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THE COMMON MORMON

MAYLIN DITTMORE'S letter (SUNSTONE, Mar. 1993) caught my eye. The thought of Malaysia being the actual location of the Book of Mormon lands sounded intriguing. The implications of such a discovery would raise again the question of what the common Mormon should believe. And just what is a "Common Mormon"? On a trip to Malaysia I looked for tangible evidence, from the mist enshrouded Genting Highlands to the sweltering heat of Kuala Lumpur (which means "muddy estuary"). The Moorish architecture of the city (which highlighted the pervasive Islamic influence) was punctuated by occasional Hindu and Buddhist shrines. It seemed remote to anything suggested by the Book of Mormon author(s).

In the heat of the day I sought respite behind the National Islamic Center and National Mosque in the shade of a butterfly park that had hundreds of species of butterflies. As I rounded a corner, the inspiration I had prepared myself for unfolded before my eyes. The poster explaining key species answered the question of just what a Common Mormon is—nothing more than a butterfly!

How delicate, how fleeting the thought! A Common Mormon doesn't rely on SUNSTONE or the *Ensign* for strength, but rather the sweet nectar of the orchid and hibiscus! My heart skipped a beat—maybe I was really on to something. Didn't one of the Eastern Mystery Religions revere the butterfly? Could that be one of the plain and precious truths lost over the millennia? Or maybe I've got things mixed up with the *Kung Fu* television series. Hmmm . . .

Returning home, I found no reference to

butterflies in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* (I did discover, however, that in 1993 Prentice-Hall published John Feltwell's *Encyclopedia of Butterflies*), nor in the Book of Mormon (unless it is a code word such as *curelom*). Maybe there was something back in the Islamic Center next to the butterfly park that would explain? Didn't someone somewhere call Joseph Smith an American Muhammed? (Arnold H. Green and Lawrence P. Goldrup, "Joseph Smith, An American Muhammed? An Essay on the Perils of Historical Analogy," *Dialogue*, Spring 1971.) Was there a link between butterflies, Eastern religions, Islam, and the Book of Mormon? Only someone like Hugh Nibley would really know. Well, I guess the flood of light wasn't as profound as I had suspected. For travelers wishing to see a Common Mormon first hand, the Malaysian Butterfly World is off Japan Chenderasari in Kuala Lumpur.

BOB HUGHES
Hong Kong

GRANDDADDY'S STORY

IMAGINE MY delight in reading Ann Edwards Cannon's "And Now for a Little Mormon Humor" (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1993) to find myself listed among LDS humorists as "Sam Taylor, the granddaddy of them all." However, I was disturbed because this assessment was based on a single book; thus it was a sad commentary on the scarcity of Mormon literary humor.

My book was most furiously denounced by Mormons for thirty years after its publication in 1948. The story first was published as a serial in *Collier's*, a magazine with a circulation of five million. Then it was a book club

selection and it received excellent reviews in the national press. But the roof fell in in Zion: I was Making Light of Sacred Things.

I remained in the dog house until Richard H. Cracroft of BYUphoned in 1978. After our discussion, he wrote "Samuel W. Taylor and Heaven Knows Why" (SUNSTONE, May-June 1980), informing the Saints that the book was unique; it stood alone. There simply wasn't another humorous Mormon novel at that time. He suggested that since 1948 the Saints had matured to the point where they could laugh rather than bristle at Mormon humor.

I wrote a preface to the second edition, praising the Saints for their mature sense of humor—after being told that my book was funny, they loved it. Kenneth Hunsaker, in a survey of LDS literature, called it the "best Mormon novel." Today, Cracroft uses the book in a Mormon literature course. All things come, it is said, to those who wait.

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR
Redwood City, CA

REFER TO THE SOURCE

IN MY ARTICLE on the origins of the Book of Mormon, I failed to note the source for some bibliographic information on page

64, note 5 ("Historical Criticism and the Book of Mormon: A Personal Encounter," SUNSTONE, July 1993). References to Champollion's *Precis* and to Charles Anthon's reviews of this work derive from a publication of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies ("What Did Charles Anthon Really Say?" *E.A.R.M.S. Update* [May 1985]).

EDWIN FIRMAGE
Salt Lake City

HARD QUESTIONS

I HAVE FOLLOWED the discussion concerning historicity and scripture, particularly between William Hamblin and David Wright ("The Final Step" and "The Continuing Journey," SUNSTONE, July 1993). Of particular interest to me is the linkage Hamblin insists on establishing between scholarly conclusions and a writer's spirituality. Hamblin seems unable to accept the idea that someone can arrive at uncomfortable conclusions about the historicity of the Book of Mormon and still accept it as scripture.

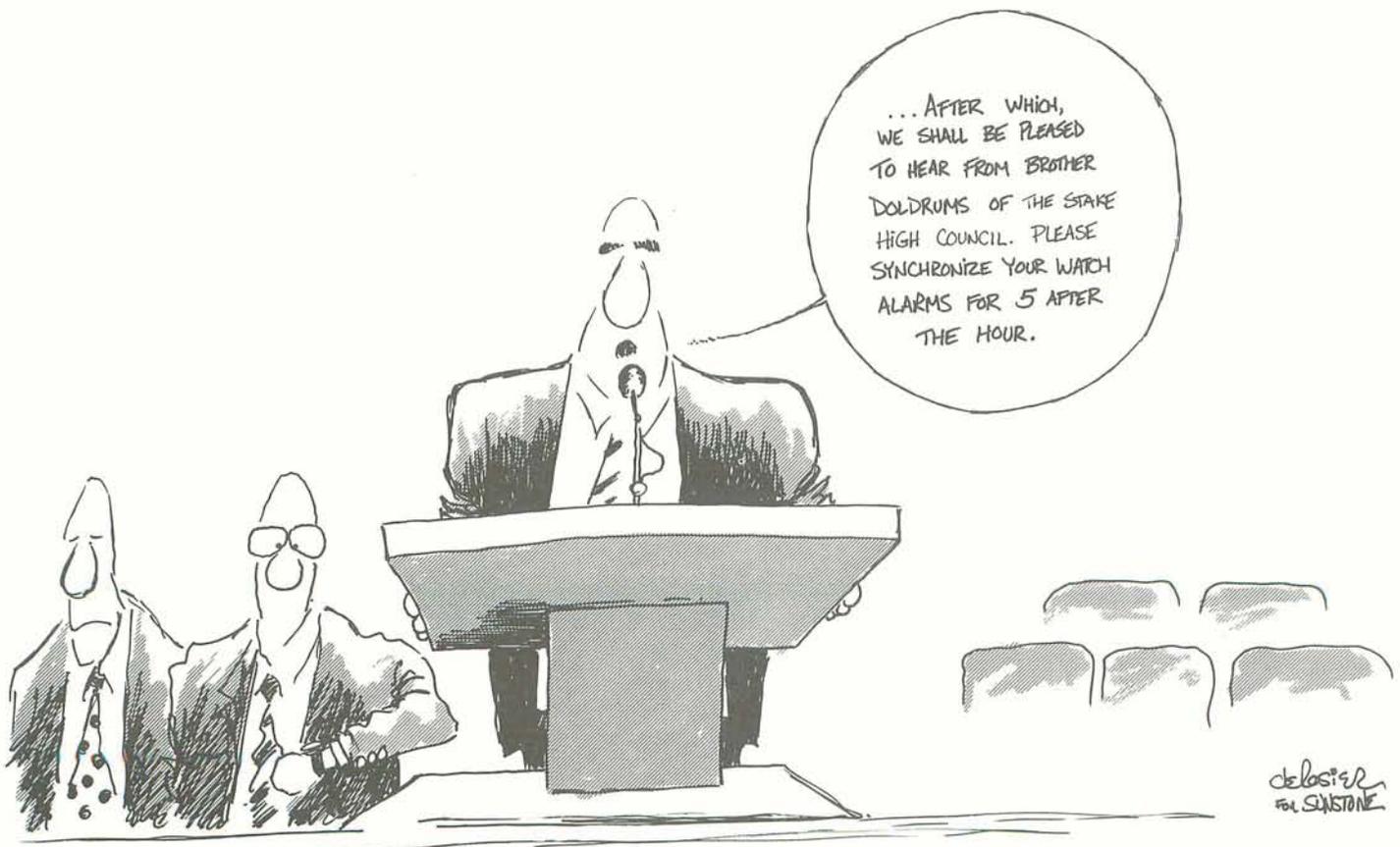
It was my pleasure to be Wright's student while doing graduate work in Near Eastern Studies at BYU. During that time he made every effort to teach us that intellectual activity was not contrary to spirituality and that

they should complement each other. He discouraged us from bending the results of our work to confirm what we wanted to find, and he also practiced what he preached.

What I find so interesting in the discussion surrounding the historicity of the Book of Mormon is not that Wright questions its historicity, but the quiet consternation I sense when he continues to claim that it is scripture. This kind of thinking presents difficult lessons for people who, like myself, have sought historical "verification" for the Book of Mormon in the literature and material cultures of ancient civilizations. But by redefining scripture in nonhistorical terms, we are suddenly faced with a different set of issues: If the book is not "history," what are we supposed to do with it? Asked more precisely, "What exactly does the Book of Mormon teach us?" By not viewing the Book of Mormon as history, we suddenly have to confront the book now, in our time. History is much easier to ignore.

I have long suspected that many LDS scholars ramble off into the stacks trying to sew up the historicity question because it is easier than the job of real life interpretation and the unblinking self-examination that must go with it.

For those who claim that intellectuals are





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being too hard on our sacred writings, I suggest they look at the interpretive traditions of other faiths. Judaism, for example, scrutinizes its scripture with an exacting criticism that most Mormons would never tolerate. But they take their scriptures seriously enough to really listen to what they have to say. I suggest we learn from them and not be afraid of our own scriptures.

SHELDON GREAVES
Berkeley, CA

TRUTH SEEKERS

I ENJOYED L. Jackson Newell's article concerning the recent actions taken by the Church to discipline some of its more outspoken members ("Scapegoats and Scarecrows," *SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1993). I appreciate his insight into the irony of the situation, in that there would be no LDS church if it were not for the principles of freedom of speech, thought, and tolerance toward different religious views that were espoused so passionately by our Founding Fathers, not to mention Joseph Smith.

The Church is using excommunication as a harsh but effective way of silencing (censoring) its members, thus intimidating others who might otherwise wish to express themselves. This is done ostensibly for the good because, not being "spiritually mature," we may not be able to discern truth on our own. Benjamin Franklin, showing the opposite was true, proposed that all persons should have access to the press because "if what is published be good, Mankind has the benefit of it, if it be bad . . . the more tis made public, the more the weakness is exposed, and the greatest disgrace falls on the author." Gamaliel expressed the same thought when he plead for tolerance toward Peter and the apostles when the Sanhedrin wished to discipline them for their unorthodox teachings. (See Acts 5:38-39.)

I left the religion of my birth and joined the LDS church twenty-two years ago precisely because I was willing to question my

church's teachings and be open, intellectually and spiritually, to searching for and accepting more truth. I continue that search. This is the same principle upon which literally millions have joined the Church.

How can we possibly ask other people to accept a young missionary's challenge to question their deepest, most sacred convictions so that they will be willing to join the Church, and then once joined, demand that they "follow the Brethren" and cease seeking truth for themselves?

TED McCANN
Lake Forest, CA

INVENTIVE WORDPLAY

PLEASE FIND SPACE in that grandiloquently spectacular firestorm of polysyllabic theobabble, your "Readers' Forum," to inject a note of thanks to Virginia Ellen Baker for the marvelously inventive wordplay of her sonnet, "Mist on Garmisch Slopes" (*SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1993), which all by itself made the issue worth the price of admission. My skier friends loved it. And to all you "so-called scholars": keep up the good work!

LEONARD SIDDHARTHA
Kent, WA

OWNING THE CHURCH

"OF SACRIFICE A Shrine," a poem by Ingrid Fuhrman (*SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1993), really touched my heart. In the early sixties, my father, brother Steven, and I built the Sunday School/Scout room for the old McLean chapel. Building that church is still one of my greatest memories. A "building missionary" lived with us for six months. On several occasions, we had the important assignment of sleeping in the tool shed to guard the property. Against all the rules, my dad brought his old Winchester and leaned it against the shed wall. An old guard dog, chained to the door, would bark until we fed him. Of course if you fed him, he slept all night. We were never awakened, and I hope

Pontius' Puddle



nothing was stolen. I don't know what our family's assessment to the building fund was, but it had to have been a sacrifice.

Thirty years after helping build that edifice with my own hands, I still feel like it is my church. When I visit that building, I still check the Sunday School room to make sure it has held up after all these years.

This week I drove by our new, under-construction stake center. We are not allowed on the property by order of the builders. We can see pretty well from the road how well it's going, but I wish my boys and I could sleep on cots in the tool shed and guard the piles of wood, or hammer hundreds of nails into sheets of plywood. It would give them reason for years to come to visit. They could then come by my house and we could laugh about that lousy guard dog that wouldn't stop barking until you fed it. I would even pay a little extra assessment so I might think I bought a brick or two.

MICHAEL R. WARNER
Manassas, VA

THE TRUE "NEW ERA"

ALTHOUGH WE MIGHT not encourage the excesses of the "Baseball Baptism Era," I still feel uneasy hearing too often, at missionary farewells and homecomings, that the ultimate measure of a missionary's success is the quantity of those immersed rather than the degree to which the quality of life has been enhanced ("I-Thou vs. I-It Conversions: The Mormon 'Baseball Baptism' Era," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1993).

Michael Quinn's article made me grateful that I served a mission in England and Scotland (1951-53) under the leadership of Stayner Richards and A. Hamer Reiser before baseball became the enticement to join the Church. They emphasized the quality of conversions, and never, as far as I can remember, the quotas—or what T. Edgar Lyon of the Salt Lake Institute used to call "statistical righteousness."

Quinn attributes the term "new era" to President McKay through Woodbury and says it was the "nickname" for the mass baptisms of the late fifties. On 22 July 1953 (11:30 A.M.!), however, I took notes at a meeting of district presidents of the British mission held at Newchapel Manor, the London Temple site. President Reiser said this was the "beginning of a new era" for the Church in the British Isles. The focus of this meeting was not on converting masses, but on helping hundreds of Saints get ready for going to the temple. I believe this was the first time "new era" was used in public discourse—five

years before it became associated with mass baptisms or was used by President McKay at the dedication of the London temple. As we understood it, the "new era" had everything to do with the quality of life of adult members and nothing to do with forcing children into a commitment they could not sustain.

On a more serious note, my nationalist genes require me to comment on Ann Edwards Cannon's observation that she'd like the Salt Lake Scots Pipe Band to play the pipes at her funeral, although she realized that "bagpipes are not a part of a traditional Mormon funeral." Could it be that their more frequent use at funerals has been suppressed in spite of what the prophet David O. McKay said about this most heavenly of musical instruments?

Around 1966, Bruce Hansen, pipe major of the Salt Lake Scots, was asked to play at a Salt Lake City ward social gathering for general authorities. After he played, some of the Brethren commented that they weren't sure whether they liked bagpipes. Thereupon David O. McKay cautioned them: "Brethren, you had better learn to like the bagpipes because that's the only music that will be

played in heaven." With such a prophetic imprimatur for the pipes, perhaps it is now time for each ward to have a "ward piper" to greet the Saints each Sunday morning with the stirring strains of "Scotland the Brave"—the tune to which "Praise to the Man" is sung. Besides, just think what that would do for missionary efforts in Scotland!

