regular consideration of such questions by both editors and readers is essential to an endeavor such as SUNSTONE. In a couple of issues, we'll send out a special edition that features a cumulative index of Sunstone's magazines and symposiums. The Readers' Forum section will feature letters reflecting on the contributions, and failings, of SUNSTONE. Please share your own ruminations. ☐

—WANTED—

SUNSTONE VOLUNTEERS

Earn passes to the symposium and party at the Sunstone office!

Two nights each month Sunstone needs help staffing its phones to solicit new and renewal subscriptions. On the second Tuesday and the fourth Wednesday between 4 P.M. and 10 P.M. volunteers are needed to donate 1-6 hour blocks of time. For each hour donated a free symposium session pass or a cassette recording of a past session will be given. To reserve your space, call Carol at 801/355-5926.

Tuesday		Wednesday	
March 9	June 8	March 24	June 23
April 13	July 13	April 28	July 28
May 11		May 26	

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Lawrence Young

JOURNEYING INTO THE DESERT: THE FAITH-BASED WITNESS AGAINST NUCLEAR WEAPONS



The 1992 Franciscan weekend at the Nevada Test Site. The first person "crossing the line" at the cattleguard onto federal land as part of her witness against nuclear testings is hugging the police officer who is arresting her.

Acting as individual Latter-day Saints, Mormon Peace Gathering is planning a weekend of activities that affirm dedication to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to God's command to "renounce war and proclaim peace." A campaign of prayer and witnessing is part of the process of creating a will for peace.

But now I shall woo her, lead her into the wilderness, and speak words of encouragement to her. . . . I shall make a covenant on

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Israel's behalf with the wild beasts, the birds of the air, and the creatures that creep on the ground, and I shall break bow and sword and weapon of war and sweep them off the earth, so that my people may lie down without fear. (Hosea 2:14, 18, Revised English Bible.)

PEOPLE OF FAITH, coming from a wide range of denominational backgrounds,

have gathered at the rim of the Nevada Test Site in recent years to pray and to protest the idolatry of nuclear weapons. Thousands have found this place of evil, where their nation has developed and tested the tools of mass destruction, to be a significant arena for the deepening of faith and for nonviolent actions of resistance.

During Lent of 1992, I made my first visit to the Test Site as I joined a weekend retreat sponsored by Franciscans. It was a deeply moving experience as I joined with hundreds of others in praying, singing, reflecting, sharing, listening, worshipping, symbol-building, and "crossing the line" (trespassing) in the desert through an act of nonviolent civil disobedience.

Over the past few years I have met many who have committed part or all of their lives to the Franciscan tradition of Christian devotion and practice. My respect for this tradition was heightened through the presence of Brother Hermann Schaluck, the minister general of the Franciscan Order, and the fourteen Franciscan provincials of the English speaking Roman Catholic Church, who worshipped with us at the Test Site. Brother Hermann delivered the keynote address during the weekend retreat; and listening to the modern-day spokesperson for Francis of Assisi stirred the subterranean whisperings of the spirit that call my soul.

In his address, Brother Hermann reflected on the essential components of the faith journey in order to help each of us reflect on the nature of Christian witnessing. He said that the call to be peacemakers must be rooted in faith of a living and loving God who is among us—it is this faith that is the source for our lasting optimism as we seek a more just world. He emphasized the link between voluntary poverty and peacemaking, noting that one's poverty becomes a humanizing force by placing us in a position where we can say, "I don't want things because then I would need arms to protect my things." He told us that the world needs healing and that the source of that healing was not abstract theology, but relationships lived out in the context of nonviolent language (he would view language constrained by patriarchy as one indicator that authentic relationships were still restricted). Brother Hermann called on each of us in the world to overcome evil by doing good. Making accusations against actions or policies we perceive to be evil may be justified, but it is no solution. He said that we must bring about something new—and this is done by doing and saying the positive. Finally, he expressed hope and counseled that in what-

ever we do in our commitment to peacemaking, we must do it consistently with pure motives and with patience.

On the Sunday morning that I was first arrested for unauthorized entry onto the Test Site, Brother Hermann stood with me as I prepared to "cross the line." As we quietly conversed, he reflected on how surprised he was by the spirit of the place. Our collective commitment to a code of nonviolence, coupled with our just completed worship, created an atmosphere of gentleness, honesty, and love for our fellow beings (including the security personnel who were about to arrest us). We had come to a place of evil and were enveloped by a sense of humanity and deep spirituality.

In the desert, I learned that the religious community's witness against nuclear weapons is quiet, humble, and based in faith. It confronts ultimate evil with powerlessness, love, and hope. People find God at the Test Site, they discover themselves in ways that seem remarkably familiar and experience a profound sense of community as they share the witness with others. This experiment with peacemaking transforms those who participate in it, and the work of inner healing takes place even as they seek to heal the world. On a personal level, the Franciscan weekend deepened my resolve to pursue the spiritual journey that had recently been calling me to deeper personal reflection and

broader involvement with issues of peace and social justice.

I returned twice more before the end of Lent, first for a weekend sponsored by the Society of Friends (Quakers) and then for an interfaith Palm Sunday worship service and direct action.

On each of my three trips to vigil at the Test Site, I was accompanied by other Mormons—men and women representing a variety of backgrounds and ages (a student in her early twenties, a lawyer in his mid-thirties, an administrator in his fifties, etc.). By Palm Sunday, nearly a dozen Mormons had joined with me at these interfaith worship services and witnesses. Without exception, all were deeply moved by the experience; many spoke of it as a deeply transformative moment in their lives.

Others at these interfaith gatherings were impressed by the presence of Mormons, and they wondered what it was that brought us to the desert. They seemed to understand our concern that "men seldom [have] created armaments that eventually were not put to use" (May 1981 First Presidency Statement on the MX System). They joined with us in deploring "the use of nuclear weapons with their terrible potential for the destruction of life, property and even of civilization itself" (1981 First Presidency Easter Message). They shared in our view that weapon systems represented modern-day idols that de-

tracted from the Christian ideal of love (see President Kimball's 1976 bicentennial address). Finally, they shared our faith that "when there is enough of a desire for peace and a will to bring it about, it is not beyond the possibility of attainment" (1980 First Presidency Christmas Message).

Leaders of the Nevada Desert Experience (NDE), the organization that has coordinated much of the faith-based resistance to nuclear weapons testing at the Test Site, asked the Mormons who participated in the 1992 Lenten Desert Experience if there were other Mormons who might add their voices to the interfaith witness against nuclear weapons. Specifically, they wondered whether NDE might help us organize a Mormon weekend as part of the 1993 Lenten Desert Witness.

What was the motivation of those at NDE in seeking such an alliance? Over the past decade, NDE had already welcomed peacemaking groups from across the religious spectrum—including Catholics, Methodists, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Friends, Mennonites, Jews, and Buddhists—who came as people of faith to protest nuclear weapons testing. It was in their nature to seek an expansion of that interfaith witness. Although a Mormon weekend would add to the workload of the NDE staff, it would also be a new source of energy and vitality in the interfaith effort to overcome the terrible threat of nuclear weapons.

By early summer of 1992, a group of Latter-day Saints—calling themselves Mormon Peace Gathering—had made a commitment to Nevada Desert Experience to organize a Mormon weekend at the Test Site in March of 1993. Other weekends during Lent of 1993 will be sponsored by groups of Franciscans, Lutherans, Episcopalians, Methodists, and Friends.

Acting as individual Latter-day Saints, Mormon Peace Gathering is planning a weekend of activities that affirm dedication to the restored gospel of Jesus Christ and to God's command to "renounce war and proclaim peace" (D&C 98:16).

What do those involved with Mormon Peace Gathering hope to accomplish? Let me draw on their words, as contained in one of their organizing pamphlets:

Our objective is to bring about an end to nuclear weapons testing at the Nevada test site, as a first step toward negotiation of a comprehensive test ban treaty. We are inspired by the efforts of many people throughout the world who, recognizing the presence of evil and injustice around them, have



"Just for the record, Mormons were non-smokers long before it was fashionable."

heeded the spiritual prompting to “be anxiously engaged in a good cause, and do many things of their own free will, and bring to pass much righteousness” (D&C 58:27). Adding our voices to the thousands of others calling for an end to nuclear testing, we can make a difference.

And there is more. In our own lives, we are grateful for the testimony of God’s love we have experienced in feeling called to bear personal witness against preparations for nuclear war. We feel an obligation to talk and reflect together on the significance of what we have experienced personally: on the one hand, horror at our nation’s continued preparations for a “holocaust, the depth and breadth of which can scarcely be imagined” [1980 First Presidency Christmas Message]; on the other, a celebration of God’s love, plainly manifest in the spiritual promptings we feel, and in the natural and human creation we are called to preserve and protect. The NDE Mormon weekend will provide us with an opportunity to lift and strengthen one another in an expression of faith that integrates Mormon identity with peacemaking. Like our pioneer forbearers, our faith in God challenges us to embark together upon a spiritual journey into the desert. (From the Mormon Peace Gathering pamphlet, “Mormon Peace Gathering: Answers to some commonly asked questions about the Nevada Desert Experience 1993 Mormon Weekend.”)

Mormon Peace Gathering is proceeding with plans to hold a 1993 Mormon Weekend in Las Vegas on Friday and Saturday, 26-27 March, and near the entrance to the Nevada Test Site at Mercury, Nevada, on Sunday, 28 March. Activities will include individual reflection, testimony sharing, group worship (including keynote addresses by Eugene England, Edwin B. Firmage, and Claudia Peterson), nonviolence training, meals, a sing-along (Mormon pioneer trail songs interspersed with “songs of the movement”), and plenty of time for getting to know one another—culminating in an outdoor worship service near the entrance of the Test Site.

Based on my own experience at the Test Site, I eagerly await the 1993 Mormon week-

end. I know that many Mormons have already found a deep spirituality in the desert journey toward peacemaking. I am confident that those who join with us at the 1993 Mormon weekend will have similar experiences.

ONE major question looms over the continuing faith-based witness at the Test Site: Is the witness still necessary in a post-Cold War era? Those involved with Nevada Desert Experience and Mormon Peace Gathering believe we are at a crucial juncture in the history of efforts to limit the proliferation of nuclear weapons and that it is the responsibility of those committed to peace to seize the opportunity.

The U.S. government is currently in the middle of a nine-month moratorium on nuclear weapons testing. At present, U.S. testing is scheduled to restart after 1 July 1993 and continue until after the 1995 expiration of the current Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty that restricts the building of nuclear weapons by non-nuclear nations. Although Congress has indicated that the resumption of U.S. testing should focus on a restricted set of “safety” issues, recent reports indicate that some military officials and scientists are arguing for add-on experiments to the authorized nuclear tests. These add-on experiments will focus on the development of new kinds of weapons and would likely fuel a continuation of the arms race. These same military officials and scientists are arguing that the current ban does not restrict “zero-yield” tests that could be used to design new nuclear weapons. (See, for example, “Bomb Designers Stick to Their Guns, Want More N-Tests,” *Salt Lake Tribune*, 26 November 1992, A10.)

Many who are involved in the peace movement believe that we now have a window of opportunity to establish a permanent moratorium on U.S. nuclear weapons testing and to enact a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty within the international community before the 1995 expiration of the Nuclear

Non-Proliferation Treaty. However, we must recognize that powerful interest groups are lobbying for a continuation of business as usual. Failure to get a Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty in place prior to the expiration of the Non-Proliferation Treaty could have dire consequences for global peace as numerous nations stand on the threshold of having nuclear weapons. Many non-nuclear nations have indicated that they will proceed with nuclear weapons development if a Comprehensive Test Ban is not in place by 1995 and if nations with nuclear weapons have not made a commitment to undergo a build-down of their stockpiles of weapons.

Nevada Desert Experience and Mormon Peace Gathering believe that a campaign of prayer and witnessing is part of the process of creating a will for peace. These acts of faith are coupled with continuing lobbying efforts—efforts that can be energized by the presence of Mormons in the interfaith witness.

The faith-based effort to bring about an end to nuclear weapons testing and a reduction in nuclear arms has experienced significant achievements within the past several months, but much remains to be done. Over the years, church people have encouraged other church people to pray with them in the desert, to protest the testing of nuclear weapons. It was what they knew how to do, so they did it. Thousands have come to the Nevada desert over the years to pray and protest the idolatry of nuclear weapons. Now they have invited Mormons who share this concern to join with them. And while the journey we have been invited to join is focused on resistance to nuclear weapons, it involves much more. In the solitude of the desert at the gate of the Test Site, those who embarked on this journey have learned that when they pray “What in God’s name are we to do?,” the prayer includes the question “Who in God’s name are we to be?” The answer we find in the desert is a gift of grace from God. ☪



Where is there a singing bird
when all I hear is silence?

Leaves droop from lonely limbs

whence brightly colored sounds once came.

Where is there a warm lit bloom

when all is languid darkness?

—DAVID CLARK KNOWLTON

The cities of the eastern Roman provinces were teeming with religious associations, initiatory cults, and purveyors of moral reform. That was the world in which Christianity began, and no other. Both its ways of belonging to and estrangement from that world are equally parts of its character. We must try to understand both.

THE PUZZLE OF CHRISTIAN BEGINNINGS

By Wayne A. Meeks

YOU WOULD NOT THINK, AFTER NEARLY TWO thousand years of diligent inquiry, that the beginnings of Christianity would still be a puzzle. Or even if they are a puzzle, once we acknowledge that hard facts about the early years are hard to find, at least you might think that there is nothing new that could be said on the question. However, the picture that historical scholarship has formed of early Christianity has changed significantly in recent years. Why has this happened? Without doubt one reason is that there are a great many scholars like me who earn their livings by trying to say something new. Still, there are more substantial reasons why we have had to revise our understanding of the way Christianity began.

For one thing, new evidence has turned up. The most dramatic discoveries have been widely publicized: a cache of fourth-century manuscripts in Egypt shed extraordinary new light on one deviant movement in the early Church, Gnosticism. And the now-famous "Dead Sea Scrolls" have shown us with some clarity the inner life of a sect of Judaism that was active for a century and a half before Christianity began, and which had many traits in common with it.

As important as these discoveries and dozens of other smaller ones are, another factor has worked even more strongly to shift our perspective on Christianity's origins. That factor is our increased knowledge about the environment

within which Christianity began and developed. We owe most of our new insight to advances that have been made by scholars in other fields, particularly in the social and intellectual history of the Roman Empire and in the history of the Jews under Roman rule. Moreover, for a variety of reasons too complicated to go into here, scholars of early Christianity have learned to pay more resolute attention to the movement's larger environment than has often been the case in the past.

I hope to provide an introductory sketch of the way the puzzle of Christian origins now looks to me as a result of the changed perspectives I have just mentioned. I will begin by describing Christianity as one among several innovative movements and sects of Judaism that flourished in the first century of our era. To see the followers of Jesus as a sect of Judaism is the fundamental starting point for any historical account. However, for reasons that will become apparent, I will concentrate on what became of the Jesus movement when it moved from the land of Israel into the cities around the eastern Mediterranean basin. My primary aim will be to try to help the reader imagine how this new movement would have been seen by ordinary people in those Greek-speaking cities.

THE JESUS SECT

AS a sect of Judaism, Christianity was not a success. That is not so surprising; it shared the fate of almost all the Jewish sects of which we know, lasting about as long as any of them. The one exception was the Pharisees, the one truly successful sect, if we can believe the conventional view that it gave birth to the rabbinic movement. I mean by successful that the avowed or tacit reason for a sect's existence is either to convert or to replace the main religious tradition and organization over against which it has defined itself. Although the rabbinic movement required several centuries and a great deal of luck to succeed, the earliest Christians tried but failed to change Judaism. In that respect they were like the Essenes and the other obscure sects.

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This paper was delivered at a plenary session of Sunstone Symposium XIII, 10 August 1991, at University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. An earlier form of the lecture was delivered at Davidson College, Davidson, NC, 29 September, 1986, at Miami University of Ohio, 10 March 1987, and at Carleton University, Ottawa, Canada, on 8 February 1989.

The Jewish sects in general, so far as our sources inform us, had little impact outside the land of Israel. The Therapeutae celebrated by Philo were a Diaspora group, but they appear to have been a small and isolated phenomenon in a single location in Egypt. A sect, by definition, takes its shape in vocal or tacit opposition to the central institutions of its larger society. In second-commonwealth Judea those institutions were the temple and the priesthood. When the temple was destroyed in 70 C.E., the sects accordingly ceased to exist. We hear no more of the Essenes, and the Pharisees apparently were absorbed into the emerging proto-rabbinic movement. For a time some parts of the Christian sect defined themselves over against that emerging set of authorities, the rabbis, but its future lay elsewhere.

THE MOVE TO THE DIASPORA

THE Christian sect did move to the Diaspora (the Jews scattered abroad), and early, long before the revolt of 66-73 C.E. The second-century Roman historian Suetonius reports that the emperor Claudius expelled Jews from Rome because of disturbances in their community caused by a certain "Chrestus." The usual and probably correct interpretation of that report is that Christian missionaries had already arrived in Roman synagogues. Opinions about the date differ, but it was no later than 49 and perhaps as early as 41. The followers of Jesus had found adherents in the Jewish communities of Syria much earlier than that, first in Damascus, and then in the great metropolis of Antioch. It was at Antioch that the crucial step was taken, as we are told by the book of Acts, that some of the Greek-speaking Jesus-sectaries who had been chased out of Jerusalem began to proselytize non-Jews. There, too, outsiders first nicknamed this sect "Christus-followers," *christianoi*. The name stuck, and it marked a step toward having an identity distinct from the Jewish community.

There at Antioch Paul served with Barnabas his apprenticeship as a Christian missionary, after an earlier, apparently unsuccessful, venture into the "Arabian" kingdom of the Nabateans. The great controversy over circumcision that started at Antioch led to his break with Barnabas and his departure and his subsequent organization of new missionary

enterprise in Asia Minor and Greece. Interestingly, that controversy over circumcision was still within the context of a dissenting Jewish sect, for the whole issue was whether (male) gentile converts could be received into the community in any other way than that which had come to be prescribed, in post-exilic times, for proselytes to Judaism.

But the oddest thing of all is that as vehemently as Paul rejected that requirement, his own understanding of Christianity, as laid out in the Letter to Romans, was that of a Jewish sectary. Paul understood the new movement, including the gentiles whom he thought it his peculiar mission to incorporate, to be the fulfillment of the hopes precisely of Israel—its destiny consolidating with Israel's, his proselytes were but wild branches grafted into the trunk of Israel. And unlike the later author of Matthew's Gospel, Paul did not think of the kingdom as taken away from Israel and given to another people; he does not yet speak as later Christians would of "the New Israel" or "the True Israel." It is the conversion of Israel for which he, like every sectary, hoped for.

The irony is that the practical organization of Paul's mission was, so far as we can discover from his letters, altogether independent of the Jewish communities that existed in the cities where he and his fellow-workers founded their Christian cells. By the time he wrote his extant letters, these groups were no longer effectively a Jewish sect at all, but were something quite new.

NEW CULTS IN THE GRECO-ROMAN CITIES

THE appearance of a new religious group in the cities of the Roman empire was nothing unusual, of course. Most of these imported cults, however, were the native religions of people who had immigrated. The Hellenistic and Roman periods of Mediterranean history were times of rapid growth of cities, of consequent movement of people from rural areas to cities, and also of a constant flux of people from one part of the Mediterranean to another. Every city of any size thus took on a mixed complexion as it acquired ethnic neighborhoods from the immigrants who settled near people who had come earlier from their homelands. Today's visitor to the cities of Turkey and Greece whose Roman strata have been excavated can see the patterns of those immigrant associations laid out patently before the eyes. One of the most graphic instances is the Aegean island Delos, which, because it

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is now virtually uninhabited, has been almost entirely excavated. In the age of the Athenian-run Delian league, Delos had been sacred to Apollo and his sister Artemis, who supposedly were born there, and in Roman times a colossal statue of Apollo still towered over the central plain. As Delos had lost its political significance and become instead a major marketing center, waves of merchants from all over the world had come, settled, and brought their own gods with them. There by the harbor one sees the vast plaza dedicated by the Italian merchants to business and its patron, Mercury. Leading off from it is the avenue on whose verge still stand many of the row of monuments to the Greek Dionysus, those astonishing giant, erect phalluses, which must have made Victorian visitors fairly giddy with what seems to modern eyes blatant pornography. Off to the left are remains of a grand community center of the immigrants from Beirut, dedicated to the god Poseidon. Ascending the hill above the theatre, the visitor comes upon the several shrines, built over succeeding generations to the Egyptian gods Isis and Serapis. Over near the farther shore, in much plainer buildings, were the community centers of the Jews and of the Samaritans, the latter referring to themselves as "Israelites of Delos who send their offerings to Sacred Har Garizim." At the time when Christianity was born, Delos would have made today's San Francisco seem parochial. And a similar confluence of peoples and their gods would have been evident in each of the cities where the Christian missionaries looked for converts—as one can readily see in the ruins of Corinth, Philippi, or Ephesus.

It is not surprising that, in such cosmopolitan settings, people would be curious about the rites of their neighbors and some would sample them. Most of the rites were public and took forms that were fairly standard: processions on festival days through the streets of the city; banquets in the anterooms of the temple; sacrifices on the altar of the god; salutations to the god's statue at set times. For some there were special functions, like the popular healing gods, particularly Asklepius, and of course the rites of some gods seemed more exotic than others, exciting sometimes titillation, sometimes outrage, by staid Romans of the older school, like the historian who was among the first to mention Christianity, Tacitus. Occasionally a new cult would be organized, like the famous one satirized by Lucian, the cult of Glykon founded in the late second century by a certain Alexander of Abonuteicus.

Glykon, however, was only a new appearance and form of Apollo, and the things he was supposed to do—give oracles, provide miracles—were familiar enough. By and large, the cults that moved with their migrating supporters were variations on a few familiar themes, and they came to resemble one another still more as they assimilated to the styles and fashions of the modern Greek cities. Greek was everybody's language, and the temples that every cult erected as soon as it could afford to were Greek, too.

The Jews and the Samaritans, to be sure, were different, and some people held that against them. However, the Jews of the Greco-Roman cities were not really as different as we have been led to believe, as we can see now from such discoveries as the magnificent synagogue on the main street of Sardis, or the reserved section in the theatre at Miletus, or the list of members and "God-fearers," with their trades and status-designations, of the synagogue at Aphrodisias. The truly significant difference was their exclusivity: one could not fully participate in the worship of their god and also still casually share in other cults as well. That was thought odd and to many eyes offensive in a religious world characterized on the whole by both easy tolerance and frequent syncretism. Nevertheless, this exclusivity was officially acknowledged as part of the ancient tradition of Judean religion, and that therefore the Jews were behaving quite rightly in preserving their ancestral customs. One of the most

problematical things about the Christians, indeed, was that they insisted on the same sort of intolerance toward other cults as the Jews. Yet once it was apparent that they were distinct from the Jewish communities and were not of any particular ethnic origin, the Christians had no ancient customs to excuse it.

The Christians were not the first offshoot from an ethnic cult in the Greco-Roman world to take a form quite different from that of its native parent. I have already suggested that every native religion modified itself to some extent to fit into the world of the Hellenistic city in the age of Roman imperialism. There were also a few instances of a radically new form of cult emerging from native roots. One of these was already widely established in the world in which Christianity began: the cult of Isis and Serapis. Though they were known as "the Egyptian gods," Serapis was not part of the ancient Egyptian pantheon at all, but first appears on the scene in the third century B.C.E. And the Isis who became so popular all over the

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Mediterranean basin at the time of Rome's dominance was very different from the ancient consort and sister of Osiris. Many scholars think that the new cult was the deliberate and artificial creation of the Ptolemaic kings of Egypt in the Hellenistic age, made up in order to advance their imperial policy, which extended their interests far beyond the borders of Egypt. If so, they were extraordinarily successful, as you can easily see by reading Apuleius' famous novel *Metamorphoses*, or Plutarch's learned philosophical essay on Isis and Osiris, or the popular novel about the Ephesian couple saved by Isis' providential care, Xenophon's *Ephesian Tales*.

Another new cult with only tenuous native roots was Mithraism, the cult that became so popular with members of the Roman armed forces in the second and third centuries. Its chief deity, Mithras, had very little to do with the minor god of that name in the ancient Zoroastrian religion of Persia. So it is not so ironic that the Roman garrison in Dura Europos, sent there to defend the borders of the empire against the Persians, should have been so enthusiastic about a nominally Persian god that they repeatedly remodeled a house into a grand home for his worship.

Archaeologists have traced the way the Mithraists of Dura progressed in that little border town, expanding from modest beginnings in a private house through successive enlargements and remodelings until they had a thriving establishment. It was typical of the way other cults established themselves in a new place as well. Indeed, on the same street where the Mithraeum of Dura was found, the Jews had gone through a similar progression, producing that wonderfully decorated synagogue whose painted walls so astonished scholars when it was unearthed in 1935. A few blocks down the same street, the Christian group had progressed the same way, though they were obviously still smaller and poorer than the Mithraists or the Jews; their house and its decoration were still fairly primitive by comparison. The adherents to a cult in a new place, whether the cult of their homeland or one of the new or modified cults that were attracting worshippers across ethnic lines, formed an association, a club. And they characteristically found a patron—a relatively wealthy person who would either pay for renting or building a suitable meeting place or would permit them to meet in his or her own home. This patron might either be an adherent of the cult or simply someone who wished to do a favor for some depen-

dents in exchange for their support and honor for him. Scholars have discovered a number of inscriptions from antiquity which were put up to recognize such benefactors properly.

THE CHRISTIAN CULT IN PAGAN EYES

WHEN we read in the Book of Acts about Paul moving in with fellow tent-makers Prisca and Aquila, or accepting the hospitality of the Jewish adherent Lydia, a merchant of luxury fabrics, or staying in the house of Jason, who had to post bond for their good behavior, we are witnessing the use by the early Christians of this same familiar institution of patronage. The same is true when Paul sends greetings to the Meeting at the House of Philemon, or Prisca and Aquila, or Nympha, and when he reminds the Corinthian Christians of the special recognition they owe to householders like Stephanas. The pagan observer would have seen in these little household meetings a familiar phenomenon. Adherents to a newly imported cult were setting up as voluntary associations in private households. Although they showed few of the public trappings of a proper religion—they held no processions and celebrated no visible festivals, they performed no sacrifices and had no statue of their god—yet like many of the new cults, they practiced an initiatory ritual and assembled at set times for a ritual meal.

THE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE CHRISTIANS AND OTHER CULTS

STILL, there were important differences between the Christians and other cults. Once it became apparent that Christianity was not, or no longer, a sect of the Jewish community, it seemed odd because it had no single ethnic root. The Christians did not come from anywhere. Tacitus, you will recall, still saw the Christian "superstition" as Judean in origin, even at a time when, in Rome, it had become clear they were not a part of the Jewish community proper. But even in Paul's lifetime, though Paul persisted in thinking of the gentile Christians as somehow part of the stock of Israel, the communities he founded were overwhelmingly gentile. Their fundamental identity was not ethnic in the sense of having a common immigrant heritage. In this way, the Christians resemble their younger rivals, the Mithraists.

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Roman cults in their sharing with Jews an extraordinary exclusiveness or intolerance of other cults. We cannot be sure, of course, of the degree to which every convert to the new faith really separated him or herself from participation in every one of the religious activities that permeated civic life in antiquity. In the Pauline groups in Corinth, for example, an argument broke out whether a Christian was allowed to accept invitations to dinner with a pagan, or even to eat any meat from the local meat-markets, since the principal source of publicly sold meat was the sacrifices that went on incessantly in the various temples. The question remained controversial through the first century and was mentioned in Christian handbooks in the second. Most leaders were more conservative than Paul; apparently many individuals, on the other hand, were more liberal. Nevertheless, the principle that Paul insisted upon remained the norm for the mainstream of the Christian movement: anyone baptized as a Christian must not participate in a clearly recognized cultic rite of any other god. "Even though there are many so called gods in heaven or on earth, as indeed there are many gods and many lords, yet for us there is one God, the Father, from whom is the universe and for whom are we ourselves, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom is the universe and through whom ourselves" (1 Corinthians 8:5-6). "You cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of demons; you cannot share the table of the Lord and the table of demons" (1 Corinthians 10:21).

A third, and significant, difference between Christianity and most other cults is that they very early developed a translocal organization. The model for this development was clearly Jewish, for in Jewish scriptures and in Jewish consciousness there was one People of God as there was One God. Yet the Christians developed a practical organization and maintained lines of communication among their scattered little groups more elaborately than even the Jews. The reason seems to have been simply the practical needs of the rapidly spreading mission in the latter decades of the first century. Anyone who has read Ramsay MacMullen's book on *Paganism in the Roman Empire* and sees how loose and weak were any connections between the Isis cult in Ephesus and that in Rome, Alexandria, or Memphis, sees how inappropriate it is to speak of an "Isisism" or "Dionysianism." In that context, one must marvel at the complex network of connections, visits, letters, mutual

aid, mutual meddling, oversight, and complaint that connected those Christian groups to each other and about which Paul and his disciples wrote their letters. No wonder that by the third century the emperors were beginning to regard Christianity not merely as a local secret society that might be politically or morally dangerous, but a kind of international conspiracy whose structure in some ways rivaled the imperial bureaucracy itself. And when Constantine decided to join this cult that his predecessors and competitors hadn't been able to stamp out, he found that church bureaucracy and the bishop's schools that prepared candidates for service in it a useful source for recruitment to the imperial civil service.

The final external distinction that the astute observer of Christianity would have noticed is that in many ways this cult was more than a cult. Not only did it lack many of the external features of a proper religion, it occupied itself with things that were not ordinarily the province of religion in ancient societies. The letters of Paul, for example, or the letters of other leaders of the new movement, or the handbooks that the movement produced, devote an astonishingly small space to the specifically religious, that is, cultic matters. By far the dominant concern of these documents is with the behavior of the members of the Christian groups. The preponderant form of the literature is exhortation or moral advice, explaining and backing up in multiple ways

the reasons for behaving in the ways advocated and holding the attitudes that were inculcated. The ancient reader would not have seen this as religious literature, but as examples of that set of genres so popular with literate pagans of the time, which the Greeks called *psychagogia*, the guidance of souls. The closest parallels were in the teachings of the leading philosophical schools, like the so-called Diatribes of Epictetus, or the public discourses of such moralizing sophists—professional rhetoricians of philosophical bent—as Dio Chrysostom, or the rougher and more popular harangues of Cynic preachers. No wonder that Christian apologists in the second century begin to represent their community as not a religious club but a philosophical school. It was not merely another cult; it made far more demands upon its initiates than any cult. It was a comprehensive, intimate, and totalistic community that was at the same time an empire-wide organization with utopian claims.

CONCLUSION

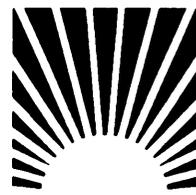
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know about the beginnings of Christianity has been modified in recent decades. The changes have come principally in our knowledge about the cultural and social setting within which Christianity emerged. They have come about because of new discoveries as well as through alteration of the ways in which historians interpret the evidence. The latter is part of the on-going conversation that students of the past have with one another, and that conversation is an inextricable part of our own cultural experience, training, and conditioning, part of the way we see the world simply because we belong to the here and now and not to some other time or place. Neither side of this process of trying to understand the past will ever come to rest. We will never, in this life, come to the point at which we can say, "Ah, now I understand perfectly just who the first Christians were, and what they thought, and how they behaved, and why." We are looking into badly polished mirrors; we see in enigmas.

We know, then, a great many things that our fathers and mothers did not know, but our knowledge is in part, and our prophecy is not so great either. We know many things, but do we therefore better understand? A difficult question, indeed. As we have seen so many of our historical certainties undermined by additional evidence or replaced by different perspectives, many historians have become more humble, which is a desirable development. Some people, however, have gone beyond humility to counsel despair. History teaches us nothing certain, they say, so let us abandon the search. The historical critical method of studying scripture is bankrupt; let us throw away those false canons of objectivity and suspicion, since they have not served to provide a firm grounding for faith. This reaction is altogether understandable, but I believe it is also quite wrong. The voices that call us to abandon the quest to understand Christianity's beginnings and its development within the best picture we can obtain of its historical contexts are voices of disillusion, indeed sometimes the voices of moral cowardice.