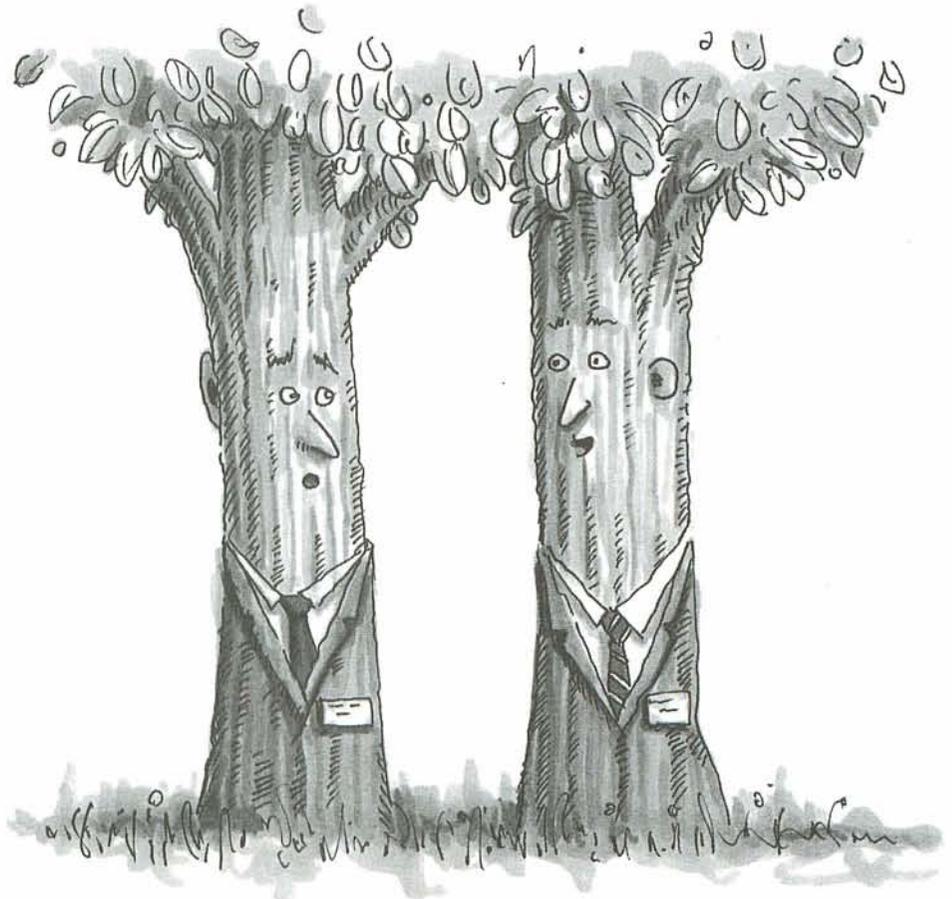
FRED S. BUCHANAN
Salt Lake City

THE MOYLE ERA

AS ONE WHO was intimately acquainted with President Henry D. Moyle and privileged to be involved in what may well have been the most productive (and surely most exciting) period of modern Church history, I protest Quinn's narrow handling of what properly may be called the "Moyle Era."

Possibly there were abuses in the overzealous missionary efforts, but it is unlikely that they were of the magnitude implied by Quinn. A full disclosure of President Moyle's contributions most likely would lead to the following conclusions:

1. The actual number of converts who



"It's best to convert a quaking aspen because you convert a whole grove."

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remained active and became Church leaders was unsurpassed during this era.

2. The value of Church property acquired during this era would probably exceed \$1 billion today. This laid the foundation for the present material well-being of the world-wide Church.

3. Moyle personally contributed to the Church his family's rights to property in Florida and Georgia, currently worth some \$500 million.

4. He was one of the prime movers in the planning of the present Church Office Building complex, providing the necessary facilities to administer a world-wide church.

5. If he died of a "broken heart," it was because few general authorities (other than President McKay) caught the vision of what was necessary to pull the Church out of the early twentieth-century doldrums and into its period of rapid expansion.

Moyle was a unique, multi-faceted Church leader. Before being a general authority, he had enjoyed successful careers as attorney, rancher, founder of business

enterprises, mining engineer, and politician. Few people knew him in all these roles.

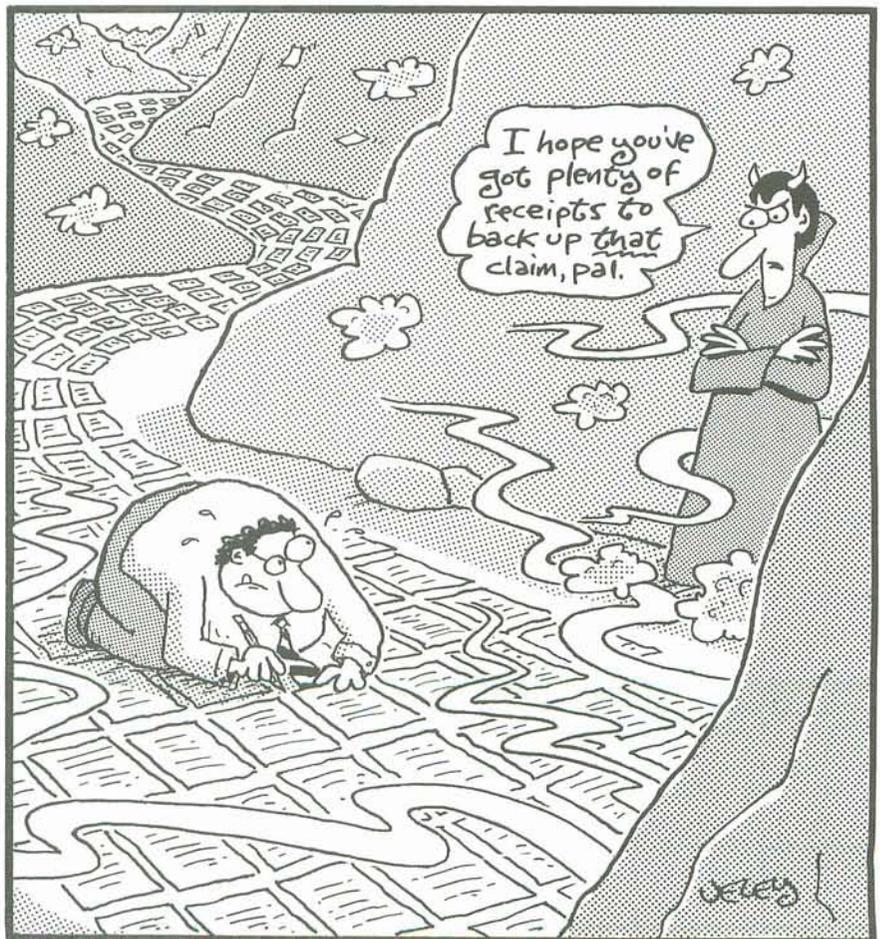
Upon being called as an apostle, Elder Moyle immediately and without qualification closed down all worldly activities and dedicated all of his material goods and life itself to the building of the kingdom. He refused to have his Church works published as this might appear as self-aggrandizement.

Would that the Church could again be blessed with his type of talent and dedication.

HOWARD J. MARSH
Santa Barbara, CA

CRYING ON CUE

MICHAEL QUINN'S article rightly implies that the end continues to justify the means in today's missionary effort. When I was a missionary in France in the early 1970s, a member told me that both he and his brother were products of baseball baptisms. I thought that this was an isolated situation stemming from a handful of way-



Contrary to popular belief, the Road to Hell is actually paved with a comprehensive, lifetime IRS tax return.

ward elders. Twenty more years have taught me that the emphasis on numbers continues and results in the abuse of missionaries and members alike.

In the late 1980s, there was an incredible push in Montana to baptize, baptize, baptize. I was a ward missionary and then the high council liaison to the stake mission, and stake missionary meetings involved little more than marketing strategies. Ward mission leaders had to set and regularly report on numerical baptismal goals.

The monthly *Mission Architect* newsletter, which always noted the "Top Five" baptizing stakes, threatened bishops with disciplinary action if they complained about the quality of the record number of "converts." It quoted Elder Howard W. Hunter as saying, "No one should ever be heard to say that a person was baptized too soon." It also reported that Loren C. Dunn, while visiting the mission, brought direct counsel of the urgency to baptize an investigator within two to three weeks of the first meeting. Elder Dunn confirmed to me in writing in February 1990 that "this was presented to all General Authorities, including the Council of the Twelve, by the Executive Director of the Missionary Department with the instruction that it be taught throughout the Church." Elder Dunn then quoted President Kimball from June 1975: "Brethren, the spirit of this work is urgency, and we must imbue our missionaries and our Saints with the spirit of now, NOW, NOW. We're not justified in waiting for the natural slow process of bringing people into the Church, we must move rather hastily."

Although all previous baptism records were broken by this mission president, whose personalized license plates said "LDS MP," the members felt abused. They were tired of missionaries crying on cue during the first discussion to help investigators better "feel the spirit." They grew weary when baptismal interviews were conducted only thirty minutes before scheduled baptisms. Likewise, they were saddened when, despite valiant efforts and fellowshipping, so many of the new "converts" went immediately and totally inactive. Few were saddened, however, when this mission president's three years were over.

RICHARD WILLIAMS
Billings, MT

"WHO'S ON FIRST?"

I WAS A "new era" missionary in the French East Mission (1962-64), and will remember those afternoons playing baseball in the *quartiers* of Lyon, Dijon, Cannes, and

Geneva.

Those who served in France will remember the tedious process of tracting door after door, day after day, week after week, just to find a "golden contact." The baseball program was received with glad tidings as a reprieve from the monotonous routine of tracting. Baseball was certainly not a national pastime in France, and we had to teach the entire game to everyone interested in playing—even a few missionaries.

Then one day, at the bottom of the ninth, two outs, game tied, runners on first and third, our next batter was an overweight lad with no skills whatsoever. The odds of him bringing in the winning run were less than me being translated. After reviewing his batting stance and grip, I asked him, "Are you sure you can hit the ball?" Stunned that I would ask such a question, he paused for a minute and, without any doubt, replied, "I'll do my best."

Words cannot describe the impact his response had on me. My selfish and inappropriate question was answered with his resounding commitment to do the best he could. Here was a young boy who knew he had very little to offer, but was determined to try. His gutsy response to a young missionary has been the basis upon which I have attempted to do my best as a son, husband, father, friend, employer, and member.

Thus, while Quinn suggests the Baseball Baptism Era left a great deal to be desired (rightfully so), there was at least one positive

experience as a result of its implementation.

JOHN H. EMMETT

Portland, OR

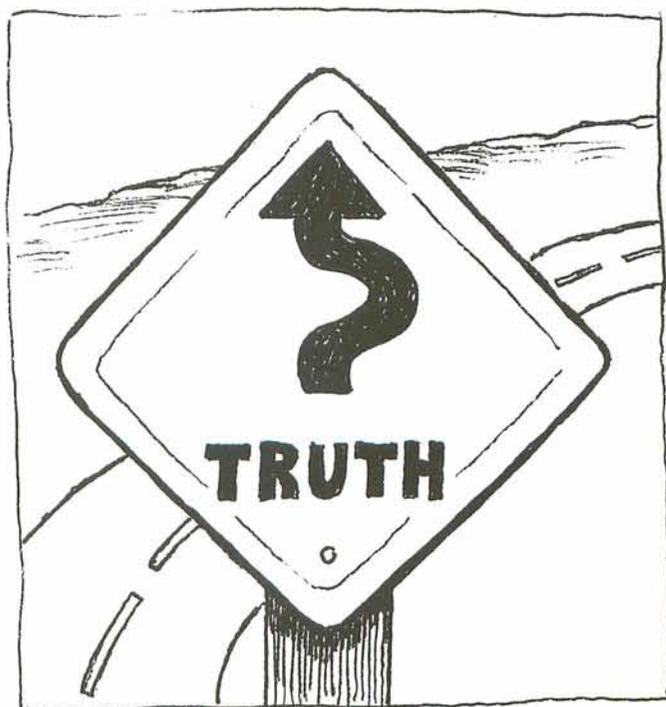
WOODBURY'S BLESSING

DESPITE QUINN'S DISCLOSURES, I shall never forget Woodbury's kindness to me as a stranger in spiritual crisis.

While in distress the night before defending my doctoral dissertation, T. Bowring Woodbury's face flashed in my mind. My friend Calvin Wood and I decided to seek him out immediately. Woodbury's address was in the phone book.

As our car pulled up in front of Woodbury's house, he and his wife were coming down the walk. He took one look at me and said, "You've come for a blessing?" "Yes," I answered. In his living room, Cal anointed my head, and Woodbury sealed the anointing. Before the blessing, he asked me nothing about myself, except my full name, and began praying to get in tune.

Suddenly, Woodbury spoke with a different voice, filled with confidence and unequivocal promises. I'll never forget the image in his first words: "A cordon of angels will surround you in your hour of need so that your mind will be released." Next he spoke about my Slavic ancestry and future involvement with my father's people. Uncannily, those words reminded me of a visionary experience I, myself, had had less than a year earlier while talking to my father about his



genealogy. After the blessing I felt somewhat comforted, and thanked Woodbury for his kindness. I never saw him again.

After a fitful night, I still felt mentally blocked. Then at about ten o'clock something subtle, but powerful, happened in my mind. The block to my memory was gone, and clarity and confidence flowed in. I soon discovered that I had virtually *total* recall,

something I'd never before experienced. Facing my dissertation committee, I had command of my mind and subject like never before. During a small, bright window of time, God spoke to me through T. Bowring Woodbury as a willing channel, and my professional life was spared.

EUGENE KOVALENKO
Los Alamos, NM

SUNSTONE ENCOURAGES CORRESPONDENCE. ADDRESS LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION TO "READERS' FORUM" (FAX:801/355-4043). WE EDIT LETTERS FOR CLARITY AND TONE AND CUT THEM FOR SPACE, DUPLICATION, AND VERBOSITY. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO AUTHORS WILL BE FORWARDED UNOPENED TO THEM.

OF GOOD REPORT

NARRATIVE THEOLOGY

Old Testament models of telling the story of God and his people resonate with overtones for telling the history of modern Israel. By exploring—even celebrating—the tension between the realities of social power, God's providence, and human personality, we might find space to create authentic religious histories.

THE TASK OF theological interpretation of scripture is profoundly complex. The subject matter, focus, and perspective of biblical texts are difficult to discern and articulate because our conventional categories of theology do not work very well with the texts. Moreover, the reason the text is so complex is that the experience of life and faith mediated in the text itself is incredibly complicated. The Bible does not want to slot life-experiences easily into any of our logical, conventional categories but wants to exhibit the strange and crucial convergences and interfaces that matter most for our life and for our faith.

My work in 1 and 2 Samuel has led me to articulate this nonnegotiable complexity under the three themes of power, providence, and personality. I have settled on these themes because together they express the attractive reality of David, the hidden but forceful presence of Yahweh, and the revolutionary cultural situation in which both David and Yahweh are presented. I pursue this complexity here because I judge this same complexity to be present in and important for our life and faith. . . .

It is demanding, and at times maddening, that one must speak about all three of these factors at the same time in a single convergence. We will of course never quite get the matters of power, providence, and personality all rightly balanced. We must consider, nonetheless, what perspective even stands a chance of speaking about all these factors in the text (and in our life) at the same time. If we wish to focus on power, we can do socioeconomic analysis, but most such social analysis finally explains (away) everything, and will never permit us to speak about providence. If we wish only to pursue the providential will of God, we may settle for theology, but theology has not done very well at taking into account the reality of power. In parallel fashion, much recent psychology is excessively analytical, so that everything except the crucial oddness of the person is discussed; or conversely, psychology is too much attracted to religious categories and is not open to the realities of social power. When one chooses sociology that is too reductionist, theology that is too frontal, or psychology that is analytical or religiously romantic, one inevitably stacks the cards and misses too much. In our usual interpretation of the text (and of our life), our propensity has been to select one of these emphases to the disregard of everything else.

I have been dazzled by the Samuel literature because in that literature Israel practiced (I refrain from saying discovered or

invented) an artistic rendering of social public reality that allows for convergences, tensions, and transitions without being excessively reductionist in any direction. Israel's artistic rendering, which takes seriously power, providence, and personality, is narrative that does not claim to be a descriptive report on social reality, that does not claim to be eyewitness to personalities in dialogue, and that does not claim to speak directly about God.

Israel's settlement on *narrative* as its preferred mode of discourse is a remarkable decision about the nature of revelation and about the texture of social reality. Israel's decision about narrative reflects the practical awareness that *what* is said largely depends on *how* it is said. This central decision made in Israel poses for us a question about artistic rendering that allows for odd convergences. We are let to ask, as we take these texts seriously, whether narrative modes of discourse can be practiced credibly in a world of excessive moral certitude and excessive technical control. This narrative mode of rendering the world is itself subversive of technically settled social reality and is certain to be misunderstood in a society that is militantly reductionist in both religion and science.

I am, as you will see, tilting toward an argument about narrative theology. I note in passing, however, that so-called narrative theology is not simply an excuse for telling interesting or clever stories. It is rather an insistence that *these are the stories*. What is required of us is consummate artistry to tell these old stories as though never heard before, so that God's providence is seen as a decisive presence in the portrayal of persons, so that power is a reality reckoned with both by God and by human persons, so that self occurs in a story where God is also fully present as a character in the plot. This breakthrough in Israel's faithful rendering of reality is a continuously daring alternative to our various reductionisms, where the reductionisms are theological and moral or are some form of social-scientific explanation of reality. I believe there are crucial implications for exegesis, for theological education, and for ministry in seeing how these stories render reality as an artistic alternative. They invite us to think alternatively to our best theology, our convinced social ideology, our favorite psychology.

WALTER BRUEGGEMANN

*in Power, Providence, and Personality:
Biblical Insight into Life and Ministry*

Westminster/John Knox Press, 1990, 13,17-20

Submissions of interesting quotations are welcome.

FROM THE EDITOR

PONDERING HEARTS



By Elbert Eugene Peck

I VIVIDLY REMEMBER the moment on my mission when I read the title of a new Church pamphlet, *Read the Book of Mormon, It Can Change Your Life*. Sweet memories embraced me: teenage campfire discussions about King Benjamin's call to service; sobbing, born-again repentings after viewing Pageant; "warm fuzzy" BYU lectures; and an overwhelming experience of Christ's love and forgiveness while meditating on 3 Nephi. I loved the Book of Mormon because it *had* changed my spiritual life for the good.

In the intervening years, I have come to approach all scripture less literally, although it is still a deep, spiritual well. Last year while teaching gospel doctrine, the classroom conversations challenged me to wrestle with the traditional approaches to the Book of Mormon. In struggling to share honest views and teach inspirational lessons, I addressed the fruitful but historically evasive question, "What life does this text call us to live?" I found profound answers that, once again, called to my spirit and changed my life. As a spiritual primer, the Book of Mormon billows my spiritual coals and kindles a fire that warms my world-weary soul, burns away my impurities, and lights my mind. It is a text worthy to build a religious community on. I testify that the Book of Mormon is of God.

Still, it is a text produced by mortals. And, while secondary to the book's spiritual life, exploring the interplay between divine and human interests me, profitably. Perhaps my tolerance level for divergent ideas is abnormally high, but, frankly, I am baffled at the finger pointing, testimony challenging, and anti-Mormon labeling of "revisionist" Book of Mormon scholars by more traditional scholars. I don't share their insistence that, if a scholar has a testimony, his or her conclusions must confirm long-held assumptions. Since we don't have final answers to the current battles about the book's nineteenth-century elements, I take a let-it-play-itself-out attitude, trusting in the meantime in God's relentless spiritual calls to individual reform. Joseph Smith brought forth the Book

of Mormon by the "gift and power of God," but just how that gift operated in him is less clear. God's acts are fused with human elements; nothing is purely divine. Similarly, I suspect the Gospels don't contain Jesus' exact words; more likely, they reflect the faith-filled understanding of first century Christians. Thankfully, God's spirit brilliantly shines through human texts and acts.

In contrast to identifying the divine, scholarship addresses earthbound, human truths by encouraging never-ending insightful, correcting responses to opposing ideas. Making space for, but not necessarily accepting, divergent views is essential to progress. Because scholars' conclusions are incomplete, ever-changing approximations about human actions, they should not be the core of one's faith. The Spirit's tug to a holier life is independent of scholarship.

The response to the differing First Vision accounts by Joseph Smith illustrate the strengths and limitations of human knowledge. In the 1960s, some felt the multiple versions threatened the Church, and the texts were suppressed. It took scholars time to understand what some saw as the prophet's duplicity. They grappled with human memory, storytelling, and Joseph's evolving self-understanding—all of which revised or expanded understanding of Joseph, God, and ourselves. In the meantime, missionaries still taught the Joseph Smith story, with the Spirit's witness. There are still unresolved discrepancies, but the once-banned narratives have been published, even in the *Ensign*, with no harm.

The turn-around time by scholars on the First Vision narratives was short. After more than a century, New Testament scholarship is still an infant. With the Book of Mormon, our current studies only survey the fields to be cultivated. Can we wait patiently for that harvest of understanding? Can we say: "These are perplexing questions. Let's pursue them, but not get overexcited about interim conclusions. In the meantime, we'll continue as a community with the task of Christian

living that the text calls us to do." Some hard questions can only be answered after dramatic societal changes or new intellectual methods develop. Conversely, one generation's hot questions are a later's irrelevancies.

We're an inquisitive people, but, paradoxically, we're overprotective, too. At BYU, I heard clandestine reports of Rodney Turner's locked-up study on women and the priesthood; apparently the stuff was too hot for the general Church. Since then, the discussion on women has made Turner's relatively tame treatise an historic relic. It's now on the open stacks. What was the big deal?

Similarly, subscribers call inquiring about underground items and say, "It's too dangerous for you to publish, but please fax me a copy." We can take the hard stuff, but our neighbor can't? What is our fear of public discussion? I'm suspicious of such who-you-know elitism: a democratic access to knowledge is essential to a healthy community.

Faith is patience. If we really believe in something, we will work for it and wait for its realization in its own time. Impatience is lack of faith: prematurely forcing an outcome to quell doubt. With faith, we can let unsettling ideas simmer, percolate, age, unfold, and weather. Yet, that slow, crock-pot process affects our spirituality, too, usually for the good. For example, pondering how Brother Joseph may have blended his own world view with God's revelation has challenged me to consider the same human/divine alloy in blessings I have given or in interpretations of pivotal spiritual experiences. Whatever the truth about Joseph's process, my ponderings have brought insights into my spiritual life, my ability to clearly hear or speak for God, and of God's tolerance of my hubris.

Apparently, taught by angels early in his life, Jesus intimately foreknew his entire ministry. But, like the rest of us, his mother had no such luxury. After the events in the infancy narratives—angels, shepherds, startled wise men, and a virginal conception—Mary had a testimony that Jesus was God-called, but she probably didn't know what it meant. "But Mary kept all these things, and pondered them in her heart," wrote Luke. (2:19.) Anchored by her faith, she still must have watched with unsettling perplexity her son's life unfold, her hopes and assumptions constantly being revised against the hard facts of his unpredictable life, death, and resurrection. Years after the Ascension, she probably was still sorting it all out, coming to new insights that changed her understanding of her faith. We need Mary's kind of open, pondering faith today. 

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Stanley B. Kimball

HEBER C. KIMBALL'S DOMESTIC LIFE RECONSIDERED: AN ESSAY, SORT OF



DAUGHTERS OF UTAH PIONEERS

There's little indication that Heber ever considered plural marriage more than a religious responsibility—a form of Mormon dynasticism along the lines royal houses have done for millennia.

WAY BACK IN 1972 when I first started research on Heber C. Kimball, I was forty-four and my great granddaddy, in his sixties, seemed to be an old man. Today, at sixty-seven, I am now in a much better position to understand a person who would be about my own age and to relate to the strains in his unusual domestic life. So I not only offer new information from relatively unknown sources, but the new understanding I have gained over the past twenty-two years.

STANLEY B. KIMBALL is professor of history at Southern Illinois University. An earlier version of this paper was presented at the Chicago Sunstone Symposium, 16–17 October 1992.

Since Heber was one of the most married men in history, the record of his domestic life is of more than passing interest. This paper examines new documents concerning his familial life and contrasts his monogamous life with his first wife, Vilate, to 1842 with the early years of polygamy to 1844, and the problems Vilate faced raising children with an absentee husband.

Recently I had access to thirty-eight slightly-known Kimball family letters that added greatly to my understanding of Heber and Vilate's domestic life, especially in respect to their marital relations, to their children, and to the mysteries and trials of early polygamy during the Nauvoo years.¹

There is an interesting development/evolution in the epistolary style of this couple.

Initially, in the pre-polygamy period, the letters are rather restrained, affectionate but not notably loving; suddenly, after polygamy, the letters, especially Heber's, are much more loving and romantic. This could mean that Heber did actually become a more loving husband, to Vilate at least, or it could signify that he was simply trying to smooth over the marital difficulties of the plural-wife system.

In the earliest known Heber/Vilate letter on 6 September 1837, Vilate writes rather forthrightly, from Kirtland, Ohio, to Heber on his first mission to England: "My dear husband, once more I resume my pen to address you, who although far distant in body, yet you are ever present before my mind. I cannot express to you the heart felt gratitude which swells this bosom of mine . . . for the heart cheering intelligence we have received from you."

At week later, Vilate wrote, "I shall look for a letter soon from you, and when you receive this I want you to write immediately or come your self . . . I remain your affectionate wife, Vilate Kimball."

A few months later in January, still from Kirtland, Vilate, noted, "My dear husband, Your kind and interesting letter of November 12 came to hand last Tuesday and was gratefully received . . ."

"Now my dear Heber, farewell, may the Lord bless you, and soon bring us together, Amen."

After Heber returned from England to Far West, Missouri, to help the Saints flee the persecution there, he writes on 2 April 1839 to Vilate, whom he had previously sent to safety in Quincy, Illinois:

My dear vilate. I take this opportunity to let you know that I am in the Land of the living tending to my father's business, there is but one thing in this world that I long for, that is the welfare of my dear wife and children. . . . When you receive this send me a letter and let me know where you are and what you are doing and whether you are dead or alive. . . .

Now my dear wife I bid your farewell for a little season. Give my love to [the children] William and Helen and Heber P[atton], tell them to pray for me.

After Heber finished his work in Missouri, he joined his family in Illinois, settled there in Nauvoo, and promptly left on yet another mission—his second to England. On 13 September 1839 from Quincy, Illinois, he wrote, "My dear companion . . . I am as ever,

your affectionate husband. Give my love to little William, Helen, and Heber tell them to be good children and pray for me and that I will be at home by and by. . . ."

From Manchester on 9 July 1840, he wrote, "My dear companion. I sit down this morning to direct a few lines to the one whom I love. . . . Now I bid you a due for a little season."

On 18 July 1840 from Nauvoo, Vilate wrote to Heber in Liverpool with a little more affection than usual: "My dear companion, Through the goodness of God I am yet alive and have one more oppoportunity of addressing you who are the source and fountain of my earthly happiness. How long O Lord shall I be separated from the object of my affection, and go mourning like a lonely dove for her absent mate? Haste, O hasten the time I beseach of thee. . . . I am ever your wife with favor. V. Kimball."

From the above several quotes and from similar sentiments I have previously cited in my biography on my great grandfather,² it is clear that Heber's and Vilate's letters to each other, while certainly affectionate and caring, were not particularly loving, certainly not romantic.

His style changed dramatically after he entered polygamy in 1842. It is quite obvious that he was trying to comfort Vilate, the "wife of his youth." Years ago I quoted extensively from some of these letters showing how much more loving they were than his pre-polygamy missives.³

These new letters confirm and strengthen this view. First the facts: Sometime in 1842 (we do not know just when), Heber was commanded by Joseph Smith to enter polygamy. After agonizing about it and in an attempt to spare Vilate's feelings, he agreed to marry one or both of the spinster sisters, Laura Pitkin (age fifty-two) and Abigail Pitkin (age forty-five) who were friends of Vilate. Joseph, however, commanded him to marry the thirty-one year old Sarah Peak, six years Vilate's junior, an English convert with two young daughters, who had been abandoned in Nauvoo by her husband when he returned to England.

Later that year, during the fall, scores of elders were called to travel through the country refuting charges of polygamy.⁴ On 8 October 1842 from Pittsfield, Illinois, Heber wrote Vilate in an style distinctly different from his earlier letters:

I love you with all my heart for you are my dearest friend fore you have been true to me all the day long and the Lord God of Daniel bless you with life, health, pease. . . . [I

pray that I will have the] power to claim you in the resurrection . . . I shall never be content short of that.

My dear love I never left you when it come harder than this time. . . .

You wished to know if I sent you a kiss, yes. I shall bring you one in a chort time. I excpected [expected? accepted?] the one you sent me and it was sweet as honey.

Two weeks later, on 22 October from Glasgow, Illinois, he wrote, "My dear companion and beloved most dear . . . there is four kisses on that round mark."⁵ Two weeks later he was home.

During the summer of 1843, he was sent on another mission to the East, leaving Nauvoo on 10 June and returning four months later.

Three days after he left, he wrote from St. Louis, "I am willing to suffer for His name sake that I may enjoy the love of my youth and the dear children he has given us" etc.⁶

On 22 June 1843: "I had rather die than to do anything to . . . wound your tender feelings for I know they are tender and kind toards me. . . ." Again on 15 July 1843: "I love you with a pure heart and with a real intent not fore this world only, but fore that which is to come. . . ." And on 23 July 1843: "Ill spend my time writing the one whom I love most dear as to any object on earth. . . ."

Heber was home after this mission but seven months before he and many others were called to go through the United States to present the name of Joseph Smith as a candidate for the presidency. We have three new letters that Heber wrote at this time:

21 May 1844: "Oh my dear Vilate can I now express. No my toun [tongue] is too chort. There is none, but thy fine heart that can tell how deep this day my heart feels as though it would melt within me. . . . I do not believe there ever was two that ever came together that one [were?] more alike than you and myself" and on and on. . . .

Pittsburgh, 31 May: "I say O Lord bless the love of my youth fore so she is and no one can surpass the love I have fore the[e], my dear Vilate. . . . remember me to Helen and Sarah Whitney. Tell them to be good girls . . . remember me to Heber, David, and Charles. Kiss the little fellows for me."⁷

Washington, 4 June 1844: "My dear Vilate as thou very well knowest that I love the[e] with a pure heart, fervently . . . no one can fill your place you are the love of my uth."

While Vilate undoubtedly remained the "love of his uth," after he returned from this

mission, he took six additional plural wives during October and November of 1844. Because of this, I am not sure what can be made of differing letter styles. Let us turn to what little can be gleaned from these new letters regarding the practice of polygamy.

POLYGAMY

The Principle certainly did not contribute to domestic tranquility.

REGRETFULLY these new letters add little to our understanding of polygamy itself. The practice, of course, was largely kept secret, and we know little about it in Nauvoo. I found only two rather oblique and unimportant references to the subject. Allusions to plural wives are scarce in Mormon letters. On 13 September 1839 Heber, en route to England, wrote Vilate from Quincy, Illinois. In this letter he comments on the sisters Laura and Abigail Pitkin: "I called at Sister Laura Pitkin's soon after arriving. . . . you may expect Sister Laura and Abigail at your house next week. You try to take them in for a season until they can get a place to live for they will prove a blessing unto you. While I was sick they took me in and left this home and gave me their bed and bestowed every kindness upon me that was possible." The letter also included a short note to Vilate from L. Pitkin.