I have stressed, on the one hand, those things which the movement that formed around the memories and beliefs about Jesus shared with other people in their time and place. On the other hand, I have pointed to some of the unexpected combinations and transformations of those familiar things which show up in early Christianity when one looks at it within its historical context. Our attempts to understand the origins of this faith have always veered between these two poles. We are wont to claim that Christianity is explained either by what it has in common with other things we know or by its uniqueness. Surely either is an abstraction. Jesus was one of many prophets in Roman Galilee and Judea about whom some people had notions that he might be the restorer, the prophesied king, or prophet or priest of the end of days. The cities of the eastern Roman provinces were teeming with religious associations, initiatory cults, and purveyors of moral reform. That was the world in which Christianity began, and no other. Both its ways of belonging to and estrangement from that world are equally parts of its character, and we must try to understand both.



PORTABLE SHRINE

Shoki glares from rice paper pennants,
squat and bloody above the armor-box
as Yoshitsune is pierced by a fish-kite;
the battle ground is between taxi
and pedestrian swallowed
in the great shadows of Sanbancho skyscraper—
children shriek between chrome bumpers,
their brown arms baskets of iris.

An old man slips through brushing
from the shoulder of his dirty kimono
a quivering monkey. He has wrapped
rope around the monkey until it is nearly
dead and still it fights—panting, leering,
jabbing and pawing at the old man's kimono.

A young couple (he suited, she in jeans
and Rolling Stones t-shirt) stop to eat. He
is tired, cross, sweat greasing his forehead,
she is pregnant. They have been standing
waiting to eat half an hour,
at last she has bought boiled
eggs, rice cakes, sake. "Omedeto!" he says,
cramming his mouth full as if the waiting
and hunger were her doing.

The moon is high in heaven, burnt blind
behind the sun.

Wind blows through the silk carp
and rice paper deities smog-warnings.

I will not wear the surgical mask,
I will distinguish myself above
sickness: the old man has no mask,
the monkey and children are unmasked—

I will breath the fumes, motes, germs,
vapors, and if I die the children will carry me
on their shoulders shouting joy,
the screaming horses of Sakanoue
unbridled will gallop forward,
pounding flat my shrine's waiting-place.

—SEAN BRENDAN BROWN

Does it cheapen or invalidate the message of the Book of Mormon to use common words and unpoetic sentence structures? Would Nephi or Mormon speak to us today using archaic forms, or would they be more concerned that as many people as possible learn about Christ and his gospel—including the undereducated, the functionally illiterate, and the learning disabled? To paraphrase Jesus, the scriptures were made for people, not people for the scriptures.

DELIGHTING IN PLAINNESS: ISSUES SURROUNDING A SIMPLE MODERN ENGLISH BOOK OF MORMON

By Lynn Matthews Anderson

INTRODUCTION

DUTIFULLY FOLLOWING COUNSEL, I BEGAN reading the Book of Mormon in 1988 to my children, the oldest of whom was five at the time. I was not surprised to have to paraphrase what I was reading so that they could understand what was going on. For example, rather than reading, "For it came to pass in the commencement of the first year of the reign of Zedekiah, king of Judah (my father, Lehi, having dwelt at Jerusalem in all his days); and in the same year there came many prophets" (1 Nephi 1:4), I would say something like, "Lehi lived in Jerusalem his whole life. Then at the beginning of the first year that Zedekiah was king of Judah, many prophets came. . . ." After only one session of this kind of simplification, the thought struck me that I ought to write down a verse-by-verse paraphrase so that my children would be able to read and understand the Book of Mormon by themselves. I have been working on *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon*¹ since.

I now have a full draft that has been through four extensive

revisions. After I began working on this project, the need for such a thing became even more clear—not just as a tool for children, but for functionally illiterate adults and learning-disabled individuals as well.

I live in Pittsburgh, Allegheny County, Pennsylvania. As of four years ago, the number of functionally illiterate adults in my county alone was estimated to be 186,000, or roughly 15 percent of the entire adult population. Literacy statistics for the United States indicate that at least one in six adults, and possibly as many as one in five adults, cannot read above a fourth-grade reading level. The incidence of functional illiteracy is even greater in second- and third-world countries such as Nigeria and Ghana, where one is considered lucky to receive a fifth-grade education.

During the 1990-91 school year I taught the Book of Mormon for home study seminary in my ward. Evidently Church Educational System personnel have been paying attention to the growing problem of illiteracy: at the outset of course work, we seminary teachers were to administer a reading test to each of our students. More specific to my project, one of the most prevalent learning exercises in the Book of Mormon study guide was to have students read a particular verse or set of verses and then rephrase the passage in modern English to ensure understanding. My students were all capable of reading the authorized Book of Mormon, but I would ask them from time to time to rephrase a verse using their own words. The

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interpretations they came up with were occasionally comical, sometimes way off the mark, and sometimes surprisingly insightful. When their interpretations were far afield, we would discuss what it was about the language in the verse that made the verse hard to understand, or what made it possible to interpret the passage in more than one way.

Why is the Book of Mormon so difficult to read? There are several factors: length and complexity of sentence structures, vocabulary (including an enormous number of unfamiliar proper nouns), and use of archaic language forms. *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* makes every effort to keep sentences relatively short and simple. Written in simple, modern English on approximately a fifth-grade reading level, it uses roughly half of the vocabulary of the authorized version. (Other features of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* include: a “words to know” glossary section that provides uncomplicated definitions of hard words for which there are no simple equivalents, such as “salvation,” “atonement,” and so on; brief explanatory notes; and a paraphrased rendition of the Joseph Smith story.) *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* is shorter in length overall than the authorized version by about one-third, which makes it a less formidable-looking challenge to the functionally illiterate.

On learning of this project, a few people have asked, “Well, what about *Book of Mormon Stories* or the Deseret Book illustrated *Book of Mormon Reader* ‘comic-book’ version? What about these new animated video stories of the Book of Mormon and audio recordings? Aren’t these sufficient?” No. While I believe an animated or film reenactment of significant Book of Mormon events might be helpful were it possible to do it in the same way that the Genesis Project’s Book of Luke videos were done, “Teenage Mutant Ninja Nephi” seems designed more as commercial entertainment than as a source of spiritual enlightenment. Audio recordings of the authorized Book of Mormon still require a certain level of education and linguistic sophistication to be understood. Comic-book style versions leave out doctrinal exposition and impose a not-necessarily-accurate visual interpretation of events. Sometimes there are serious inaccuracies in the retellings themselves. (The *Book of Mormon Reader*, as a case in point, depicts Christ as coming almost immediately after the catastrophic natural disasters signifying his death. But the authorized text indicates that he did not visit the Americas until nearly a year later.)

In a First Presidency message in the *Ensign* some years ago, President Thomas S. Monson related the poignant story of a missionary who came to him in tears because he couldn’t read well enough to read the Book of Mormon. This missionary was advised to read Deta Peterson Neeley’s *A Child’s Story of the Book of Mormon*, through which the missionary was able to learn enough about the Book of Mormon to truly feel he could gain a testimony of it. But *A Child’s Story*, as well as the original *Book of Mormon Stories*, avoids any kind of in-depth doctrinal exposition and relies heavily on fictitious embellishment to make the story-line read more smoothly. (For example, in *A Child’s Story* Nephi’s wife, from Neeley’s description, is evidently Scandinavian and prone to anxiety attacks brought on by the

misdeeds of Laman and Lemuel. In like manner, the animated video “Nephi and the Brass Plates” adds an entirely fictitious scene of Nephi’s brothers bribing the guards at Jerusalem’s gates.)

Finally, such materials, with the exception of the audio recordings, are obviously designed for children. Literacy experts are well aware that most functionally illiterate adults would rather not be caught reading “kids’ books.” Adult literacy materials are intentionally designed to avoid a cutesy or juvenile appearance.

In sum, *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* is meant to bridge the gap between children’s materials and the authorized version. Although I am working on a fifth draft, earlier drafts have already been used in my own ward and elsewhere to help learning-disabled individuals, new converts, children, and other individuals better understand the Book of Mormon. I want to make it clear that I consider this work a stepping-stone to, and not something to be generally used instead of, the authorized version. Some have suggested using *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* in tandem with the authorized version, perhaps in a parallel-column comparison edition.

ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES OF A SIMPLE-ENGLISH BOOK OF MORMON

THE single greatest advantage of a simple-English Book of Mormon is that people with minimal reading skills will have access to the message of the authorized text. Simplifying and updating the language can also help provide greater overall clarity. Let me give an example.

There are four places in the Book of Mormon that describe people “listening to obey.” Three are in King Benjamin’s discourse (Mosiah 2:32, 2:33, and 2:37) and one in Alma (3:27). I assumed for years that this phrase meant “listen to obey,” since “list” is a poetic form of listen, and was reasonably meaningful in context as well. But “list” as used in the Book of Mormon means to desire, to want. In fact, in the index, the entry for list says “see also ‘desire.’” Thus:

Mosiah 2:32
(Authorized)

But, O my people, beware lest there shall arise contentions among you, and ye list to obey the evil spirit, which was spoken of by my father Mosiah.

Mosiah 2:32
(Simple English)

But, O my people, be careful not to fight and argue with each other, so that you will not want to obey the devil that my father Mosiah talked about.

But there are some disadvantages to simplification as well. First, and most important, all paraphrases or translations of necessity involve some degree of interpretation. The reader is more or less forced to rely upon the paraphraser’s understanding of what the original is saying. If the paraphraser’s understanding is uninformed, impaired, biased, or flat-out wrong, this will be reflected in the text. Putting the Book of Mormon into modern language has required me to make some choices

about meanings that were somewhat more ambiguous or open to interpretation in the original translation. Some of these choices have included what percentage of the original text to include and what words to use—factors which have the capacity to significantly affect a reader's comprehension of the intended messages. For example, the first part of 1 Nephi 3:28 reads: "And it came to pass that Laman was angry with me, and also with my father; and also was Lemuel, for he hearkened unto the words of Laman." How should Lemuel be portrayed according to the text? Is the text saying that he listened to Laman in just this particular instance, or does this mean that he always listened to Laman and may never have had an original evil thought of his own? *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* used to read this way: "Laman was angry with both me and my father, and so was Lemuel (because he always listened to Laman)." But my choice at that time to include the word "always" would obviously color someone's opinion of Lemuel, painting him as the Book of Mormon's consummate "yes-man for evil." I have since revised this passage, dropping "always." As with the authorized version, it is left to the reader to decide about Lemuel's status as a follower. This is probably not so important in the long run, but there are other places that

require similar choices with possibly more significant consequences. I did my best to follow the Spirit in these instances. I hope that people reading *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* will frequently cross-check what I have paraphrased with the authorized version. If the reaction is "does the Book of Mormon really say that?," then *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* will have served a useful meditative function!

Second, some of the internal, linguistic kinds of proofs of the Book of Mormon's veracity that Hugh Nibley and others have found so compelling are lost in simplification and shortening. Chiasitic and parallel structures often disappeared, along with myriad "authentic Middle-Eastern" expressions and Hebraic poetics and phraseology. While the awkwardness of the authorized version's translation has been a great witness to its truthfulness to some scholars, for many people (and not just non-readers), this same "verifying awkwardness" has proven to be an enormous stumbling block.

Third, there is some concern that a simple, straightforward, easy-to-read text may induce people to avoid studying the authorized version as they should. It is possible that some people will prefer this version, regardless of their reading skills. While I strongly believe that there is much more to be

THE PSALM OF NEPHI

2 NEPHI 4:16-30

(Authorized)

16 Behold, my soul delighteth in the things of the Lord; and my heart pondereth continually upon the things which I have seen and heard.

17 Nevertheless, notwithstanding the great goodness of the Lord, in showing me his great and marvelous works, my heart exclaimeth: O wretched man that I am! Yea, my heart sorroweth because of my flesh; my soul grieveth because of mine iniquities.

18 I am encompassed about, because of the temptations which do so easily beset me.

19 And when I desire to rejoice, my heart groaneth because of my sins; nevertheless, I know in whom I have trusted.

20 My God hath been my support; he hath led me through mine afflictions in the wilderness; and he hath preserved me upon the waters of the great deep.

21 He hath filled me with his love, even unto the consuming of my flesh.

22 He hath confounded mine enemies, unto the causing of them to quake before me.

23 Behold, he hath heard my cry by day, and he hath given me knowledge by visions in the nighttime.

24 And by day have I waxed bold in mighty prayer before him; yea, my voice have I sent up on high; and angels came down and ministered unto me.

(Early Draft)

16 Learning about the Lord makes me happy; and I am always thinking about the things I have seen and heard about him.

17 But even though the Lord has been kind to me and has shown me many great things that he has done, sometimes I feel like saying: O I am a terrible person! I am so very sad because of the bad things that I do.

18 I am sad and feel bad because sometimes I do things that are not right.

19 And when I want to be happy, my bad feelings make me sad; but I know that God will help me.

20 God has helped me always: he led me while we were in the desert, and he saved my life while we were going across the sea.

21 He has filled me with so much love that it burned almost like fire.

22 He has made my enemies stop what they were doing and be afraid of me.

23 He has listened to my daytime prayers, and helped me know things by giving me visions at night.

24 During the day I have prayed strongly to him; yes, I have prayed to him on high, and angels came down and taught and helped me.

(Current Draft)

16 Learning about the Lord makes me happy, and my heart is always think about the things that I have seen and heard.

17 But even though the Lord has been so good to me and has shown me many great things which he has done, my heart says: "O, what a miserable man I am!" Yes, my heart is very sad because of my weaknesses. My soul is very sad because of my sins.

18 I am full of sadness because of the temptations and sins I fall into.

19 And when I want to be happy, my heart is sad because of my sins. Even so, I know that God will help me.

20 God has always helped me. He led me through my troubles in the desert, and he saved my life while we were going across the sea.

21 He has filled me with so much love that it almost makes my body burn like fire.

22 He has stopped my enemies and made them shake with fear before me.

23 He has listened to my prayers in the daytime, and has helped me to know things by giving me visions at night.

24 I have prayed to him without fear during the daytime. Yes, I have prayed to him on high, and angels have come down and taught and helped me.

gained from reading the authorized version, I don't believe that this simplification will require any less thought and pondering and prayer for those seeking spiritual truth. Although *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* is in many ways easier to understand on a surface level, it does not provide people with any shortcuts for applying gospel principles in their lives nor for gaining a testimony of the truth of the Book of Mormon and its message.

The title *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* has undergone numerous changes since the project began. Although I have some fear that using "Easy-to-Read" in the title might potentially alienate adult readers, I felt a compromise was necessary to try to make this work less threatening to conservative folk for whom "The Book of Mormon in Simple Modern English" seems to be anathema. Reaction to this work has been generally positive. Only a handful of people have indicated that they feel it is the height of presumption on my part to try to do anything that may in any way be construed as a "new translation"; of these, only one has attempted to call me to repentance. By contrast, I have received a great deal of support and affirmation in this effort from priesthood leaders at various levels.²

Although *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* is a paraphrase,

one LDS publisher had to treat it as a translation (requiring the First Presidency's go ahead for them to proceed with the project, which is unlikely as evidenced by the recent First Presidency statement [see the news section in this issue]). Another publisher apparently thought it *ought* to be a bona fide translation, with half of its editorial board rejecting the manuscript on the interesting "philosophical" premise that I did not have the original source material (by which I believe they meant the Golden Plates).

The prime objective of paraphrasing is to avoid doing violence to the meaning of a text by saying the same thing in a different way from the original (which in this case means the current authorized version of the Book of Mormon). My method was straightforward: I wrote down what I read in the authorized version using as simple language as I possibly could, and the work evolved from that point on. As mentioned, at some point in the earlier drafts I changed my primary audience from young children to functionally illiterate adults. Note the differences in the paraphrasing from one draft to the next in the below sidebar excerpt from the "Psalm of Nephi" (2 Nephi 4:16-30).

One late development concerns the presentation of the paraphrase itself. I have been partial to the idea that *The*

(Authorized)

25 And upon the wings of his Spirit hath my body been carried away upon exceedingly high mountains. And mine eyes have beheld great things, yea, even too great for man; therefore I was bidden that I should not write them.

26 O then, if I have seen so great things, if the Lord in his condescension unto the children of men hath visited men in so much mercy, why should my heart weep and my soul linger in the valley of sorrow, and my flesh waste away, and my strength slacken, because of mine afflictions?

27 And why should I yield to sin, because of my flesh? Yea, why should I give way to temptations, that the evil one have place in my heart to destroy my peace and afflict my soul? Why am I angry because of mine enemy?

28 Awake, my soul! No longer droop in sin. Rejoice, O my heart, and give place no more for the enemy of my soul.

29 Do not anger again because of mine enemies. Do not slacken my strength because of mine afflictions.

30 Be happy, my heart, and say to the Lord: "O Lord, I will praise you forever. Yes, my soul will be happy in you, my God, the rock of my salvation."

(Early Draft)

25 And his Spirit has taken my body to very high mountains. My eyes have seen such things that I was told not to write them down.

26 O then, if I have seen such great things, and if the Lord in his mercy has been so kind to people [such as I], why should my heart weep and my soul be sad, and my body get sick, and my strength go away because of my troubles?

27 Why should I give in to sin because of my body? Yes, why should I give in to temptation and let the evil one into my heart, so that he can destroy my peace and trouble my soul? Why does my enemy make me angry?

28 Wake up, my soul! Do not be weak because of sin. Be happy, my heart, and do not make room for the enemy of my soul anymore.

29 Do not get angry at my enemies again. Do not become weak because of my troubles.

30 Be happy, my heart, and say to the Lord: "O Lord, I will praise you forever. Yes, my soul will be happy in you, my God, the rock of my salvation."

(Current Draft)

25 His Spirit has taken my body to very high mountains. My eyes have seen things that are too great for people to see, and I was told not to write them down.

26 O then, if I have seen such great things, and if the Lord has had so much mercy on people, why should my heart weep and my soul be sad, and my body get sick, and my strength go away because of my troubles?

27 Why should I give in to sin because of my body? Yes, why should I give in to temptation and let the evil one into my heart, so that he can destroy my peace and trouble my soul? Why does my enemy make me angry?

28 Wake up, my soul! Do not be weak because of sin. Be happy, my heart, and do not make room for the enemy of my soul anymore.

29 Do not get angry at my enemies again. Do not become weak because of my troubles.

30 Be happy, my heart, and say to the Lord: "O Lord, I will praise you forever. Yes, my soul will be happy in you, my God, the rock of my salvation."

Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon should be written in a verse-by-verse format in order to allow the reader an easy way to compare it with the authorized version. But several people with whom I have consulted have recommended approaching the text in paragraph format, which they feel will make the work more comprehensible to those with minimal reading skills. Although it remains to be seen which format will go to press, the paragraph format does have the advantage of making the text read more smoothly by eliminating redundancies.³ For example, here is the first chapter of Moroni in verse and paragraph formats.

(Authorized)

1 Now I, Moroni, after having made an end of abridging the account of the people of Jared, I had supposed not to have written more, but I have not as yet perished; and I make not myself known to the Lamanites lest they should destroy me.

2 For behold, their wars are exceedingly fierce among themselves; and because of their hatred they put to death every Nephite that will not deny the Christ.

3 And I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ; wherefore, I wander withersoever I can for the safety of mine own life.

4 Wherefore, I write a few more things, contrary to that which I had supposed; for I had supposed not to have written any more; but I write a few more things, that perhaps they may be of worth unto my brethren, the Lamanites, in some future day, according to the will of the Lord.

(Simple English, paragraph format)

¹Now I, Moroni, did not think I would be able to write anything else after I had finished with the history of the Jaredites. ²The Lamanites are fighting each other, and because they are so full of hate, they are killing every Nephite who will not deny the Christ. ³I will not deny the Christ, so I go wherever I can to keep from being killed. ⁴Since I have not been killed yet, as I thought I would be, I am going to write more things in the hope that, God willing, they may someday do some good for my Lamanite brothers and sisters.

(Simple English)

1 Now I, Moroni, did not think that I would write anything else after I had finished writing about the Jaredites, but I have not been killed yet. I am hiding from the Lamanites so that they will not kill me.

2 They are fighting each other, and they are killing every Nephite that will not deny the Christ because they hate them so much.

3 I, Moroni, will not deny the Christ, so I go and hide wherever I can so I will not be killed.

4 Since I have not been killed yet, as I thought I would be, I am going to write some more things that will be good for my Lamanite brothers and sisters to know when the Lord thinks the time is right.

MULTIPLE AUTHORS,
TEXTUAL AMBIGUITIES,
AND DOCTRINAL INTERPRETATION

THERE have been systematic and scientific studies trying to show that a variety of authors contributed to the Book of Mormon. To me, based solely on my subjective impressions borne of extreme familiarity with the Book of Mormon itself, there are clearly noticeable differences in style from one author to another. The later writers seemed less remote linguistically than earlier writers; it seemed harder to paraphrase Nephi's writings than those of Mormon and Moroni.

As I am neither an Isaiah nor a Hebrew scholar, the Isaiah portions represented a different kind of challenge. I sent my first effort to the noted LDS Isaiah scholar Avraham Gileadi for his comments. He suggested that I look at his new translation of Isaiah for help in trying again, which I did.⁴ Although I am much more comfortable with the current draft of these sections than I was with previous drafts, I intend to enlist the help of someone better qualified to edit these particular passages.

But even with simplification and updated language, the "Isaiah wall" still exists. People may very likely skip or stop at the Isaiah portions of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* for the very same reasons they skip or stop at those places in the authorized version. The mysteries of prophetic discourse and symbolism therein are not unraveled simply by using shorter sentences and easier words.

All of this brings me to the next point—handling textual ambiguities and doctrinal interpretation. According to Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon is "the most correct book" vis-a-vis its clarity of Christian doctrine and precept. For a book of its size, I must say that there were not as many places where the text was ambiguous as one might expect, and those places by and large nearly always concerned minor points of detail, not doctrine.

On occasion I found it helpful to look at the French and other Romance language translations to see how other people treated ambiguities in the text. For example, we start right off with a difficulty in the first verse of Nephi: What does "goodly parents" mean? Contemporary U.S. Latter-day Saints tend to believe that this means Nephi's parents were morally upright individuals, when a better rendering might make it clear that Nephi's parents were rich enough to afford to have even a younger son formally educated to some extent. (This interpretation is supported by the subsequent text.) The French version reads *Moi, Nephi, étant né de bonne famille . . .* ("having been born into a good family"). *Bonne famille* is generally understood to mean wealthy or upper class.

Questions of doctrinal interpretation were far more problematic, to be sure. In particular, Abinadi's extremely trinitarian-sounding exposition on the Father and the Son—on which I've yet to hear a reasonable explanation that does not try to distort what the Book of Mormon actually says on the subject—posed an interesting problem. While I initially considered making some additions to the text that would make Abinadi's discourse more closely resemble current teachings

about the Godhead, I finally went with my own feeling that I could not in good conscience try to pretend that Abinadi said something other than what the authorized version reports that he said. If the simplified version causes the same kind of confusion as does the authorized version, the reader will have to rely on later, modern revelation clarifying or even radically modifying our understanding of this and other doctrines.

Another troubling aspect of the Book of Mormon is its racism—dark skin being equated with wickedness and light skin with righteousness. I am a believer in the “limited geography” theory of the Book of Mormon: I do not believe that Lehi’s people were alone on the two continents, but rather that they occupied a relatively small tract of land and were surrounded by all sorts of other peoples and cultures.⁵ Doubtless Laman and Lemuel and company had fewer scruples about assimilating and being assimilated by other cultures, at least partly through intermarriage. I suspect that all Book of Mormon peoples looked pretty much alike—small and dark, rather than tall and Scandinavian in complexion (Arnold Friberg’s heroic northern European depictions notwithstanding). What might account for the distinctions drawn in the Book of Mormon? One anthropological principle holds that when two peoples or tribes, virtually identical in nearly all points of appearance and culture, become enemies, each tribe will ascribe to the other any and all characteristics that either or both tribes find to be repellent and loathsome, despite the fact that these are shared characteristics of both tribes. So I take the literal reality of contrasting dark and light skins of the Book of Mormon peoples with a large grain of salt. Prophets then as now interpret events in the light of their own understanding and through the windows or blinders of their own cultures. The Lord is very clear in Doctrine and Covenants 1:24 that he speaks to his servants in their weakness and in their own language—with all of the cultural and ethnic baggage associated with that language.

My personal reconciliation of this matter, however, did not address the problem of what to do with these passages in the text, and again I found myself painfully opting for letting the Book of Mormon say what it says, rather than what I’d like it to say. I have given serious thought to putting my personal views into a section all its own—a “note on the text”—but have concluded that such an explanation is the province of a prophet, not a paraphraser. I wish one of our modern prophets would provide an official, revealed repudiation of this demeaning doctrine before *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* goes to press, which I would then gladly simplify and add to the work’s explanatory notes.

Another major problem dealt with convoluted sentence structures that went on clause after modifying clause. I have concentrated on this problem in the fifth (hopefully the last) full draft. My approach has been to repeat the main idea several times in short sentences so that all of the modifiers—which seem important to fully understanding the messages—are included. The following example is part of Abinadi’s discourse found in Mosiah 16:10-12.

(Authorized)

10 Even this mortal shall put on immortality, and this corruption shall put on incorruption, and shall be brought to stand before the bar of God, to be judged of him according to their works whether they be good or whether they be evil—

11 If they be good, to the resurrection of endless life and happiness; and if they be evil, to the resurrection of endless damnation, being delivered up to the devil, who hath subjected them, which is damnation—

12 Having gone according to their own carnal wills and desires; having never called upon the Lord while the arms of mercy were extended towards them; for the arms of mercy were extended towards them, and they would not; they being warned of their iniquities and yet they would not depart from them; and they were commanded to repent and yet they would not repent.

(Simple English)

10 “Mortal bodies will become immortal, and imperfect bodies will become perfect. People will come and stand before God, and he will judge them by the good and bad things they have done.

11 “If they have done good things, they will be resurrected to life and happiness forever. But if they have done evil things, they will be resurrected to damnation. They will be given to the devil, who has made them his slaves. (This is damnation.)

12 “They will be damned because they did whatever evil they wanted to do. They never prayed to the Lord while he could have mercy on them. The Lord wanted to have mercy on them, but they did not want it. They were warned about their sins, but they would not stop sinning. They were commanded to repent, but they would not repent.

GENDER-INCLUSIVE LANGUAGE Using “brethren” or “brothers and sisters”

WE as a church tend to be linguistically conservative, at least where English is concerned. Although things have been changing somewhat, we still hear many (but thankfully not all) speakers at general conference using such gender-exclusive terms as “man” to mean both men and women (even though this generic meaning has been fast fading from current public discourse and memory). Many more male examples than female are found in talks and manuals ostensibly aimed at both women and men, and gender-role stereotyping still abounds. The Book of Mormon, mirroring women’s lots and stations in its own time and in Joseph Smith’s, is a very male-oriented or androcentric work. It is evident from the text that women were not Nephite citizens: they were chattel. Much as I regret that this was the state of things among a chosen people, I also recognize that it was never the intent of the Book of Mormon to tell us in any great detail about the day-to-day life and

culture of the Nephite people, female or male.

I have approached the question of using gender-inclusive language very simply as I have gone along: I have followed the counsel in 1 Nephi 19:23 to “liken the scriptures unto [myself]” wherever appropriate. Not surprisingly, there are very few places where it is inappropriate to use gender-neutral pronouns.

One concern about using gender-inclusive language in a Book of Mormon context is that it might distort the reader’s picture of Nephite culture (what little we know of it). Such usage may give rise to the idea that the Nephites were more egalitarian vis-a-vis the status of men and women than what the authorized text can support. After a great deal of thought and prayer on the subject, I feel that the benefits of using gender-inclusive language outweigh the ramifications of this legitimate concern. The Book of Mormon must be treated in this context as living scripture, which to me is a more important function than that of being a “window on the past.”

Gender-inclusive language changes have mostly been limited to places in discourses now applicable to both men and women—when “my beloved brethren” is more appropriately rendered in our day as “my dear brothers and sisters.” I have tried to clarify the use of “Nephites” as meaning “Nephite men” in those places where women and children are also mentioned in the same breath. The frequently used grammatical construct “if a man, he . . .” has been changed in virtually all cases to read “if people, they . . .” Note the difference between the exclusive and inclusive language in this example (Moroni 7:48):

(Authorized)

48 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, pray unto the Father with all the energy of heart, that ye may be filled with this love, which he hath bestowed upon all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ; that ye may become the sons of God; that when he shall appear we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is; that we may have this hope; that we may be purified even as he is pure. Amen.

(Simple English)

48 Dear brothers and sisters, pray to God the Father with all of your hearts, so that you will be filled with this love, which he gives to all who are true followers of his Son, Jesus Christ—so that you may become God’s sons and daughters; that when Christ comes again, we will be like him, and we will see him as he is. May we have this hope, and may we become just as pure as he is pure. Amen.

With few exceptions, the use of gender-inclusive language is unobtrusive and subtle—in fact, most people who have had access to earlier drafts were not aware of this “feature” until it was pointed out to them. (I am careful to tell readers about this in my preface.)

However, there are exceptions to gender-inclusive usage. For example, even though for myself I read “O remember, my son, and learn wisdom in thy youth” (Alma 37:35) as “O remember, my daughter,” the text clearly indicates a verbatim

transcription of counsel or a letter addressed to Alma’s son, so the text has retained the masculine address in this and in all similarly explicit instances.

What is my justification for making these kinds of inclusive changes? Alleviating my own discomfort was a prime motivation. I am a sister, a mother, a daughter; I have never been a brother, a father, nor a son, and whatever rationales have been used in times past to justify using masculine language as being sufficiently descriptive of both genders has simply lost its relevance and self-presumed “weight of reason” in our day. Moreover, using gender-exclusive terminology perpetuates common misconceptions about the importance of women’s contributions throughout history, however domesticated and commonplace those activities may have been. Sadly, some of the most notable women of the Book of Mormon remain nameless—even one with such astonishing faith as King Lamoni’s consort.

Despite my own firm belief that our Heavenly Mother was and continues to be actively involved in people’s lives here on earth, all pronouns and names for God in *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* are masculine, as found in the authorized version. (I look forward to the day when we treat our Mother as a viable theological entity, and she once again takes her rightful place in both ancient and modern scripture.)

SACRED VS. VERNACULAR LANGUAGE

FINALLY, the issue of sacred language versus the vernacular has been the bugaboo for all modern language renditions of any sacred book, from the Bible to the Koran and now, perhaps, for the Book of Mormon as well. Those of us reared in the Church, who are comfortable with King James-style scriptural language, may find it difficult to move from “I, Nephi, being exceedingly young, nevertheless being large in stature” (1 Nephi 2:16) to “I, Nephi, was big for my age.” But the latter rendition, to me, is exactly what Nephi meant and quite possibly the way he might express himself were he conversing with late-twentieth-century speakers of English. Likewise, for Lehi to *dwell* in a tent is less messy than for him to *live* in one: “living” more accurately illustrates the sober and unromantic realities of their lives: they sweated, defecated, urinated, had sex, squabbled, reared children, and so forth. For me, at least, “*dwell*” is a cut above all that earthy stuff—stuff that a prophet of God surely wouldn’t be a party to.

Tackling prayer language posed another interesting choice between old and new language forms. Currently, English-speaking Latter-day Saints have been officially counseled to use the thee-thou-thy forms of address in prayer.⁶ For the majority of Church members, who have been converted as adults, an occasional *Ensign* article or priesthood or Relief Society lesson on how to use thee-thou-thy can scarcely make a dent in overcoming a lifetime of never having used those forms before.

Others have pointed out the inconsistency in the Church’s rationale for continued use of archaic forms as a token of respect, rather than of intimacy.⁷ I believe that the Lord cares

far more about the content of a message than its form: were it not so, he would have had an angel specializing in grammar and syntax hovering over Joseph Smith as he translated. Language is dynamic and fluid. Meanings change over the course of time and understanding far outweighs efforts to preserve archaic linguistic traditions. For this reason, along with the overriding purpose of making the Book of Mormon accessible to everyone, *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* always uses the you-your forms.

Unlike some modern renditions of the Bible in juxtaposition with the King James Version, there isn't an awful lot of poetic or beautiful phraseology lost through updating and simplifying the Book of Mormon. A large part of the Book of Mormon language is not the stuff of great literature in any worldly sense. Obviously, this reflects my own tastes and biases. Wherever possible, however, I have done my best to preserve whatever loveliness of form or expression there is, as in 3 Nephi 17:1-25:

(Authorized Version)

1 Behold, now it came to pass that when Jesus had spoken these words he looked round about again on the multitude, and he said unto them: Behold, my time is at hand.

2 I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words which I am commanded of the Father to speak unto you at this time.