This otherwise unremarkable letter becomes important when we recall, as previously noted, that Abigail and Laura Pitkin became Heber's plural wives early in 1842 and that he initially wanted to marry them to spare Vilate's feelings, but was ordered to marry the thirty-one-year-old Sarah Peak.

On 2 August 1844, Heber wrote from Pittsburgh, "and also the lines from Sister S they did not come amiss. I hope she will remember me again. She shall here from me soon, my best love to hur." This appears to be a reference to his first plural wife, Sarah Noon Peak, by whom he had four children— at least I hope so.

Although Heber was sealed to at least forty-three women before he died in 1868, he had children only by seventeen. There is little indication that he ever considered plural marriage as more than a chore, a religious responsibility for raising up a large family, providing for widows, and a method of bonding with other prominent Mormon families—a form of Mormon dynasticism along the lines royal houses have practiced for millennia.

The Principal certainly did not contribute to domestic tranquility. He was not able to give his wives equal attention, and he ap-

pears to have been much less emotionally involved with his other plural wives than with Vilate. Many years later in 1893, for example, one of his wives by whom he had nine children admitted that there was "not any love in the union between myself and Kimball, and it is my business entirely whether there was any courtship or not."⁸ His relationships with his wives, other than with Vilate, appear to have been reluctant, brusque, and dutiful at best.

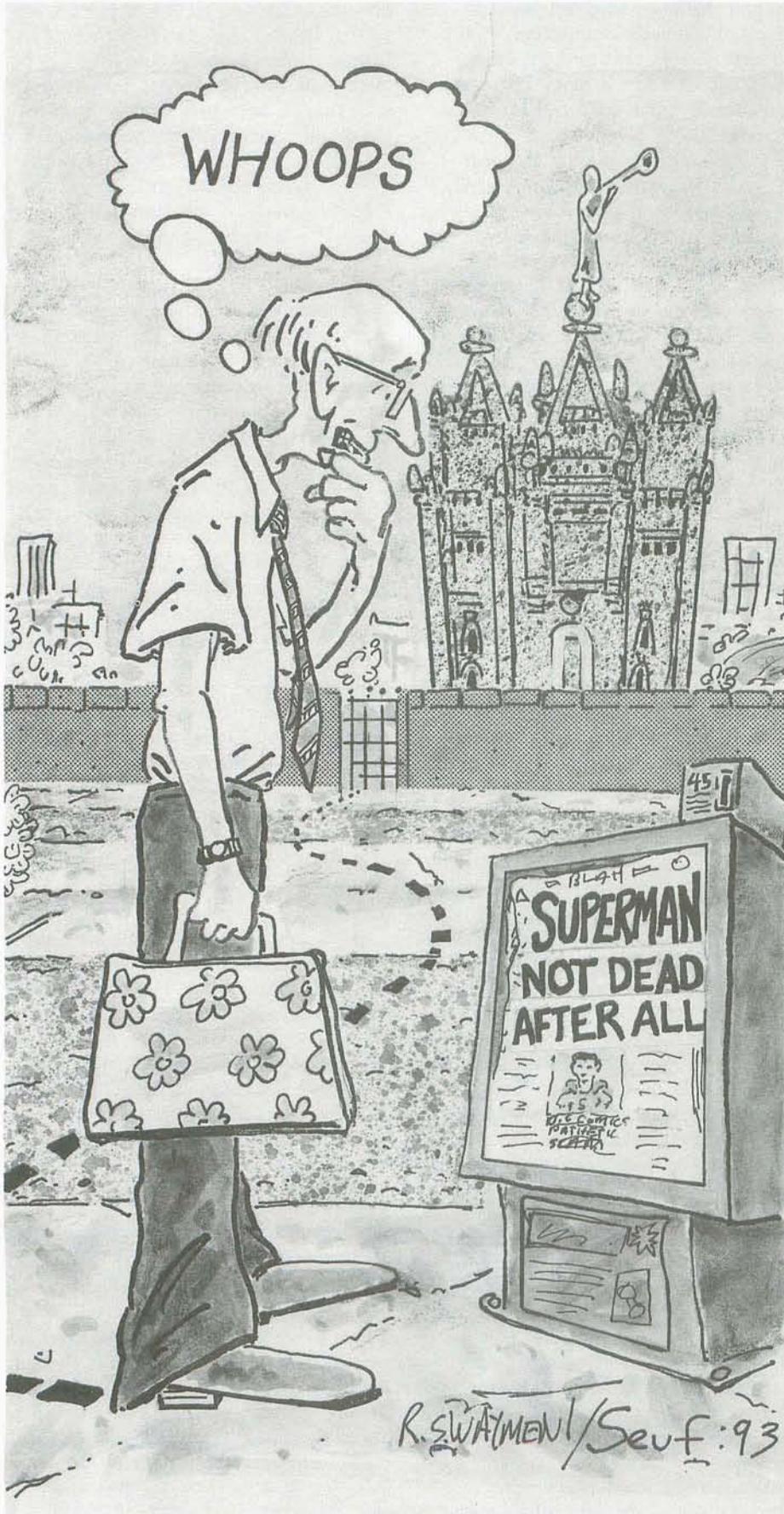
CHILDREN

Through the correspondence of Heber and Vilate we see what it was like to raise children alone.

INFORMATION on the rearing of the children of Church leaders, especially early Church leaders, is not extensive. We really know little of their intimate, domestic lives, and much of what we hear and read about the past and present children of Church leaders appears quite idyllic. So much so that imperfect fathers, such as myself, suffer when we hear nothing but the "good stuff." Just how did nineteenth-century wives and children fare during the long separations occasioned by many missions and other Church assignments? Through the correspondence of Heber and Vilate we glimpse what it was really like to try to raise children alone. Especially we learn of Vilate's problems and concerns—problems and concerns that may have been typical of their time, place, and circumstances.

One 12 September 1837, for example, from Kirtland Vilate wrote Heber, who was on his first mission to England:

if you could come home and arrange your business so as to move us next season [a reference to the planned move to Far West, Missouri], I think it would be a good thing, especially for our children. To think of having William spend his time in idleness (as he has part of this summer), is more than I know how to endure, there has been no school here fore some time, neither can I get work for him to do; you know what a wicked set of children there is here [a most candid and confidential admission about the children at Church headquarters]. Of course I must have some trials; still I think they are as few as can be expected under existing circumstance. Our's [their children] are under as good subjection as many whose fathers are at



Now that I am about the age of Heber when he died, I well understand his parental problems, and, somehow, take comfort from them.

home; yet I know there is room for improvement, and I feel the need of your help.

On 19 January 1838, Vilate, still in Kirtland, wrote to Heber, still in England: "I stay at home with the children. Little Heber grows finely, he talks about his Pa, especially when he hurts himself or feels bad. He will say, 'Oh, dear I miss my Pa.' William and Helen send their love to their dear father and want you should come home without delay."

Heber eventually went home and moved his family to Far West, Missouri, then to Nauvoo, where only four months later he went on a second mission to England, leaving Vilate, *again*, with the total care of their four children.

In an effort to help Vilate, even from a distance, with child rearing, Heber wrote from Manchester, England, on 9 July 1840: "Tell William to be a good boy and study his book [of Mormon?] so that he may go into the vineyard with his father to preach the gospel. Tell Helen to be a good gurl and study her book that she may teach school and teach her little brothers to read and write, tell Heber P[arley] to mind his dear mother and be a good boy and he shall be a prophet of the Lord as well as David and William. . . ."

Whatever Heber had in mind, it turns out he was prescient, for in an 18 July letter (that crossed his somewhere in the mid-Atlantic) Vilate sadly noted, "I have some trouble with William [their eldest], he has had his own way so long, I fear he is a ruined boy. Pray for him and me to, that I may have grace and wisdom to get along with him. . . ." And then follows a little poem:

William, Helen, and Heber P
Wish they could their father see.
I and little David too,
Will both be glad when we see you.
I am ever your wife with favor.¹⁰

Several years later on 2 August 1843, Heber was on another mission and wrote from Pittsburgh: "Tell William I thank him for his letter he sent me. I hope he will be kind to you and use soft words and stick to his school. Tell Heber to remember his dear father and be kind to his [mother?]."

What are we to make of this? William had to be *requested* to be kind to his mother and use soft words, and Heber P., too. Had Vilate complained about disrespect, about Heber's frequent and lengthy absences? Heber certainly did not "raise hell" with his first born.

Did his long absences from home cause him to be excessively tolerant of his children, like twentieth-century fathers sometimes are?

CONCLUSIONS

Knowing we are not so different in some respects from our illustrious forebearers can be comforting.

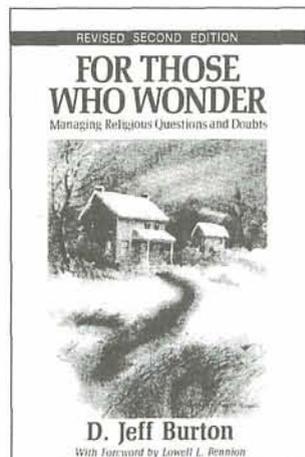
TWENTY to thirty years ago I was not particularly sensitive to or even aware of familial problems occasioned by absentee husbands. Young fathers were often told to put the Church first and the Lord would take care of their families. I am not confident that this always happened. This was years before President Harold B. Lee said, "Brethren, the most important church work you will ever do is within the four walls of your own home."

Now that I am about the age of Heber when he died, I well understand his parental problems, and, somehow, take comfort from them. Not too long ago parents had to face President David O. McKay's thundering fiat, "No success in life can compensate for failure in the home." I wonder if that beloved Prophet ever realized what pain such a pronouncement causes many parents struggling to do the best they know how. What if President McKay had said, "No success in life can compensate for not having done one's best in the home"?

Obviously parenting was never meant to be easy. Perhaps there is some truth in the adage, "This life is only a test. If it were your actual life, you would have been given better instructions." Today we no longer bear the burdens of polygamy. Certainly, however, many LDS parents have trouble with children. Knowing we are not so different in this respect from our illustrious forebearers can be comforting at times. ☞

NOTES

1. Courtesy of Patricia Geisler of the Kimball Family Association who acquired the letters from her great aunt, Meriba Kimball Cornia, a daughter of Solomon Farnham Kimball, and a granddaughter of Heber and Vilate. The original spelling has been retained.
2. Stanley B. Kimball, *Heber C. Kimball: Mormon Patriarch and Pioneer* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1981), 99-103.
3. Kimball, 99-103.
4. Just how Heber, who had two pregnant wives at home, managed this is not known.
5. In this letter is a circle, or round mark. Cf. his letter to Vilate of 16 October 1842 as cited in Kimball, 99.
6. This is his first of several references to the "love of his youth," meaning the wife he chose for love, not those he acquired through religious duty.
7. Some two years later, he married Sarah Whitney in March 1845; she was three years younger than Heber's oldest daughter, Helen Mar.
8. Kimball, 99.
9. Vilate was wise to have been thus concerned with William and her other sons. In 1847 William was said to have had little faith and had neglected his prayers. More seriously, in 1860 he was disfellowshipped for a time for drunkenness. In 1863 Vilate wrote to another son that she hoped he would never cause her the sorrow "that William does." Vilate also once wrote that David was trying to "heal the wound he has made in his father's heart, and mine. . . ." See Kimball, 136, 232.
10. Vilate occasionally dashed off some simple rhymed verses, most of them rather naive.



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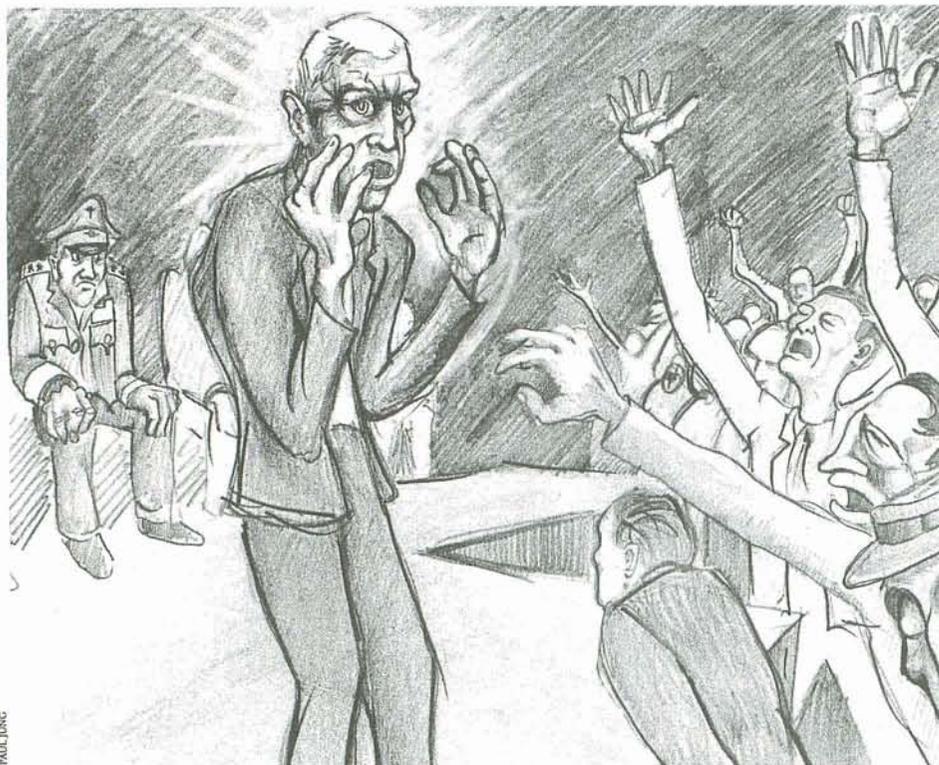
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CORNUCOPIA



PAUL JUNG

*A unique honor is due to those who find their voices,
who in ordinary or extraordinary times achieve
and maintain the integrity of heart, mind, and words.*

TO FIND ONE'S VOICE

IN THE FIRST EDITION OF THE UNDERGROUND resistance newspaper *Combat*, after the liberation of Paris in August 1944, Albert Camus wrote that the first mission of the French press was "to find a language worthy of itself," a curious phrase for the occasion. What he was thinking about was that during the Nazi occupation of France, anyone who wrote for *Combat* made it a point of honor to sign his or her name, even though that signature carried an automatic death penalty in the event of arrest. Those who wrote for *Combat* were those who had found their voices—the convictions they would maintain at any cost whatever, and the words and courage to express them.

Finding one's voice is a matter of a particular kind of courage, the courage to stand alone. And this kind of courage does not usually come without long labor of learning and sifting, finding what one will say "yes" to and what one will say

"no" to, finding what one does believe and what one does not believe, and then, after that, finding the words which will suffice. It is this kind of labor and courage that undergirded Sakharov and Solzhenitzen in the Soviet Union, each coming to stand alone against the total weight of the regime and eventually prevailing.

But there is perhaps no better example of the human voice than the "last lecture" of the Spanish author Miguel de Unamuno.¹

In 1936, Unamuno was the rector of the University of Salamanca. The Spanish fascists under Franco, in the first flush of their success, were holding a patriotic festival of the Hispanic race in the great hall of the University. On the stand were several academic speakers, then Unamuno himself, the bishop, and of particular prominence the Nationalist General Millán Astray, founder of the Spanish Foreign Legion and a ruthless commander in Franco's armies. He was known for his battle cry, "¡Vive la muerte!" "Long live death!"

The first two dignitaries spoke prudently and circumstantially and drew polite applause. Then the general spoke and started to carry the crowd with him. First of all, he said, more than half of all Spaniards were criminals, guilty of armed rebellion and high treason. To remove any ambiguity, he explained that by these rebels and traitors he meant the citizens who were loyal to the government. Catalonia and the Basque country were cancers in the body of the nation which would be surgically removed for the health of the nation.

A member of the audience was inspired to shout, "¡Viva, viva la muerte!"

Part of the audience rose to its feet chanting fascist slogans.

At last, as the audience sat down, Don Miguel rose slowly. In the enormous silence, Don Miguel began to speak. This is the essence of what he said:

"All of you are hanging on my words. You all know me, and are aware that I am unable to remain silent. I have not learned to do so in seventy-three years of my life, and I do not wish to start now. At times, to be silent is to lie. For silence can be in-

terpreted as acquiescence. I could not survive a divorce between my conscience and my word, always well-mated partners.

"I will be brief. Truth is most true when naked, free of embellishment and verbiage.

"I want to comment on the speech—to give it that name—of General Millán Astray, who is here among us.

"Let us waive the personal affront implied by the sudden outburst of vituperation against Basques and Catalans in general. I am of the Basque country and the bishop here, whether he wishes it or not, is a Catalan from Barcelona.

He paused. Faces had grown pale. Tension mounted.

"Just now I heard a necrophilous and senseless cry: 'Long live death!' To me it sounded the equivalent of '¡Muera la vida!' 'To death with life!' And I, who have spent my life shaping paradoxes which arouse the uncomprehending anger of the others, I must tell you, as an expert authority, that this outlandish paradox is repellent to me. Since it was proclaimed in homage to the last speaker, I can only explain it to myself by supposing that it was addressed to him . . . as a testimonial of his being himself a symbol of death.

"And now, another matter. General Millán Astray is a cripple. Let it be said without any slighting undertone. He is a war invalid. So was Cervantes. But extremes do not make the rule. . . . It pains me to think that General Millán Astray should dictate the psychological pattern of the nation.

"That would be appalling. A cripple who lacks the spiritual greatness of Cervantes . . . a cripple . . . who lacks that loftiness of mind is apt to seek ominous relief in seeing mutilation around him . . . General Millán Astray would like to create Spain anew—a negative creation—in his own image and likeness. And for that reason he wishes to see Spain crippled, as he unwittingly made clear."

At this point, the general could restrain himself no longer and cried out: "¡Muera la inteligencia!" "To death with intelligence!"

"No, long live intelligence! To death with bad intellectuals!" cried one journalist. Arguments and shouting broke out. The Blue Shirts accompanying the general positioned themselves to settle things violently, in the totalitarian mode. Then the clamor died down again. Unamuno still stood erect at the podium, arms folded and gaze fixed straight ahead. Once more his word dominated the hall.

"This is the temple of the intellect. And I am its high priest. It is you who are profaning its sacred precincts.

"I have always, whatever the proverb may say, been a prophet in my own land. You will win, but you will not convince. You will win, because you possess more than enough brute force, but you will not convince, because to convince means to persuade. An in order to persuade, you would need what you lack—reason and right in the struggle. I consider it futile to exhort you to think of Spain. I have finished."

Unamuno was right. The fascist forces prevailed in Spain for forty years. Unamuno himself died under house arrest shortly after the above incident. But today Franco and Franco's Spain are gone, and Unamuno's voice remains as a now im-

mutable expression of human dignity.

In the twentieth century there is no lack of opportunities to applaud those who have achieved and no end to the monuments to be built to those who have suffered. A unique honor is due to those who find their voices, who in ordinary or extraordinary times achieve and maintain the integrity of heart, mind, and words.

—KARL C. SANDBERG

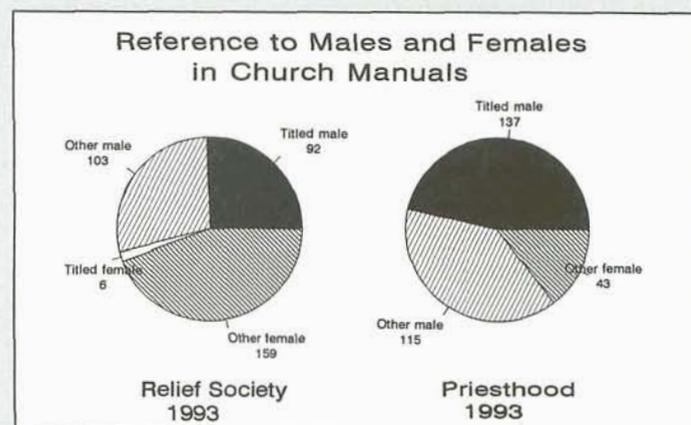
[From an address to the Honors Convocation at Macalester College, May 1992]

NOTE

1. From Luis Portillo, "The Last Lecture of Unamuno," in *The Private World: Selections from the Diario Intimo and Selected Letters 1890–1936*, Bollingen Series LXXXV, no. 2, Princeton University Press.

PECULIAR PEOPLE

REFERENCE TO MALES AND FEMALES IN CHURCH MANUALS



Content analysis of the 1993 Relief Society and Priesthood manuals shows substantial gender bias. Even after excluding all scriptural quotes, generic terms such as "man," and the two most referenced males (Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith), 62 percent of references in the Relief Society manual and 85 percent in the Melchizedek Priesthood are to men. Such gender exclusive language may be acceptable to a male audience, but many women may feel such language renders the lessons irrelevant or even offensive. The figure above shows the number of references to males and females in the lesson manuals. In addition, a distinction is made between those who are titled (e.g., President, Elder, Apostle) and all others. The figure demonstrates that reference to men is more likely, especially in the Priesthood manual. Moreover, men are much more likely to be presented as authority figures (titled) than are women in the Relief Society manual, and not a single female is presented as an authority in the Priesthood manual.

The stress in the Utah church (LDS) upon prophetic authority has choked off avenues of formal dissent and slowed the pace of change, keeping the Church in a more traditional track. The stress in the Prairie church (RLDS) on the authority of the body of believers has legitimized formal dissent, but made the church more open to change that follows societal agendas, to a softening and liberalizing of the church.

DISSENT AND AUTHORITY IN TWO LATTER-DAY SAINT TRADITIONS

By Dean L. May

THE EARLY LATTER-DAY SAINTS HAD A CLEAR agenda as they set out to transform the world—to announce that the heavens are not sealed and that God still speaks to humankind upon the earth; to build an enclave of order—a refuge from the increasingly diverse and individualistic world that modern liberalism and capitalism had spawned;¹ and in so doing to reject the claims of traditional Christianity to divine authority. Joseph Smith's most mature and complete account of his epiphany expressed clearly the pain he felt at seeing "no small stir and division," the "great confusion and bad feeling," and "strife of words and . . . contest about opinions" in his society and even within his own family. The injunction to harmony, unity, and order became central to his message and had great appeal both to Americans tormented by the excesses of democracy and to the English subjects dislocated by industrialization.

Joseph Smith's instruments for building unity and order were his claim to speak authoritatively for God, and his insistence that no other tradition did. The Savior himself had told the young man to join none of the existing churches because they "teach for doctrines the commandments of men," and after further visitations and instructions Smith proceeded to organize what he called, in the official preface to his canon of revelations, "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth."² The language is clear, unequivocal, and almost calculated to goad persons of other faiths.

Thus one could hardly become a Mormon without being a dissenter. In consequence most in the Latter-day Saint tradition are dissenters—or dissenters from dissenters. In other words, the Restoration arose as a dissent from mainstream Christianity, and most of the Restoration churches arose as a further dissent from that movement as understood by Brigham

Young, James J. Strang, William Smith, or others. A faith that at its outset so boldly rejects the claims of other traditions must insist upon the right of its converts to dissent from those traditions. And such a faith is almost certain at some point to find its adherents insisting upon that same right. How can dissenters in good conscience suppress dissent?

This dilemma, common in sects of most world faiths, is further complicated for the Saints by their belief that the heavens are open—that not only do prophets speak for God to humankind, but, in addition, all believers are entitled to personal revelation to help them in life's struggles. The young lad Joseph burned into the Latter-day Saint consciousness the promise of James that God "giveth to all men liberally." Yet, the early Saints' affirmation of the right of dissent and of personal revelation would seem a prescription for fragmentation and chaos, exactly the opposite of what the Restoration was supposed to achieve for its adherents. If all the worthy can receive revelation, what is to prevent the movement from spinning off into a solipsistic chaos of personal faiths? The agenda of Mormonism is internally inconsistent: the rejection of other faiths affirming a right to dissent; the urge to unity, harmony, and order suppressing that right for the faithful. The history of religious dissent in the Mormon tradition thus has taken place against this backdrop of contradictory impulses within the movement itself.

The centrifugal tendency of personal revelation precipitated a crisis as early as the summer of 1830, when Hiram Page began receiving revelations for the Church through his own seer stone.³ The prophet's initial intent was to wait for the matter to be resolved in an upcoming conference; but upon hearing that Cowdery and some of the Whitmers were persuaded by Page's revelations, he responded with his own September 1830 revelation to Cowdery: "No one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun., for he receiveth them even as Moses." The revelation went on to enjoin

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obedience, to affirm that one might be led by the Spirit to *speak or teach* by way of commandment to the Church, but not to *write* by way of commandment, thus acknowledging the superior place of the written canon over other inspired teachings. Cowdery's own inspired writings could be considered "wisdom" but not commandment, and, in any case, he was told in no uncertain terms *not* to "command him who is at thy head, and at the head of the church; For I have given him the keys of the mysteries and the revelations which are sealed until I shall appoint unto them another in his stead." The rest of the document points out errors in Page's revelations and commands Cowdery to speak to Page about the matter and tell him that the revelations were not of God. The parting shot affirmed that Page had usurped properly appointed authority and that "all things must be done in order, and by common consent in the church, by the prayer of faith." (D&C 28:13.)

The revelation, in responding to the crisis, asserted three principles: it insisted upon the paramount and unique role of the prophet in receiving revelation that could become a part of the canon; it nonetheless left space for personal revelation to be received and taught as "wisdom"; and it affirmed that all things, including even the revelations of the prophet, should be accepted by common consent of the Church, apparently by discussion and voting in Church conferences. In other words, only the prophet's revelations could become canon, but not necessarily all of them would. Even *his* revelations could be rejected by the Church in conference assemblies. The document defined personal revelation as of less importance to the Church generally, and it limited and contained the form and setting of dissent to what amounts to a community veto of prophetic initiatives.

The principles, thus defined, were a major asset to Joseph Smith and to subsequent prophets of Restoration churches in countering claims to their ultimate authority and in maintaining a rather remarkable core of order and harmony among the Saints, given the enormous inherent potential for fragmentation. They have nonetheless worked out rather differently in the two major surviving bodies of Saints.

Several founders of the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, and especially Joseph Smith III, who accepted leadership of the church in 1860, had deeply resented the authority claimed and exercised by Brigham Young and the apostles between 1844 and 1846. The searing experience of the loss of the Prophet, the promulgation of plural marriage, contention over settlement of the Smith family estate and Church properties, and a period of "wandering" from claimant to claimant of the Prophet's mantle, all left them distrustful of any assertion of strong ecclesiastical authority.

The very process of reorganizing the Church illustrated clearly the attitudes thus gained during the period of wandering. Initial momentum was given to the reorganization through a revelation of 18 November 1851 to Jason Briggs, pastor of a local congregation, who had never claimed to be a prophet. He nonetheless wrote the revelation down, and after getting support from men in his own congregation, distributed it widely among the Saints of the Midwest, which resulted in a

revelation to another ordinary member, Zenos Gurley, affirming that of Briggs and designating Joseph Smith III to be the new prophet.

These revelations led to a conference being convened in Beloit, Wisconsin, on 12 June 1852, which, in the words of Roger Launius, had "no acknowledged head, no organization for which to transact business, no authority to act, and no business to transact."⁴ Those taking the initiative remained reluctant to assume authority and move toward reorganization. They were prodded in that direction by a revelation to Henry Deam, another church member with no particular office and calling. And it was two of their number, Samuel H. Gurley and Edmund C. Briggs, who in 1856 asked Joseph Smith III to lead the new movement. When in 1860, he finally accepted the calling, Smith, now president and prophet, averred that he would likely make mistakes, and asked the conference that when seeing his errors "they would seek to correct them, with understanding" (quite a different approach from the "when our leaders speak, the thinking has been done," model).⁵

The entire experience opened the Prairie-based Saints to a more tentative, fluid, and tolerant structure of authority and with it greater openness to dissent as challenge to church leaders. In essence they have been most comfortable with those portions of Joseph Smith's 1830 revelation to Oliver Cowdery that stressed the authority of Church conferences in debating and deciding important issues, and especially in sustaining prophetic revelations.⁶

The Rocky Mountain-based Saints had a very different experience. The succession crisis was itself a war over who was chief authority among several brilliant and charismatic leaders. Much of Brigham Young's energy between 1844 and 1846 was devoted to disarming the various claimants to authority and fortifying his own.⁷ The exigencies of the exodus to the Far West and the effort to maintain ecclesiastical, civic, and social order in such a setting led the Rocky Mountain group to affirm rather more strongly than in the RLDS tradition the ultimate power and authority of the Twelve, the First Presidency, and by extension, that of other high Church officials whom they, very significantly, call "general authorities."⁸ (The term suggests that they have authority over the *Church* generally, but is understood by some to mean that they have authority over *things* generally, leading them on occasion to tell ward choir leaders which music is appropriately inspirational or which politicians or political causes have divine blessing.) Whereas the historical experience of the Prairie Saints led to a more decentralized polity in which the body of Saints assembled in conference had considerable power, that of the Rocky Mountain Saints led to a more enhanced central authority. The Mountain Saints elevated those portions of the Prophet Joseph's 1830 revelation that stressed the paramount authority of the prophet to receive revelation for the Church. To them the idea of vetoing a prophetic revelation would be tantamount to vetoing God himself.

Nonetheless, and here I speak more of the Rocky Mountain tradition, which I know best, it would be greatly misleading to see these Saints as unquestioningly swallowing all that flows

from Church headquarters. There has been among them considerable latitude in the realm of "wisdom" and "personal revelation and belief." There is a canon, but it, like all scripture, is subject to interpretation, and there is no Talmud or tradition of authoritative textual interpretation, nor a formal creed, beyond the very abstract Articles of Faith. The result has been to allow flexibility in official Church teachings, and, at the grass roots level, something not far from that "solipsistic chaos of personal faiths" I referred to earlier. The Rocky Mountain Saints are united in social habit, and in respect for their authorities, but not nearly so much so in doctrine. Historically they have been free to embrace a wide range of doctrinal positions, so long as they affirm the divine nature of Christ and the authority of the prophets, past and present, to receive revelation for the Church generally. The ritual core of testimony bearing is that they believe Jesus is the Christ, and that Joseph Smith and Ezra Taft Benson are prophets.

This latter affirmation, of the validity of prophetic callings, is the stickler, and it touches heavily on the matter of religious dissent. Religious dissent in the Mountain Latter-day Saint tradition has been defined rarely as heresy, in the sense of teaching doctrines contrary to those of the Church. Saints can and do espouse a considerable diversity of beliefs in the home, Relief Society, priesthood meeting, or even from the pulpit in sacrament meeting, and will, at the most, incur a frown from the visiting high councilor, or perhaps a talk with a bishop, *except when that view challenges the authority or integrity of the general leaders*. "Evil speaking of the Lord's anointed," or, as some general authorities understand the phrase, challenging Church authority, has been the mortal sin for the Rocky Mountain Saints.⁹

Now, I may have overstated the point, but I suspect a review of incidents where Church disciplinary action has been brought against dissenters would in most instances find them in the hottest water when they challenge the authority of the prophet or other high Church leaders. And discipline against those with dissenting doctrines is most commonly brought when a member speaks out in a highly public way on matters about which Church authorities have made special pro-



REORGANIZED CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER DAY SAINTS

When he finally accepted the calling of president and prophet, Joseph Smith III averred that he would likely make mistakes, and asked the conference that when seeing his errors "they would seek to correct them, with understanding."

nouncements. Church authorities have long demonstrated extreme concern about issues related to women's rights, manifested most recently in their revoking an invitation to mild-mannered but tough-minded Pulitzer Prize-winning Laurel Thatcher Ulrich to speak at BYU. They have pursued policies to define orthodoxy in academic endeavor at BYU. They have encouraged local leaders to reprimand persons who have spoken publicly on sensitive issues.