3 Therefore, go ye unto your homes, and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow, and I come unto you again.

4 But now I go unto the Father, and also to show myself unto the lost tribes of Israel, for they are not lost unto the Father, for he knoweth whither he hath taken them.

5 And it came to pass that when Jesus had thus spoken, he cast his eyes round about again on the multitude, and held they were in tears, and did look steadfastly upon him as if they

(Simple English)

1 After Jesus had said these things, he looked at the people again and said to them: "I have to go now.

2 "I see that you are weak, and that you cannot understand all of the words which Heavenly Father has commanded me to tell you at this time.

3 "So go home and think hard about the things I have said. Ask Heavenly Father in my name to help you understand, and to get your minds ready for tomorrow, when I will come to you again.

4 "Right now I am going to Heavenly Father, and also to show myself to the lost tribes of Israel. (They are not lost to Heavenly Father, because he knows where he has taken them.)"

5 After Jesus said this, he looked at the people again, and he saw that they were crying. They looked at him as if they wanted to ask him to stay with them a little longer.

would ask him to tarry a little longer with them.

6 And he said unto them: Behold, my bowels are filled with compassion towards you.

7 Have ye any that are sick among you? Bring them hither. Have ye any that are lame, or blind, or halt, or maimed, or leprous, or that are withered, or that are deaf, or that are afflicted in any manner? Bring them hither and I will heal them, for I have compassion upon you; my bowels are filled with mercy.

8 For I perceive that ye desire that I should show unto you what I have done unto your brethren at Jerusalem, for I see that your faith is sufficient that I should heal you.

9 And it came to pass that when he had thus spoken, all the multitude, with one accord, did go forth with their sick and their afflicted, and their lame, and with their blind, and with their dumb, and with all them that were afflicted in any manner; and he did heal them every one as they were brought forth unto him.

10 And they did all, both they who had been healed and they who were whole, bow down at his feet, and did worship him; and as many as could come for the multitude did kiss his feet, insomuch that they did bathe his feet with their tears.

11 And it came to pass that he commanded that their little children should be brought.

12 So they brought their little children and set them

6 So he said to them: "I am filled with mercy and love for you.

7 "Do you have any sick people with you? Bring them here. Are there any people with you who cannot walk, or who are blind, or deaf, or who are hurt or sick in any way? Bring them here and I will heal them, because I love you, and I am filled with mercy for you.

8 "I see that you want me to show you what I have done for your brothers and sisters at Jerusalem, and I see that you have enough faith for me to heal you."

9 After Jesus said this, the people all came and brought all those to him who were sick or who could not walk, or who were blind or deaf, or who could not speak, or who were hurt in any way. He healed every one of them as they were brought to him.

10 Then all the people—those who had been healed and those who had been well—bowed down at his feet and worshiped him. And as many people as could come to him (because of the crowd) kissed his feet, and his feet were washed with their tears.

11 Then he commanded them to bring their children to him.

12 So they brought their children to him, and had

down upon the ground round about him, and Jesus stood in the midst; and the multitude gave way till they had all been brought unto him.

13 And it came to pass that when they had all been brought, and Jesus stood in the midst, he commanded the multitude that they should kneel down upon the ground.

14 And it came to pass that when they had knelt upon the ground, Jesus groaned within himself, and said: Father, I am troubled because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel.

15 And when he had said these words, he himself also knelt upon the earth; and behold he prayed unto the Father, and the things which he prayed cannot be written, and the multitude did bear record who heard him.

16 And after this manner do they bear record: The eye hath never seen, neither hath the ear heard, before, so great and marvelous things as we saw and heard Jesus speak unto the Father;

17 And no tongue can speak, neither can there be written by any man, neither can the hearts of men conceive so great and marvelous things as we both saw and heard Jesus speak; and no one can conceive of the joy which filled our souls at the time we heard him pray for us unto the Father.

18 And it came to pass that when Jesus had made an end of praying unto the Father, he arose; but so great was the joy of the multitude that they were over-

them sit down on the ground around him. Jesus stood in the middle, and the people made room until all of the children could be brought to him.

13 When the children had all been brought to Jesus, who was standing in the middle, he commanded the people to kneel down on the ground.

14 After they had all knelt on the ground, Jesus groaned in his heart and said: "Father, I am sad because of the wickedness of the people of the house of Israel."

15 After he said that, he knelt on the ground also and prayed to Heavenly Father. The things that he prayed cannot be written. This is what the people say who heard him:

16 "Eyes have never seen before, and ears have never heard before, the great and wonderful things we saw and heard Jesus say to Heavenly Father.

17 "No tongue can speak, and no one can write, nor can people even think of such great and wonderful things that we saw and heard Jesus speak. And no one can understand the joy that filled our souls at the time we heard him pray to Heavenly Father for us."

18 When Jesus finished praying to Heavenly Father, he stood up, but the people were so full of joy that they could not get up.

come.

19 And it came to pass that Jesus spake unto them and bade them arise.

20 And they arose from the earth, and he said unto them: Blessed are ye because of your faith. And now behold, my joy is full.

21 And when he had said these words, he wept, and the multitude bare record of it, and he took their little children, one by one, and blessed them, and prayed unto the Father for them.

22 And when he had done this he wept again;

23 And he spake unto the multitude, and said unto them: Behold your little ones.

24 And as they looked to behold they cast their eyes towards heaven, and they saw the heavens open, and they saw angels descending out of heaven as it were in the midst of fire; and they came down and encircled those little ones about, and they were encircled about with fire; and the angels did minister unto them.

25 And the multitude did see and hear and bear record; and they know that their record is true for they all of them did see and hear, every man for himself; and they were in number about two thousand and five hundred souls; and they did consist of men, women, and children.

19 Then Jesus told them to stand up.

20 They got up from the ground, and he said to them: "You are blessed because of your faith, and now I am full of joy."

21 When he said that, he wept, and all the people saw it. Then he took their little children one by one and blessed them, and prayed to Heavenly Father for them.

22 After he did this, he wept again.

23 Then he said to the people: "Look at your little children."

24 And as they looked to see, they looked up toward heaven, and they saw the heavens open. Angels came down as if in the middle of fire and made a circle of fire around the little children, and blessed them.

25 The people saw and heard these things, and were witnesses of them. They know that their record is true, because they all saw and heard these things for themselves. (There were about two thousand five hundred men, women, and children.)

Does it cheapen or invalidate the message of the Book of Mormon to use common words and unpoetic sentence structures? Not too many centuries ago devout scholars were put to death for translating the Bible from Latin or Greek into the common or "vulgar" language. Would Nephi or Mormon speak to us today using archaic forms, or would they be more concerned that as many people as possible learn about Christ and his gospel—including the undereducated, the functionally illiterate, and the learning-disabled? Perhaps we can take

current conference addresses as a guide. Most general authorities are plain-spoken and quite easy to understand. For the most part, they seem to care more for content than they do for form. To paraphrase Jesus, the scriptures were made for people, not people for the scriptures. The Church has slowly begun to recognize this, as the occasional use of other editions of the Bible even in general conference attests, although we have recently been counseled in a First Presidency statement to use the King James Version at church. I strongly feel that God will be highly displeased if we allow tradition to take precedence over other people's ability to learn about the gospel in their own language—in this case, late-twentieth-century English.

Although this project has been a not-for-profit venture from the start, I have felt greatly rewarded in many ways. In taking *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* to this point, I honestly feel that I have done what God has wanted me to do; in addition, my experience in producing this paraphrase has strengthened my conviction that the Book of Mormon really is a translation of an ancient text by an unschooled farmer who was reasonably well-versed in the King James Bible.

I don't know under what auspices *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* may appear or how it will ultimately be used, but I sincerely believe that a way will be provided for this work to be a useful tool in helping build God's kingdom. Many people eagerly await its publication. (Current plans are to print the work privately and have it in circulation by the end of 1993.)⁸ It is my fondest hope that *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* will help its readers gain a testimony that Jesus is the Christ and that his church has been restored through the prophet Joseph Smith. This desire has been both the impetus and the rationale behind it all. ☞

NOTES

1. At the time this talk was given, the title of my work was "Mormon's Book," and it was mentioned with this title in an article by Marvin Folsom appearing in a 1992 edition of the *F.A.R.M.S. Journal*. However, in November of 1992 I was made aware of another book using the title "Mormon's Book," scheduled for publication in 1993, which purports to be a modern English (but not explicitly simplified) version of the Book of Mormon, as interpreted by Timothy B. Wilson. Although my work and my use of the title "Mormon's Book" precedes Wilson's by more than two years, there appears to be no legal way to prevent him from using this title; and because of the extreme differences in our respective intentions toward and approaches to paraphrasing the Book of Mormon, I am unwilling to have my book appear in print under the same title.

2. I was careful to keep the First Presidency apprised of this project. On two separate occasions I advised them of the progress of the work, both times offering it gratis to the Church. On both occasions I received polite responses indicating that the Church had no plans for producing any kind of simple English version of the Book of Mormon. Neither letter from the First Presidency indicated that it would be inappropriate for me to continue with the project. I also maintained a correspondence with a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy who was very enthusiastic about this project. He believes there is a definite need for such a thing, and encouraged me to pursue private publication. My stake president and especially my bishop have been very supportive. (Copies of all correspondence are in the author's possession.)

3. Some modern translations of the Bible use the paragraph format, but reference the verses in superscripts.

4. I wrote to Dr. Gileadi on two separate occasions, each time enclosing my simplification of the Book of Mormon's Isaiah sections. The first time, in 1988, Dr. Gileadi returned my work after having made detailed notes on one or two

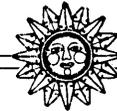
chapters. He recommended that I consult his translation of Isaiah for some clarifications. I used his translation (Avraham Gileadi, *The Apocalyptic Book of Isaiah* [Provo, Utah: Hebraeus Press, 1982]) in tandem with the authorized version in my efforts to deal with certain textual ambiguities. In 1991, I sent him the revised sections, which he again returned with detailed notes on one chapter. He felt the sections needed more work, but he did not have time to work with me on the project. I did another revision of these sections in 1992. (Copies of all correspondence are in the author's possession.)

5. John L. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City & Provo, Utah: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1985).

6. Boyd K. Packer, "Reverence Invites Revelation," *Ensign*, November 1991, 22-23.

7. Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The Grammar of Inequity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 23:4 (Winter 1990), pp. 81-95.

8. An electronic version of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* is available free of charge to all interested persons. For information about downloading the files, send electronic mail to dba@cs.cmu.edu. Printed spiral-bound copies of the 1992 electronic release are available at cost (approximately \$10, which includes postage). A version on diskette is also available at cost. It is anticipated that a perfect-bound, corrected edition will be printed and available at cost in mid-1993. Persons interested in obtaining any of these versions of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon* should contact Lynn Matthews Anderson, 5806 Hampton Street, Pittsburgh, PA 15206, or send electronic mail to dba+lynn@cs.cmu.edu.



VISITING TEACHING (A SPIRITUAL)

Lord, send babies, good healthy babies
(yes, sweet Jesus),
Cause I don't want to be a sick old lady
In a senior citizens subsidized apartment
That smells like old cooked grease,
Where everyone leaves before I can get to the door,
And hangs up before I can get to the phone,
And someone brings groceries I can't see to cook,
So I eat waffles I put in the toaster,
And no one comes, most days
(yes, Lord, hear it now).

Lord, send babies, good healthy babies
(amen, sweet Jesus),
Cause I don't want to be a sick old lady
In a nursing convalescent old age senior citizens home
That smells like urine,
Where teenagers call me by my first name,
And they serve jello at every meal,
And the members of my high school class
Stare wordless at the walls and drool,
And no one comes, most days
(hear me talking at you, Lord).

And make those babies care for their mama
Or let me come to you
(amen, amen)

—LISA BOLIN HAWKINS

Second Place, 1990 Brookie & D. K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest

IN SEARCH OF SPILLED ROOT BEER

By Margaret Young

WHEN JAKE HAMPTON GOT HIS CALL TO Michigan Detroit, where he had lived until four years earlier, he shouted all the way to the Inkom Woolworth's, which his grandfather owned and operated. "Gramps, lookee there," he said, showing the call. "Goin' home, Gramps. God's called me home."

Across the back wall of the store were posters of basketball stars, a display Jake had designed. Two of the players were Motown boys, who Jake had never known. He had, though, known "The Ace" Carlton, who sure as fire would someday be part of that back wall display, dunking a ball, his face saying "Eeeassy." Jake had seen The Ace shoot perfect three-pointers, where the ball didn't even touch the rim, made no noise at all, save one sinful-quick SWOOSH as it poured through the net like orange water. The Ace was built for fame. Jake had a testimony of that.

And Jake was going to find him. God was sending him back for some big purpose like that.

When he went through the Idaho Falls Temple, made his pilgrimage from glory to glory, he thought of The Ace. Coming through the veil, he imagined The Celestial Ace, reaching up, fingering the lights on that brilliant crystal hoop.

It was a June afternoon when Elder Hampton boarded the plane for Michigan. His mother gave him a bouquet of day lilies she had picked that morning. She cried about how her brown-eyed little boy had grown so tall and now was going away and she wouldn't have him again, since when he returned he would be a man.

HERE was Detroit: muggy, grey, slow. On busses, everyone looking drugged, but flashing streetwise eyes at any sudden sound or movement.

Jake's first two areas were far from where he had once lived. He was in the rich zones—the George Romney suburbs. But at the start of his eighth month, he made senior and was transferred to a zone that included his old house. Ace Carlton's place was five minutes from the missionary apartment.

The day after he arrived in the old neighborhood, Jake took

his greenie, Elder Cline—a plump, apple-cheeked farmboy from Santaquin, Utah—on tour. "This is lower-middle-class Detroit, Elder Cline," Jake said. "Right over there is where I got my boots stuck in snow up to my hips. And there—that lightpost—that's where I saw a guy get mugged once. Now, mugging doesn't happen as often as you might think. It mostly happens if you look scared. Elder, you're looking scared. Don't look scared, Elder. Over there, right at the corner, there's this little old lady. I washed her windows with soap one November day after she didn't give us treats for Halloween. Over there, two houses down, that's where Ace Carlton lives, unless he's joined the pros by now." His voice grew soft, reverent. "I remember we had a party there once. They gave me root beer. I spilled it all over the front room floor. I was laughing so hard at this bad joke The Ace told that I spilled my root beer."

Cline kept looking over his shoulder.

"Elder buddy," said Jake. "Hey, cut it out, huh? You are going—I promise—to get us mugged. I swear you are."

THE sky was mother-of-pearl the day they tracted out The Ace's house. Tiny bits of snow floated down like powder from heaven, like the angels were dusting each other's wings, and vanished on yellow grass. It was the kind of snow you could see through, but your face got wet. Some of the trees wore clumps of white from yesterday's blizzard, but the snow on the ground was patchwork.

"Here it is," said Jake, looking up at the yellow gables. Two of the attic windows had jagged, black stars in their middles where baseballs or rocks had broken through. The other windows were thick with dust. Most had finger-writing on them, words like "No soliciting" and "Royben loves Tilda." The front room window had "Merry Christmas" written in its dust, and a thin, glittery, gold garland in place of curtains.

The Ace," said Jake, as though the name were part of a mantra.

"How tall'd you say he was?" asked Elder Cline.

"Maybe almost seven feet, I'd say."

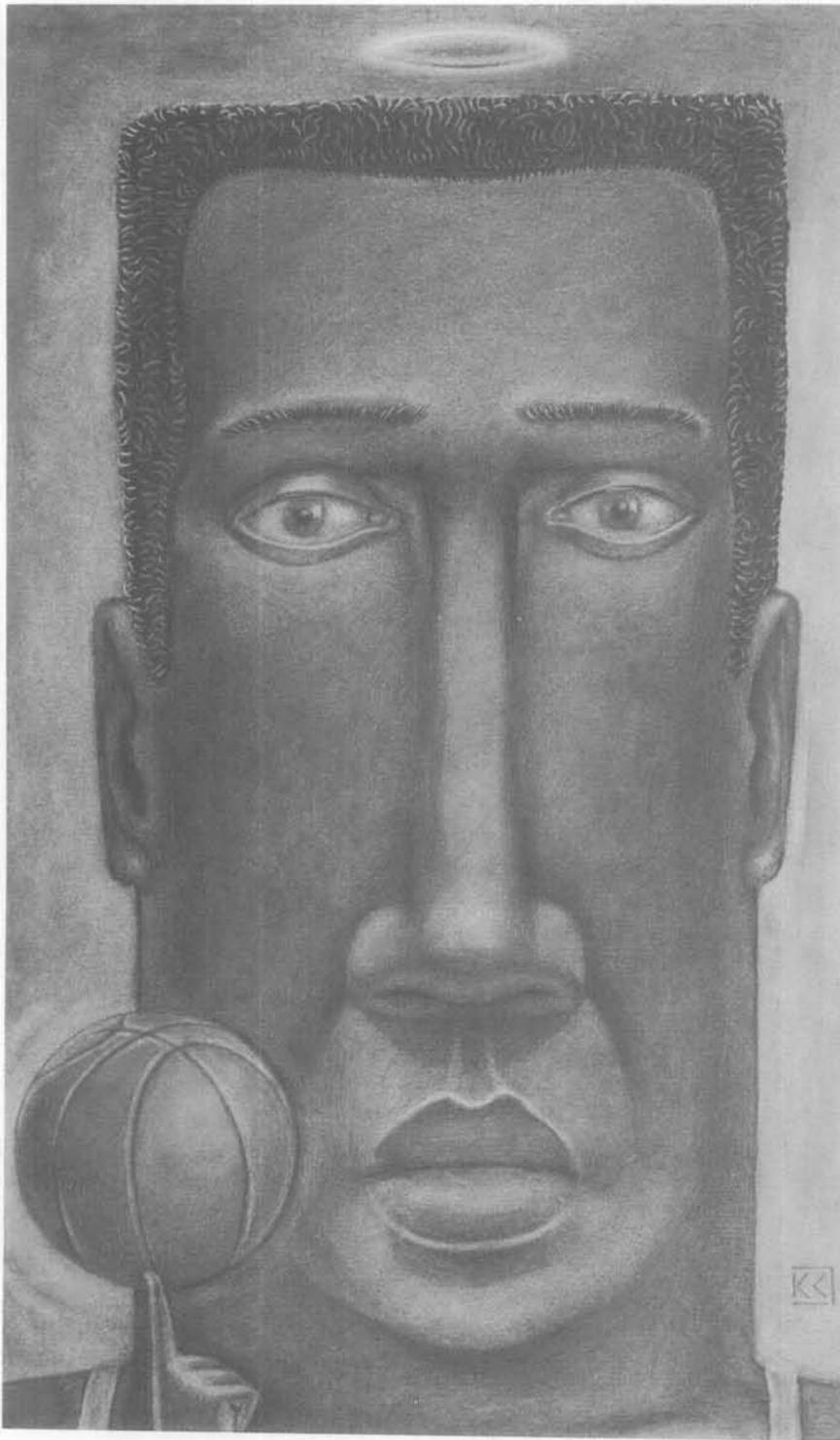
"You sure he won't be hostile?"

"The Ace? No. He's easy."

"Some of the coloreds don't like us much, I don't think. On account of the priesthood. From before the revelation."

Jake flashed his companion an accusing glare. "Don't think about that," he said. "The Ace will be—you watch. When he sees me, when he recognizes me—watch the grin. You'll think

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*"Ace," Jake said, "I thought you'd go pro, man."
Ace looked away. "So'd I," he said to the teddy bear.*

his teeth are filled with God, they'll shine so much. Gird up your loins, bud."

THE Ace's sidewalk was weather-cracked, lined with uneven, dirty snow. There was a film of ice on the cement, which the missionaries negotiated slowly. A faded Santa Claus

made of construction paper and cotton balls hung from the doorknob. "Carlton" was scrawled in red marker on the mailbox.

"I knew it," said Jake, closing his eyes. "The Ace. Thank you, God, for letting me come back. This one's for you." He rang the doorbell. When no one responded, he knocked. "Think I've changed too much for him to know me?" he said.

Elder Cline shrugged. "This neighborhood gives me the willies, Elder. I'm ready for some flippin' Watusi to come through that door. Gives me the willies."

There were sounds of movement inside. "Whozzeh?" came a woman's voice.

Jake covered his missionary tag with his overcoat. "One of Henry's friends," he called.

"Say what?"

"Jake Hampton. I used to know Henry."

A tiny window in the door opened. A brown eye squinted through it.

"You sellsmen?"

"No. Friends of The Ace," said Jake.

"Speak up?"

"Friends!" he shouted.

"Friends?"

"Yes!"

"Who friends?"

"Henry's."

"Not here."

"Where is he?"

The door opened three inches. The woman's face stared at them from above a chain bolt.

"He's a come soon. He down at the Y."

"The YMCA?"

"That's what I say. The Y."

"Working out, is he?"

"Right. He workin'."

"Can we come back?"

"If your legs work, I reckon."

"Say in an hour?"

"Awright. He come by then."

"Tell him Jake Hampton came."

"Hampton? He know you?"

"Yeah. I was here once. Right here. I spilled root beer on your front room carpet. The carpet was blue, right? Your carpet blue?"

"Brown."

"You sure?"

"I sure. And don't try to take looks. I don't let no strangers inna my house."

Elder Cline tapped him on the shoulder, said let's go, with his eyes.

"You Henry's sister?" said Jake.

"Wife. I give him the message. You best leave for now."

"Come on," Elder Cline said. "She's right. Come on."

"His wife?" said Jake.

The door closed. Elder Cline took his arm and they negotiated the ice again.

"Married!" said Jake. "The Ace got married!"

The snowflakes were getting bigger. The sun was an apricot stuck on maple tree claws.

"Hey, Cline bud, what say I show you where I lived as a kid?" said Jake, and started walking ahead, walking fast, as though there were no ice. "These trees are the same, y' know? Nothing's changed. Married! Shee-oot!"

Elder Cline skidded behind him. "It's getting dark, Ham."

"Hang loose." He did not look back as he spoke, but moved faster. A winter fog was descending.

Elder Cline begged him to slow down. "Don't vanish on me!" But Jake was already into the mist. Cline heard him scream.

"Oh God!" said Elder Cline. A prayer.

"Elder!"

"God!" Cline whispered.

"It's my flippin' house!"

"What?"

"Come on, bud. Rush the buns. My house! My flippin' house!"

Cline moved gingerly forward. The fog was cold and moist. Jake was a phantom, his arm outstretched, indicating a hazy, dilapidated, white house. Cline jogged up to him, said, "You do that again, Ham, and I'm on a bus without you, understand that?"

"Do what? That's my house! See the trellis? Looks grey, don't it, but it's blue. My father put it up. Pretty lousy shape now, but back then—and my mother planted tulips. Should we see who lives there these days?" He started towards the walk.

"It's dark," Cline called.

"Come on, bud."

"I'm catching a bus, Ham. Seriously."

"Damn it, come on!"

Cline, glancing quickly over his shoulders, acquiesced. "Foul-mouthed bastard," he accused through clenched teeth when he caught up.

"My house," Jake repeated, and knocked.

"Foul-mouthed flippin' bastard."

"Shut up, Elder."

A hunched old man with steel wool hair answered the knock, cursed, and slammed the door.

"Let's go," said Elder Cline.

Jake knocked again. Again the door opened. Before the old man could speak, Jake said, "Please, sir, it's not what you think. I used to live here is all."

"Right," said the man.

"Yes sir, I did. My dad put up that blue trellis. My dad did that."

"Name?"

"Jacob Hampton."

"Ain't heard it. And m' rent's paid."

"I used to live here."

"Must be long time 'go."

"Five years is all."

"That long time."

"In that room there," Jake pointed, "my brother and me slept. We put notches in the door. For our growth, y' know? To measure it."

The man's stone face moved to a loose grin. He chuckled. "That you been wreck the door?"

"Yeah. Me and my brother."

Beyond the old man, Jake could see the front room—a ruin of his memory. Where his mother had had an autumny hide-a-bed and two burgundy arm chairs, the old man had a burlapish couch with sunken cushions. The only light was a dim lamp in the corner. The lampshade had children's pencil scrawls all over it. Above the couch was a velvet painting of a cocker spaniel pup with pathetic eyes.

"Same as y'members?" said the old man.

"Yeah," said Jake. "Same."

"Good then. You best be on your ways, I reckon. Night comin'." He smiled tiredly and closed the door.

"I'm catching a bus," said Elder Cline. "Swear I am."

"You're sticking with me, bud, or you're in for your first mugging. Your fear stinks, Cline. Streeters will smell you coming two miles away. And I'm senior anyways."

Cline sniffled and murmured under his breath, "Die and rot."

AN hour had passed when they returned to the home of The Ace. Jake knocked. The woman called again, "Whoozeh?" "Jake Hampton."

The door opened two inches. A dark face appeared again in the rectangle. A man's voice called, "You know me?"

"Ace? Ace, is that you?"

Heavy steps. The door closed, then opened wide. Ace Carlton stood in the frame, two inches taller than Jake.

"Ace?"

In The Ace's arms was a skinny child, a boy about three years old, wearing faded Winnie the Pooh pajamas.

"Ace? It's Jake Hampton. We used to play basketball together. Remember me, doncha?"

"Nope."

"Jake Hampton? Lived on Adams Street? Moved to Idaho when I was fifteen?"

"Idaho?"

"Yeah. I kept thinking I'd see you on some basketball poster in Idaho." He grinned stupidly.

"Jake Hampton?" The Ace shook his head and rubbed the child's back. "It don't come to me."

Jake gazed at the dark, suspicious face. The Ace had grown fleshy around his jaws. "No reason you should remember me. Not really," said Jake. "I was just some dumb honky. Couldn't play basketball to save my—" He glanced at Elder Cline. "To save my nose."

"Yo' nose?" The Ace broke into a grin. Two of his teeth were missing. "Damn, man!" he said.

"We had a party here," said Jake. "I came, and I spilled root beer on your rug. Used to be a blue rug, didn't it? Blue?"

"Brown. Always be brown."

"Maybe I just think blue because—I don't know. The sky."

"You sellsmen?"

"Missionaries." Jake's voice was soft.

"Damn, man. Shee-it. Why you come here for?"

"Just to see you, man," said Jake. "Don't worry. You don't need to hear no missionary talk from us. Just come to see you, man."

"Jake Hampton. You wear glasses?"

"I did. Have contacts now."

"Li'l black kiss-ass, Poindexter glasses, din'cha."

"Yeah, Ace. That's me."

"I 'member. Spilt root beer all over my rug. My mama like t' kill me. Shoulda make you pay for that." He grinned big.

"Can we come in, Ace?"

"Chassay forrard!" Ace stood back and let the missionaries pass.

THE house smelled of cigars. The front room was lacerated. In one corner was a tinsel tree, rattling like paper—shivering, it seemed, with the coldness Jake and Elder Cline had let in. In the opposite corner was a teddy bear. It sat grinning, spilling its white guts. There were four Santa Claus cards hanging on nails above the couch. Each Santa had a blue-grey beard and a sugary blue-grey tassel; each wore a fuzzy suit. The couch was mock leather and looked knifed. Black tape covered the biggest splits in its upholstery; none covered the smaller ones; stuffing poured out of them.

When they sat, Jake could feel the couch's coils. Looking at the yellow light bulb swinging from the ceiling like a metronome, Jake had a fleeting thought of an electric chair.

"Right there," said The Ace, pointing to the corner where the teddy bear sat. "That's where you spilt it."

Jake nodded.

"Probably there still."

Jake chuckled.

"Damn man," said The Ace. "I 'member you for sure. I thought I forget off'n the mind, but I 'member. But what's this get-up? You get 'ligion? You some moonie or somethin'?"

"Mormon, man. I told you. Mormon."

The Ace laughed hard and didn't stop for a long time. He tried to speak twice, but couldn't get the words past his laughs. "Scuse me," he said at last. "Sorry for the gigglement, but you know how funny 'tis seein' some dressed-up MORmon dude, sassy as'a jay bird, y'know, in his shiny blues, sittin' like nothin's unusual—sittin' right here in my room?" He finished laughing with a ghostly moan. "Damn, man," he said, wiping his eyes.

"Ace, hey—" said Jake, and The Ace started laughing again.

"It's getting late," whispered Cline.

"So Ace," Jake said, "you got married."

"Yeah."

"She's pretty."

Ace wiped his eyes. "Oh yeah. My woman. Love her like the mischief, you know. Now you all—you all have them big weddin's, right? Like thousand brides and thousand grooms all

marry t'once?"

"Nah, man. That's them moonies."

"Oh yeah. Yeah."

Elder Cline whispered, "We don't want to miss the bus."

"So how's the basketball?" said Jake.

The Ace shrugged. "Last I look, basketball fine."

"Come on, Ace. You're the best basketball player I ever seen," said Jake, looking him square in the eyes. The Ace shrugged again.

"You was workin' out when we come first time. Basketball, right?"

"When?"

"Before. Your wife said you was at the Y."

"My job. I sweeps up."

"You sweep?"

Another shrug.

Jake blinked and pushed at the glasses he no longer wore. He could feel himself starting to sweat. His lungs stung. "Ace," he said. "I thought you'd go pro, man."

Ace looked away. "So'd I," he said to the teddy bear.

"So yeah. So—what happened?"

"Nothin'," he said, still to the toy. "Weren't nothin to count on gettin'. I never was good enough." He turned his eyes back to Jake. "Got busted up. An' I don't wanna wrassle with my shadow, understand me?"

"But you're the best, Ace!" said Jake, his voice nearly squeaking with adolescent conviction. "The best!"

The Ace's eyes were as pathetic and big as the cocker spaniel's in Jake's ex-house. They circled Jake's face. His voice, when he spoke, was a soft, low monotone. "I don't have nothin' to brag on." He paused, looked from one missionary to the other, eyes moving back and forth between them, then up and down. "Mormons," he said. "Mormons. Isn't they the church don't let no black man inside?"

"That's changed, Ace," Jake said fast.

"Yeah?"

"Yeah, Ace. Changed way back."

"The way used to be all blocked up. I don't reckon you'd know what that's like, wouldn't you. Havin' the way blocked up. You wouldn't know, bein' from Idaho."

"I do know, Ace."

"Nah. You wouldn't."

"Ace—"

"Most my friends, they call me Hank now."

"Ace, you should practice or something. You're too good to sweep up other guys' sweat. You should be up on the posters, you know? Shootin' baskets. Ace, you got to gird up your loins!"

The man leaned forward, stunned. "I got to WHUT?"

Jake glanced at Elder Cline, who gave him a defiant look of abandonment. "Gird up your loins," Jake whispered.

Ace grinned, and started laughing again. "Git up my WHUT?"

"It's a song. A Mormon song. Says 'Take fresh courage. Gird up your loins.'"

"Sound like some faggot song ta me," he laughed.

"Nah, it's just—"

"Jacob," he said, his face suddenly hard. "Jacob, you know how many high school kids's wantin' to be pros in basketball?"

Jake shook his head.

"No idea? I tell you, then. More 'n all the MORmons in the world. More 'n all the MORmons in the whole damn world."

"Ace—"

"You bes' be gettin' on your way now, missionaries."

Elder Cline sat up straight. "He's right," he said. "The man's right. We don't want to miss our bus."

The Ace shook his head. "Lookin' so shiny and so sassy. Kickin' up shines and shuttin' all the doors and the windahs. You best go. You wanna give me money for the spilt root beer, that's awright."

"Ace, that's not why I come. I—"

"Maybe ten dollar."

Jake felt around in his pockets. "I just come to say 'Hi.' That's all."

The Ace held out his palm. Jake fed it a ten.

"Come on," Cline said.

Jake held out his hand for The Ace to shake. The Ace backed away.

"Good to see you," Jake said. "Really."

Grinning, The Ace slapped the missionary's palm. "Other side, man," said The Ace, and, by reflex, Jake turned his hand over. The Ace slapped it again, hard, and Jake felt himself being gently shoved toward the door.

THE construction paper Santa Claus swayed back and forth when the door closed behind them. It was fully dark now.

"Cold," Cline said, his breath white.

Snowflakes were big and thick. Clumps of snow fell from the Carlton roof like rags. It was a black and white, frozen world. Pines towered above them, seeming to Jake like huge black bears, the snow on their limbs white stuffing, coming all undone as they stood there waiting to get slapped, stood there saying with the wind, "Gimme fa-a-av, m-a-a-an. Utteh s-s-side, ma-a-a-n." Jake slapped one branch, then turned his hand over and caught the snow as it fell. He made it into ice in his fist.