Such acts may indicate a growing preoccupation with doctrinal correctness and the possibility of more aggressive action against ideas considered heretical than has been the case in the past. But I suspect even in these instances the crucial concern is authority more than doctrine. In the Rocky Mountain tradition a public breach, through challenging authority, of the order, harmony, and consensus central to the agenda of the Restoration, is a most egregious act. It can bring a swift and unequivocal response. Part of that response usually takes

the form of resistance, hardening, and delay of prayerful inquiry by those in authority into the issue at hand.

A recent brouhaha in the Rocky Mountains has had to do with a central Church policy of maintaining files on members and making those files available to local leaders in suggesting a reprimand is necessary. The policy goes squarely against the belief I have grown up with that local bishops and stake presidents know their members most intimately and that no person removed from them has ecclesiastical rights to make judgments as to worthiness. Certainly busybodies whose hearsay reports may or may not reflect the spiritual well-being of individuals do not have those rights. I personally find the policy of gathering potentially misunderstood or garbled files on Church members and sending the information to local leaders utterly inconsistent with gospel principles of stewardship and Christ-like love. But I am not optimistic that the path of direct and public confrontation, for all the historical reasons I suggest above, will correct the situation; indeed it well may push us toward a lose-lose situation. Dissent, in the Rocky Mountain tradition, will more likely succeed if it avoids direct, confrontational challenges to authority.

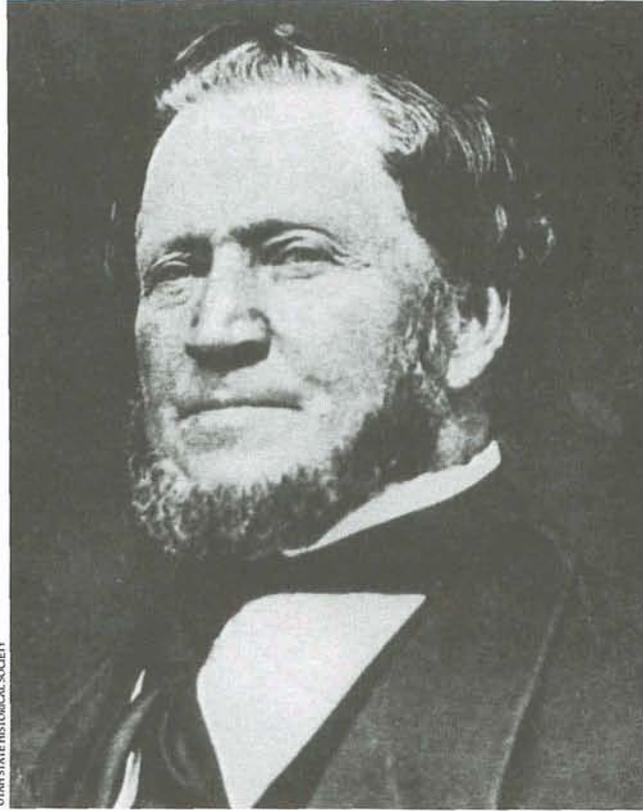
This sounds pessimistic, for dissenters outside of official

channels are clearly between a rock and, at least, a very rigid place. But not all the news is bad. For if institutionalized dissent is stonewalled in Salt Lake City, the more pervasive tradition of folk dissent has and does chip away slowly, and sometimes effectively, at those walls. If modification of policy is our goal, and surely it must be in this instance, the quiet letter, affirming faith but expressing concern, will do far more to bring change than a phone call to the religion editors of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, the *Denver Post*, or the *Los Angeles Times*. Folk dissent is widespread and powerful in the Latter-day Saint tradition. My own experience, participating nearly a half-century in wards and branches in Wyoming, Idaho, BYU, Boston, France, Germany, and in the heart of Zion, is that local Saints adopt and adapt pronouncements coming from headquarters that resonate with their situations. As Art Garfunkel and Paul Simon sang, "A man he hears what he wants to hear /

And disregards the rest." If a gospel doctrine lesson is larded with sentiment or silliness, Latter-day Saints pass it by. If a policy inhibits accomplishing a legitimate and necessary goal, they work around it. The old saw that it is easier to get forgiveness than permission is a real principle of governance in the Rocky Mountain tradition. Their veto is less public and more quiet than in the RLDS Auditorium, but it is a veto nonetheless.

The downside of this necessity of learning to work around authoritative pronouncements without disrupting at least a surface harmony is a tendency toward evasiveness, inconsistency, and deviousness that, alas, influences much that is done in Mountain-LDS parts of the world in the same way bribery influences much that is done in parts of Asia. The upside is that in avoiding public debate and firm community resolution of issues that may arise, they also avoid precise definitions of orthodoxy in creed, doctrine, and even conduct, leaving a rather extensive sphere in which local and personal revelation can be manifested. The entire system avoids the brittleness that public dissent and decision making often engender, leaving a powerful residue of flexibility and variety beneath the outward veneer of uniformity. In most cases the small tremors seem to dissipate the stress, preempting the Big Trembler that all fear one day may come.

It would appear that the Prairie Saints are not without their



In contrast, in the Rocky Mountain tradition a public breach of the order, harmony, and consensus through challenging authority, is a most egregious act.

own problems related to their particular approach to dissent. An ongoing debate has, for several years, pitted those who hold to a more traditional view of the distinctive character of the Restoration, a male priesthood, the validity and role of the Book of Mormon, the New Translation, and the Doctrine and Covenants, against those who prefer to see the Church go more in the direction of inclusive, liberal Protestantism. Neither the authority of the prophet nor the openness of conference debates has been able to resolve this issue, and in the mid-1980s a number of RLDS members became convinced that the church was in apostasy and in need again of reorganization. Upon finding that their views would not prevail in church conferences, they began to secede. Indeed, their more or less spontaneous coalescing of local pastors and church members echoed the process that led in the 1850s to the initial Reorganization. In the early 1990s some proceeded to orga-

nize the Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. Feeling inspired by God, they designated a set of apostles and filled other leading priesthood quorums. Recently their council of patriarchs chose a prophet and president to head their movement, in fact a Lamanite, not descended from the Prophet Joseph.¹⁰

Interestingly, the Utah church has been more prone to disaffection or apostasy than schism. Even fundamentalist dissenters have generally not created a duplicate structure at the highest level, and indeed the great majority concede a certain legitimacy to the mainline church in spite of its having gotten "out of order" on the question of plural marriage.¹¹ It may be that the stress upon the authority of the conference with its more public and democratic decision-making process, over that of the prophet, has for some desanctified the revelatory process and contributed to a hardening over controversial issues that diminish flexibility and foster brittleness.

The stress in the Utah church upon prophetic authority has choked off avenues of formal dissent, slowed the pace of change, keeping the Church in a more traditional track and leading Saints, if they would hope to effect change, to quiet, subtle, and personal resistance. The stress in the Prairie church on the authority of the body of believers has legitimized formal dissent, but made the church more open to change that fol-

lows societal agendas, to a softening and liberalizing of the church, and, when crucial issues cannot be resolved through legitimate means, to faction and even schism.

Finally, we are left with the strange irony of the Restoration: the conservatives of the mid-nineteenth century, who shrank back from the radical teachings embraced by Brigham Young and the Rocky Mountain Saints, now are led by a hierarchy that is theologically liberal, indeed more so than a good many of the members. Major currents of dissent in this tradition tend to pull back toward the views of early Saints. The radicals of the nineteenth century, on the other hand, find themselves led by a highly conservative hierarchy. Dissent among them tends to push toward current social agendas. We might all be better off if somehow Joseph Smith could put us into that proverbial bag and shake us up together, as he in a sense did with the issues raised by Hiram Page and Oliver Cowdery in 1830. In the interim, we will no doubt continue to labor along our curious paths, loving and sustaining our faiths, though not without a bit of grouching here and there, bearing willingly, and for most of us, even unknowingly, the burdens and the blessings of our respective pasts. ☞

NOTES

1. See especially Marvin S. Hill, *Quest for Refuge: The Mormon Flight from American Pluralism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1989).

2. Pearl of Great Price, Joseph Smith 2:5–10. Doctrine and Covenants 1:30. Though Joseph Smith's concerns were expressed primarily about religious divisiveness, it seems clear, in light of his subsequent work, that the increasingly chaotic character of liberal society in general weighed heavily upon him.

3. B. H. Roberts, *A Comprehensive History of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* 6 vols. (Salt Lake City: Deseret News Press, 1930), 1: 218–19.

4. Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1988), 79–139, esp. 88, 118.

5. The statement comes originally from a 1945 ward teachers' message in the *Improvement Era* (June 1945), 354. It was shortly thereafter repudiated by President George Albert Smith, but remains a common part of Latter-day Saint hortatory discourse. See *Dialogue* 19(Spring 1986): 35–39.

6. It remains possible in the RLDS faith for a conference of the church to reject a prophetic revelation. While there has never been an outright rejection, in 1968 a revelation of President W. Wallace Smith was sent by the conference back to the Prophet for clarification. He then presented a second revelation, removing the unacceptable ambiguities, and the revelation, with the clarification, was approved. It would seem such a scenario would not be possible in the Mountain Saint tradition.

7. Richard E. Bennet, *Mormons at the Missouri, 1846–1852: "And Should We Die..."* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1987).

8. Eugene E. Campbell, *Establishing Zion: The Mormon Church in the American West, 1847–1869* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1988).

9. It would be possible to write another paper on the possible meanings of the term. My own sense is that "evil speaking of the Lord's anointed" should not appropriately include the assertion that general authorities might be wrong on some issues as they apply to particular situations and persons. If the Saints believe as I do that they can and should seek a confirming witness of the Spirit on all counsel and callings that are given from higher authority, then it must be possible in some instances for such counsel and callings to be rejected by the Spirit as inappropriate to the specific case. This might happen in those instances when Church authorities do not seek spiritual counsel and/or confuse personal belief and ideology with spiritual direction, thus giving directives that are not inspired. The revelation chosen by the Prophet Joseph as the preface to his compendium of revelations opened that possibility in suggesting that God's commandments "were given unto my servants in their weakness, . . . and inasmuch they erred it might be made known." (D&C 1:24–28.) "Evil speaking of the Lord's anointed" would seem rather more like libel or slander, that is, open defamation of character, which is

quite a different matter from saying a pronouncement or decision might not be applicable in all situations. Of course public statements questioning the integrity of general Church leaders diminish the authority of those leaders, and thus it is, I am arguing, authority that is the core of their concerns.

I might point out that this paper was prepared and delivered in the spring of 1993, well before the several highly-publicized Church disciplinary councils in Salt Lake City. My reading of these events is that they were played out in a manner consistent with the basic thesis in this paper.

10. William Dean Russell explained the recent discontents within the RLDS faith in "Defenders of the Faith: Varieties of RLDS Dissent," *SUNSTONE* 14(June 1990): 14–19.

11. D. Michael Quinn makes this point in "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," chapter 10 of *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992), 240–93.



GORDON

I always followed public rules that said
I must blend in—deny myself myself,
until I read a newspaper account
of how another man was left to die.
It took the medical examiner two hours
to tell the court about his many wounds.
She used a model of a human skull
to illustrate just where the crowbar struck.
The injuries, the witness said, "are like
what happens when one's head is smashed beneath
the wheels of a car or truck. Beneath these blows
were crushing fractures, like an eggshell cracked
The victim . . . suffered wounds consistent with
the jabs that wire cutters make . . . an arm
was broken . . . injuries to genitals . . .
an x-shaped slash was carved into his throat . . .
and bruises from his shoulders to his knees,"
she said. The doctor also told the court:
"The victims liver had been punctured when
he was sexually assaulted with a lug wrench."
And after, Wood and Archuleta said:
"We didn't start out to kill," which is the same
excuse I heard a ten-year-old once say
while blindly stuffing firecrackers into
a stray cat's ass. The questioned killers said
he never begged or pleaded for his life.
I see the innocence of Gordon's eyes
in raging visions now, then turn and fight
to break the rules—an unchained, baited dog;
for friends too scared, or sick and weak, or dead.

—MARK JENSEN

Pillars of My Faith

Why did I demand a higher level of responsibility and involvement of God in the Church than I did of Him in the world at large?

IN THE GARDEN

By Molly McLellan Bennion

I DIDN'T GROW UP ANGRY WITH God. Raised Lutheran, I even escaped the heavy dose of guilt and fear in Ingmar Bergman's films and Garrison Keillor's monologues. Somehow I washed down the pungent, Norwegian doctrinal *lefse* with the sweet cherry soup of God's grace. Jesus wanted "me for a Sunbeam."

Perhaps Lutheran pessimism failed to take hold in my soul because I was equally influenced by my grandmother's family's Pentecostalism and my father's Scotch Presbyterianism. I still clearly see my great-aunt belting out "In the Garden" on the pump organ. "And He walks with me, and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own. . . ." I felt God's love and expected to talk with Him. Thanks to my father, I expected to talk with Him rationally. Dad's Scotch Presbyterianism was less "man is a mess" and more "man is a work in progress." He tempered Calvinism with Bobbie Burns, Sir Walter Scott, and Shakespeare (especially "To thine own self be true").

I loved church. I loved Easter morning, Bible stories on pale blue flannel boards, assembling paper arks in Vacation Bible School, and a Sunday school in which each student actually did the homework assignments in her own hardbound manual. My family taught me to approach religion with heart and mind and energy. And that is how I approached catechism classes at thirteen. I loved the questions of theology, but I became agonizingly frustrated with Pastor Belgum's answers. I distinctly remember the day I pummelled this sweet, quiet

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man with questions of the Trinity. Exasperated, he said, "Molly, just think of God as a three-cornered cloud." How could I possibly talk with a three-cornered cloud? That was the beginning of the end of Lutheranism for me.

With my parents' blessings, I embarked on a search for the God "in the Garden." I went to almost every other denomination in town. I read widely. Nothing clicked until I met Roy Bennion and became an "investigator." The basic tenets of the gospel compelled me. My patriarchal blessing says it well: I "recognized the Gospel as something familiar and could not restrain" my "entrance into the Church." Not that I didn't try. I tried out of loyalty to my parents who feared I wished to join for Roy and not out of personal conviction; to allow anyone else to do one's thinking is a terrible sin in my father's eyes. I tried because while the plan of salvation, eternal intelligences, free agency, the nature of God, and the independence of

evil from God were familiar, the culture of the Church was very strange. Some of the strangeness I liked. I liked the sincerity and spontaneity of a lay service and the sense of inclusion and caring of visiting teaching, but the institutionalized inferiority of women disturbed me. I cemented a youthful belief in the equality of the sexes at Smith College, intellectual home of Betty Friedan and Gloria Steinem. The logic and beauty of the gospel won out, but only after six years of study. Fortunately for me, during those years Roy was at Harvard and his advisor got me a permanent pass into Widener Library. I discovered the Mormon section and spent many weekends on a dusty floor in the bowels of Widener reading the *Messenger*, the original *Exponents* and an exciting new journal, *Dialogue*. That study, together with my experience among a few like-minded women in the Cambridge wards, convinced me to join the Church. I had faith that not only was the gospel true, but

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women of independence had in the past and were in the present making a place for themselves in the LDS culture. My yoga teacher had recently told the class to create spaces and move into them. Similarly, I believed I could create a space for myself in Mormonism.