Elder Cline was two steps ahead.

"Elder!" said Jake.

"Die and rot!" yelled his companion.

To Jake. To the world.



ANOTHER COUNTRY TO CAT CASTEEL

Easy to come for the weekend
and stay until Tuesday, in your country.
Now I try to remember everything
how the boys practiced their swimming in the bathtub
and said their rhymes in the language of your country.

Next time I'll come sooner and stay later.
To see the Palominos stamping in your stable,
to ride out through the wind,
to feel the sand sucking at our toes at the shore,
Your country, like beryl in a sapphire sea.

Someday I will live there.
We'll eat apricots in the gloaming,
the bowl heavy between us,
the skins peeled back to get at the sweetness,
the apricots so perfect in your country.

And we'll eat them off the ground,
in your orchard in the morning,
walking beneath the trees in the morning,
in your country, in death, your perfect country

—KATHLEEN WEBER

Mormon theology is somewhat different from the norm. In its concreteness and in the raw it appears to be meaningful, without the fancy linguistic garb that usually adorns theological discourse. But the problem is, it also appears to be false. At least it appears to be false unless one is able to make, as the faithful Mormon makes, a complete about-face from the traditional ways of thinking about God and the soul and the human condition.

SOME DISTINGUISHING CHARACTERISTICS OF MORMON PHILOSOPHY

By Sterling M. McMurrin

I WILL COMMENT ON THREE BASIC ELEMENTS IN Mormon philosophy that have both theoretical and practical implications for the Mormon religion and that distinguish it in fundamental ways from the traditional forms of Judæo-Christian philosophical and theological thought: Mormonism's materialism, its nonabsolutism, and its naturalistic humanism.

In the beginnings of the LDS church, its philosophy and theology were quite fluid and in some respects transitory, a condition entirely normal for a movement in its infancy. In the early years, the theology was not basically different from typical Protestantism, but there were radical changes before the death of Joseph Smith. In the first decades of this century, the philosophy and theology achieved a considerable measure of stability and consistency. But things changed after the death in 1933 of the Church's leading theologians, Brigham H. Roberts and James E. Talmage; now for several decades there has been considerable confusion in Mormon thought, with the result that it is often difficult if not impossible to determine just what are and what are not the officially accepted doctrines.

MORMON MATERIALISM

DESPITE the confusion, however, nothing is more characteristic of Mormonism than its materialistic conception of

reality. Every philosophy must come to grips with the apparent fact of matter—whether it is real or is appearance only, is one of two or more kinds of reality, or is the only thing that is genuinely real. The dominant tradition of occidental philosophic thought has been idealistic, holding that the ultimate real is idea or the product of idea, mental rather than physical, or, in theological contexts, spirit—that matter is either unreal or at best is an extremely low level of reality. Moreover, that matter is the source of evil and suffering. The anti-materialistic temperament and character of traditional Christian theology are not derived from biblical sources, but rather especially from the overwhelming influence of Platonic metaphysics, which dominated major segments of philosophic thought in the Hellenistic and Roman world in which Christianity was born. The biblical religion does not denigrate material reality. On the contrary, the Bible holds that the material world is good because God created it.

The radical materialism of Mormonism has its ground in the Doctrine and Covenants and has been basic in the thought of virtually all influential LDS writers to the present. Section 131 includes the familiar statement, "There is no such thing as immaterial matter. All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes" (D&C 131:7, 9). In numerous writings officially accepted by the Church, even God is described as a material being, having "body, parts, and passions." Orson Pratt, B. H. Roberts, and James E. Talmage, major influences on Mormon thought, all agree with this materialistic principle, insisting that there is no such thing as immaterial matter. Of course, no respectable philosopher ever held that there is immaterial matter; this is obviously a logical contradiction. The immaterialist position has been grounded in the theory of the reality of immaterial *substance*. The Mor-

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mon writers have fallen victim to the common tendency to treat the term "substance" as a synonym for "matter." There may be no immaterial substance, but that is a factual matter to be argued on the basis of factual evidence, not logic. It is not a logical contradiction to say that God or the spirit or mind is an immaterial substance.

It is of interest that the pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Anaxagoras, who was the chief originator of the occidental conception of mind or intelligence, *nous*, employed the same terminology used by Joseph Smith in describing spirit. "Mind," he wrote, about 460 B.C.E., "is the finest of all things, and the purest, and has complete understanding of everything, and has the greatest power. All things which have life, both the greater and the less, are ruled by mind" (Hermann Diels, *Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, translated by Kathleen Freeman, 59:12). There is some question of whether Anaxagoras held that *nous*, which became soul or spirit in theology, was material or rather his use of the terms "fine" and "pure" as descriptions of *nous* as matter was due to inadequacies of the Greek language in his time. But the extant fragment which expresses his views seems to mean that *nous* is simply a different kind of matter. The foremost historian of Greek philosophy, Theodor Gomperz, in his monumental *The Greek Thinkers*, wrote that "nine-tenths of the ancient philosophers . . . regarded the individual 'soul' as a substance not immaterial, but of an extremely refined and mobile materiality" (Vol. 1, 216).

Clear and unambiguous materialism entered the stream of occidental philosophy with the atomism of Leucippus and Democritus in the fifth century B.C.E. For the Greek atomists, the world, both physical and mental, is a mechanical congeries of material atoms, all of the same quality and differing only quantitatively, in their sizes, shapes, positions, and motions. If this mechanical atomism had prevailed, what we call modern science might have developed many centuries earlier than it did, but atomism and mechanism were completely overshadowed by the science of Aristotle until the time of Galileo and by the idealistic metaphysics of Plato, which is even today a powerful force in philosophical and theological thought.

Nevertheless, atomism survived as the scientific base of the ethical school of Epicureanism, which reached its zenith in the *De Rerum Natura* of Titus Lucretius Carus (ca. 96–ca. 55 B.C.E.) in the first century B.C.E., and exerted a considerable influence as an anti-religious school in the Roman world until

the triumph of Christianity. Stoicism, which was opposed to atomism and held that reality is a continuous material plenum, was in its dominant form favorable to religion and had a strong impact on Christianity. Even though much Roman Stoicism, as in the writings of the emperor Marcus Aurelius Antoninus in the second century, was essentially pantheistic, the Stoic metaphysics was a thoroughgoing materialism—both the physical world and mind or spirit were regarded by the Stoics as material.

At least one major early Christian theologian was a confirmed materialist—Tertullian (ca. 155–after 220 C.E.), the earliest of the Church Fathers to write in Latin and to give a strong Western-Roman emphasis to Christian doctrine. Like the Mormons, Tertullian held that the spirit or soul is material and that even God is corporeal. "For who will deny," wrote Tertullian, "that God is a body, although God is a spirit? For Spirit has a body substance of its own kind, in its own form" (*Adversus Praxean*, ch. 7). But materialism failed to capture Christianity, which came increasingly under the dominion of Platonism, especially through the influence of the Jewish philosopher Philo Judaeus and the foremost Roman philosopher, the Neoplatonist Plotinus. The Spanish Jewish philosopher Solomon Ibn Gabirol in the eleventh century held a position somewhat like that of Mormonism—that there are two kinds of matter, spiritual and physical. This had been suggested even by St. Augustine (354–430), the greatest of the theologians, but it was opposed by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. There were some under Aristotelian influence, however, who accepted the idea of spiritual matter especially because Aristotle held that matter is the principle of individuation, and angels,

though spiritual, are individuals rather than species. They must therefore be in some sense material. This, of course, was the point of the medieval argument about how many angels can stand on the point of a needle—or was it the head of a pin? If angels, as the Church taught, are immaterial beings, they are in Aristotelian terms species rather than individuals and therefore occupy no space whatsoever. At a 1978 meeting of the Trustees of The Tanner Lectures on Human Values at Cambridge University, Lord Ashby, in commenting on the scientific tradition of Cambridge University in contrast to the philosophical tradition of Oxford, called attention to the angel-pin problem. The two universities, he said, had been requested by a leading scholarly academy to put an end to the controversy and come up with the correct answer. Oxford replied with a



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and that the material
world is good.

detailed commentary on Aristotle's principle of individuation, the scriptural description of angels as spirits, the tradition of the Church, etc. Cambridge, on the other hand, replied with a short telegram: "Please advise concerning the area of the head of the pin in question and the center of gravity and girth of the several angels."

In a sense materialism went underground in occidental thought and let the metaphysics of idea, mind, and spirit dominate both philosophy and religion. But it surfaced again in the modern world, especially in the seventeenth century when there was considerable revolt against both Platonism and Aristotelianism. Pierre Gassendi (1592-1655), a priest and mathematician, revived atomism in the Epicurean form, which described a break in the mechanical behavior of the atomic world allowing for freedom of the will. From then on, the atom gained ground steadily as a basis for the essentially material conception of the world, a conception that dominated one branch of science after another until there was a virtual mechanical synthesis in science as the nineteenth century neared its close—a synthesis grounded in the classical physics of Isaac Newton. The established religions resisted the materialistic description of reality, as did the dominant idealistic philosophical schools, especially Hegelianism and its offspring, but Mormonism, which was born and nurtured in the century of materialism, played matter for all it was worth—and then some. Of the many philosophical defenders of materialism in the past century, the British philosopher Herbert Spencer (1820-1903), whose materialistic metaphysics was a cosmic expansion on the principle of evolution, has been the main non-Mormon influence on LDS writers.

The chief defender and advocate of materialism in the early years of the Church was Orson Pratt, whose essay *Absurdities of Immaterialism* (1849), the most impressive analytical piece in Mormon literature, had a permanent impact on Mormon thought. Pratt objected to the idealistic argument of the philosopher George Berkeley (1685-1753) on the ground that it was productive of atheism. In technical metaphysics, materialism had received a telling blow in the seventeenth century from Berkeley's brilliant and influential essay on the *Principles of Human Knowledge*, which argued that *esse est percipi*, to be is to be perceived. There is no ground, Berkeley insisted, for regarding a thing to be real apart from its being perceived by a mind—which gave rise to a famous limerick by Ronald Knox which Orson Pratt would have endorsed:

There was a young man who said, "God
Must think it exceedingly odd

If he finds that this tree

Continues to be

When there's no one about in the Quad."

But Pratt did not fully understand Berkeley, and contrary to his criticism that Berkeley's mentalistic approach to the reality of the physical world produced atheism, Berkeley regarded it as an argument for the existence of God. After all, he gave up philosophy and became a bishop. Someone came back with a reply that nicely puts Pratt in his place and states Berkeley's theistic position:

"Dear Sir:

Your astonishment's odd:

I am always about in the Quad,

And that's why the tree

Will continue to be,

Since observed by

Yours faithfully,

God."

Orson Pratt went all out for the atomistic approach to matter. Like the atoms of Democritus, Epicurus, and Gassendi, and indeed of the generality of physicists of his time who were under the influence of Newton, Pratt's atoms were extended, space-filling, solid pieces of matter. His atoms, of course, composed both mind or spirit and body. But Pratt was really a panpsychist. His were no ordinary atoms. They were little material minds, in some ways not unlike the monads of the great German philosopher and mathematician Gottfried Leibniz (1646-1716). Pratt was a Newtonian up to a point, so his atoms obeyed the law of gravity; they were very smart; they obeyed Newton's laws because they were obedient and did what they were supposed to do. Pratt never disclosed how his atoms knew so much about Newtonian physics or why, being free to do as they pleased, they always pleased to do what God had in mind for them. Leibniz's monads, on the other hand, were subject to a pre-established harmonious behavior when they were created by God, but Pratt's atoms were uncreated and had free will. The generality of Mormons were not partial to the idea that sticks and stones, as well as their own bodies, are made up of little living minds, and that part of Pratt's materialism, his panpsychism, failed to get official recognition. As a matter of fact, it was this kind of speculation that got him into trouble with his chief nemesis, Brigham Young.

The materialism that was so strong in the nineteenth century suffered a mortal blow early in our own, with the relativity theory overthrowing the absolute space and absolute time of



What is refined
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Newtonian physics and quantum theory destroying classical mechanics in the treatment of both light and matter, raising serious questions about causation, and mercilessly complicating the structure and behavior of the atom. The poor old atom of solid stuff no longer exists. It was supposed to be impregnable—the very word atom means the unsplittable, the indivisible—but as everyone knows, in our own time it has been split and split until now there are electrons, photons, neutrons, and more, and heaven only knows how many other “ons” will show up in the future. Matter, which was supposed by the old materialists to be absolutely indestructible, is shown to be convertible to energy, and now from energy to matter.

To say the least, over the past few decades, matter and old-fashioned materialism have been having a rather rough time, much to the delight of most theologians and all philosophical idealists. As Bertrand Russell has written, “Modern physics is further from common sense than the physics of the nineteenth century. It has dispensed with matter, substituting series of events; it has abandoned continuity in microscopic phenomena; and it has substituted statistical averages for strict deterministic causality affecting each individual occurrence” (*Human Knowledge: Its Scope and Limits*, 322). The British astronomer and philosopher Sir James Jeans, a modern Pythagorean, held that God is a “pure mathematician” and the universe is his “pure thought” (*The Mysterious Universe*, 165, 168). So much for the old-style matter.

The opposition of religion to materialism, which has a long and complicated history, has been due, I think, especially to two things: that matter is the source of evil and suffering, and that a materialistic conception of the world entails a mechanical determinism that leaves no room for the freedom of the will, which is the basis of moral responsibility. The first idea entered Christianity especially from Platonism, which held that matter in itself is non-being, the lowest level of reality, and from the Gnosticism that plagued Judaism and Christianity in the first two centuries of the Common Era and had infected Christianity especially through its intrusions into the writings of Paul and the Gospel of John. The second, mechanical determinism, is found in Democritean atomism and in ancient Stoicism and was very strong in much nineteenth-century scientific and philosophic thought. It is still around despite the efforts of many scientists and philosophers to dispel it through the indeterministic interpretations of the Heisenberg principle of

uncertainty in quantum mechanics.

Mormonism has refused to accept either of these objections to materialism. Its reply to Platonism is that matter is real in every positive sense, and to both the Platonism and Gnosticism in Christianity, that the material world is good. It is good because God said that it was good—not the bad God of Gnosticism, but the good God of Judaism and Christianity. Its reply to the specter of mechanical determinism, like that of Epicurus, is that even within the framework of a world of physical law, human beings have genuine freedom of will, or what Mormons, in the old-fashioned terminology, commonly call free agency. The Mormon theologians have never given a good explanation of how this can be true. But in Mormon philosophy the uncreated intelligence, which is the essential being of humankind, is presumably by its very nature free.

The LDS writers have done little or nothing to clarify the meaning of the idea that spirit is refined matter, to bring it into the context of the contemporary treatment of matter in physics and chemistry, or to seriously wrestle with the difficult problem of the relation of mind to body. It seems to me that the simplistic idea of spirit, or mind, or *nous* being refined, pure matter—whether in Joseph Smith or Anaxagoras—is ambiguous in the context of the early nineteenth-century conception of matter and unintelligible if not meaningless in the context of today’s scientific description of matter. John A. Widtsoe, a scientist and an apostle, seemed to have some interest in this problem when he employed the concept of ether in his speculations on the Holy Spirit; but he didn’t get very far with this, in part because he advanced his ideas in the early decades of this century at the very time that physics was

in the process of discarding the explanation of light by reference to a luminiferous ether.

More than once I discussed the problem of so-called refined matter with Henry Eyring, a devout Mormon and the Church’s foremost scientist, and one fully cognizant of the most sophisticated theories on the nature of matter—a field in which he made important contributions. But I was never able to get very far with Eyring. He knew all about quantum mechanics, and he also knew that the gospel is true. That was about it. In *The Faith of a Scientist*, Eyring says, “The scriptural description of spirit as a more refined kind of matter takes on a new perspective in the light of this larger concept of the interchangeability of matter and energy. Matter, in the broader sense, can still be spoken of as indestructible [a position held by Joseph Smith



The idea that God is an eternal, timeless being still dominates the official Christian creeds, but today there is a strong movement against it in both Catholicism and Protestantism.

and the LDS theologians and also by Anaxagoras and most Greek philosophers] providing we realize that energy is just another form of matter" (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1967, 78).

A new perspective indeed. It is one thing to think of a more refined matter in the days when it was thought that theoretically a piece of matter might be ground up more or less indefinitely. But what is refined matter when ordinary gross matter is a congeries of electrical charges?

MORMONISM'S NONABSOLUTISTIC CONCEPTION OF GOD

BUT enough of this. I'll turn to the nonabsolutistic conception of God. Here Mormonism is even more heretical than in its materialism—if you're a good Protestant or Catholic. And here is the most important and, in my opinion, the best thing in Mormon philosophy or theology.

Whatever is absolute is unconditioned and unrelated. At least that is the case for whatever is absolutely absolute. There can be, of course, only one absolutely absolute absolute—*The Absolute*. *The Absolute* must be the totality of reality, as in the case of pantheism, where God is everything and everything is God. The classical Judæo-Christianity was theistic, of course, and followed the biblical pattern of an ontological distinction between God, the creator, and the world, his creation. In that theology, therefore, God was not a genuine absolute, as he was related to the created world. It was a relation imposed by himself. But from the beginning, the Christian theologians' passion for absolutism pushed it to the limit, and there it is today in the more orthodox forms of the established religion, as the traditional omni's testify—omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and all the rest.

In its formative years, Christianity had what might be called a political or power absolutism in its background, the power of both the biblical creator and law-giving God and the Roman emperors. But the main source of its absolutism was its inheritance of Greek Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics.

Plato was influenced by the Pythagorean philosopher Parmenides, the arch-absolutist who held that reality is one and that all sensations of individual objects and events are illusory. Plato's description of reality was a kind of two-level affair—the world known by the senses of particulars which come and go and are in process, and a higher reality of universals, the Platonic forms or ideas. The sensory, material

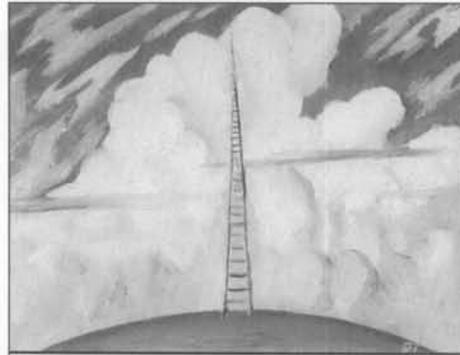
world of particulars is in space and time, the objects in space and the events in time. But the higher, ultimate realities, the universals, are spaceless and timeless; they are not anywhere and they are not anywhen. They are without motion, without change or process of any kind; unlike the particulars, they do not come into being and do not go out of existence; indeed, they do not exist, they subsist. They are abstractions that are apprehended not by the senses but by the rational mind. They

inhabit an intelligible world as physical objects and events inhabit a sensory world.

Now, this doctrine of universals as ultimate realities as opposed to particulars, which exist by participation in the universals, is the essential feature of Hellenic Platonism and the later Neoplatonism and was fated to have a most profound influence on the whole character of occidental thought. An object such as this paper is a particular. It exists somewhere in space and some-when in time; it comes into existence, moves from place to place, goes through various processes, and ceases to exist. But its smoothness, its whiteness, and whatever else can be said of it, are universals. The adjectival descriptions of the paper are abstract nouns or substantives which designate realities that are independent of particular pieces of paper, realities by virtue of which the particular exists. At least this is the argument of Platonism. Just acts and just judges are particulars, but justice is a universal; beautiful sunsets are particulars, but beauty is a universal; true propositions are particulars, but truth is a universal.

Whether universals have genuine reality independently of particulars, as the Platonists have argued, is probably the most important problem in metaphysics, and this position, which is known technically as realism, has had the most profound philosophic influence on theology, religion, and morals. The opposite of Platonic realism is nominalism, the position that only particulars are real and that universals are simply names or words employed to refer to similarities among particulars. Nominalism is strong today, with today's commitment to sensory experience as the chief source of reliable knowledge, but over many centuries realism dominated philosophy, science, and religion and was the philosophic basis of orthodoxy in Christian theology. Even today it is a powerful influence in our thinking, as when we insist that truth is eternal or an act is right or wrong regardless of the related circumstances. Here the Platonic absolutism is still with us.

Now, Platonism had a powerful impact on the Jewish phi-



Some Mormons seem to think of God almost as if he were simply one of us, only a lot smarter than the rest of us, and, of course, way ahead of us.

This overhumanization of the conception of God is the weakest part of the Mormon theology and religion.

losopher Philo of Alexandria, who was roughly a contemporary of Jesus. Philo (ca. 13 B.C.E.–ca. 45 C.E.), much of whose work is still extant, was born and reared in two cultures, as most of us have been, the Greek philosophic-scientific culture and the Jewish-biblical culture. He attempted to combine and reconcile the two, Plato and Moses, in his philosophy, and he thereby set the pattern for the early development of Christian theology by the Alexandrian theologians who, after Paul, were major creators of that theology.

In keeping with Plato's doctrine on the nature of universals, Philo held that the creator God of the Bible is a being in neither space nor time, but is absolute and free of all external conditions and relations. God is not in space and time, because he created them. "The great Cause of all things," wrote Philo, "does not exist in time, nor at all in place, but he is superior to both time and place, for having made all created things in subjection to himself, he is surrounded by nothing but he is superior to everything." Moreover, God "is uncreated, and always acting, not suffering," an idea that indicates especially the influence of Aristotelian metaphysics on Philo.

Now, to make a very long and complicated story short and altogether too simple, by the fifth century, with Christianity finally the official Roman religion and St. Augustine, the greatest of the theologians, hard at work sorting out the ideas that would determine the course of the theology even to our time, the living personal creator and law-giving God of the Hebraic tradition was defined by impersonal descriptions which came predominantly from Greek sources, especially Plato. For Augustine and most Christian theology since his time, God is a personal, living, thinking, and willing being, but he is eternal or timeless and not in space. He is related to nothing and subject to nothing. He created the world from nothing and is free of all influence by his creation. The mind of God is eternally stocked with the Platonic value universals, and the universals determine his will.

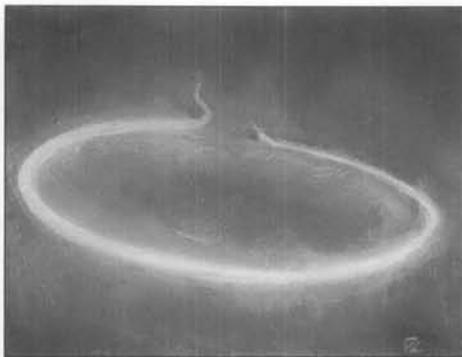
The biblical God, who was intimately involved in the temporal processes of human history, became a timeless being who has no past and no future, who embraces in his being the past, present, and future of his temporal creation and who enters into it only once, descending vertically into the horizontal movement of history by becoming incarnate in Jesus Christ. The idea that God is an eternal, timeless being still dominates the official Christian creeds, but today there is a strong move-

ment against it in both Catholicism and Protestantism, as evidenced particularly by the so-called process theology and philosophy that are identified especially with the metaphysics of Alfred North Whitehead and the theology of Charles Hartshorne.

It is important to recognize what is meant by the creeds of the churches when they express the idea, as in the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith of the Church of England, that God is a being "without body, parts, or passions." These are ideas with predominantly Greek ancestry. The "without body" is fairly simple. Body suggests materiality, and matter in Platonism is the lowest form of reality, non-being, and, to make matters worse, it is the source of evil and suffering. This, of course, has some support from especially the Gnostic elements in the New Testament. The "parts" business is a little less obvious. In Plato's *Phaedo*, where Socrates is discoursing to his disciples prior to drinking the hemlock, he makes a case for the immortality of the soul on the ground that it is a simple entity rather than a compound. If it were a compound, theoretically it could decompose. If it had parts, it could come apart. But being simple, it is indestructible and therefore immortal. That God is without passions, despite the passions of anger and mercy evident in the biblical accounts, draws especially on the powerful influence of Aristotelian metaphysics on Christian thought, mediated through the same channels as Platonism. God, says Aristotle, is pure act and is in no way passive. He is always the subject, never the predicate, always in the active voice, never the passive. God influences all else but can be influenced by nothing. He is impassive, without passions. This idea has never had much appeal for the typical worshiper, who likes to influence

God through prayer. But it has always been popular with the theologians, who obviously don't go in for praying. Aristotle's God, who or which was the chief cause of this impasse, is pure thought, the prime mover; but he thinks only himself, as other objects of thought would be impure. He does not know that the world, which he moves by attraction, even exists. It's obvious that he isn't really a he, and certainly not a she. In his *Science and the Modern World*, Alfred North Whitehead wrote that "Aristotle's metaphysics did not lead him very far towards the production of a god available for religious purposes" (249).

Everyone knows that God is eternal, but that is usually taken to mean that he had no beginning and will have no end. That, however, is not the point of the technical theology. He has no beginning and no end because he is not at all a temporal



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being. Most informed non-Mormon Christians know that God is not anywhere in particular. But because he is not anywhere in particular he can be everywhere in general. That's the beauty of the Platonic universals. Yet those same Christians, believing that God is eternal, do not come to grips with the idea that he is not anywhen in particular, but rather that he is everywhen in general. This is a more difficult, and far more important, idea.

I rather think that most church people, if asked "Where is God?" would say that he is everywhere in general, but nowhere in particular. But if asked "When is God?"—a strange but technically correct way of asking—would say that he simply is eternal, not meaning, however, that he is not in time. But if this is the case, they would be at odds with the technical theology, both Catholic and Protestant. Of course in Protestantism, especially, there has been a large movement even among church leaders and theologians away from the major founders, Luther and Calvin, in matters of doctrine. And there is some indication of important dissension in these matters in Catholic theology.

The idea that God is a temporal being subject to time and space is the basic heresy of Mormonism. God is somewhere in space and is in the context of the passing of time. He has a genuine past, present, and future. His present is our present, his future our future. In view of this spatialization and temporalization of God, taken together with the extreme anthropomorphic character of Mormon theology, there was always the problem of how the deity got around the universe, a problem worked over by several Mormon theologians by distinguishing between the Holy Ghost—the traditional third member of the Godhead, regarded by Mormons as a separate person—and the Holy Spirit, the all-pervading agent of God's actions.

All theistic religions which hold that God is a person, as is the case in Judaism, Islam, and the Christian churches generally, have anthropomorphic conceptions of God, since they describe God essentially in terms of human values. But Mormon anthropomorphism is of the extreme type, where God is described as being so human-like that unfortunately some Mormons seem to think of God almost as if he were simply one of us, only a lot smarter than the rest of us, and, of course, way ahead of us. This overhumanization of the conception of God is the weakest part of the Mormon theology and religion. A doctrine intended to emphasize the divinity that is latent in the human, too often it results in stressing the human in the

divine. Mormon theology lends itself all too easily to trivialization.

But the importance of the belief that God is in time, the most distinguishing characteristic of Mormon theology, is difficult to overstate. The entire question of the meaningfulness of human history and the life of the individual person, his hopes, aspirations, failures, and successes, is at stake. If for God every event in the totality of the world occurs simulta-

neously, as St. Thomas Aquinas held, or if God has everything in the total creation immediately present before his eyes, as John Calvin held and as some contemporary Mormon writers seem to believe, so that our future is God's present, what can we say of human effort and human freedom? It isn't the familiar question of how can we have free choice if God knows what we are going to choose. St. Augustine answered that very simply: God knows that we are going to choose it freely. Rather it is the far more important question of what is free will if what we are going to do tomorrow is for God already being done by us today. Is there no real past and no real future? Not just for us as creatures but for God as well.

This is the chief problem faced by theistic philosophy: how an absolute God who is timeless and spaceless can be related to a world that is in space and time. The death-of-God theology that made some impression a few years ago arose from this predicament—that the God of the theologians has no meaning for the life of humanity. Absolutistic theology encounters an insoluble difficulty in the problem of why there is evil and suffering in a world over which the omnipotent and omnibenevolent God has total control. The absolutism of the traditional theism is supported, of course, by the orthodox doctrine of the *fiat* or *ex*

nihilo creation—that God created the world from nothing, including the space and time that the world is in.

Aristotle held that God could not do anything because he should already have done it, but St. Augustine, certainly one of our brightest saints, pointed out that God could not have already done anything before he created the world because "already" involves time, and there was no time before the creation of time. In the eleventh book of the *Confessions*, St. Augustine's brilliant psychological treatise on time, he avoided the temptation to say to those who insisted on asking "What was God doing before he created the world?" that he was busily engaged in creating a proper hell for those who persist in asking this question.

It is well known that in denying the absolutistic conception



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of God, Mormon theology denies the *ex nihilo* creation, holding with the ancient Greek philosophers and most modern scientists that the world is uncreated. In some form or other the world of space and time has always been. The Genesis account of the creation does not say that the world was made from nothing, but that idea became important in both Judaism and Christianity as the absolutistic conception of God gained ground, for God as absolute could not be conditioned by or related to anything external to himself except his own creation, and in a sense he included his creation. This was a self-limitation, as today's theologians sometimes describe it. In his late dialogue the *Timaeus*, Plato describes the constructor God, a demiurge, making the world of particulars from uncreated matter after the patterns of the uncreated ideas or universals, a scenario somewhat like the Mormon belief in two creations or constructions, spiritual and physical.

Or take the case of the American philosopher William James, the chief philosophic enemy of absolutism in all its forms. In a famous passage in his *Pragmatism*, a statement that should warm the hearts of the pragmatic Mormons, James says,

Suppose that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: "I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own 'level best.' I offer you the choice of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of cooperative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?" (290-91.)

Now, Mormons take this idea very seriously, right down to the point of joining up. The world is imperfect and unfinished and will never be finished. The future is as real for God as for his children; it is open, free, and undetermined. Anything can happen. They and God are in this thing together, and they must work through it together.

Confronting the problem of evil and suffering, James blasted those who say, as most religious people do to comfort themselves and others, "God is in his heaven and all is well." James said, in effect, "in times like these God has no business hanging around Heaven. He is down in all the muck and dirt of the universe trying to clean it up."

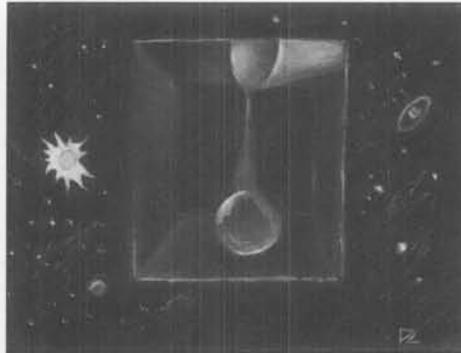
It is well known, of course, that Mormonism has much in common with pragmatic philosophy. Both came out of New England, and both are intellectually descendent from Puritanism. The Mormon activism is one of its obvious similarities to pragmatic philosophy, which judges in terms of results, and also what might be called futurism, which issues from the strong temporal emphasis of both Mormonism and pragmatism. Here I must succumb to the temptation to tell of an

incident in a seminar given by William Pepperell Montague, one of America's foremost philosophers. Montague said, "Mr. McMurrin, I understand that you are a Mormon." When I assured him that I was, he said, "All I know about the Mormons is what I have learned from my friend and colleague Professor John Dewey, the great pragmatist. Professor Dewey regarded Mormonism as an exemplification of his instrumental pragmatism writ large, and he once told me that when you Mormons die and go to heaven you don't get harps and play on them like other Christians. Could that be true?" I said, "That's the truth, no harps." Montague continued, "Professor Dewey told me that in heaven you Mormons get jobs and go to work like in this life. Could that be true?" "Yes," I replied, "we have to go to work." Whereupon Montague said, "Ah, I like that, I like that, that's great; I was never partial to string music."

Every Mormon believes that the denial of the *ex nihilo* creation entails the idea that the essential being of a human being, the intelligence, is uncreated. In his influential King Follett sermon shortly before his death, Joseph Smith insisted that humankind is uncreated and co-equal with God. The Church felt, quite rightly, that that was pushing the point a little too far and edited "co-equal" down to mean "co-eternal." At any rate,

the human being turns out to be in an ultimate sense self-existent, a necessary rather than accidental element of the world. If the uncreated intelligence is described in part in terms of freedom, that is, free will, as I think it should be, it provides an important basis for the intense Mormon emphasis on free moral agency.