THAT belief has been sorely tested. In 1973 I entered law school and was effectively disenfranchised from the Church for the next five years. The bishop believed no mother who would attend law school and subsequently practice law could be fit to serve in the Church. I did not have a calling until he was released. During this time the Equal Rights Amendment was heating up. The International Women's Year was held in Houston in 1977, my hometown, and lines were being drawn in the sand. Sisters were defensive with each other, and priesthood leaders more patronizing and condescending than ever. Where was the God who inspired women to bless their oxen? Where was the God who placed the tongue of Adam and Eve in his daughters and who stood with them as they commanded the powers of heaven to heal their sick? By now I was teaching gospel doctrine and each new directive to stick to the manual was more threatening than the last. I ignored them; that is an issue of integrity. Members seemed complacent and uninquisitive. A later bishop called me to be Relief Society president, but only after admitting he had repeatedly put my name on the bottom of the pile as quickly as it had arisen. Only after three months of this denial did he reluctantly call me. He "knew about me," he said. I asked too many questions and spoke too strongly for women. He knew the call came from God because it sure didn't come from him. I, however, had known for weeks the call would come.

What a frustrating experience that calling was! I saw so many unmet needs, needs I believed could and should be met were it not for an institutionalized lack of respect for and under-utilization of women. A number of women asked the bishop if they could talk with me about matters too personal to discuss with him or too uniquely feminine for him to understand easily. Most of these women were raised in Utah and were products of Mormon culture. These were not women comfortable enough with their own decision-making and their own ability to function without the priesthood to have sought female counsel without the bishop's blessing. Of course, he denied their requests. Never have I felt so much responsibility and so little power to fulfill it.

Freed from traditional Christian dogma that God created evil, I no longer blamed Him for general misery. I didn't even blame Him for general misery inflicted upon women, for the 100 million women who live their lives in constant pain due to clitorrectomy, millions of women sold into marriage slavery,

or burned to death in homage to deceased husbands, or murdered upon birth for their very femaleness. Painful as it is, I credit these evils to humankind.

My crisis of faith in the Church began when I became angry that God didn't seem involved enough in the affairs of the women of the Church. Why did I demand a higher level of responsibility and involvement of God in the Church than I did of Him in the world at large? It didn't help that blacks received the priesthood as the Relief Society lost autonomy. I, too, had prayed that black people could have the priesthood, and I was delighted. But if God could right that wrong, could He not intercede for women? It didn't help that I loved Church history and knew something of His unusually close ties with the early Saints. It didn't help that as a convert I was unfamiliar with the experience of a living prophet. I had great expectations fueled by the minority of Old Testa-

ment prophetic stories. We do tend to find more truth in the exception if it suits our purposes. It did not help that, like the Psalmist wrote, "We have heard with our ears, O God, our fathers have told us, what work thou didst in their days, in the times of old" (Psalm 44:1). It didn't help that I had faith in the God of the Garden, the God who would walk and talk with me. Now I was unsure just what that meant. I felt an analogy to the Jews who had seen the hand of God work closely for them and then felt the hand withdraw. Was God a giant jumper-cable? Or was the status of half the membership too trivial in the giant scheme of things? Like the Jews, I was increasingly angry with God. I was not so angry as the death-camp rabbis who performed excommunication ceremonies against God. The situation for Church women is not so dramatic, of course. But we dwell on the issues of our own lives and to

have my church, and by inference, my God, tell me that my spirit and labor are not as valuable as that of a man created a spiritual crisis.

Fortunately, I did not reject God. I appealed to Him. I remained hopeful He is just, but I wasn't quite sure. Why bother to appeal to God if you don't believe He is just? Isn't any degree of hope in God and the justice of His purposes the core of faith? Furthermore my very anger reaffirmed my faith in Him. You cannot remain angry with someone who does not exist. I just blamed God for not setting things right. It was a most uncomfortable position. I felt as the author of Lamentations: "You [God] have covered yourself with a cloud so that prayer should not pass through" (3:44). Some days I could pray; some days it seemed too futile or too likely God wouldn't be pleased to hear from this upstart. Like Ephraim of Bonn, Rabbi of the Crusades, I knew a new fear: "Woe is me if I speak and cast doubt on my Maker; woe is me if I do not speak, venting my sorrow. Woe is me, my day of goodness has declined. My Comforter and Relative is far away from me."¹

God grieves
over our
unrighteous
dominions. He
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rarely offers
deliverance.

I turned to the prophets who dared argue with God. Abraham pled for the righteous of Sodom and Gomorrah by asking, "Shall not the judge of the Earth deal justly?" (Genesis 19:20). In so doing he taught us there is a universal moral order by which even God is expected to abide and that God may choose to be involved in humankind's affairs. God saves Lot partly because He remembers Abraham (Genesis 19:20). That surely didn't help. That was the problem. I expected God to get involved. Why did He not choose to be involved in improving the opportunities of Church women? What effect does the universal moral order have on that choice? A lot, but I wasn't ready to accept it. I looked on for a more pleasing answer.

Jeremiah argues with God for his people and for himself. Tucked in his prophecies are the Six Confessions in which Jeremiah cries, "O Lord, you have deceived me and I was deceived. You are stronger than I and You have prevailed" (20:7). Yet, although he believes God has let him down, he concludes, "But the Lord is with me as a mighty terrible one: therefore my persecutors shall stumble, and they shall not prevail: they shall be greatly ashamed; for they shall not prosper: their everlasting confusion shall never be forgotten" (20:11). Was Jeremiah the proper model? Could I retain my faith in the justice of God should I reach old age or death before I saw God the mighty and terrible right the wrongs done against Mormon women?

Did the answer lie, as many Jewish authors believe, in the act of unusual suffering itself? Martin Buber sees Jeremiah, the sufferer, as a paradigm for the Jewish people. As Jeremiah's martyrdom led him to a deep fellowship with Yahweh, should the unique sufferings of powerless women be a door of approach to God? That insight has some promise, but no more than does any suffering for any person.

That the people I have found most interesting have tended to live challenged lives bears out the wisdom of God's plan and the value of earthly struggle, but I reject the idea that more suffering might have been foreordained for women to speed their spiritual growth. No, I am as offended by the suggestion that women, or the Jewish people, may have been dealt special sufferings to enhance their spirituality as I am that my brethren need the priesthood as a crutch for their inherent spiritual weakness. I do not believe suffering is doled out as a blessing, but that the blessing of suffering comes from the wisdom, strength, and humility available for the sufferer. The inspiration I receive from Jeremiah originates from his faith that, however betrayed he felt, he believed in the final justice of God. Would I be able for a lifetime to ask as the Psalmist: "Rouse Yourself, why do you sleep, O Lord?" (44:24-27). Why do you sleep for the women of the Church?" and retain my faith in God's justice?

Are you exasperated yet? Are you asking, "How could this woman be so dense?" The answer is so simple. Anger distorts

our thinking and destroys our love; it was eroding my love of God. I had let egocentrism and self-pity (both for myself and, less selfishly but nonetheless pitifully, for all women) suggest to me an exception to the rule that free agency is the just corner piece of the plan of salvation. The universal moral order precludes God from denying both the right and the wrong free agency. And one person's free agency so often impacts another's. I was angry with God for the work of men. And I had by now learned enough of the self-destruction of anger not to transfer my rage toward those men. Oh, yes, He does intercede in human affairs as He did to save Lot, to lead the Exodus, and to usher in this dispensation. But much of religious anger relates to how rarely He does so, even in scripture. Jeremiah's experience is more the rule than the exception. Yes, we may pray a lifetime for intercession that never comes just as we may pray once for a rich blessing that comes quickly. God is bound by that universal moral order of free agency. The Church is, too.

Somehow in my conversion zeal I let my excitement in the Restoration fuel a ridiculous hope that God would direct the Church as He apparently has never before (witness the Apostasy or the speed with which the Israelites built the Golden Calf). We would have been puppets on Satan's string; Heavenly Father gives us a long rope with which to hang or save ourselves. I joined the Church escaping the false doctrines of foreordination and predestination. I loved the principle of free agency. It is a pillar of my faith. And yet I had yearned for God to tamper with this most precious of principles. How quickly we can apostatize when self-interest, especially innocent self-protection, is at stake.

I do believe God guides and directs His church through the prophet, but I have given up guessing the perimeters of that direction. The Church institution is directed by good men and women true to their personal cultures. Although I do see progress in such areas as confronting the issue of abuse, I do not think the Church yet facilitates the growth of women as well as that of men. But I am not angry with God. I am of the sex doomed to power losses from the minute we went from a hunting and gathering society to an agricultural one. It has a lot to do with muscle mass and little to do with God. Surely it does not please Him.

SO where is God? Let's go back to "In the Garden," the song my aunt loved best. The last verse holds the key: "I'd stay in the garden with Him Tho' the night around me be falling. But He bids me go; Thro' the voice of woe His voice to me is calling." And remember the allegory of the olive tree in Jacob 5. Eight times God says, "For it grieveth me that I should lose the trees of my vineyard." God grieves over our unrighteous do-

I expected God to get involved. Why did he not choose to be involved in improving the opportunities of Church women?

minions. He prunes and transplants, waters and feeds, but He never makes our choices. God consoles the afflicted. He promises us forbearance and endurance and patience and wisdom; He rarely offers deliverance. He comforts and then He bids us go on to work out our salvation armed with His principles and His solace, like Jeremiah, strong in the knowledge His justice and mercy will be painfully and joyfully evident in the end. To the extent I perceive unrighteous dominion, I can pray for confirmation that that is indeed the case and that I am not mistaken, and I can pray for the enlightenment of the perpetrator. If I am personally involved or otherwise close enough to the situation, I can speak to the offender. I can also raise the issue for discussion among the members of the Church. I can try to love those leaders who fail to love my sisters. I can work for social justice in the world community. But I really have little

scriptural or historical precedent for the concept of God's intercession, even in the affairs of the Church. Perhaps He could step in without mocking the plan of salvation, but He probably won't. And when He does, we probably won't understand why this action and not another anymore than we understand why one blessing and not another. But through it all, on occasion, at moments of His choosing only, "He walks with me and He talks with me, And He tells me I am His own; And the joy we share as we tarry there, None other has ever known." 

NOTE

1. Carmi, *Hebrew Verse*, in *Arguing With God—A Jewish Tradition* by Anson Laytner (New Jersey and London: Jason Aronson, Inc., 1990), 146.



REPRINTS

It was to honor the hard labors
of my father's past that we hung the photos:
an old milkcan slanted in weeds
grown up since I've gone.
Beside an unhinged door,
a one-legged milkstool and a shovel
crusted with rust and dried manure—
posed at the threshold by my daughter
making plain in black and white
what has fallen to disuse.

Her grandfather will not part
with even broken things, has refused
dismantling a cracked and withered harness
for the ivory circles
that make souvenirs; keeps tattered feedbags
hung on nails, though he's had no horse
in twenty years.

And more and more my waking is riddled
as I pass through the hall, as though my house
a thousand miles from the farm
has undiscovered rooms that I will someday
chance upon—serial dreams
become real: glass doors of a sunlit room
opening out to the rough-hewn floor
of a sinking barn; the faint, musky ammonia
left from cattle, spilled milk, and old hay.
Through an overpowering dimness,
the random beauties of collapse.

—DIXIE PARTRIDGE

*The sixties taught a generation to question authority
and the benevolence of those in power. The Church's response
was to stonewall, deny, and reject calls for change.
As a result, the Church entered the 1970s and proceeded through
the 1980s with management and control as high items on its agenda.*

CHANGE AND GROWTH: THE MORMON CHURCH & THE 1960S

By Jeffery O. Johnson

ON 7 MARCH 1965, ABOUT THREE HUNDRED PEOPLE met at the Federal Building in Salt Lake City and marched a block and a half to the LDS Church Administration Building. Protest demonstrations and marches were common pressure devices used in the 1960s to urge social change; but this was the first to pressure the LDS church. Organized by black Utahns and liberal whites, many of them students and faculty from the University of Utah, it directly challenged Mormon internal affairs from outsiders.¹ It brought Utah and Mormonism into the nationwide turbulence over civil rights, challenged the trend of positive publicity that had been growing steadily for this prosperous, patriotic, politically conservative church, and would leave the Church in the 1970s out of touch with the mainstream of American social thought and increasingly on the defensive about its racial and—in the 1980s—gender policies.

This personal essay is an overview of the stresses that the LDS church encountered as the larger American society underwent rapid and devastating social changes.

The demonstrators demanded that Church leaders actively support civil rights legislation then pending in the state legislature. A few days earlier, NAACP leaders had met with Elders Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner, counselors in First Presidency, asking them to support these bills. The civil rights leaders felt that they had received assurances of support from the Church leaders; but the public statements of support did not come and the legislation seemed doomed. The demonstrators decided to act. Steve Holbrook, a student activist, had spent the previous summer of 1964 registering blacks to vote in Mississippi, a highly successful though violence-marred experience that had trained dozens of dedicated civil rights

supporters in the tactics of social activism.

Although President Brown's sympathies are now well known, he then resisted yielding to pressure. Some Church leaders misunderstood the goal of the demonstration and thought the NAACP was pressuring the Church to change its policy of not ordaining black men to the priesthood. Senior apostle Spencer W. Kimball, who later as president of the Church enunciated the policy that lifted the priesthood ban in 1978, expressed resistance in 1963 saying that the Church practice in relation to holding the priesthood could not be changed just to respond to human wishes.² The Church was officially silent during the three-day demonstration in which activists prayed, made speeches, sang "We Shall Overcome," and displayed a large sign that read: "LDS Leaders, Use Your Influence for Moral Justice."

The demonstration ended on the day that the Church-owned *Deseret News* published an editorial quoting a statement of general support for civil rights that President Brown had made eighteen months earlier in the October 1963 general conference. Three days later, the state legislature passed the public accommodations measure and the fair employment act; a housing bill died in committee.³

For many civil rights sympathizers, the Church's statement was a grudging concession that was yielded under pressure. For many Mormons, the nightmare of civil rights conflict had moved off the television screen into their homes and streets.

Utah's Democratic governor, Calvin L. Rampton, had proposed the civil rights legislation after Lyndon B. Johnson had made it a Democratic Party priority when he was elected in November 1964. However, the atmosphere in the state was tense and paranoid. I was a student at BYU at the time and recall persistent rumors before each general conference that blacks were converging on Salt Lake City to take over the temple. When bombs damaged the east doors of the temple in November 1962, many Mormons associated this incident with the violence of the nation's racial strife.

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THE CHURCH'S INTERNAL STRESSES

A faltering presidency, explosive growth, and the correlation movement absorbed the Church's attention in the 1960s.

IN retrospect, a clash probably could not have been avoided. The Church apparently had no policy for dealing with the social issues that swirled through the nation except for dogged resistance and reluctant concessions, an approach that robbed even the concessions of some positive effects.

This intense conservatism was caused in part by the lack of strong Church presidential leadership, the Church's explosive growth, and the reorganization of the Church bureaucracy, known as the correlation movement. These events created internal stresses within the Church hierarchy.

The weakening Church leadership was perhaps the most important. On 8 September 1960, eighty-seven-year-old President David O. McKay had been a general authority for fifty-five years, had been president for ten, and would continue in that office for another ten. His two most recent counselors had died in the early sixties—J. Reuben Clark on 6 October 1961 at the age of ninety, and Henry D. Moyle died 18 September 1963 at age of seventy-four. Elder Hugh B. Brown, who had been an apostle for only three years, replaced President Clark. Elder Brown's nephew, N. Eldon Tanner, who had been an apostle for one year, replaced President Moyle. Both men had spent their formative years and much of their professional lives in Canada.⁴

Six weeks after President Tanner was called on 12 November 1963, President McKay was hospitalized with a stroke. Although he survived, his speech and energy were severely curtailed; Church management largely fell into the hands of Presidents Brown and Tanner. By comparison with the other members of the Quorum of the Twelve, ten of whom had served longer than either of them, these two counselors in the First Presidency were inexperienced outsiders. President Tanner assumed the Church's financial and business affairs. In an interview with G. Homer Durham soon after he was called, President Tanner said that he felt "greatly handicapped in my present position. I have had no background, experience, or knowledge with the people that the others in Salt Lake City have had."⁵ It seems reasonable to conclude that the other members of the Twelve may have had some reservations about their leadership as well.