The pre-existence of the soul, or spirit, or mind, or whatever it might be called, is commonplace in some Eastern religions, but not in Christianity. The Alexandrian theologian Origen believed in pre-existence, but not like the Mormons. He believed that God created the soul in a pre-existent state. It is possible, but I think rather doubtful, that Plato held to a doctrine of pre-existence in connection with his theory of knowledge, that a human being is born with innate ideas



In Mormon theology there seems to be some ground for a theodicy that can account for natural evil and suffering without implicating God, for there apparently is no ultimate creator. The totality of reality has always existed alongside God.

acquired in a previous existence by direct contact with the universals. But I agree with those who are inclined to think that this was a kind of myth employed by Plato as an explanatory device to account for knowledge. But two modern philosophers of major stature have held to the idea of uncreated pre-existent souls: J. M. E. McTaggart of Scotland, who did not believe in God, and George Holmes Howison, a theist who established the philosophical tradition at the University of California.

Nothing in Mormon philosophy receives more attention from the faithful than the freedom of the will. But as far as I know, no accepted Mormon writer has made any contribution to the basic problem of free will versus determinism within the context of the generally accepted principle of universal causation. Instead, there seems to be an uncritical assumption of the so-called libertarian conception of free will, where the connection of cause and effect is interrupted by uncaused causes. Henry Eyring, who was an authority on the problems of quantum physics, and with whom I discussed this matter extensively, held, as have many others, that the Heisenberg principle of uncertainty in the behavior of sub-atomic particles is a principle of indeterminacy. But, contrary to a quite popular opinion, I fail to see that this could have any relevance to the freedom of the will, at least until someone establishes that the will is an electron and that the operations of such an individual particle can determine the course of events in the macroscopic world where moral action takes place.

But now to return to the issue that is so crucial to theology, how to account for evil and suffering if God is absolute in power and absolute in goodness. Only a comparatively primitive religion would compromise the absoluteness of God's goodness, and traditional occidental religion has held tenaciously to the belief in the absolute power of God. This follows easily from the doctrine of creation *ex nihilo*. And here is the seat of the trouble: Why does an all-powerful God either cause or permit the surd evils and suffering of his creatures—the evils and suffering which they inflict on one another, the moral problem, and the suffering of living things caused by the natural world, the natural problem. Moral evils, the evils committed by human beings, are commonly dealt with on the basis of free will, but there is still the problem, except for Mormons, of why God permits the will to be free to the point of producing the heinous crimes that are so prevalent.

But the most difficult problem is the so-called natural evils,

the suffering caused by the natural world. Primitive religions often explain natural evils on the basis of moral behavior, as in the case of God's brutality in Genesis in drowning everyone for behaving badly, and then repenting after it was too late, saving only a rather well-packed boatload to start things all over again. Today, of course, it is obvious that some of our suffering from natural causes is due to our immoral exploitation of nature and of one another.

There are several ways in which evil and suffering have been explained short of denying the reality, omnipotence, or omnibenevolence of God—from the "every cloud has a silver lining," and "God is in his heaven and all is well" syndromes, through the conversion of moral to aesthetic values, so that evil and suffering are necessary to the total good, like the dissonant tones that are necessary to harmony, or the dark shadows in a work of art that are essential to the beauty of the light—from such explanations as these to the denial that evil and suffering are really real—all to preserve the omnipotence of a God who apparently doesn't seem to care much for us in the first place. To the absolutist-pantheist Spinoza's insistence that we should see the world *sub specie aeternitatis*, from God's standpoint, William James replied in effect that it is high time that God saw a few things from our standpoint.

The most persistent pattern for treating this problem in technical Christian theology had its source, as might be expected, in Platonism and Neoplatonism and was secured for Christian thought by the writings of St. Augustine. In Platonism, as I have pointed out, the negative facets of human experience, such as evil, are laid at the door of matter, and unformed matter is non-being. In Plotinus and then St. Augustine, evil was regarded

as real only in a negative, privative sense; as darkness is the absence of the light, evil is the absence of the good. It is not caused by God; it is the absence of the influence of God. But just why God would permit even a negative reality to stain his world has been carefully hushed up as a mystery of the faith. There's no point in blaming it on the devil, for an omnipotent God could take care of the devil in short order if he wanted to, without waiting for the millennium, which is always coming but never quite makes it.

In the early period of the Hebraic religion, as evidenced in the Old Testament, God seems to have been responsible for the evil as well as the good. He was ably assisted by a corps of good angels and bad brownies. But as the concept of God was moralized by the prophets, the evil was eventually shunted off



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on such characters as the Persian deity Angra Mainyu, who conveniently became the Christian devil. The theologians have never liked the devil and have usually more or less ignored him. I think they have been embarrassed by him and don't know quite what to do with him, but the conservatives are stuck with him. He is still around in fundamentalist religion and in the mythology of Mormonism—and is still an embarrassment.

Now, in Mormon theology and philosophy there seems to be some ground for a theodicy that can account for natural evil and suffering without implicating God, for the Mormon God is not omnipotent. He is limited by the materials at hand, which he did not create in the first place, but which were the necessary materials with which he constructs and reconstructs the world. Nor is he the ultimate creator of the laws that dictate the structure of the universe. Heresy of heresies, there apparently is no ultimate creator. The totality of reality has always existed alongside God.

And in the matter of moral evils, the evils that are willfully done by human beings, here again God is vindicated. He has to put up with working with these recalcitrant free intelligences, which he did not create, just as he is caught in a world of uncreated matter that doesn't always behave.

At any rate, the Mormon theology, if worked at properly, offers at least an opening for treating the most persistent problem in theistic religion, even though at the same time it opens the way for other serious problems. The trouble is that most of those LDS leaders, professors, and writers who seem to have a kind of proprietary claim on the theology too often fail to understand the potential intellectual strength of the radical, heretical ideas which their prophet propounded. Of course those ideas are often trivialized, as I have said, to the point of nonsense, or are presented in crude and even vulgar terms, but the fundamental proposition that God is a nonabsolutistic, finite being, moving in time and genuinely related to things in space and time that place limits upon him—ideas that are compatible with the belief that the deity is really a person in the fullest sense of that word, related to the other persons in the process of creation—such a proposition sets forth an idea and its implications that are now capturing the interest of talented theologians from all corners of occidental religion. As I have indicated, the leading symbols of this movement of process philosophy, a movement in which Mormonism might have been a leader, are philosopher Alfred North Whitehead

and the leading contemporary theologian, Charles Hartshorne. Mormons should take some pleasure in Whitehead's statement that "that religion will conquer which can render clear to popular understanding some eternal greatness incarnate in the passage of temporal fact" (*Adventures of Ideas*, 41).

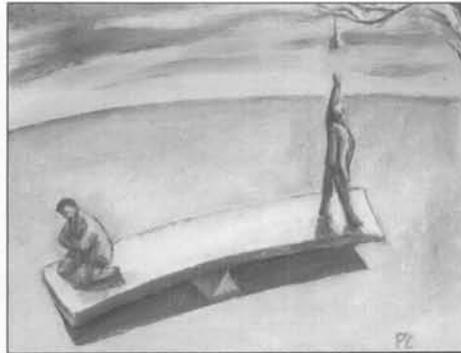
But too many LDS preachers and writers, like the faint-hearted in all religions, lust for the linguistic fleshpots of orthodoxy, the vocabulary of absolutism which provides a plethora of those words of assurance which the religious seek. Words like infinite, absolute, eternal—and the host of omni's that the orthodox coin—roll from the writer's pen and resound from the preacher's pulpit with dogmatic and comforting conviction. The vocabulary of nonabsolutism, with words like limited, conditioned, finite, and temporal, the language of a religion of creativity, adventure, progress, and risk, simply doesn't come off well in church. These words don't stir the emotions. This kind of religion, religion of struggle and failure as well as victory, where the end is not determined from the beginning, will always have an uphill battle. People simply do not like to take their problems to a God who has problems of his own.

MORMONISM'S HUMANISTIC-NATURALISTIC QUALITIES

TURNING now to my third distinguishing characteristic of Mormonism, its humanistic-naturalistic qualities, I will make only a brief comment. But first a few words about the recent charges of some evangelicals that the LDS religion is not Christian. Apparently this charge is based on two considerations: first, that Mormonism does not accept the fourth-century Nicene Creed, which sets forth

the orthodox doctrine of the Trinity; and, second, that it does not accept the doctrine that salvation is by grace only. Both of these claims, of course, are quite true. Mormonism is tri-theistic rather than trinitarian, and it believes that salvation depends upon both grace and works.

The Nicene Creed is basic in both Catholic and traditional Protestant theology, expressing as it does the doctrine that God is one in substance and three in persons. Actually, the Creed does not employ the term "person," but that came into the picture later as an interpretation of its meaning. The Creed was the result of intense hassling over the status of Christ in the matter of his divinity and was a remarkable achievement considering that it is still the basic Christian symbol after almost seventeen hundred years. Now there is no scriptural



Conservative Protestants

hold that we sin because

we are sinful. Mormons

hold that we are sinful

because we sin.

basis for the trinitarian doctrine which, in the Nicene Creed, employs Greek metaphysics in holding that God is both one in substance and has three personae. This formula was tremendously important, for here were the early Christians with two gods, the Father and the Son, and eventually, with the Holy Ghost, three gods on their hands, not only tied intimately to the intense Judaic monotheism, but also heavily involved with the monistic metaphysics of Platonism and Stoicism. The Creed was a brilliant stroke. It provided for both the one and the three. The Mormons are not the only tri-theists to break with the trinitarian theology. A notable case is Roscellinus in the eleventh century, whose nominalistic metaphysics dictated his break with the Creed. His tri-theism was, of course, declared heretical.

The other basis for the charge against Mormonism, that the Mormons do not believe in salvation by grace only, but insist as well on works, does have a scriptural basis—in the writings of the Apostle Paul, especially his Letter to the Romans. But it has nothing whatsoever to do with the teachings of Jesus, to whom Paul paid little or no attention. His concern was with the risen Christ and how human beings who are in the condition of sin can die and rise with him—by confessing him as their savior. Now, if it is necessary to accept the Nicene Creed and believe in original sin in order to be Christian, the Mormons would do well to abjure that name. But since they believe in the divinity of Christ and that he is their savior, the charge of non-Christian is something they should not be willing to accept.

Generally speaking, Mormons and Catholics prefer the Epistle of James to Romans because it lays great stress on the moral teachings of Jesus and, in contrast and probably in opposition to Paul, it insists on moral works as a requisite for salvation. Very conservative Protestants generally are not favorable to James, whose author may have been a brother of Jesus. Martin Luther, who was intoxicated with Paul's commitment to sin and grace, didn't like James and refused to give it full canonical status.

In a sense, the Mormon preference for James over Romans is an index to what I have called Mormon humanism. In contrast to Paul's epistle, which is the chief source of the doctrine of original sin, with all of its negative entailments and overtones, James has a positive flavor with a life-affirming quality that suggests the possibility of genuine moral advancement through human effort. Mormonism has essentially a liberal doctrine of humankind, a typical nineteenth-century

belief, which is supported by the idea of the necessary existence of the individual intelligence. It rejects the dogma of original sin, which arguably is the worst idea ever to infect the human mind. James E. Talmage called it that "belief . . . with its dread incubus as a burden which none can escape," which "has for ages cast its depressing shadow over the human heart and mind" (*The Vitality of Mormonism*, 1919, 45).

Original sin is supposed to be a consequent of Adam's fall, but the Mormons believe that it was a fall upward, that Adam did just what God wanted him to do—what the philosopher Arthur Lovejoy has happily called "the paradox of the fortunate fall." The Mormons, to employ the crude vernacular, hold that in all this "fall" talk Adam has received a bum rap. Always concerned with women's rights and anxious that she receive full credit, they point out that Eve was responsible for the whole thing in the first place. Instead of the "fall of Adam," it should be called the "upward reach of Eve."

Luther and Calvin and today's conservative Protestants follow St. Augustine, who followed Paul, in holding that the "fall" resulted in original sin, that human nature is corrupt, that we sin because we are sinful. The Mormons, with liberal religionists generally, hold that this is nonsense, that we are sinful because we sin. The official Catholic position on original sin is a mild, half-way doctrine. Original sin is the loss of the supernatural gift of sanctifying grace, but it is not a corruption of human nature. The natural reason is preserved. Both Catholics and Mormons, and also liberal Protestants—perhaps the majority of members of the mainline churches—believe, therefore, that human beings can contribute something to their own salvation, and perhaps the salvation of others. This makes all the

difference. It accounts for the life-affirming character of Mormonism. Mormons may experience sin when they smoke, or drink, or rob, or get involved in a little illicit sex. But they don't feel morally guilty just because they exist as human beings. Normally, they don't suffer the anguish of being estranged from God.

Mormon naturalism is, of course, an aspect of its materialism. In the Mormon conception of reality there is no supernatural. This is most evident, perhaps, in the conception of miracles. There is no miracle in the traditional sense of an intervention in the laws of nature. Mormons believe in miracles, but the apparently miraculous events are simply in principle the operation of natural law beyond human understanding. Now it is possible to say that this is simply quibbling about



We create our gods in
our own image, and
they have a way of
thinking our best
thoughts and echoing
them back to us
in revelation.

words, but the important thing here is the sense of continuity of the natural and human with the divine. For Mormons, just as there is not a metaphysical opposition of the eternal and the temporal or of the spiritual and material, there is not a basic contradiction of the supernatural and natural—which translates into the divine and human.

Ideas such as these can be an open invitation to nonsense, and there has been without question a serious trivialization of spiritual matters in Mormon theology. Among Mormon writers one can find a fair share of what I would call uninhibited theological absurdity. Now in my opinion, most theology, wherever it is found, is probably cognitively meaningless. But usually it is disguised by sophisticated-sounding language that appears to make it not only meaningful but even believable. Mormon theology is somewhat different from the norm. In its concreteness and in the raw it appears to be meaningful, without the fancy linguistic garb that usually adorns theological discourse. But the problem is, it also appears to be false. At least it appears to be false unless one is able to make, as the faithful Mormon makes, a complete about-face from the traditional ways of thinking about God and the soul and the human condition.

There is in Mormonism a kind of folk theology, and what might be called an esoteric theology, as well as the standard normative theology, but these are difficult to define. Perhaps it is in the esoteric category that one of the most radical ideas in Mormon thought appears, a complete contradiction to the whole tradition of occidental theism, and, most critics would agree, a contradiction of common sense: that God became the supreme deity through some kind of process of achievement that took him to the top, so to speak. Now I don't want to pursue this line in any detail because I have real difficulty in making any sense of it. But this is an established Mormon belief. Back in the early fifties, the Mormon Bible scholar Heber C. Snell and I discussed this matter with the Mormon theologian Joseph Fielding Smith. In reply to the question of how he could hold that God is absolute while believing that God went through an educative process to achieve the status of deity, President Smith gave the simple reply that he was a relative being until he finally became God, and from that moment on he was no longer relative but absolute. What can one say in reply to that kind of argument? To put it crudely, who was minding the store, or the school, while all this process of becoming God was going on? Whoever it was, she has certainly managed to keep herself well hidden in the background.

I am aware of the various attempts by Mormon writers to justify this belief—an infinite series of Gods, the God of our corner of the universe, and so on. But it seems to me that none of them makes sense, unless it was Orson Pratt's attempt to invoke the Platonic universals in his famous statement in *The Seer* that TRUTH, in all caps, is the ultimate God and that it is TRUTH dwelling in the deity that makes him divine and an object of worship (Vol. 1:2, para. 22). Pratt was severely disciplined for his efforts, as he apparently described the ultimate divine as impersonal. But he was just trying to do what theologians are supposed to do, make some kind of sense

of what the people believed. He was quite right in holding that there must be something over and above this process of a being becoming God.

Now that is why I refer to the idea of Mormon naturalistic humanism. What must be over and above as the real ultimates are the value universals, as Pratt apparently believed. For St. Augustine, God's mind was eternally stocked with the Platonic value absolutes and his mind determined his will, but the Mormon deity apparently had to work into it. Mormon theology is still in its formative stages, and I rather think it may eventually abandon this belief.

But the point is, who decides what these values are, such as Truth, Beauty, and Goodness? Human beings decide, of course. The Mormons believe that God legislates for human thought and human behavior, but always the legislation is in terms of what passes as the best ideas and best insights of human beings. In this, of course, Mormonism is no different in principle from other religions—at least those that attempt, as Mormonism does, to be reasonable, or at least pretend to be reasonable even when they are unreasonable. We create our gods in our own image, and they have a way of thinking our best thoughts and echoing them back to us in revelation. This is the anthropocentric paradox of all theistic religion. It's simply that Mormon theology makes this human, naturalistic foundation of religion a little more obvious. 63



Bring me a guitar
a song beats within me.

Bring me a guitar
a song flows through me
sounding its life-giving rhythm.

Bring me a guitar
before it's too late.

Hurry, bring me a guitar.

It pounds on my soul
threatening to break me
if I frustrate its birth.

Quick, bring me a guitar
before this song steals
the meter of my life
in its still passing.

Bring me a guitar.
I need a guitar
with strings and fertile box
to save me from this song.

—DAVID CLARK KNOWLTON

We incredibly rich and largely spoiled North Americans need to turn to finite and material things, rather than flee from them, for this may be the character of our continuing and eternal existence.

REFLECTIONS ON MORMON MATERIALISM

By John Durham Peters

MUCH IN MORMON THINKING SUGGESTS A POSITIVE attitude toward the realm of matter—the Earth, our bodies, material things. At the most basic level, Mormon cosmology is the story of humankind’s increasing immersion in matter for the sake of progress and growth. Though life on Earth may sometimes feel to us like a brief sojourn in an alien condition or an enforced terror in a dark place of forgetting and temptation, it is more fundamentally a sort of homecoming. We live on Earth, not as exiles from a more perfect realm of spirit and crystal, but rather as initiates into a new, and higher, stage of existence: the realm of element, of matter, of bodies.

The world of pure spirit is a preschool: Earth life is a higher order where spirit and element commingle. Mortal life is not a deviation but a foreshadowing of what is to come; it is an invitation, not a condemnation. This continuity of present and future spheres is emphatically expressed in the distinctive Mormon doctrine that the very earth on which we now live, not some distant heaven, will be the eternal dwelling place of its valiant citizens. Heaven, in a Mormon vision, is not an alternative to but the exaltation of this world. The marriage of matter and spirit is the order of the eternities: “spirit and element, inseparably connected, receive a fullness of joy; And when separated, man cannot receive a fullness of joy” (D&C 93:33-34).

A positive attitude toward matter shows up in key places of Mormon thought. Joseph Smith wrote that spirit was a form of matter, and that God the Father and his Son have tangible bodies of flesh and bone (D&C 130, 131). Orson Pratt’s classic treatise, *The Absurdities of Immaterialism*, denounced as absurd any theology that was not materialist. Brigham Young saw Zion as a place where holiness was crowned by the beautiful and

good things of the earth. Such examples, doctrinal and historical, could be extended almost endlessly. Mormon thinking traditionally melts down the metaphysical barrier between matter and spirit. Matter, for Mormonism, does not weigh down spirit; it brings glory to it.¹ The glory of God is described in Mormon scriptures as inseparable from the increasingly wondrous collaborations of spirit and element throughout the universe.

Despite this magnificent heritage, we hardly have any inkling of the philosophical and practical consequences of the materiality of spirit and the spirituality of matter. Much of our doctrinal discourse slips into older Christian habits. Thus we talk about the spirit and the body at war, or about the dual nature of our existence.² Further, current Mormon attitudes and practices are often confused about the realm of matter. On the one hand, the most wondrous of all material things, the human body, is often mistrusted as a source of sin (or sinful tendencies) and hence in need of mastery. On the other, we Mormons are almost famous for being heirs of the Protestant ethic—the notion that (to simplify) if you are righteous you are rich and vice versa. That these two attitudes—the distrust of the body and the love of material success—coexist should strike us as something of a puzzle: how can you simultaneously disdain and adore material things? In what follows, I offer a few reflections on this puzzle, bearing in mind the curious fact that while denunciations of the lust for fine things are a dime a dozen, hardly anyone votes with their checkbook against fine things when all else is equal.

THE BODY

Why the Body is Not a Source of Sin

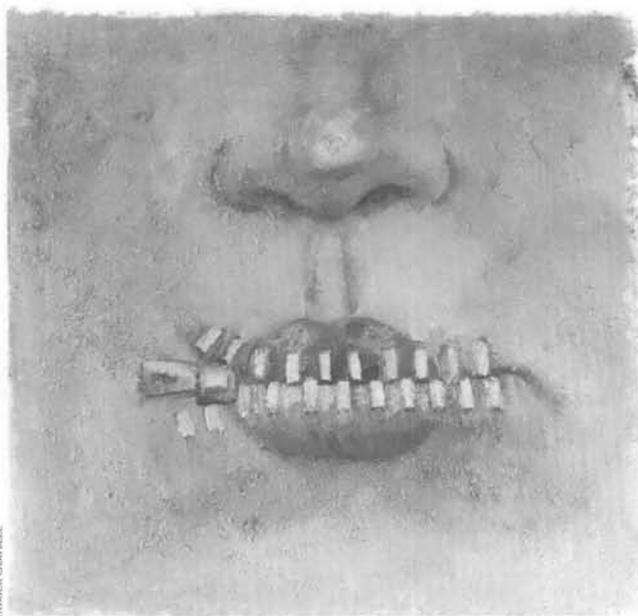
A DISTRUST of the body is one of the major legacies of the Christian tradition. Neo-Platonism, Gnosticism, and Hellenic culture generally helped teach Christians that their bodies were a gross weight and a bondage from which the spirit should long to soar free.³ A whole language and set of disci-

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plinary practices developed around the lusts of the flesh, the passions of carnal (i.e., fleshly or embodied) beings, and so on, that blamed the body for sin. We inherit, by default and lack of a positive alternative, some of this language and the attitudes that go with it. All too often Mormons feel their bodies to be sinful, as sources of temptation, as secondary to the spirit, and in need of the spirit's discipline. The reasoning seems to go like this: We live on Earth as spirits in bodies. Our spirits are eternal, pure, and born of God. Our bodies are temporary and earth(ly). Further, we all sin. What then is the source of sin? It can't be the spirit, since it is eternal. Therefore, it must be the body.

I do not believe that anything in the gospel truly obligates us to such a conception of bodily evil. Consider King Benjamin's dictum: "The natural man is an enemy to God" (Mosiah 3:19). What is this "natural man"? Is it man and woman embodied, with our built-in inclinations to eat, sleep, mate, and so on? Clearly not. Benjamin is not referring to humans in the state of nature, but to socialized adults. This is clear in his point that the little child is the opposite of "the natural man." Benjamin's terminology is a bit confusing since "natural" can signify both the innocent joys of paradise and the animal brutishness of raw physical need. Clearly, in any case, the "enemy to God" is not the body.⁴ Worldliness, not bodiliness, seems to be the problem. Furthermore, if the body were the source of sin, then infants indeed would need baptism; but they do not (Moroni 8). That we baptize children when they are eight years old testifies that it is not the body per se that leads to sin, but something else. Likewise, humankind did not instantly become "carnal, sensual, and devilish" upon exiting Eden, but as a consequence of a specific choice some people made (Moses 5:13). (One wonders if one could choose to avoid this state afterwards—a problem for another paper.)

The relative contributions of the spirit and the body to human sinfulness is a complex theological problem that I hope to address another time. Clearly, the body cannot be singled out as the prime culprit. In fact, Mormon theology can be read in a way that sees our bodies and their appetites as good and beautiful—it is choices and abuses that corrupt them.⁵ Hence the spirit, as the agency of choice, might be a more likely candidate for the source of sin.



PATRICK CAMPBELL

FASTING IS AN ACT OF SOLIDARITY WITH OUR FATHER'S CHILDREN WHO ARE PERPETUALLY HUNGRY—TO FEEL, BRIEFLY, AS THEY DO AND TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT—NOT AN EXERCISE IN SELF-AFFLICTION.

Why the Notion of the Spirit Mastering the Body Makes No Sense

THE whole imagery about the relation of spirit and body that we have inherited is one of the spirit as master and the body as slave—an imagery that needs to be examined for its violence: whips, chains, subjection, enslavement, mastery, taming, and so on. Too often it is implied, for instance, that we fast monthly to somehow let the spirit breathe free from its dead bodily weight for awhile. Fasting thus becomes a sort of spiritual discipline designed to knock the body into shape, a self-denial in the name of increased "spirituality." Where did this strange asceticism come from? In contrast, the spiritual foundations of the monthly fast in Mormondom have less to do with the discipline of self than the love of others.⁶ Fasting is an act of solidarity with the many of our Father's children who are perpetually hungry—to feel, briefly, as they do and to do something

about it—not an exercise in self-affliction (see Isaiah 58). More centrally, the scriptures are clear that the urge to lordship and domination is suspect in whatever shape it appears. Even (or especially) when you're doing it to yourself or your body, it's still domination. You don't need a Nietzsche, the German philosopher, to tell you that there is usually a lot of resentment—the frustrated desire for power or recognition—at the heart of self-denial. Nietzsche had a keen eye for seeing how some people get pleasure from suffering stoically, all the while enjoying a fine sense of their own nobility. He believed that Christianity was "nothing but" the will to power turned inward: since the kingdom was not built on Earth, Christians turned their desire to rule and reign on themselves. Asceticism (which he saw as the predominant character of Christianity) is the last resort of the urge to be master somewhere and over something, if only one's own body. You don't have to agree with Nietzsche's conclusions to learn from his analysis (and there's no reason, given the Mormon view of the history of Christianity, why we cannot take Nietzsche as an acute analyst of the fruits of apostasy).⁷ Civilization naturally rests on some channeling of biological appetites, but when Mormons think of the spirit as beating the body into submission, as we often do, we perpetuate a long tradition of flawed thinking and practice about the body. Instead, we need to find new—or better yet, old—and more healthy ways of thinking about the relation of

body and spirit.

The Mormon theological imagination has barely begun to explore how to think about the mix of body and spirit. But let us imagine for a moment—what if we thought the task of Earth life was not to make the body behave, but to teach the spirit moderation? Many of the foibles of mortals are not anchored in the body's appetites, but in our capacity for imagination and aspiration, rivalry and pride. When the Lord says to Moroni, "I give unto [my children] weakness that they may be humble" (Ether 12:27), this might be imaginatively interpreted as saying, "I give unto my children bodies that their desires not be infinite." Maybe the real lesson of mortality is not to master the flesh, but to mellow the spirit. Maybe we come into the world with an eternity's experience of boundlessness. The task here is to become comfortable in an imperfect body, to encounter checks on infinite desires. "Why am I no longer infinite?" is a question behind many resentments, ambitions, longings, and dominations. The body is the school of finitude. The real evils are less those of the flesh than of run-away ambition. Meanness, snideness, cruelty, spouse or child abuse, torture, inquisitions, and genocides are not evils that arise from the body, but from the desire for power, the urge to rule and reign. People can be more dangerous when they try to be gods on Earth than when their bodies are insufficiently harnessed. We try to be lords, only to end up lording over our fellows. The twentieth century shows clearly that rationally organized procedure can be a million-fold more dangerous than run-away passion. A cool Hitler is ultimately more dangerous than a hot Elvis.

Clearly not all these problems—as acutely diagnosed in the pages of the Book of Mormon as they are by Nietzsche—can be attributed to the spirit. I do not aim to celebrate the body and blame the spirit—you don't cure an unhealthy dualism by inverting it. The point is that we mortals get lost more often in chasing after the infinite than in dwelling in finitude and that our bodies have much to teach us about sanity, modesty, and moderation. Lust exceeds in imagination anything the body could endure in practice. Admittedly, we can dream, long, and imagine in ways we can never act, fulfill, or create: this makes us human. There is a sort of built-in "disproportion" between the vastness of human desires and the limitations of mortality. This disproportion makes us human; it fuels action and creativity and dreaming; but it can also lead to strange results.



WHAT IF WE THOUGHT THE TASK OF EARTH LIFE WAS NOT TO MAKE THE BODY BEHAVE, BUT TO TEACH THE SPIRIT MODERATION?

Three scriptural images present three different ways of dealing with this gap; we may be able to learn something from them about the relation of spirit and body.

TOWER, TEMPLE, IDOL:
Images of the Gap between
Human Limitation and Desires

THE Tower of Babel is the story of desire run berserk, of a longing for the infinite that distorts the finite realm. The story, of course, concerns an attempt to reconcile heaven and earth. We read in Genesis 11 that a group of people in the plains of Shinar apparently decided that temples—which throughout the ancient world were called the binding points of heaven and earth—were not enough.⁸ "After all," the builders must have reasoned, "anyone can see that temples do not really reach the sky

and hence are at best a mere metaphor of the union of earth and sky." So they decided to actually reach heaven by building a tower. With care and calculation, they thoroughly baked bricks so that they would not crumble beneath the weight of the tower, and started to build skyward. Up and up they went. The project was interrupted by a confusion of tongues sent by a God worried about their ambition. Perhaps the confusion, however, was less a curse motivated by God's fear of his potentially uncontrollable offspring than his intervention to stop a quest doomed to be lost in infinitude. If they had not been interrupted, how far would they have gone before they found the sky? With resources and energy enough, the tower would today be swiping through the asteroid belt, still unable to get to heaven. Their quest would have assumed the infinite proportions of its object: they never would have found what they were looking for; they would have sought endlessly. For heaven is always beyond, somewhere else. The more bricks one applies, the less attainable heaven becomes.

The tower was motivated by what is essentially a religious quest: to get to heaven. The aim was legitimate, the method mad. The tower builders wanted to construct a bridge from mortality to immortality on which one could physically ascend. The whole project was an attempt to erase the tension between heaven and earth. This tension, in contrast, was acknowledged by the temple. The temple had no pretensions of selling tickets to the sky-train; its devotees, if we follow Hugh Nibley's claim that temples anciently were first and foremost observatories, gazed at the heavens in wonder. The stars were enigmas and

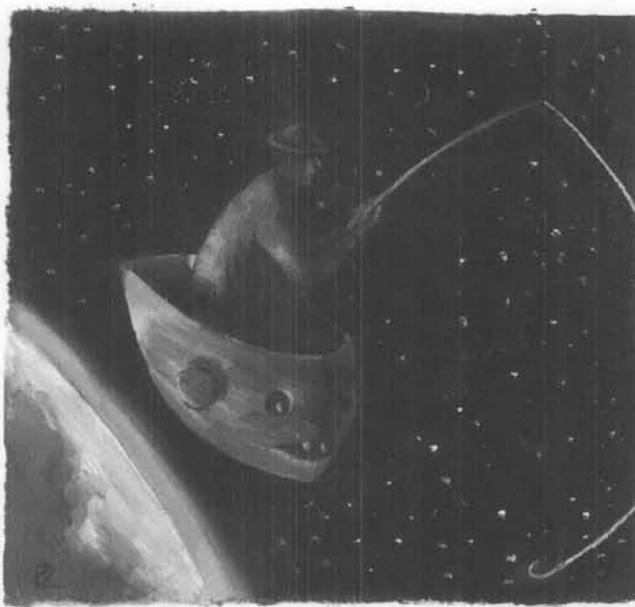
omens to be read, never to be attained. The temple derived its energy and power precisely from the tension that the tower sought to overcome. The presence of heaven in the temple was metaphorical, open, and unfulfilled. A temple-goer saw the stars, longed for the treasures in the heavens, and felt the relative nothingness of humanity's present state (Moses 1:10). The union of heaven and earth was a dream, a contemplation, a hope that one could bridge that gap; those dreams did not deny but came face to face with the negativity and permanent unfulfillment of human longing. The tower builders thus denied the gap in a quest for the infinite; the temple-goers embraced it in all its paradoxes. The temple converted the elusiveness of the heavens to an energy of devotion that recognized human limits; the tower strove to erase the abyss via a massive public works project.

The case of idolatry manages the gap between longing and object in the exact opposite way. While Babel's architects saw heaven as beyond, idolaters believed it to be immediately present. If the tower-builders suffered from too much transcendence, idolaters suffered from too much immanence. The tower makes a parody of longing, idolatry of fulfillment. In the idol all divinity is to be found, here and now; there is nothing left to strive for, for heaven has taken up residence on earth. Idolatry brings heaven down to earth; the tower brings earth up to heaven. In both cases, the marriage of spirit and matter, infinite and finite, is adulterated: the tower gives earth the infinite proportions of the heavens (the building); idolatry gives heaven the finite proportions of earth (a piece of wood or clay that is a divinity). In both cases, one partner in the marriage takes over and dominates the other.

The temple, in contrast, is a place of marriage: it is the binding point of heaven and earth, and also the place where the union of man and woman is sanctified. Both give, both take; together they are one, but they can be one only because they are different. So also spirit and matter are at once forever different and forever interdependent.

MATERIALISM

“**M**ATERIALISM” is a complex and confusing word. In everyday speech, “materialism” refers not to a philosophical doctrine about the fundamental composition of the cosmos,



PATRICK CAMPBELL

MORTALS GET LOST MORE OFTEN IN CHASING AFTER THE INFINITE THAN IN DWELLING IN FINITUDE. OUR BODIES HAVE MUCH TO TEACH US ABOUT SANITY, MODESTY, AND MODERATION.

but serves as a term for acquisitiveness. It is ironic that the desire to have is called “materialism.” While the term accurately describes the *consequences* of this desire (the accumulation of a sheer bulk of material things), it does not describe its *origins*. Materialism is a quest much like the Tower of Babel—running toward something that you may already have, but don't recognize. It results, paradoxically, from a *lack* of appreciation of material things, and works as a temporary salve to a spiritual wound.

Our bodies are really not all that demanding, in general, for basic maintenance. It is surprising (as Thoreau demonstrated in *Walden*) how little it takes—of food, labor, and money—to keep our bodies healthy and our minds lively. To be sure, as animals we have built-in nesting instincts and a preference for security, but these are almost always defined socially. We listen to what society says are suitable clothes, “gracious homes,” fashionable cars, and so on, rather than to our bodily needs (which would likely give much more modest answers in general). Consider Donald Trump's ninety-foot living room that he had in the late 1980s. As he admitted, he couldn't possibly need it—but he liked being the only person in New York City to have one. What, then, brings him enjoyment? He takes pleasure not from the room, but from the realm of social comparison. Just as a few more bricks to Babel shows that heaven is not there yet, so as soon as someone else gets a hundred-foot living room, Trump's pleasure will evaporate. Only pleasures that lose nothing when removed from the public eye are genuine.

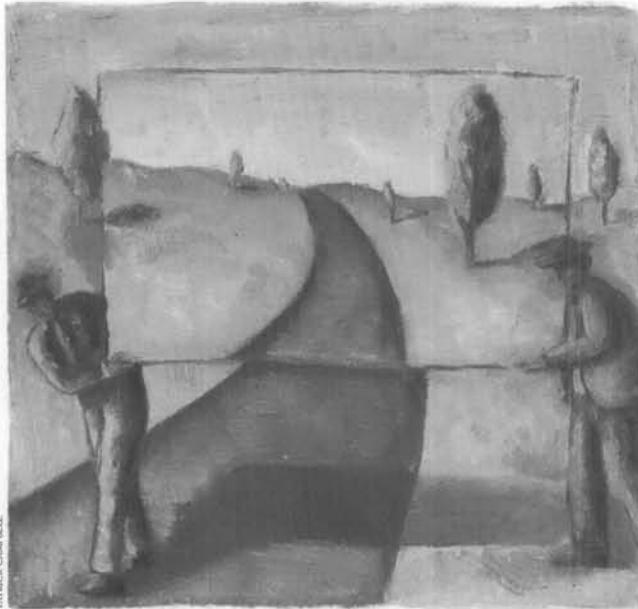
This is to say that “materialism” is not really concerned with matter—with goods or things in themselves—but with signs, status, comparison, prestige. It is not properly materialist but the most metaphysical of quests. We want fancy charge cards and tailored suits not so much for what we can do with them but for what they mean or for what they will buy us in the marketplace of other's opinions—which buttresses our wavering opinions of ourselves. Advertising shows that symbolic associations, more than practical uses, sell products. Advertisements give us lifestyle, prestige, honor, gleam, and sparkle more often than they do usable or modest products.⁹

If we had more confidence in what our bodies—as opposed to others—tell us what we need, we would likely have a saner relationship to the material world. We would want

houses that pleasantly meet our needs rather than ones that allow us to admire ourselves through the eyes of others. I just bought a used car, and I find myself often studying its appearance, discovering its angles and overall shape. I like how it looks—but I can never see how it looks when I am driving it. Only others can. I would be hard pressed to sort out the mixture of my personal feelings for the car and my sense of its symbolic meaning in the more general automotive universe. Materialism can be a spiritual quest gone haywire, a quest for a better world, in the skies or in the eyes of others, where one will never find it. How can we redirect the theological esteem for matter and element in Mormon thought into sane attitudes toward things?

We are talking about matters of economics here, and a great treatise on the sources of value (the centerpiece of economic theory) is Lehi's dream of the Tree of Life (1 Nephi 8). This story contrasts two competing sources of human motivation: public esteem and private satisfaction. Lehi sees a tree, more beautiful than all others with fruit sweeter than all others. That the fruit in itself is delicious and that one must endure major stress to acquire it are taken for granted—Lehi has no problem with a fervent desire for the sweetest, finest, and most beautiful of all things. Those who eat the tree's fruit know its satisfactions in an immediate, bodily way. But across the way is a tall, "great and spacious" building filled with fashionable souls who point mocking fingers at the tasters. Does Lehi blithely assume that taste buds are stronger evidence than the opinions of others? No—he warns that whoever pays heed to the mockers leaves the tree. The choice posed is stark: what to use as a guide for action? Your own experience or the approval of others? More often than not, we place more trust in the wisdom of the world—which is visible, public, and secure as convention can make it—than our own quiet satisfactions (if we even know what they are). We desire things desired by others. Or, as with Donald Trump, enjoyment is dependent on the esteem we reap, while the immediate joy (or sorrow) our bodies feel gets ignored.

"Use-value" versus "exchange-value" is a classic contrast in economic theory. Use-value is defined by the relationship between a person (or society) and a commodity. Thus I may use a cherry tree for shade, for fruit, for wood, for a tree-house, for decoration. The variety of uses depends on the inherent properties of the commodity and my needs and practices. Exchange-value, in contrast, is defined by the abstract work-



ONLY PLEASURES THAT LOSE NOTHING WHEN REMOVED FROM THE PUBLIC EYE ARE GENUINE.

ings of the market. The cherry tree's exchange value only abstractly relates to what kinds of immediate uses or enjoyments it can yield; it is determined by the current supply of and demand for cherry trees in the market. Marx's critique of capitalism, for instance, was partly that use-value was being gobbled up by exchange value, that concrete uses were disappearing before the tyrannical and illusionary workings of the market. In Lehi's terms, one's treasures come to be defined not by the taste or sweetness of the fruit but by the current state of opinion in the great building across the way.

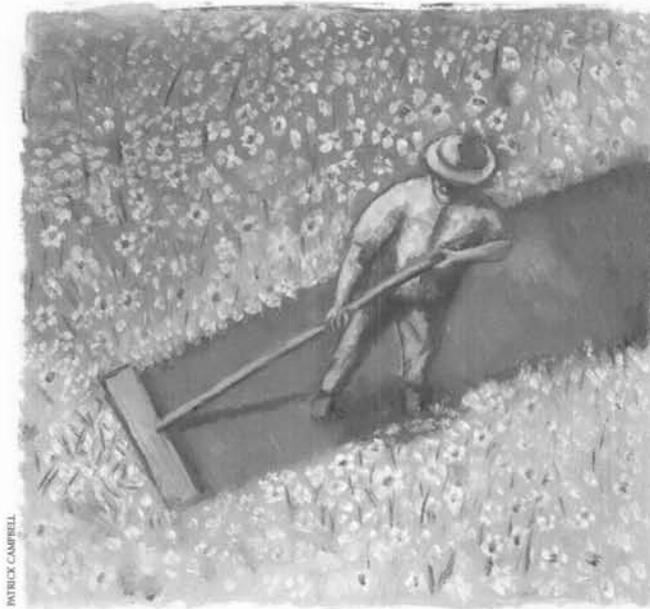
Once while in Washington, D.C., I crossed the Potomac to nearby Alexandria, trying (unsuccessfully) to find the childhood house I had lived in twenty-five years earlier. Driving through Old Town, I was im-

pressed by the lovely shops, the appealing array of colors, the exotic restaurants, the charming colonial architecture, and the beautiful people walking about. How could anyone, I thought, be sourpuss enough to deny the loveliness of the place? The beauty and attraction of it is real. But that beauty occurs within a larger geography. Semiotics, the general study of signs and their relations, has taught us that all symbols take meaning with reference to the entire system of which they are a part, and Alexandria cannot but help derive some of its appeal from its contrast with other places, such as southeast Washington, D.C. Beauty needs squalor and takes strength (negatively) from it, at least in this fallen world.

Could it not be that our private pleasures are the symptoms of inequality? That matters of personal consumption are fundamentally linked to the social and spiritual welfare of the human family as a whole? It is not comfortable to recognize that some of our pleasures may be predicated on others' discomforts, that one man's meat is another man's starvation. My point is not to condemn lovely things or to denounce our appreciation of them. Indeed, beauty may be the most eternal of all—in a celestial world, the good and the true could be taken for granted, but beauty never could. The problem is not with beauty or with finery but with the social system in which they are asymmetrically circulated. Beautiful things should not be swept away in some vast, totalitarian Puritan purge, but should abound and be open to all.

Material things are intensely moral because of the unequal social and economic system in which they circulate. The whole world lies in sin in that some have more and others have less (D&C 49:20). Some pleasures—of basketball court-sized liv-

ing rooms or Imelda Marcos's infinite regress of shoes, never broken in to the unique use-value of her own feet—consist only in the intoxicating air of feeling oneself at the top. Parking lots outside California wards or neighborhoods along the Wasatch Bench sometimes become theaters of competitive blessedness. Material goods can be spiritual bads, if they are only used to reenforce the sensation of your own holiness. Goods (in the tangible sense) are related to the good (in the moral sense). Should Christians follow some kind of categorical imperative in our pleasures? This would mean that we would enjoy what in principle only could be enjoyed by everyone. What would a society look like in which no enjoyment or pleasure was predicated on another not being able to have it? Who can hear such doctrine in this world? There is a difference between taking pleasure in the fact of exclusivity (Donald Trump) and taking pleasures from which others are excluded. The first we can decide to avoid, but to avoid the second would require us to quarantine ourselves from the global economy—perhaps an impossible task.



PATRICK CAMPBELL

OUR PRIVATE PLEASURES ARE THE SYMPTOMS OF INEQUALITY. BEAUTIFUL THINGS SHOULD NOT BE SWEEPED AWAY IN SOME VAST TOTALITARIAN PURITAN PURGE, BUT SHOULD ABOUND AND BE OPEN TO ALL.



CONCLUSION

I HAVE explored attitudes toward the body and toward possessions—two sorts of material things—and argued that while Mormon thinking can encourage much positive thought toward the material world, we generally neglect the lessons that matter has to teach us (a main point of being on Earth, after all, according to Mormon cosmology). The lust to possess is not a case of the body's appetites running out of control, but something else—a twisted spiritual adventure run rampant. We have to learn from matter: lessons of dwelling, hominess, modesty, plainness, the joys of the everyday uncanniness that is all around us. A farm, said Emerson, is a mute gospel. Almost everyone can luxuriate in the animal joy of simply being alive, savor the colorful glories of the crabapple trees in spring, the greenness of the grass, the blue sky though the magnolia trees, the ever-changing expressions of children. There is enough and to spare, and nobody is excluded from partaking. Many of these sorts of joys are already distributed democratically. All the earth is a temple, as are our bodies: we needn't build towers to find heaven or shrines to capture it when it visits. Happiness is the condition of one's desires

having found a dwelling; misery is when desires wander about like dispossessed spirits, seeking rest and finding none.

It may sound paradoxical to suggest that a cure for *materialism* is a genuine appreciation, love, and gratitude for worldly goods. Too often *materialism* is a flight from the world of plainness, the world of ordinary joys. We incredibly rich and largely spoiled North Americans need to turn to finite and material things, rather than flee from them, for this may be the character of our continuing and eternal existence. Does not God say that his greatness and glory are due more to his ongoing work in the mess and muck of finitude than his detached glory above-it-all? (Moses 1:39.) Does not true godliness consist partly in the taming of one's longings for the lofty and infinite long enough to do what one can to bring about the salvation and exaltation of particular people? Is not this world

of material things and embodied spirits designed as an education in the things of eternity? Maybe an attitude adjustment of the rich would be one step in the right direction toward the more serious issue: how to care for the poor of the earth.¹⁰



NOTES

1. Joseph Smith developed the interplay of "element" and "glory" in the King Follett discourse: see Bruce W. Jorgensen, "Element and Glory: Reflections and Speculations on the Mormon Verbal Imagination," *Proceedings of the Symposium of the Association for Mormon Letters*, 1978-79 (1980): 65-78.
2. For example, Russell M. Nelson, "The Magnificence of Man," *Ensign* 18 (January 1988): 64-69.
3. Peter Brown, *The Body and Society* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1987).
4. Thanks to Barbara Day Lockhart for this insight, and to her, Jay Bybee, Peggy Fletcher Stack, and Tom Griffith for useful comments.
5. For just one example, see John A. Widtsoe, *A Rational Theology* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1937).
6. Marion G. Romney, "Fundamental Welfare Services," *Ensign* (May 1979): 94-97.
7. As James Faulconer argues in his review of *The First Coming: How the Kingdom of God Became Christianity* by Thomas Sheehan in *SUNSTONE* 11 (May 1987): 26.
8. Richard J. Clifford, *The Cosmic Mountain* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1972), and Hugh W. Nibley, *Nibley on the Timely and the Timeless* (Provo: BYU Press, 1978), 111.
9. Raymond Williams, "Advertising: The Magic System," *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980).
10. For stimulating suggestions, see essays by Garth Jones, James Lucas, and Warner Woodworth.

THIS SIDE OF THE TRACTS

Carol Lynn Pearson

“I DON’T WANT TO BE A MORMON ANYMORE!”



How do I keep my children involved long enough to see the good in the Church for themselves? Or at least long enough to make a rational choice?

IT WAS SUNDAY morning and I had just finished getting ready for church. Strains from *My Turn on Earth*, a musical I had written, wafted through the house. “. . . It ends with death, it begins with birth, and it’s my turn, my turn, my turn on earth.” I walked down the hall and opened Aaron’s door to urge him on.

“Aaron? We’ve got fifteen minutes to

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be. . . .” I froze. “Well, what is this?”

John, halfway out the window in torn jeans and an old grey sweatshirt, looked at me sheepishly. Behind him I could see Aaron’s legs on the roof.

“Where are you going?” I demanded.

“Up in the hills.” John’s voice was soft but clear.

“Why?”

“So we won’t have to go to church.” He lifted his other leg through the open window and hunched down to look at me. Aaron’s face moved into the frame and spoke.

“We hate going to church. We’re not going to go anymore. We hate being Mormons.”

“Yeah,” added John. “Church is lame.”

Speechless, I stared for a moment at my two boys framed in the window, the morning

sun on their hair and a sure defiance in their eyes. I was stunned. They had grumbled from time to time about how boring church was and how most of their friends got to go swimming on Sunday. But running away to the hills so they wouldn’t have to go? We always went to church, like we always ate dinner. It was not up for question.

Rage and frustration rocked me as I finally found my voice. “I cannot believe . . . how dare you . . . ?” I sputtered, unable even to complete a sentence. “Get . . . back . . . in . . . this . . . room . . . right . . . now!”

John’s legs made their way back through the window. Then Aaron’s.

“Sit down!”

They sat on the floor and I stood over them, wanting all the height I could get. “So this is it? You’re dropping out of the Church? You’re never going back?”

John shook his head. “Never,” said Aaron.

Had I been watching this scene in someone else’s family, I would have had to stifle a smile. But this was my family, and I found myself seized with terror. “Falling away” is not what I had in mind for my children. Certainly not at this age. John was only twelve and Aaron was eleven. They were too young to fall away.

“Are you going to make us go?” asked John sadly.

I heaved a huge sigh and leaned up against the door. I could make them go. I could threaten them or bribe them or cry in front of them until they felt so guilty that they’d get into their white shirts and dark pants and Sunday shoes and go.

“No,” I said after a long pause. “I’m not going to make you go. But you’re not going up into the hills either. If you don’t want to go to church this morning, you can just sit right where you are while we’re gone. No going outside. No television. We’ll talk about this later.”

“Okay,” they mumbled.

AS the deacons, twelve to fourteen years old, walked up and down the aisles in their white shirts and ties, passing the sacrament, I felt a war within me. John should be with them. John should want to be with them. I could make him be there next week. Should I? The War in Heaven was fought over the right to free agency. I could sort of remember voting for it for me, but I certainly didn’t remember voting for it for my children. They got it anyway, though, and they were exercising it. A joke title someone had thought up for a book was “Free Agency and How to Enforce It.” I liked that.

The Rice boy held the silver sacrament

tray in front of me, and I took the small piece of bread. He would never sneak out the window and run up in the hills to avoid having to go to church. Every Sunday the Rice family filled the front row, and I would watch them and other stalwart, happy, two-parent, seemingly-perfect families in the ward and envy them. With two parents united it's almost possible to block all the doors and the windows so that no child sneaks onto a deviant path. *Almost.*

Early on, we were the perfect Mormon family, too, holding family home evening and singing "Jesus Wants Me for a Sunbeam" and "We Thank Thee, Oh, God, For a Prophet," and paying our tithing before any other financial obligation, and teaching the children that coffee and tea and alcohol would never be found in our cupboards, and going to the temple regularly, and fulfilling all the assignments given us by the bishop.

But then the children's father climbed out the window, and that changed everything. Even after the divorce, the window stayed open and looked inviting and winds blew in and things that had been fastened down suddenly were up in the air. The children knew that their father drank wine with his dinner sometimes and that he didn't go to church anymore or believe everything the Church taught. They were just digesting the information that this man they adored was a homosexual, someone on the Church's list of most

serious sinners. There was a *lot* blowing around that used to be fastened down, and I was left alone to grab and hold and nail down or throw away. I knew intuitively that it was not just a bright summer day that was tempting the boys to skip church. It was a crumbling of the family identity. Their father wasn't a Mormon anymore. Why should they be?

I wasn't listening to the sacrament meeting talk by the visiting high councilman, a tribute to the pioneers in commemoration of Pioneer Day. I was writing my own talk. What was I going to say to the boys when I got home? I couldn't speak with unwavering confidence like some Mormon parents could. What my boys didn't know—what most people didn't know—was that I had eyed the window and thought about climbing out myself.

Sister Keddington arose and smiled and lifted her baton for the beginning of "Come, Come, Ye Saints." Before we had finished the first verse, I felt tears on my cheeks and wondered if the bishop or Sister Keddington or the high councilman would notice. If they did, they wouldn't think too much about it. A divorced woman has the right to cry, is expected to cry. They would never guess the tears came from a different well.

"Gird up your loins; fresh courage take. Our God will never us forsake." Emily noticed that my voice broke and looked over at

me, then took my hand. I had stood beside my mother Emeline as she sang "Come, Come, Ye Saints" with great resolve and gratitude. She had been a missionary for the Church on two separate occasions and had always prayed, as the family knelt together beside our chairs at supper, that her family and their families would heed the counsel of the prophet and give their all to building the kingdom. The last Christmas she was with us before she died of cancer when I was fifteen, she put in our stockings a letter she had written, telling us she was proud of us and urging us to continue in our devotion to the truth, to the family, to the Church. I had memorized most of the letter.

Her mother, Sarah, who had walked across the plains beside a covered wagon when she was eight, had sung that same hymn again and again. I knew that as a girl in Idaho she had sent her Christmas money with that of everyone else in the family to be used in building the Salt Lake Temple. She had wanted new mittens, but had willingly sent the money and mended the holes in the old ones. "Though hard to you this journey may appear, Grace shall be as your day."

And Sarah's mother, Mary, had maybe even been one of the first singers of the hymn. The song had been written by William Clayton in the late 1840s as he lay alone in a leaky tent after receiving word of the death of his infant son back in Nauvoo, Illinois. It was passed from wagon train to wagon train, bringing the pioneers comfort and hope. "Why should we mourn or think our lot is hard? 'Tis not so; all is right." Just a phrase, just a line of the melody could link me instantly with my people, with Sarah and Mary and all those other ancestors who had seen and followed some bright new light: George, who had given up a prestigious position as a lacemaker in Nottingham; Thomas, who had marched in the Mormon Battalion to San Diego, boiling his rawhide shirt to survive; Warren, who had sailed around Cape Horn to San Francisco with Samuel Brannan and then had accepted Brigham Young's call to found a city that became Mesa, Arizona.

All these people, my people, had sung "Come, Come, Ye Saints" and had meant it. "Oh, how we'll make this chorus swell—All is well! All is well!" I heard them singing it along with me now from the back of the chapel. I saw them watching me, their posterity, their hope, their seed for whom they had sacrificed so much. They knew I would continue the family heritage, continue to build the kingdom, to be a good Latter-day Saint, to teach my children the restored gospel, to



"Why should I pay \$9.95 for a temple cross-stitch pattern when I can photocopy it for 25 cents?"

send them out as missionaries. They were happy to see me there, where I belonged.

But where were my boys? I could see Thomas Morris staring at me darkly from under the great eyebrows in the family photo album. "Carol Lynn," he said sternly, "where are your boys?"

Well, they were home sitting on the floor of Aaron's room because they didn't want to be Mormons anymore.

But I was there. I had not climbed out the window. That was something. So many of my good friends had left the Church for one reason or another, the women usually over the same issue that troubled me so deeply: the "woman" question. Oh, how many hours I had spent in tears over that! I loved the Church and that love was braided with pain. Being a woman of feminist consciousness in a thoroughly patriarchal institution brought the most wrenching conflict. Did I want that for my girls, who were sitting here beside me, dutifully holding the hymnal? Did I want my boys to be complicitors in a system that seemed to prize maleness over femaleness? And what of the other issues that waved their hands for my attention? What of the large number of homosexual people and their families who sat in our chapels or used to and were hugely misunderstood? What of the black people who only recently were being invited into full fellowship? What of the egocentric provincialism that drew such a heavy line dividing "them" and "us" and its temptation toward arrogance? What of the exasperating bureaucracy that sometimes seemed insensitive to the needs of the individual? What of all the other issues that swirled around in my head and sometimes made me stand in the foyer greeting the good people of my ward that I loved so much and feeling that my heart would break because maybe, after all, I wasn't really, really one of them? Maybe I should just let John and Aaron climb out the window. Maybe I should go with them and tell Thomas Morris I had found new frontiers.

SACRAMENT meeting dismissed and everyone moved toward the various classes that composed Sunday School. I grabbed my friend Annie in the foyer and whispered, "I have to talk to you. Come out to my car. Now." Annie looked at my intense face and followed me out to the parking lot.

Annie had been my confidant and friend ever since we had been visiting teaching companions together and understood all my questions and struggles about the Church, and even shared some of them.

I was near to tears. I explained my di-

lemma with John and Aaron. Then I asked Annie, who wasn't born into the Church, why she stayed. And why did she want her kids to stay?

Annie looked out the car window at the recognizably Mormon chapel with its plain spires and practical design. We had on other occasions lamented the cookie-cutter architecture that made all Mormon buildings look alike and joked that we ourselves were running from the same cookie cutter.

She shared her conversion story and concluded, "After I got baptized I thought I'd died and gone to heaven. Everything was wonderful. Everyone was wonderful. I was with God's best people, industrious, honest, happy. They were . . . different. There was a different spirit there, and I loved it.

"And gradually . . . I saw that it was not perfect, that *they* were not perfect, and the scales fell from my eyes and I saw the warts, and sometimes I have said to myself, 'What am I *doing* here?'"

"And what do you answer?"

"I answer," Annie said thoughtfully, "that I'm here because, warts and all, it's still an excellent system, that the leaders have our happiness as their goal, because you don't find better people, because life on your own can be too scary, and because I know that this is where God wants me to be."

I hit the steering wheel in frustration. "Of course! The pluses far outweigh the minuses! But how do I keep my children involved long enough to see that for themselves? Or at least long enough to make a rational choice? How do I keep them from climbing out the window?"

Annie smiled and put a hand on my arm. "When you find out, Sister Pearson, let me know." The Mormon mode of formal address

had become our standard term of endearment.

"Thanks, Sister Mauss."

I GRABBED the girls when Sunday School was over and hurried through the foyer to the big wooden doors before anybody could ask me where John and Aaron were. But Brother Jones stopped me on the steps.

"We missed your boys today."

I turned and tried for a smile. "Yes. They . . . couldn't make it." I could not lie and say they were sick. But I couldn't tell the truth and say they had fallen away. If I said that, we would be on the agenda of the next bishop's meeting, with all the leaders in the ward charged to assist in the reactivation of the Pearson boys. There would be friendly calls from the youth leaders and "kidnappings" for ice cream. Other boys would be mobilized to tempt the erring ones back. I would be viewed as a failure if I allowed my boys to leave the fold and we'd never hear the end of it. Why couldn't they just leave us alone?

But I knew why. It was more than just statistics, more than just doing their duty. They *cared*. They all cared about my boys. And not just about their eternal souls. They cared about them here and now, and they wanted to help keep their feet on good and growing paths and avoid some of the pitfalls that can be so dangerous. Growing up is tough and the world is a mess. We'd be a lot better off, I had to admit, if every boy had Brother Jones to watch out for him.

And so I wasn't angry as I hurried down the steps before he could ask any more questions. Just embarrassed. And confused. And exhausted.

"Tell them we hope they can make it next



"Are we ready if Jesus comes tonight?"

week," he called after me.

WHEN I opened the door of Aaron's room, the boys were sitting on the floor playing "Monopoly." My talk wasn't quite ready yet, so I didn't give it.

"Brother Jones said to tell you they missed you," was all I said.

Aaron glanced up. "Good. They can miss me again next Sunday."

IF ever I wanted a pure religious experience, which I did that night, I put on the orchestral arrangement of Mormon hymns I'd had for years. One side, having a scratch, reminded me too much of mortality, but the other side was heaven. And I curled up in the reclining chair in my bedroom under the red wool blanket we got in Scotland.

Why was I feeling so frightened? All parents run the risk that their children will leave the family religion. Each of my ancestors who were converts had left a religion, maybe had broken a parent's heart. I believed strongly that one should grow where one was planted. But if the ground was not good for growing, then one had to transplant oneself. Sarah and Warren and Thomas had transplanted themselves and had been happy with the new ground. Lots of people I knew had found a new life on Mormon ground that was unquestionably better than their lives on the old ground. I had been born on this ground. Had it been good for me?

My own history as a Mormon moved before my closed eyes. Memories covered me, warm as the red wool blanket. It had been lovely to grow up knowing I was one of God's chosen people, knowing I was unique and well loved and well taken care of, protected from the world by a living prophet whose guidance was as firm as the mountains around us, knowing that the heavens were again open, that angels had visited the earth just like they had in the Bible, and that God had spoken to Joseph Smith and would speak to me whenever I truly asked, though probably not so dramatically. Even when, years later, I decided God chose various peoples for various things, that no leader on earth was infallible, and that God had spoken to lots of people besides Joseph Smith, it was nice to feel special.

It was nice as a very small girl listening to Aunt Cree tell how she knew the spirit world was as close as walking through the door to the next room and that she knew her own mother was there, strong and happy, because she herself had been allowed a glimpse the last time she went to the temple and it was

wonderful . . .

It was nice at age seven playing Raggedy Andy in the church play and knowing it was important because all of us had talents that were given by God and it was our obligation to develop them and share them . . .

At eight putting on a little white dress and being immersed in a font of water by the strong hands of one who had God's authority to baptize me exactly like John the Baptist had baptized Jesus . . .

At ten giving my first talk in sacrament meeting, telling the story of Grandmother Sarah leaving her dolls in Nottingham, England, to come to America and cross the plains to Utah and how all of us must be prepared to sacrifice for a greater good, and having Bishop Bodily hold out his calloused farmer's hand to me and tell me I was a real fine speaker . . .

At thirteen sitting quietly under the warm hands of Brother Eldredge for my "patriarchal blessing" as his warm voice inspired me to be prayerful and to guard my virtue carefully and to speak words of encouragement to uplift those who are discouraged and to be a ministering angel here upon the earth, and to trust in God even in times when darkness appears and to know that through faith I would see the light and find the encouragement to go on . . .

Knowing at fifteen that my mother was just as real as she had ever been, but now she was in the spirit world and on her way to the celestial kingdom because she had been such a good woman, and I had to do my best to live a good life so someday I would be there, too, because families can be forever . . .

Standing in the Smith fieldhouse at BYU as one of thousands of incoming freshmen to sing "The Spirit of God Like a Fire is Burning" and knowing that in spite of all the challenges of combining intellect and faith, and despite too much attention to hair length and skirt length, I would sit in classes for five years with students and professors who wanted to make the world ready for Christ's return . . .

Arriving as a young woman in Athens with all my luggage stolen, alone and with no friend in the world but a young Greek man who had tried to seduce me for three days on the train, knowing that I could go to the U.S. Air Force base and find the Mormon "branch" there and have instant family, instant friends . . .

Kneeling across the altar from Gerald in the Salt Lake Temple and exchanging vows of love and fidelity for time and all eternity, and then when part of the vow went awry, knowing that much of it remained and that

the strong, strong promises of eternal progression for all of us were still intact . . .

Seeing my children standing with all the other children at the front of the chapel and singing brightly, "I Am a Child of God" . . . collecting their pennies for the sick children in the Primary Medical Center . . . memorizing their parts on the Christmas program and finding bathrobes to be the three wise men . . . dreading the monthly "fast Sunday" when they'd have to skip two meals and give the money to the poor . . . seeing Emily get off the bus from a week at Girl's Camp still shining from standing around the campfire with a hundred girls and leaders, arms around each other, singing "The Lord's Prayer" and then putting crackers in sleeping bags . . . Aaron remembering a challenge in a talk given at church for everyone to live twenty-four hours as if Jesus were right there beside you and suggesting that we try it. . . . How could we not be Mormons? That's who we were, like it or not, and if we didn't like the kind of Mormons we were we needed to become the kind of Mormons we would like. We've gone through such a lot to get here, *such a lot!* The Church had been good for me. Even the conflicts had been good for me, making me think and feel and become stronger and opening up plenty of work that needed to be done.

I DIDN'T really give my talk until the following Saturday, when the children's father came out, and Gerald gave most of it for me. Strange where one's best help comes from sometimes.

"I hear you've been giving Carol Lynn some problems about going to church," he said to the boys after all of us were gathered in the family room.

"We don't want to go anymore," said Aaron, staring up at his father grimly. "It's lame. I don't want to be a Mormon."

"Lots of people don't go to church," added John, "and they're still nice people. I don't want to go. It's boring."

"Boring?" asked Gerald. "That's not a good enough reason."

"And I don't believe half the stuff I hear."

"That's not a good enough reason either."

"Well, you don't go. Why do we have to?"

"I did when I was your age. When you're out and on your own you'll make your own decisions on going to church and thinking whatever you want to about religion. But you need a place to start, and this is a good place for you to be right now. Learn all you can. And the bottom line is that your mother needs you to go. That's what the family does and that's the end of it. Carol Lynn needs

more support right now than she's getting from all of us."

I knew this little speech required some sacrifice from Gerald, and I was grateful. He was torn with his own pain, the terrible pain of being a Mormon at heart and at root, but one that did not fit.

AND so after one week of having fallen away, the boys were reclaimed. They went to church the next Sunday, and the next, and most Sundays after that when they weren't sick.

TODAY three-quarters of my children are active in the Church, and I love them all the same.

John is serving a mission in Argentina. When he left home to go to college at the ultra-liberal California Institute for the Arts, he stopped going to church, as expected he would. A year later he amazed me in a telephone conversation by saying, "Mom, I've decided I want to get back into the Church."

"John! What does this mean?"

"I had to see if I could be John without being a Mormon. And I see that I can do that."

"And what makes you feel you want to be John and be a Mormon?"

"That's who I am. That was my upbringing. I feel more comfortable there. And I feel that the Church is an instrument of great power."

"So this decision feels right in your heart?"

"Yep. I dropped out because it didn't feel right in my head, but I've decided there's something about religion that ought to be a thing of the heart with the head just standing by giving a little advice now and then."

John's letters from the missionfield are warming. He loves the work and tells me the gospel is true and the Church is the closest thing we're ever going to find to Narnia. Still, he is aware of the dangers of a system that has the missionaries screaming "baptize" in the mornings, and has decided, "my goal is to love the people, to get them to feel the Spirit, to raise them to a higher place, and seal them there with baptism."

Emily is experiencing some profound growth and joy in her life, in which the Church is playing a central part. She has been instrumental in the recent conversion of a high school friend. The Church with its splendid support system has been hugely important in helping Emily heal from some emotional distress centering around our unusual family circumstance. And two years in the pits of L.A. has made a move back to

Zion feel very much like a return to the "pure in heart." After first attending her new single's ward, she called me in ecstasy with a report on finding two dozen brand new beautiful friends. But she can laugh at our cultural absurdities and is in no danger, I think, of becoming an empty-headed follower.

Katy at sixteen is perfectly comfortable with being a Mormon and has been known to haul out an inactive friend up the street and get him to church. But she is a thinker and points out to me ongoing inequities, such as at our last ward conference raising our hands to sustain the Young Men's presidencies, but not raising our hands to sustain the Young Women's presidencies.

Aaron at present is not attending church and does not consider himself a Mormon. He tells me he is not comfortable with organized religion and wants to develop an independent spirituality. He has long, blond hair and is a rock guitarist and has his own sound studio and takes good care of his mother and

younger sister. The values he grew up with are intact, and several people have told me Aaron has said that when he has children they're going to be raised in the Church.

Whatever becomes of any of my four children, I am not going to disown them like Tevye did. I will respect their decisions. But if I could write the scenario for each of them, I would keep them in the Church.

EMILY and John and Aaron and Katy are fifth generation in a remarkable spiritual movement. I want them to continue it, to appreciate the rich, rich heritage they hold, to honor the teachings that point them toward godhood, to remember Sarah and Mary and Emeline and George and Warren and Thomas, to stay with the family, the small family and the larger family, to grow where they were planted.

And if the ground needs attention, to dig in, and if the overgrowth cuts out the sun, to trim it back. And never, never to put pioneering in the past tense. ☞



LOOKING AT HER, I COULD

These frail, sacred, and profane people
shield the piano-chewed soprano;
looking at her, I could
scream, swoon, redefine my entire life
as insipid series, unexplained temptations,
a mishmash mosaic like speed
typing drunk, tired, fingers
locked like frozen twigs.

(looking at my wife again) I think:
I am not Agamemnon,
no need to murder me, dear—
raise an axe, stop the rhythmic pulsing
of my weak-willed half value heart,
a purple bit of flesh
engineered from primitive molecules.

Looking at her, I could
be played all the way through once,
looking at her, I could
reform my commercial acculturation,
smash the thrones of despotism,
read an underground newspaper,
decry the charitable virtues
of my gender, class—
throw my nameplate to the vast populace,
long for the consummation
of voice and action, peace and feeling,
love and instinct.
Looking at her
I could.

—SEAN BRENDAN BROWN

REVIEWS

PLURAL MARRIAGE AND THE MORMON TWILIGHT ZONE

SOLEMN COVENANT: THE
MORMON POLYGAMOUS PASSAGE

by B. Carmon Hardy

Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992

445 pages, \$34.95



Reviewed by D. Michael Quinn

THIS BOOK IS a wonderful addition to the library of anyone interested in American social history or in Mormon history. It is essential for the study of Mormon polygamy.

There is a personal dimension in my response to *Solemn Covenant*. The first paragraph of the book acknowledges Victor W. Jorgensen as Carmon Hardy's co-researcher. I first met Jorgensen twenty years ago in a graduate seminar at the University of Utah. He had prepared a long paper on post-Manifesto polygamy, and his work was more than casually interesting to me. I had already spent five years researching post-1890 polygamy along the same lines. Later I met Carmon Hardy.

Hardy, Jorgensen, and I continued to traverse the same historical terrain without ever comparing notes, research designs, or anticipations for publication. *Solemn Covenant's* American context, case history approach, distribution tables for marriages, and appendix of polygamists make it the kind of book I expected to write. Hardy and Jorgensen have every reason to be proud of this study;

D. MICHAEL QUINN recently edited *The New Mormon History: Revisionist Essays on the Past* (Signature Books) and is the author of "LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890-1904" (Dialogue 18 Spring 1985) and "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism" in forthcoming *Fundamentalism and Society*, edited by Martin Marty and R. Scott Appleby (University of Chicago Press).

the book has many strengths.

Solemn Covenant is a classic analysis of the relationship between Mormon polygamy and American society's values during the last half of the nineteenth century. The chapter "Civilization Threatened" explains the deep social, cultural, and psychological sources for the intense anti-polygamy crusade in America. Hardy's mastery of the relevant literary sources in Victorian America and Victorian England is staggering. He juxtaposes this broad social analysis with an intensive look at the Mormon inability (then and now) to understand that polygamous society deeply threatened Victorian Americans.

The chapter "Blessings of the Abrahamic Household" argues persuasively that Mormon polygamous theology bore a dangerously symbiotic relationship with American society. "The Saints spoke directly to questions absorbing many others at the time—sexuality, health, and home," but posited polygamy as the solution to these ills. Mormon polygamy was not simply counter-cultural, it was the highest form of marriage relationship.

The Latter-day Saints did not recognize the disaster if non-Mormons believed Mormon defenses of polygamy. If polygamy was the real answer to society's ills, then "Gentiles" had every reason to fear that Mormon polygamy was the marriage relationship to end all other marriage relationships. If, as Wilford Woodruff frequently preached, polygamy could not be surrendered without destroying Mormonism, then anti-Mormons had every reason to press for a public aban-

donment of the practice.

Hardy's chapter on the 1890 Manifesto is similar to previous discussions by Kenneth Godfrey, Henry J. Wolfinger, E. Leo Lyman, Thomas G. Alexander, and this reviewer. Its most significant contribution is Hardy's analysis of how the Manifesto evolved to the status of revelation. That discussion is as important as his careful explanation of the illegality of every allegedly safe haven for Mormon polygamy—in Mexico, Canada, and on the high seas.

Two of *Solemn Covenant's* essays will certainly polarize the reactions of various readers. The concluding chapter, "Monogamous Triumph," describes what most contemporary Mormons see as the best of all possible worlds. Hardy cites surveys that reveal 80 percent of LDS church members today would refuse to obey even a direct, personal *command* from a living prophet for them to enter polygamy! However, the chapter rings melancholy for Mormonism's modern Fundamentalists and others who look back wistfully on Utah's old-time religion.

Carmon Hardy's appendix, "Lying for the Lord," is sure to disturb most readers. This essay is the longest discussion in print for what I described in 1985 as Mormonism's "theocratic ethics." In my view, the words "lying" and "situational ethics" do not apply to Mormonism's theocratic context and nineteenth-century world view. However, few modern readers see reality through early Mormonism's prism, and they will resonate with Hardy's perspective. Even on its own, Hardy's "Lying for the Lord" is a notable contribution to Mormon studies.

As I've written elsewhere, history isn't the same as the past. Beyond the human limits of historians who try to make sense of the past, the unrecorded event is history's Twilight Zone. That event may be a conversation or an action that appears in no contemporary document, nor even in a reminiscence. Because of its continual illegality, much of the Mormon polygamous experience disappeared into that Twilight Zone of unrecorded events and conversations. However, crucial documents about the Mormon past do exist, but are currently unavailable for historians to analyze. These historical documents have disappeared into vaults at LDS headquarters or are in the private possession of individuals—an artificial Twilight Zone for historians.

But whether the absence of evidence is real or artificial, historians have two alternatives: either say nothing about the event, or make plausible recreations of the past based on circumstantial evidence that does exist.

Hardy chooses the latter. For example, he suggests and evaluates multiple scenarios for Apostle Abraham H. Cannon's polygamous marriage(s) several years after the 1890 Manifesto. This is important in the historical effort to attempt a reconstruction of the past. Some may prefer that Hardy and other historians speak only of incontrovertible events in the past. Still others would like everyone to maintain a respectful silence about any "sensitive" matter in the Mormon past, no matter how much evidence exists. *Solemn Covenant* ventures tentatively into post-Manifesto polygamy's Twilight Zone, as well as confidently into sensitive developments that have clear verification.

I have only two objections about Hardy's forays into the past. First, on several occasions, he undercuts his analysis by saying someone "allegedly" or "supposedly" made a statement, when in fact a diarist recorded the words on the day they were spoken. The top of page 177 has an example of an unnecessarily tentative use of a quote.

On the other hand, Hardy sometimes asserts without qualification certain statements by one person that were only alleged decades after the fact by others. The top of page 178 confidently affirms a reported statement from a third-hand source. Another instance is a quote alleged by a non-participant on the basis of written evidence which Hardy did not examine. Unlike the words of one person recorded the same day by a listener, statements claimed decades after the fact by non-participants are more needful of such qualifications as "supposedly" or "allegedly."

My second objection, and *Solemn Covenant's* principal weakness, is that it does not communicate sufficiently the human dimensions involved in the Manifesto and the subterranean continuation of polygamy. Until this year, my own historical publications have neglected women, so I'll mention them first in this regard. Hardy frequently cites women by name, and even describes the circumstances of many post-Manifesto wives. However, the book does not communicate to me the intensity of their personal experiences. I'm reminded of Wallace Stegner's awe for Mormon pioneer women whom he presented so well in his *The Gathering of Zion: The Story of the Mormon Trail*.

For example, several of the legal wives in Hardy's appendix were unable to bear children and consented to a post-Manifesto polygamous marriage. In some cases, a childless first wife was the one who repeatedly asked Church authorities to grant a post-Manifesto wife to her husband. In a case

of which I'm aware, the first wife said she could not be happy if she thought the new plural wife was unhappy. The self-doubt, anguish, love, familial devotion, and religious faith of these remarkable Mormon women simply are not explored in this book. Those personal dimensions of women's experiences are essential dimensions of post-Manifesto polygamy.

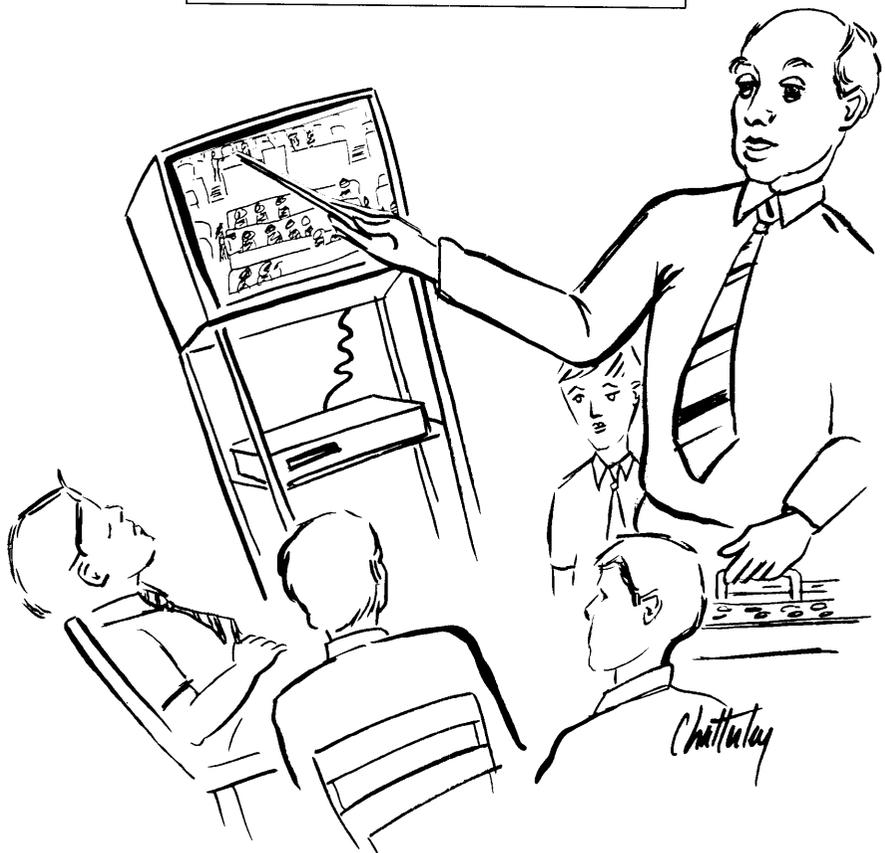
The book presents even more impersonally the general authorities involved in post-Manifesto polygamy. One sentence characterizations are always distortions of any person. However, here are my suggestions for what is lacking in Hardy's descriptions of these LDS leaders.

- Wilford Woodruff as a guileless personality caught in the impossible situation of trying to save the temples he valued most in the Church by giving up the polygamous living that he had preached for years was impossible to surrender.
- Brigham Young Jr., living constantly in the shadow of his famous father, painfully insecure, and feeling a fundamental disagreement with a Church president he

adored about a principle they both revered.

- Joseph F. Smith, frequently on the edge of expressing strong emotions (often tears or anger), now faced with upholding policies he disagreed with, and alternately being accused of compromise or duplicity.
- Francis M. Lyman, haunted his entire life by his father's apostasy and rebellion against one Church president, now being told by the majority of his quorum that he was out of harmony for trying to enforce the official statements of three other Church presidents about the Manifesto.
- Heber J. Grant, confused by the contrast between the Church's official position and his knowledge of the private acts by members of the Presidency and the Twelve, and torn between his desire to sustain the official position and his need to marry again to have sons who would outlive him and carry on his name.
- John W. Taylor, who married polygamously a week after the issuance of the Manifesto and again a decade later, yet

POST-SACRAMENT ANALYSIS



"You, Allen, see how you're holding the tray too high?
You're almost hitting Sister Kolon's chin!"

who performed few polygamous marriages himself, and who felt his closest friend Matthias F. Cowley was too ardent an advocate of post-Manifesto polygamy.

As much as it is possible to feel affection for distant historical persons, I respect and love these men. Although they were sometimes at cross-purposes, all of these leaders were devoted and righteous men in a transitional era that strained each of them to their limits.

Among the prominent actors in the drama of post-Manifesto polygamy, I feel the greatest love for Apostle Matthias F. Cowley. Of the Church authorities involved in continued polygamy after 1890, Elder Cowley received the most criticism during his lifetime. The stigma outlived him and bothered several of his children until the day they died. Yet while he lived, even his severest critics in the Twelve continued to call him "Mattie." This gentle man was loved by all who knew him. What I know of his experience I gleaned from diaries and official minutes, but neither *Solemn Covenant* nor any other study does justice to Matthias F. Cowley's complexities as I perceive them. Also, more than other leaders in turn-of-the-century Mormonism, Elder Cowley's personality and life experiences are accessible for historical reconstruction. Like several of his apostolic associates, he kept a detailed, personally revealing diary throughout his life. Then in his seventies, Elder Cowley used those original documents to write thousands of pages of an autobiographical and even more reflective "revised journal." This sets him apart from his other associates in the Mormon hierarchy. I once handled both the original and revised journals before two of his children donated the manuscripts to the First Presidency. Hopefully, one day a descendant of Matthias F. Cowley will resurrect these sequestered documents to help recreate his remarkable life and times.

As extraordinary as *Solemn Covenant* is, B. Carmon Hardy has not fully communicated the personalities of Church leaders who called each other such nicknames as Mattie, Abram, F. M., Hebe, and Johnny. And there are also hundreds of names, dates, places, and circumstances missing from Hardy's textual discussion and from his appendix of post-Manifesto plural marriages. One day, I will make such a separate contribution. Nevertheless, this book is the most thorough examination of the subject published in the century since the Manifesto. *Solemn Covenant* is erudite, lucid, provocative, informative, and a must-read for anyone interested in the Mormon past. ☐

SYMPATHETIC BUT HONEST

THINGS IN HEAVEN AND EARTH: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF
WILFORD WOODRUFF, A MORMON PROPHET

By Thomas G. Alexander

Signature Books, 1991, \$28.95, 484 pages



Reviewed by Kenneth L. Cannon II

THOMAS ALEXANDER'S recent biography of Wilford Woodruff is an intriguing addition to the growing canon of important works on the history of the LDS church its members. Utilizing his own painstaking and voluminous primary research conducted over decades, as well as recent historical scholarship of others, he provides both a perceptive and sympathetic portrait of Woodruff and one of the most comprehensive histories of nineteenth-century Mormonism. In short, this is the best kind of biography: it not only provides a compelling view of an important historical character, through his experience it also provides new insights into the history of the movement in which he played a significant role.

The title of the book is well chosen. Alexander presents Wilford Woodruff as a man who, although obsessed with "things in heaven," also had one foot firmly set on earthly soil. Woodruff's formal education was unusual for his time. His natural curiosity prompted him to pursue educational opportunities beyond his formal schooling, making him one of the most educated of early Church leaders. He forced himself to develop practical leadership skills that helped him lead the Church through one of its most difficult times. Alexander develops well the dual themes of the spiritual and the practical in Woodruff's life.

The first two chapters are devoted to the background and early life of Woodruff. Alex-

ander introduces the reader to a relatively well-educated, hard-working Connecticut youth surrounded by religious revivals. Woodruff's own naturally spiritual nature led him "to become a Christian primitivist, a millennialist, and a seeker" not formally associated with a particular denomination. Alexander tells us of Robert Mason, a fascinating prophet with whom young Wilford became acquainted. This "Simsbury Prophet" told Woodruff about a revelation he had received that convinced him he would never find the true church. Mason prophesied, however, that Woodruff would find the truth. This experience helped young Wilford, who had a strong sense of his own mortality because he was unusually accident-prone, to focus on things spiritual. Woodruff recognized the profound influence Mason had on his life, and one of the first vicarious baptisms for the dead that he conducted in Nauvoo was for Mason. Later, shortly after the completion of the St. George Temple, Woodruff completed Mason's other temple work and "adopted" Mason.

Fully utilizing Woodruff's extensive diaries, Alexander sets forth in detail Woodruff's remarkably successful missions and chronicles the occasional disputes with other, less committed Church leaders. His success among the United Brethren in Great Britain is unique in Mormon history. Woodruff began preaching to members of this group at the Benbow farm in March 1840. Thirty-six days later he left the area after having baptized 158 people.

Through Alexander's narrative, the reader experiences the early ordinances, the "intensive charismatic experience," and the academic studies conducted in the Kirtland

KENNETH L. CANNON II, a lawyer living in Salt Lake City, is the author of "After the Manifesto: Mormon Polygamy 1890-1906" (SUNSTONE 8:1&2).

Temple, although Woodruff missed the initial dedication of the temple. The murders of Joseph and Hyrum Smith are seen through Woodruff's eyes as well as the difficult transition that soon followed. The inner workings of the Church hierarchy are followed first-hand throughout the administrations of Brigham Young and John Taylor. Woodruff's further visions and revelations and his service in the St. George Temple are fully described.

Alexander carefully chronicles Woodruff's temporal life. He describes in detail Woodruff's participation in the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society, the Poly-sophical Society, and several other, less well known early Utah groups. He follows Woodruff through museums and libraries. He analyzes Woodruff's experiments with plants and the practical steps Woodruff took to further Utah's pioneer economy by introducing certain strains of plants and animals to the territory. Alexander describes Woodruff's business pursuits as a merchant and farmer, and discusses openly and sympathetically his family life, noting both his successes and failures.

Alexander closely examines Wilford Woodruff's tenure as Church president, one of the most difficult periods for the Church. Woodruff led the Church through radical changes that ushered the Church into the twentieth century. The Church's woes caused by the Edmunds-Tucker Act and the related official abandonment of polygamy, the major modifications in Church views and practices, and the accomplishment of statehood are treated as well or better than they are treated in other works.

Alexander's writing style is lucid and readable with little flourish. Some might find portions of the book too detailed, but the cumulative effect is one which makes the book hard to put down. There are several typographical errors and one or two misplaced endnotes, but these are so few and far between that only the most careful reader will ever find them.

Alexander's view of Woodruff is sympathetic but honest. Although his conclusion that Woodruff was the third most important nineteenth-century Latter-day Saint (behind only Joseph Smith and Brigham Young) is subject to dispute, there is little doubt that this work is one of the two or three best and most important biographies of nineteenth-century Church leaders both because of the breadth of Wilford Woodruff's role in Mormon history and because of the scholarly and careful manner in which Thomas Alexander researched and presented the work. ☪

A CRASH LIKE A SHOT

THINGS HAPPEN: POEMS OF SURVIVAL

by Emma Lou Thayne

Signature Books, 1991, 80 Pages, Cloth \$18.95



Reviewed by Dennis Clark

PEOPLE'S TASTE in poetry reveals its values as fully as do its tastes in music or painting, sculpture or drama. Mormons haven't earned Emma Lou Thayne's poetry yet. If they had, this book would be selling like Carol Lynn Pearson's books and be quoted in sacrament meeting more often than Edgar A. Guest, since it arises from the encounter, at times harrowing, at others harvesting, by turns horrible, hortatory, ecstatic, of an honest Mormon soul with the inadequacy of language.

We don't often talk about the arts as a survival mechanism, but that is exactly what

they are—for the artists that produce the works we value, for the culture that nurtures the artists, for the audience that treasures them. Thayne is a poet we should treasure in the only way poetry can be treasured: by giving it away. We should be reading these poems aloud, to ourselves and to each other, all the time, sharing the richness of her experience.

And it is a wealth of experience. Thayne groups the poems in three sections: "Come to Pass"; "The Map of the World"; and "Things Happen." She captures the ecstatic quality of experience in poems like "Morning is My Time," from the first section:

MORNING IS MY TIME

Morning is my time for making love. Away, anonymous
I stalk from sleep adrift in dreams that tell
me who I am. Unprotected by the surfaces I

polish in a day, deflectors set in careful
place to fend off thoughts, unconscious as the clouds
of beauty in their conformation, I cover

with a mystic wand the impertinent intrusions so
born of joy that they would curl about my edges
and claim a hand, a cheek, a burrowing, and race me,

unprotected, home. But after sleep, when morning
catches them let down and you beside me mysterious as
what has so delivered us well kept and ringing

with the music our nights have so supplied, I wonder
how my surfaces would yield to yours, or if, in
holding, there would be no surfaces at all.

DENNIS CLARK is a librarian at the Orem Public Library and co-editor of *Harvest: Contemporary Mormon Poems*.

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NEW BOOKS

For Those Who Wonder—Managing Religious Questions and Doubts by D. Jeff Burton, foreword by Lowell L. Bennion. Entirely revised second edition. Available at all LDS bookstores. ISBN 0-9623160-4-0; about \$7. 091

Progression: The Afterlife by D. Jeff Burton. Brand new. Tongue-in-cheek exploration of Mormon afterlife and its disturbing impact on today's men and women. 80 pages. ISBN 0-9632160-5-9; send \$6 to: IVE Press, 2974 S. 900 EAST, BOUNTIFUL, UT 84010. 091

NEWSLETTERS

SINGLE SAINTS

Looking for friendship/romance? *SingleSaints* is the nationwide publication for single, divorced, and widowed LDS. Fun. Easy. Confidential. We also feature "photo profiles" for singles. Four issues: \$15, or free info. Send LSASE to: PO BOX 211, LYLE, WA 98635. 091

MAGAZINES WANTED

SUNSTONE BACK ISSUES

We will pay market value or give generous trade in symposium session tapes or subscription issues for back issues of SUNSTONE. We are interested in copies of the first issue through volume 5:4 (July-August 1980). Write or call SUNSTONE: 331 S. RIO GRANDE, SUITE 206, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84101, 801/355-5926.

BOOK EXCHANGE AD RATES

\$3.00 per line, minimum of 4 lines at \$12.00. Headline type counts as two lines. Lines counted at seven words per line. Other heading titles are negotiable, such as magazine subscriptions, printing services, autographed letters, books wanted. Payment must accompany the ad—we do not bill. For more information call 801/355-5926.

The sense of the world here, that it comprises a mysterious beauty barely kept from overwhelming the reader, from flushing one away in a rush of joy, permeates the poems in this book. Even the third section, "Things Happen," which details the pain of an accident that sparked these poems of survival, is a collection of poems on healing, not disaster.

This sense of joy arises from an optimism fundamental to Thayne's life, and to the Mormonism she lovingly embodies in her poems. Her sense that the joy is incarnate in her, in each of us, that the ecstatic can only be kept from racing her, "unprotected, home" (surely one of the most positive images of death in poetry), by the surfaces she polishes into deflectors—this sense of the poem clearly expresses how we each use the mundane to shelter us from the divine, how housework preempts the mansions of glory. And it culminates not in the ecstatic state of the traditional Christian mystic, burning, sweetness and light infusing oneself, but in the yearning for another body, in the hope that "in holding, there would be no surfaces at all": a carnal union that heals the divided spirits.

But this poem also exemplifies the most interesting problems with Thayne's poetry. It is a poetry of strong feeling that expresses itself in structures of logic that sometimes fail. For example, in the second line, grammatically, the core sentence, "I stalk," is modified by two adverbial phrases, the prepositional "from sleep" and the verbal "adrift in dreams that tell me who I am." I think the second phrase is intended to modify "sleep"—but it doesn't. The resulting sense is "I stalk . . . drift in dreams," a sense inconsistent with the tenor of the poem. It brings up images of a night stalker, anonymous, not one being told "who I am."

The next basic sentence, "Unprotected . . . I cover . . . the impertinent intrusions," would seem to refer to the speaker's drifting, half-waking state in the first stanza (with perhaps unconscious phallicism in the "mystic wand"). In that case, "unconscious as the clouds of beauty in their conformation" would seem to modify the subject, "I," rather than the "thoughts . . . the impertinent intrusions" that seduce with that race toward home. But the following sentence denies that this one applies to the half-waking state.

The next sentence begins "but after sleep, when morning catches them let down. . . ." The conjunction "but" signals a contrary state, and the pronoun "them" refers either to the "deflectors" or to the "intrusions"—in either case, this introductory adverb indicates that the condition does not apply. The deflectors are not up; the intrusions are not

rampant. The wand is treated grammatically as one of the deflectors, not as a protection of the half-sleep. This is a time when no protection is needed, when the possibility exists that "in holding, there would be no surfaces at all." This last sentence is a wonderful contrast to those polished deflectors, but it renders the second and third stanzas problematical.

That may seem like an overly technical analysis, the kind of dissection that yields only murder, never knowledge. To me, however, the question at the heart of the poem is that of the third stanza, the question of the relation of wand and intrusions to both the morning languor and the polishing day. That is not what is primary to the poem: the ecstasy is primary. But is the poem a sufficient construct to amplify the ecstasy, to pass it on whole?

Perhaps it is. I do not like the poem less for having spent so much time on it. And I certainly don't want a greater rigor in the logic of Thayne's language. The problem I sense in these poems, and it is a dissonance in the poems, not a failure of Thayne's art, is that they often rely on bald statement, rather than the sensuous elements of language—sound, rhythm, repetition—to carry the poem. An example, from "Tourist":

I want to hold onto the idea of Russia's
equivalent of bougainvillea or acacia
or lilacs.

Till I am actually there.

Maybe I am simply up against Thayne's personality here. Perhaps this is just the way her language works. But I yearn after an even more sensuous expression of this idea, some startling image, or figure of speech, to give me the experience whole, not the assertion of it.

I overstate my case. The more I read the poems, the more often I return to read them again. Mine is a lover's quarrel with Thayne: if the poems weren't so steeped in her love for the world, could I care so strongly about them? 



Our Sundays may well be the zaniest,
Our leaders by far the brainiest.

We've consolidation

With real innovation—

Our meetings are all simultaneous!

—KAREN ROSENBAUM

NEWS

BYU CONTINUES TO DEBATE ACADEMIC FREEDOM ISSUE

THE WAR over faculty rights at Brigham Young University that erupted last year still rages. The question at stake is to what extent can a faculty member's expression on religious issues be proscribed by the University's commission to promote orthodoxy among its faculty and students.

Last September the faculty committee responsible for writing the philosophical statement on academic freedom released its final draft. According to many BYU faculty, most of the changes from the earlier preliminary draft that was circulated among faculty last summer provide more protections for individuals. (See "BYU Memo Highlights Academic Freedom Issue," SUNSTONE 16:1.)

For example, the final draft states that any limitations on academic freedom must be "narrowly drawn so as not to impede the robust interchange of ideas," and the guidelines now acknowledge the freedom to "discuss and advocate controversial and unpopular ideas."

The statement says that limiting faculty speech is "reasonable when the faculty behavior or expression *seriously and adversely* affects the University mission or the Church. Examples would include expression with students or in public that:

"1. contradicts or opposes, rather than analyzes or discusses, fundamental Church doctrine or policy;

"2. deliberately attacks or derides the Church or its general leaders; or

"3. violates the Honor Code because the expression is dishonest, illegal, unchaste, profane, or unduly disrespectful of others."

After review by the faculty and board of trustees, the ten-page document became part of the university handbook. Al-

though, to the surprise of some campus insiders, by February 1993 no final version reflecting later faculty concerns has been released. Instead, in March it was announced that the final draft had been accepted by the board and was now university policy.

Some faculty still are uncomfortable with the document and feel that it might have a chilling, "psychological effect" on research in Mormon issues. "It might lead some faculty to be afraid to do research or take positions based on their data that don't agree with positions of church leadership," BYU sociology department chair J. Lynn England told the *Salt Lake Tribune* last fall. "As scholars we need to be free to point out where [Church leaders] have made mistakes," he said.

At the annual university faculty conference in late August 1992, BYU President Rex E. Lee said that the university was "basically sound." Quoting John Milton, Justice Holmes, and John Stuart Mill, Lee said that "truth can be best pursued in an atmosphere free from unwarranted inhibition on the development of expression of thoughts and ideas." Lee said that because BYU also celebrates the religious aspects of intellectual life, its faculty "enjoy a greater measure of academic freedom" than at "any other school."

Lee also defended the need to preserve institutional academic freedom and applauded the limitations in the statement. He also said that the Church's 1991 statement on symposia was issued to all Church members and thus included BYU faculty. He said the statement wisely counseled "between what is appropriate for public discussion and what can more usefully be resolved in private."

BYU Provost Bruce C. Hafen, speaking on "The Dream Is Ours to Fulfill," gave an expansive view of the mission of BYU that "embraces all truth," but which gives "priority to the truths that lead to Christ, and we cannot allow our most sacred premises to be altered or even minimized by secularist assumptions."

Hafen said that many spiritual casualties are "inflicted when a thoughtful student senses, even through subtle hints, that a BYU teacher she respects is cynical about the Church." He acknowledged that educated people may have troubles with a Church issue, but said that the public expression of them is not an issue of intellectual integrity or educational depth but one of judgment. Hafen said public expres-

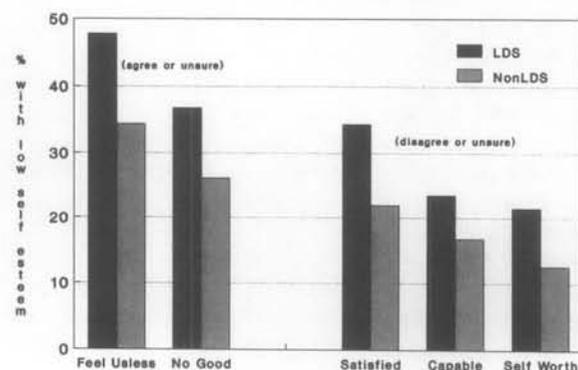
sion of disagreement conveys a "cynicism about the divine influence in a Church based on prophetic leadership." He counseled private communication over public expression that "may simply spray another burst of spiritual shrapnel through the ranks of trusting and vulnerable students."

"'Follow the Brethren' means more than we might imagine," Hafen said. "[U.S. House of Representatives Speaker] Tip O'Neill used to say that you find out who your friends are not by seeing who's with you when they agree with you, but who's with you when they think you might be wrong. And the religious core of a sacred system just might ask its followers to trust the religious imperative even when it does not

PECULIAR PEOPLE

SELF ESTEEM OF LDS AND NON-LDS WOMEN ON THE WASATCH FRONT

SELF ESTEEM OF LDS AND NONLDS WOMEN
ON THE WASATCH FRONT



Source: Survey of Women's Work Experience

A 1991 SURVEY of approximately 1,400 randomly selected women living along the Wasatch Front indicates that LDS women have lower self-esteem than non-LDS women. In comparison to non-LDS women, LDS women were more likely to agree with or have mixed feelings about the statements, "I certainly feel useless at times" and "at times I think I am no good at all." They were more likely to disagree with or have mixed feelings with the statements, "on the whole, I am satisfied with myself," "I am able to do things as well as most people," and "I feel that I'm a person of worth at least on an equal plane with others."

THE BROOKIE AND D. K. BROWN FICTION CONTEST deadline for short stories (maximum 6,000 words) or short short stories (maximum 1,000 words) dealing with LDS issues is **1 June 1993**. Contact: The Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

BYU-HAWAII LDS WRITERS' 1993 WORKSHOP on **28 June, to 3 July 1993** at Brigham Young University-Hawaii will feature lectures and small group workshops by professional writers Jack Weyland, Dean Hughes, Louise Plummer, Dick Harris, Janice Kapp Perry, and others, as well as editors from *Deseret Book*, *Bookcraft*, and the Church magazines. Sessions will cover fiction, ad copy writing, non-fiction, article writing, and song writing. Workshop fee is \$195 (\$220 after 28 April). Contact: Chris Crowe, 808/293-3633, or John Bennion, 808/293-3601.

AN INFORMATIVE CONFERENCE ON SEXUALITY/HOMOSEXUALITY on **24 April 1993** at the University of Utah will feature Kinsey Institute director Dr. June Reineisch plus ten panels on various subjects. For more information contact The Graduate School of Social Work, 801/581-8913.

LOWELL BENNION FEST to celebrate his 85th birthday and many and various contributions. Friends are planning a day of scholarly papers, personal reflections, and community service on Saturday, 7 August, at the University of Utah Student Union Building. Sponsored by Douglas Alder, Mary Bradford, Eugene England, Emma Lou Thayne, and the Lowell Bennion Community Service Center.

THE MORMON ALLIANCE's case reports committee invites contacts from individuals who feel they have experienced ecclesiastical or spiritual abuse within the context of the LDS church or who know about the experiences of others. The Mormon Alliance wishes to identify, document, and address such problems. We are not interested in Church-bashing. As a committee we are prepared to listen nonjudgmentally and confidentially, and we hope to promote healing and reconciliation. Contact: Lavina Fielding Anderson, 1519 Roberta St., Salt Lake City, UT 84115 (801/467-1617); Janice Allred, 221 W. 3700 N., Provo, UT 84064 (801/225-4967); Mormon Alliance, 6337 S. Highland Dr. Box 215, Salt Lake City, UT 84121.

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION will hold its annual meeting at the Graceland College in Lamoni, IA, on **20-23 May 1993**. Lamoni was founded in the 1870s as an Order of Enoch joint stock company managed by the RLDS presiding bishop. In 1881, Lamoni served as headquarters for the RLDS church for over two decades. Nearby historic sites include Adam-ondi-Ahman, Far West, and the Mormon Train community of Garden Grove. The conference, whose theme is "Religious Pluralism: The Communities of Mormonism," will begin with an afternoon tour of and session in the RLDS temple in Independence, MO, on 20 May, followed by a bus trip to Lamoni where the evening session will explore "Mormonism in All Its Varieties." For program, travel, and housing information, contact: The Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602.

THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART 1993 will offer five new temporary exhibits and three special foyer displays this year. The exhibit celebrating the centennial of the **completion of the Salt Lake Temple** opened on 27 March. Currently running through 18 April is a special exhibit entitled "Through a Child's Eye" showcasing **children's art from around the world**, which includes more than 300 drawings from 32 states and 30 countries. When that

exhibit closes, it will be replaced ten days later with one exploring the development of a **Latter-day Saint presence in West Africa**. Curators have collected artifacts, art, and photographs from the 1960s and early 1970s to document this relatively organized part of the Church. During July, visitors will see detailed scale models of historic farm machinery recalling the **history of an Idaho homestead**. This is one of three special holiday foyer displays planned in 1993. The others featured **art of the "Last Supper"** for the Easter season and will feature the traditional Christmas display of **nativity sets**. On 1 October, the museum will open a five-month exhibition of **rare historical art** created in early Utah. Featured will be paintings by Dan Weggeland, C. C. A. Christensen, George M. Ottinger, and other pioneer artists. The West Africa exhibit in the Theater Foyer Gallery will be replaced 21 October with another international theme: **native art from around the world** depicting various Latter-day Saint temples. The museum will begin judging entries for its **Third International Art Competition: Living the Gospel in the World Church**, for which entries are due 30 November 1993.

THE NAUVOO JOURNAL, published bi-annually by the **Early Mormon Research Institute**, is to make available in one source a variety of information about the Church in the United States and Canada from 1830 to 1850. Previous issues have featured: early Mormon sources 1830-1850; Utah marriage index, 1847-1905; biographical sketches of the first members of the Church (prior to 26 September 1830); 1843 petition to the U.S. Congress by members in Nauvoo; Nauvoo Legion and Mormon Battalion names and ranks; a list of all early branches of the Church; and excerpts from letters and journals. The Institute has identified over 600 early branches of the Church, identified many of their original members, and has a computerized index of over 30,000 names from the period. The Institute welcomes additional information or pictures. Contact: Early Mormon Research Institute, 433 East 300 South, Hyrum, UT 84319.

SOUTHWESTERN WOMEN'S RETREAT is now in the planning stage for **fall 1993**. Those interested in attending should contact: Paula Goodfellow, 10045 Hooker Ct. Westminster, CO 80030 (303/460-7278) or Lisa Turner, 6259 Roadrunner Loop NE, Rio Rancho, NM 87124 (505/891-2388).

WASATCH REVIEW INTERNATIONAL, a biannual Mormon literary journal, has published its **first issue**. The inaugural issue featured essays by Eugene England, Valerie Holladay, and Douglas Thayer, short stories by Wayne Jorgensen and Harlow Clark, a novel excerpt by Michael Fillerup, and poetry by William Powley, Dixie Partridge, Philip White, Timothy Liu, Brian Fogg, Donnell Hunter, Sally Taylor, K. Randall Kimball and Michael Collins, plus book reviews. Subscriptions are \$10 for two issues, \$18 for four. Contact: *Wasatch Review International*, P.O. Box 1017, Orem, UT 84059

SUNSTONE LECTURES AND CONFERENCES

1993 SALT LAKE SYMPOSIUM will be held **11-14 August 1993** at the Salt Lake Hilton. Send proposals for papers and panel discussions to: Greg Campbell, The Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, UT 84101-1136 (801/355-5926).

NORTHEAST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held **12-13 November 1993** at the Burlington Marriott Hotel. Contact: Don Gustavson, 413 Clearview Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).



NORTHWEST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

Proposal Deadline—15 June 1993

29-30 October 1993

Mountaineers Building, Seattle, WA

Molly Bennion, Chair
1150 22nd Ave East
Seattle, WA 98112-3517
206/325-6868



CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

22-23 October 1993

Kirk and Becky Linford
961 Elm Court
Naperville, IL 60540
708/778-9551

square with their own opinions.”

The faculty response to Hafen and Lee was mixed. Many faculty celebrated Hafen's and Lee's vision for the future of the university, but others, especially in the humanities and social sciences, felt that when it came to Mormon studies it allowed only for one orthodox viewpoint and discouraged faithful but questioning inquiry.

In early October the administration released the long-awaited draft of policies that will implement the academic freedom document, which is primarily a philosophy statement. In the cover letter to the draft of the Grounds and Procedures Document that outlined why and how faculty may be terminated, Lee noted the “long-standing expectation at BYU and other units in the Church Educational System that LDS faculty be active members of the Church in good standing. The University and Board of Trustees have together developed revised guidelines that will implement this expectation both uniformly and confidentially. These guidelines seek to preserve related but separate spheres for ecclesiastical and university deci-

sions.

“Through ecclesiastical channels, the Church will periodically remind Bishops and Stake Presidents that LDS faculty at BYU should meet the standards of conduct consistent with qualifying for temple privileges. Bishops will be invited to communicate with their Stake President only if there is an excommunication, disfellowshipment, or failure for a reasonable period of time to meet the standards of conduct consistent with qualifying for temple privileges. In such cases, Stake Presidents may then contact a single confidential source in the Academic Vice President's office. When the circumstances are deemed to warrant it, the vice president will contact the individual, who, if appropriate, will be invited to resolve the concern with ecclesiastical leaders within a reasonable time.”

The requested faculty response to the procedures document was at times intense and strong. At one meeting, numerous faculty protested the involvement of their bishops in their employment, saying that it compromised their relationships with their bishops and made

them hesitant to be open in confessing confidential matters knowing it might affect their jobs.

While some faculty chafe at ecclesiastical involvement in their academic jobs, university administrators report that the general authorities feel that they are bending over backwards to accommodate them, because for all other Church employees (including the towel boy at the Deseret Gym!) and at other BYU educational institutions, including Ricks College and BYU-Hawaii, faculty are not just required to be temple-recommend-holding worthy but to possess a current temple recommend. In fact, some employees of the Church Education System and the Welfare Services department are now required to sign a release allowing all their former bishops to discuss with the Church matters that were confessed in confidentiality.

In the middle of the heated campus debate, Apostle Boyd K. Packer raised the temperature with his comments at October general conference: “For those very few whose focus is secular and who feel restrained as students or as teachers . . . there are over 3,500 colleges and universities where they may find the kind of freedom they value.”

Many faculty were angry at Elder Packer's remarks and resented that he called them *employees* because the traditional model for a university is a community of autonomous *colleagues*. Some said that they felt that Elder Packer did not trust or respect them.

The following week during his BYU devotional address, President Gordon B. Hinckley, first counselor in the First Presidency and chair of the executive committee of BYU board of trustees, attempted to calm the waters. “You have the trust and confidence of the governing board,” he assured the faculty, whom he called colleagues. “I am confident that never in the history of this institution has there been a

faculty better qualified professionally, nor one more loyal and dedicated to the standards of its sponsoring institution,” he affirmed.

Nevertheless, he said, “that trust involves standards of behavior as well as standards of academic excellence.” “It is not that we do not trust you. But we feel that you need reminding of the elements of your contract with those responsible for this institution, and that you may be stronger in observing that trust because of the commitment which you have made. Every one of us who is here has accepted a sacred and compelling trust. With that trust, there must be accountability.”

While many faculty said that President Hinckley's comments helped make the climate more tolerable, the debate continued.

At one meeting with faculty, Lee was asked if a faculty member could be pro-choice regarding abortion. Lee reportedly said that the question had been brought up with the board of trustees and the word was that there was no place at BYU for faculty members who were pro-choice. This report apparently disheartened many faculty, for while a few pro-choice faculty activists have received publicity, campus notoriety, and criticism, there are in fact many faculty who are not activists but who identify themselves as pro-choice (meaning the individual decides concerning an abortion, free of governmental proscriptions) but not pro-abortion.

One female professor was told that she would have crossed the line if she publicly favored abortion rights. She was read an unpublished resolution from the board of trustees that prohibited faculty from taking stands favoring abortion.

At one point, it was rumored that there was a list of six professors that the general authorities had identified who should not be at BYU. With one exception, all were younger, untenured faculty. While the administration specif-

ically denied that there was an official list, it became known that there were indeed faculty members who had been noted by at least one general authority and discussed with BYU administrators because they were troublesome for their environmental, feminist, and Mormon stands and writings.

This revelation further prompted the discussion and finger pointing between "conservative" and "liberal" faculty (often older vs. younger faculty), as well as between faculty and the administration and the board of trustees. Of particular note is the factious English department, where challenges of professors' testimonies and right to be at the university have at times almost reached the status of being an out-right war. One debated juncture is the teaching of feminist criticism by some younger faculty. In March, a candidate for an English tenure-track position was interviewed at length about whether he would teach feminism in the classroom.

According to long-time observers of BYU, all this discussion has put faculty morale at an all-time low. There is a wide-spread lack of confidence in the administration's ability to protect professors' independence. Reportedly, even many deans criticize Provost Hafen's handling of the matter and privately say they don't trust him to deal honestly with them.

Many faculty members have said that they are tired of not being valued, of having their testimonies questioned by other faculty, and are seeking positions at other universities. Some have noted that BYU is fortunate in having this controversy at a time when the faculty job market is all but dried up, making it difficult for individuals to leave. Both the *Salt Lake Tribune* and the *New York Times* have run stories about faculty discontent and flight, reporting that up to twenty faculty had sent out resumes because of the situation. Non-Mormon psychology professor Tomi-Ann

Roberts and her husband, Mormon German professor William Davis, are leaving BYU because of the constraints on faculty expression.

The controversy also has made it more difficult to hire new faculty. Top-qualified candidates for tenure-track positions in several departments have withdrawn their names from consideration and have specifically cited the academic freedom controversy as the reason.

One example is Astrid Tuminez, a BYU graduate who recently received her Ph.D. in political science from Columbia. She told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that she is concerned about accepting an invitation to join the faculty if it means choosing between secular and revealed truth. "I don't want to be in a situation where I feel paranoid and have to watch out for everything," she said. "If the church meddles too much in the university or takes a dictatorial stance on intellectual issues, I would have a problem taking a job there."

In the math department, where it is so hard to find qualified LDS applicants that half of the faculty are non-Mormon, two highly qualified LDS candidates withdrew because of BYU's intellectual climate. A similar scenario occurred in the history department.

In an effort to defuse the crisis, last fall the First Presidency called Henry B. Eyring to be commissioner of education for the Church Educational System, a position that had not been filled for several years. Eyring had been commissioner once before from 1980 until 1985 when he was called to the Presiding Bishopric.

Reportedly Eyring has two main assignments. First, he is to improve Church institutes so that they will better serve and attract students who attend other universities. This is in part to address the fact that more and more disgruntled member students are not getting into BYU and have to go elsewhere (the primary topic of Elder Packer's October general

conference talk).

Second, Eyring is to solve the problem at BYU. Throughout the fall, he met with numerous faculty members just to listen and understand. Faculty members were impressed with his willingness to educate himself on the issues before making decisions. Initially after Eyring's appointment, many felt there was a kind of hiatus in the controversy.

However, as the winter semester came to a close the points of controversy flared more brilliantly as the April deadline for faculty appointments and contracts forced issues. Several faculty members at different points in the tenure approval process have been reproved for their involvement in Mormon issues. Cecelia Konchar Farr's candidacy for a tenured English position is threatened by a speech she gave at an abortion-rights rally and for her feminist scholarship. Her review process specifically challenged her campus "citizenship," not her research and publication record.

Other faculty members have also been directly chastised because of articles they have published or speeches they have given on Mormon topics.

One point of controversy is faculty participation in Sunstone symposiums, which have become a symbol for heterodox discussions of Mormonism. Noting the Church's Statement on symposia ("Church Issues Statement on 'Symposia,' " SUNSTONE 15:4), university officials refuse to prohibit professors from participating, perhaps because of fear of reprisal from its accrediting organization, but they increasingly make Sunstone participation a litmus-test question in new-hire and tenure interviews. Tenured faculty members who are interviewed for various university appointments report that part of the interview process includes questions on whether they will participate in Sunstone symposiums. Sunstone participation is often juxtaposed against loyalty and obedience to Church lead-

ers. At a recent meeting, college deans were informed that faculty who participated in Sunstone symposiums would be held accountable. Reportedly, one dean asked for the written memo of the policy and was told that it was an oral policy.

Some see this entire episode as the defining period in the university's history, whether it will continue to grow in stature in the academic community's esteem, whether it will become the Bob Jones University of Mormonism, or whether the LDS church will decide that supporting an expensive world-class LDS university is just not part of its mission. Already, some faculty report that their departments have lost stature in their discipline as a result of the debate. In a couple of years BYU will be engaged in this question for the once-a-decade accreditation review; and many predict that the university will not sail through the process as easily as it did in the 1980s.

Whatever the outcome, at the moment Brigham Young University and its Mormon sponsor are undoubtedly engaged in an eventful "experiment on a great premise," to quote President Hinckley, "that a large and complex university can be first-class academically while nurturing an environment of faith in God." ☐

RESEARCH REQUEST

WERE YOU AN LDS CONSCIENTIOUS OBJECTOR IN VIETNAM, KOREA, WORLD WAR II, OR WORLD WAR I OR DO YOU KNOW SOMEONE WHO WAS? TO ASSIST WITH AN UPCOMING SALT LAKE SYMPOSIUM SESSION, PLEASE CONTACT:

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IN THE NET

a crisis: "I was told that one year's worth of food storage is enough and anything more is excess. . . . I haven't done anything I haven't been told to do by the prophet."

In fact, it is the current prophet who gets many of these people in trouble. The earlier ultra-conservative apocalyptic writings of then Apostle Ezra Taft Benson, often informed by the John Birch Society, are the political and religious bible for many of these individuals. Several have stated publicly and many say privately that they believe the reason President Benson has not come to their defense is that he is being muzzled by other Church leaders.

If the excommunications are few, others have clearly been silenced by the "house cleaning" campaign. LDS Isaiah scholar Abraham Gileadi, whose writings deal with the imminent Last Days, has stopped speaking and writing after being threatened. Another man who sells video tapes and cassette recordings on the Last Days said that he ceased doing so when he was threatened with excommunication, although he resented the charge of priestcraft—making money from teaching the gospel — when countless others do it from sales of Church books. Other conservatives say that there has been a definite pulling back by many conservatives in response to the Church's actions, although many say they are disappointed in their church.

Proponents of home schooling were relieved when the Church issued a statement saying it did not oppose home schooling. In a letter to the *Tribune*, Joyce Kinmont, of LDS Home Educators' Association, noted that the director of the Church Education System spoke to their conference last June and asked, "If the church were opposed to home education, would BYU Press have published *School Can Wait* by Seventh-day Adventist Raymond Moore? Would the first dissertation on home education in the entire country have come out of BYU and would it have

been written by religion professor Reed Benson, son of the current church president?"

Nevertheless, Bruce L. Olsen encouraged individuals involved in home schooling to "carefully assess the implication of both withdrawing their children from public systems and also of what the loss of the influence of Church members could mean for those same public institutions."

One superstar of the Mormon conservatives is Vietnam war hero and anti-New World Order lecturer "Bo" Gritz, who converted to Mormonism in 1984. While in Salt Lake City this January to speak on "Secret Combinations" at the Yorktown Survival Xpo 90s exposition, Gritz told a KSL reporter that he had talked to a lot of Mormon conservatives who confirmed that there was a checklist being used to threaten members with expulsion. Gritz, who lives in southern Nevada and lectures nationwide on the sinister global governmental conspiracy, received almost 28,000 votes in Utah in the same November presidential election that put Ross Perot second to George Bush and made Utah the only state where Bill Clinton came in third.

Gritz fears that the global conspiracy is now infiltrating the Church and said that "there's no real religious freedom in the LDS church." He attributed the recent crackdown to some Church leaders who are "zealots, people who are going to extremes in protecting the church's [tax exempt] financial status" with the IRS. Both IRS and Church spokespersons told the *Tribune* that Gritz's claim that the IRS was running the Church was "baloney."

While so-called liberal Mormons who have felt similarly under siege from the Church vacillate between glee and commiseration at the news of the crackdown on conservatives, it appears that, paradoxically, as the Church broadens its cultural diversity with its growth on other continents, it is at the same time narrowing on its spectrum the band widths for acceptable politics and theology. ☐



CAROL LYNN PEARSON is travelling world-wide with her one-woman play, *Mother Wove the Morning* (which is now available on video). She recently took it to Crete (above photo); this spring she's in the Carribean.



NEW *BYU Studies* editor Jack Welch at the Mormon History Association in St. George, Utah, May 1992.



THE PLANNING COMMITTEE of the Northwest Sunstone Symposium, held in Seattle on 23-24 October 1992. From left to right: Steven Whitlock, Patrick McKenzie, Devery Anderson, Molly McLellan Bennion, Kaisa London, Norma Lee Brooks, Kathleen Bennion Barrett, Marsha Bennion Giese (Clark Carroll was not in the picture).



THE PLANNING COMMITTEE for the Chicago Sunstone Symposium, held on 16-17 October 1992. From left to right: Ann Stone, Colleen Thomas, Jonathan Thomas, Shiela Duran, K. Carpenter, Kirk Linford, Maraley Rasmussen, Richard Rasmussen (not shown were Becky Linford and Jeff Meldrum).

UPDATE

BYU REJECTS LDS PULITZER PRIZE WINNER AS SPEAKER

THE CHURCH recently turned down a request by the planning committee for BYU's Women's Conference to invite Laurel Thatcher Ulrich to be the conference's keynote speaker. Ulrich, a life-long devoted LDS woman who returned to college to get her post-graduate education after rearing her children, was awarded in 1991 both the prestigious Bancroft Award in American history and the Pulitzer Prize for history for her book *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812*. She is the third Mormon and first LDS woman to receive a Pulitzer prize. For her work in women's history she also was awarded \$320,000 from the MacArthur Foundation—the so-called “genius award.” Ulrich is a professor of history at the University of New Hampshire. Last June she was the commencement speaker at the University of Utah and has spoken at BYU several times to smaller audiences, such as to BYU honor students. The decision to refuse her speaking this time was officially made by the BYU board of trustees at a meeting when the only two women on the board were out of town—the presidents of the Relief Society and Young Women's organizations. Historically, BYU's annual Women's Conference was planned and sponsored within the university—first by the student association's women's office, then by the Women's Research Institute, and then by an independent committee—and speaker approval was the same as for other university functions. In past couple of years, however, the Relief Society has joined in co-sponsoring the event, making it also a Church function and requiring Church review and approval of the program, including by Correlation. After the rejection of Ulrich's name, members of the Relief Society presidency, conference committee members, and other influential women made contacts with general authorities to find out the reason for denial; each man contacted refused to give a reason. Speculation for the snub mostly centers around the fact that Ulrich, who is concerned with feminist issues, helped found and is a regular contributor to the Mormon women's magazine *Exponent II*. “When they don't provide a reason, it shows a lack of respect to those of us who are trying to plan such events,” Marie Cornwall, director of BYU's Women's Research Institute, told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. “It seems they don't value women scholars and that goes to the heart of what we are.” Ulrich, who did not know of her nomination before hand, says she is “not upset or outraged—just a little puzzled. I always enjoy speaking to young people in the church. . . . And I think of myself as a good role model.”

MICHAEL QUINN INVESTIGATED FOR APOSTASY

AN APOSTASY investigation has been launched against noted Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn. Paul A. Hanks, a Salt Lake stake president, gave Quinn a letter dated 7 February 1993 requesting Quinn to meet with him and explain his “personal feelings about the church” in an apostasy investigation. Quinn, who recently moved to Salt Lake from Louisiana, noted that this was the first contact from the Church he had received: “No home teachers, no invitations to attend ward meetings, just a summons to defend myself.” Specifically, Quinn is being charged with apostasy in connection with his recent writings suggesting that Joseph Smith taught that women receive the priesthood as part of the sacred temple ritual (in *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism*, Signature Books), and for the

SUNSTONE article “150 Years of Truth and Consequences About Mormon History” (16:1) in which Quinn chronicled the punitive actions taken through history against those who write about controversial topics of Mormon history. A believing Mormon, Quinn defended his work in a letter to his stake president that was excerpted in the *Salt Lake Tribune* saying, “As a historian it is my obligation to approach evidence as carefully and fairly as I can. . . . It is no more apostasy for me to analyze these Mormon developments than it is treason to examine American slavery, or the CIA's LSD experiments on unknowing victims, or Watergate, or Irangate.” According to the *General Handbook of Instructions*, apostasy occurs when a member “repeatedly acts in clear, open deliberate public opposition to the church or its leaders or persists in teaching as church doctrine information that is not church doctrine after being corrected by their bishops or higher authority.”

Quinn says he is not interested in meeting with President Hanks because he believes the scenario to be “predetermined actions mandated from Church headquarters, yet presented as if they are your own independent decisions as a local leader.” This feeling is rooted in Quinn's 1985 experience when he says several apostles unsuccessfully tried to have him called into a Church court through an uncooperative stake president for his *Dialogue* article that described Church-condoned plural marriages after their ban in 1890. “I vowed I would never again participate in a process which was designed to punish me for being the messenger of unwanted historical evidence,” he wrote in his letter to Hanks. Hanks, however, denies he was told to investigate Quinn and laments that Quinn will not sit down and talk with him, but said, “I respect Mike and I rejoice in the fact that he bore his testimony [in his letter refusing a meeting].”

News of Quinn's situation caused much commentary and discussion. L. Jackson Newell, a professor of higher education at the University of Utah, told the *Tribune* that “Michael Quinn is unsurpassed among Mormon writers for the integrity and courage of his scholarship. To investigate him for apostasy for what he has written is to place every open-minded Mormon in jeopardy for his or her membership. When power is used to crush ideas then no one is safe and everyone should protest.” As of yet no action has been taken against Quinn, who left Salt Lake for a prearranged two-month research trip to California.

CHURCH BELATEDLY RELEASES FORGOTTEN MCLELLIN PAPERS

WITH THE release last fall of Richard Turley's book *Victims* on the LDS church and Mark Hofmann, it became known that the LDS church discovered papers by early Mormon apostate William E. McLellin in its archives in 1986, contemporaneous with the police investigation of the Hofmann bombings. The Church did not inform the investigators of the discovery at the time. McLellin's papers were relevant because Hofmann claimed he had the documents and was trying sell them for \$185,000 to several investors. Investigators believe Hofmann killed Steven F. Christensen and Kathleen Sheets to protect his forgery schemes that included the McLellin collection. The Church had acquired McLellin's papers in 1908, but no one knew it until a search of Church archives was instituted after the bombings. Legal experts agree that a timely release of the papers would not have influenced the ultimate outcome of the case, but critics say the Church could not have known that at the time. “I can't believe that nobody came forward with it,” Gerry D'Elia told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. D'Elia was the Salt Lake County attorney who headed the Hofmann investigation and believes the information would have helped investigators unravel the case earlier by establishing

Hofmann's motives. An article in the anti-Mormon *Salt Lake City Messenger* goes at length to show how the Church's continual statements that it was fully cooperating with the investigation are disproved by this information. Church officials say they never told the investigators that they had found the collection because the papers "did not fall within any of the subpoenas issued to the church." The McLellan papers contained four small journals and several manuscripts. They had been purchased by LDS President Joseph F. Smith and stored in the First Presidency's vault—an area reserved for sensitive documents and the leading quorum's minutes and correspondence—and unavailable to historians and most employees of the Church historical department. The collection is now cataloged and open to researchers.



APOSTLE THREATENED DURING BYU FIRESIDE

HOWARD W. HUNTER, president of the Quorum of the Twelve and next in line to be Church president, had just begun a 7 February televised fireside talk in the Marriott Center on the BYU campus when a man, later identified as Cody Robert Judy, yelled, "Stop right there!" The university-owned KBYU television station stopped the broadcast and flashed "video difficulties" on the screen. Judy held a black object to President Hunter's head, which he said was a detonator for a briefcase bomb he was also holding. He demanded the Church leader to read a three-page statement, which President Hunter refused to do. Almost immediately the 17,000 people in the audience began singing "We Thank Thee Oh God for a Prophet," distracting Judy long enough for students and security officers to overtake him. The briefcase contained only books and papers, but the police detonated it as a precaution.

Reportedly, the 27-year-old Cody Judy, who grew up in Brigham City, Utah, and later moved to California, believed he had received visitations from the resurrected Joseph Smith, Jesus Christ, and ancient apostles detailing what he was to do to gain control of the Church. He told the Associated Press, "I have received the resurrected visits of Joseph Smith and Jesus Christ. I've been doing everything the Lord has told me to do. That can be found in the scriptures. I can be found in the scriptures." Part of his demand included the immediate resignation of President Hunter and the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve. His father, Robert Judy, told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "Cody is just as normal as normal can be—until it comes to religion. When it comes to religion, he's a fanatic."

During the first week of February, Cody reportedly left guns and ammunition as "gifts for the prophet" inside Temple Square. He was questioned and released when the police decided he had not broken any laws. However, they refused to return the guns to him.

Cody has been ordered to undergo psychiatric evaluation to

determine if he is competent to stand trial. He is currently being held in the Utah County Jail with bail set at \$100,000.

BYU APPROVES OFFICIAL PACKET ON EVOLUTION

A TRUCE, of sorts, has been negotiated in the on-going battle at Brigham Young University between professors in the biological sciences who teach evolution and the Religious Education faculty who often preach against it. In classrooms both sides would cite and provide students with opposing general authority statements on the subject. Now, the university's board of trustees, which is comprised of senior general authorities, has approved a packet of statements to be distributed to classes in both colleges. The ten-page packet contains a cover letter from the current First Presidency, two First Presidency statements from 1909 and 1925, a 1910 First Presidency Christmas message, and an article on evolution from the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* that quotes from the minutes of a 1931 First Presidency meeting. (In a rare move, the First Presidency supplied their minutes' quote for the encyclopedia.) These official statements allow for diversity of opinion and deal more specifically with the spiritual origins of humankind than with evolutionary biology. A university committee compiled the proposed packet and decided to rely on "source over substance" as a compromise that excluded widely circulated items such as a letter from LDS church President David O. McKay stating that the Church has no official policy on evolution and other articles by apostles and First Presidency members denouncing the biological theory. Avoiding any hint of censorship, university officials state that teachers are welcome to use additional resources in their classes, but now they do not have the same religious authority as the statements in the Church-sanctioned packet.

PARTNERSHIP WITH PRIESTHOOD EDITED OUT OF AILEEN CLYDE'S TALK

AT THE October 1993 general women's meeting, Sister Aileen Clyde, second counselor in the general Relief Society presidency, welcomed those attending by saying, "I am so pleased to join with you in this great congregation of Relief Society women and Young Women and leaders of our Primary children. It is good to have President Hinckley, President Monson, President Hunter, and other priesthood leaders with us tonight to symbolize the priesthood partnership we so value in the Church and in our homes." The version published in the *Ensign* read: "It is good to have President Hinckley, President Monson, President Hunter, and other priesthood leaders with us tonight." One person, who had seen the galleys of this address, confirmed that the "partnership" phrase was still there at that point. The *Mormon Women's Forum Newsletter* reported that in response to private inquiry, Sister Clyde indicated that she had not been made aware of the changes to her address in the *Ensign* prior to publication, and that her address had been previously approved by the First Presidency.

CHURCH ARCHIVES CHANGES POLICY

THE LDS church archives made a change in its "application for archives research privileges." According to the new application, "any publication, reproduction, or other use of archival material that exceeds the bounds of fair use requires the prior written permission of the Church Copyrights and Permissions Office." Researchers are responsible for determining fair use, which legally prohibits overly lengthy quotations or quoting a source in its entirety. Previously, individuals were required to sign a document in which they agreed to submit all direct quotations for approval.

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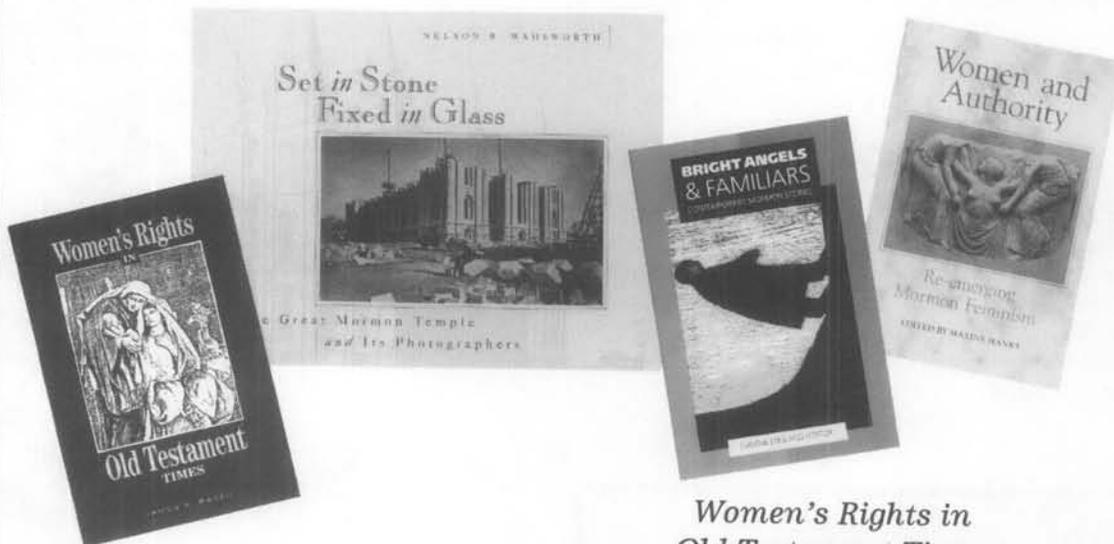
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HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF?

THE FOLLOWING quote was featured in the 14 February 1993—Valentines Day—Relief Society printed program of the Monument Park single adult ward:

In the ever-widening circles of single women and women weary of juggling two jobs—at home and the workplace—polygamy begins to look better . . . not because the men are so great but the women are.

—JOHANNA JARVIK

in *Notable Quotables: From Women to Women*, compiled by Elaine Cannon, Bookcraft, 1992, 148.

PRAYER PRIORITY

THE *New Yorker* recently reported this item in its "First Things First Dept." A clip "from the weekly program of the United Methodist Church in Spruce Pine, North Carolina," read, "Will you be loyal to this United Methodist Church and support it by your: PRAYERS.—For the youth retreat this weekend.—For those people who are getting their pictures made for the directory.—For the civil war in Yugoslavia." (*Context*)

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