Then, intensifying the internal stress and to everyone's surprise, President McKay added three more counselors:

Thorpe B. Isaacson, then an assistant to the Twelve, on 28 October 1965; followed one day later by Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve and McKay's successor; and three years later by Alvin R. Dyer, also an assistant to the Twelve, but ordained an apostle by McKay the year before.⁶ It is unclear what role President McKay had in mind for these unconventional appointments. When I began working at the Church Administration Building in 1969, Church employees had many stories about conflicts between Elders Isaacson and Dyer and the other counselors.

Another source of stress was the Church's rapid growth.

Membership grew from 1.6 million in 1960 to 2.6 million in 1970. Though these totals seem small compared to 9 million in 1994, this almost doubling in one decade strained Church resources. Joseph Fielding Smith, as president of the Quorum of the Twelve, expressed his concern

After 130 years of personal management, Church leaders no longer knew local leaders personally and could no longer rely on first-hand observations of local conditions. They must have felt that their control was slipping away.

in a journal entry in August 1962: "Our spending everywhere is to me alarming, but I have nothing to say [about it]. . . . The Church is spending enormous sums in building all over the world. We are constantly creating stakes in Europe, the islands of the Pacific, and on the American continent." While this point was well taken, he then added a statement that revealed profound theological conservatism: "I wonder if we have forgotten the commandment to gather. To come to Zion."⁷ Gathering to Zion had not been an official policy since the nineteenth century and had been actively discouraged since 1912.

President Tanner, when he was called in 1963, found that the building program had so drained Church reserves that financial officers wondered, at one point, if they could meet the employee payroll. He promptly declared a moratorium on building and investments until reserves reached a more comfortable level; he also established procedural controls over approving expenditures.

Furthermore, growth distanced Church leaders from members. After 130 years of personal management, Church leaders at headquarters no longer knew local leaders personally and could no longer rely on first-hand observations of local conditions. They must have felt that their control was slipping away. The calling of sixty-nine men to be regional representatives in October 1967 eased the administrative burdens, but inserted another layer in Church bureaucracy.⁸

An added stress point was the priesthood correlation movement, an attempt to streamline internal operations and maintain control. Church departments, many of them staffed by semi-autonomous professionals, were scattered throughout Salt Lake City overseeing legal, financial, purchasing, person-

nel, missionary, construction, welfare, and educational matters.

On 24 March 1960, the First Presidency wrote a letter to the general priesthood committee asking it to study a way of coordinating the Church's teaching material, then being produced by each auxiliary at the general level. Committee chair Harold B. Lee had wanted to reorganize the Church's administrative structure for many years. As a young apostle he had tried to make changes, but "found it necessary to fold away his charts of reorganization, changing job descriptions, and wait out the delay."⁹

With this commission, Elder Lee and the committee had the authority to suggest changes in Church structure. It seems to me that the First Presidency had only asked them to look at Church curriculum, but by the end of the sixties this committee had changed Church structure. By the

time the dust had settled, auxiliaries had been stripped of magazines, curriculum-writing powers, and the right to raise their own funds and establish their own budgets. Women were not represented on the committees that pushed through these changes and although these actions applied to all auxiliaries, women's roles, responsibilities, and powers were curtailed as a group while men's, as priesthood holders, were not. This constriction affected not only the Relief Society, the YW-MIA, and the Primary, but also broader services like welfare, which would be professionalized by male-managed departments. Other programs also were reshuffled and reorganized.¹⁰ Apostle Spencer W. Kimball wrote painfully in his diary during the fall of 1969 that President Brown had singled out his "devotion and service," but that this "praise" was actually meant to soften the blow of shifting the Indian Student Placement Program away from his control to the control of the Welfare Services Department.¹¹

Thus, these three internal stresses — a faltering of presidential leadership, the Church's explosive growth, and the divisiveness represented by the correlation movement—absorbed the Church's attention during a decade when the larger American social problems were no longer waiting patiently on the sidelines.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Civil rights, the Vietnam War, and the counter-culture movement caused the Church to stiffen its policies and dig in its heels.

FROM the perspective of more than twenty years, it

seems clear that three factors greatly impacted the social fabric of the United States during the sixties: civil rights, the Vietnam War, and a strong youth counter-culture.

The civil rights movement, the crest of a wave of idealism that had begun at the end of World War II, carried John F. Kennedy into office and raised the hopes of black leaders for equality. The struggle exposed the racism and materialism underlying the idealistic American myth.

The 1965 demonstration at the Church Administration Building was not the first move toward more equality for Utah blacks. Two years earlier, a similar demonstration had been

planned to coincide with October general conference. Sterling McMurrin, a philosophy professor at the University of Utah, arranged a meeting between Steve Holbrook, the student leader, Albert Fritz, president of the Salt Lake Chapter of the NAACP, University of Utah professor

Charles Nabors, and Hugh B. Brown and N. Eldon Tanner. At that point, Presidents Brown and Tanner agreed to make a strong statement of support for civil rights at general conference and the demonstration was canceled.¹²

I remember hearing President Brown read this statement on that Sunday morning. It said in part: "There is in this Church no doctrine, belief, or practice that is intended to deny the enjoyment of full civil rights by any person regardless of race, color, or creed. . . . We call upon all men everywhere, both within and outside the Church, to commit themselves to the establishment of full civil equality for all of God's children. Anything less than this defeats our high ideal of the brotherhood of man."¹³ It was this statement, reprinted in the *Deseret News*, that ended the demonstration in 1965 and assured passage of Utah's civil rights legislation.¹⁴

At that time, I greatly appreciated this statement and felt that it had effect on many Mormons. A woman from Georgia told me in 1965 that she would be prejudiced toward blacks if she weren't a Mormon. I was surprised because I had assumed that she would be prejudiced toward blacks because she was a Mormon.

Again on 15 December 1969, Presidents Brown and Tanner, acting as the First Presidency, made some effort to separate the issue of priesthood exclusion from civil rights: "The position of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints affecting those of the Negro race who choose to join the Church falls wholly within the category of religion. It has no bearing upon matters of civil rights. In no case or degree does it deny to the Negro his full privileges as a citizen of the nation. . . ."¹⁵ This statement did not, however, solve the problem. Many Mor-

The sixties taught a generation to question authority. The Church rejected calls for change. But well-educated Mormons, committed to their church, could not successfully compartmentalize their social and religious experiences.

mons found inconsistencies in attempting to maintain the ideal of full political and social equality, but practicing religious discrimination in not giving priesthood rights to black men.

Conservative Mormons, meanwhile, buttressed their positions with criticism about the methods of civil rights activism. The *Improvement Era* published an article by G. Homer Durham, then president of Arizona State University and a future general authority, blasting sitdowns and building takeovers: "If not illegal under present law," he wrote, then they "should be carefully legislated against."¹⁶ This group was particularly outraged when some schools took action against BYU for its suspected discrimination.

In December 1969, Stanford University severed relations with BYU over the Church's exclusion of blacks from the priesthood. In January and February, protestors at BYU basketball games disrupted the activities.¹⁷ I particularly remember seeing black armbands on the Wyoming players at a BYU–University of Wyoming game. In short, the nation as a whole was under pressure from a group of citizens insisting the government make good the Founding Fathers' promise. The Church received its share of pressure, but, stiffened by a policy that had acquired the status of theology and doctrine, dug in its heels.

The second great social issue of the 1960s was the Vietnam War. After the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution in 1964, the steady acceleration of the war drew protests that employed the confrontational tactics of the civil rights movement. Anti-War protests began at the University of Michigan, but soon spread to campuses all over the United States.

BYU's ultra-conservative president, Ernest L. Wilkinson, had no intention of letting his school join the movement. As fall semester commenced in 1965, he instructed the dean of students to "look out" for protest tendencies "so that we can nip [them] in the bud. . . ."¹⁸ It was not until late 1968 that BYU had its first major political demonstration: about sixty students wearing black armbands attempted to disrupt a speech by Curtis LeMay, the conservative running mate of third-party U.S. presidential candidate George Wallace. In March 1969, the Free Student Coalition presented BYU's administration with a list of demands including recognition for a student Mobilization for Peace Club, abolishing ROTC class credit, and the establishment of a Civil Rights Week.¹⁹ The administration disregarded these demands.

As with the civil rights issue, conservative Mormons found support in quasi-theological roots—its opposition to Communism. Church President Heber J. Grant had issued an anti-Communist statement in 1936, which became the standard Church position on Communism.²⁰ During the 1950s, the Church leaders continued this opposition. In 1960, David O. McKay, speaking to the BYU students, denounced Marx and Lenin and concluded his speech with, "I pray with an earnest heart, God keep you away from the low, seeking, scheming plans of him who enthrones passion, who decries self-control, who renounces the sacredness of the family—and who, in the words of Marx himself, would 'dethrone God.'"²¹ I fully absorbed this alarm and spent half an hour as a youth sacra-

ment meeting speaker in 1961 warning the congregation against the evils of Communism.

The transfer from anti-Communism to pro-Vietnam War was a simple one. Church officials announced in December 1965: "Latter-day Saints are not pacifists in the accepted definition of that term. Neither are they conscientious objectors."²² During that year, the Church limited missionary calls to make more Mormon men available for the draft.

The third major social movement of the 1960s was the rise of a strong youth counter-culture. Stemming from the questioning of authority that emerged from the civil rights and anti-war movements, students at various universities went beyond politics and social justice to alternative life styles that rejected the social norms of the older generation. The "Pill" seemed to promise consequence-free sex; drugs became easily available for recreational use; and rock music developed new musical forms that challenged tradition.

Longer hair, beards, Eastern religions, and unconventional clothing were part of the times. Writer Fred Voros recalled, "Life seemed to bristle with excitement and meaning, with the promise of a new kind of idealism, rejecting hypocritical materialism and embracing love, tolerance, justice, and poetic living. We lived in a neo-renaissance of kaleidoscopic lights, brightly colored clothing, intoxicating incense, sitar music, and social awakening."²³

Mormon leaders responded promptly and predictably by holding firm against the counter-culture. The beard-growing contest that had long been a tradition at Ricks College stopped, a friend of mine recalls. BYU created and vigorously enforced an Honor Code that dedicated little space on "honor" and more space devoted to haircuts, sideburn length, skirt measurements, and the disapproval of bluejeans.

Rock music was generally considered evil, and the muted struggle between teenagers bored with traditional music and stake leaders responsible for excluding "questionable" music formed a large item of the youth-adult agenda in the Church. A whole article could be devoted to the Church's increasingly detailed advice about performers, lyrics, style of singing, and beat. The December 1965 *Priesthood Bulletin* quoted Brigham Young: "If we are dancing properly, a priesthood bearer could walk off the dance floor, administer to the sick in a proper way, and feel good about it."²⁴ With some amusement I recalled that Brigham Young was denouncing "round dances," like the waltz, as licentious and sensual, and now they were being urged upon us as the height of proper dancing.

The Church's position on dating and marriage deepened and intensified. In January 1960, the Church began broadcasting radio firesides that were sent to the stakes as records. During my middle teens, these firesides formed my image of "correct" male/female relations. Ezra Taft Benson summarized this view in 1964: "Avoid late hours; dress modestly; seek good associates; avoid necking and petting; have a good physical outlet; think good thoughts [and] pray."²⁵ The middle-class images of marriage that Americans absorbed from television of Ozzie and Harriet Nelson or the Cleaver family were reinforced for Mormons by the ideally romantic relationship of David and

Emma Ray McKay. Much was made of the fact that, even when they were both in wheelchairs, Sister McKay always preceded President McKay through a doorway.

CONCLUSION

In the 1990s, will the Church overcome its dichotomous legacy from the 1960s?

It is tempting to speculate on what might have happened inside the Church if none of these social changes had occurred on the broader national scene. If the prosperous, materialistic, patriotic fifties had continued unchecked, would the Church have continued to be even more "respectable" and mainstream? Possibly, but that did not happen. The sixties taught a generation to question authority and the benevolence of those in power. It taught a willingness to sacrifice one's own interests to protect the interests of voiceless minorities. Intelligent and well-educated Mormons, committed to their Church, could not successfully compartmentalize their social and religious experiences. Furthermore, the success of the protests empowered many previously marginalized groups to bring about social change.

The Church's response was to stonewall, deny, and reject calls for change. It was more successful in remaining conservative and in retaining its tradition than many other aspects of the larger American society. Apostle Boyd K. Packer told BYU students in his 23 March 1965 address that his whole message could be summed up in three simple words: "Follow the Brethren."²⁶ But it was this message that threw the conflict between the Church and society into bold relief during the 1960s. As a result, the Church entered the 1970s and proceeded through the 1980s with management and control as high items on its agenda. It will be interesting to see if in the 1990s the Church can come to grips with this dichotomy. ☞

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SILENCE IN URSA MAJOR

The brightest stars look over her,
light her empty page
but do not write upon it.
They hover above her, barristral—waiting
as hung muses do, mute
to her probings, her delving
for some moment
of their startling brilliance.

The whites of their purest absolution
wink enthroned above her reach:
were they only diamonds,
she could have their crystal glare
wrapped in less-glittering orbs
around her finger;
but—as oculi mundi,
their sharp, diaphanous stares
are at a distance
almost merciful.

For this bare moment,
until her restitution,
they must remain
the only fire
in the night.

—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER

Grandfather is getting older and the family needs to come together and care for him. George and Veeann are both active members of the Church, caring and kind people whose only interest is his welfare. But what happens when moral principles collide with financial realities? Which tends to win out? What if those making such decisions were more selfish, less in tune with the Spirit, less caring, more grasping?

ACCOMMODATIONS

A PLAY IN THREE ACTS

By Eric Samuelsen

AUTHOR'S NOTE

IN SEPTEMBER 1990, I HAD AN OPPORTUNITY TO TRAVEL to Norway in the company of my grandfather, Ragnar Andreas Samuelsen. "Bestefar," as we always called him, was then eighty-six years old, but had always been an active, hard-working man—sailor, arctic explorer, steelworker—and in many ways the trip was a happy one, as he and I visited family and friends. It was also on that trip, however, that I began to notice how badly his health was beginning to deteriorate. His decline continued after our return to the States. Eventually my father and my aunt were forced to make the difficult decision to place him in a nursing home, where he passed away in March of this year.

My father and my aunt are both active members of the Church, caring and kind people, whose only interest was the welfare of their father. Nonetheless, seeing how the decisions they were forced to make were so wrenching and difficult, the situation began to spark my interest as a playwright. The creative impulse inside me began asking inconvenient questions. What happens when one's moral principles collide with financial realities? Which tends to win out? What if the people making such decisions were more selfish, less in tune with the Spirit, less caring, more grasping? What if the older relative involved in such a situation was similarly uncooperative and difficult? And so I wrote *Accommodations*. Ironically, we began rehearsals the week my grandfather died.

The characters in this play tend to represent darker shadings of people I have known in and out of the Church, and are polar opposites to my father and aunt. My grandfather, for example, had his moments of cantankerousness, but he was hardly a Marty Mortenson. While I hope the Mortensons, and their struggles, will be recognizable and real, I also hope nobody thinks they represent all

Mormons. The play is intended much more as a warning than as a portrait.

Accommodations was first presented by the Brigham Young University Department of Theatre and Film at the Margett's Theatre, 13–29 May 1993, directed by Thomas F. Rogers. The original cast was:

GEORGE	Bill Brown
VEEANN	Elizabeth J. Smith
LYNN	Samantha Smith
MICHAEL	J. Scott Bronson
CHUCK	Matthew Tyler Williams
CAROLINE	Lara Blackner
FRANKLIN	Curtis Brien
ROBYN	Stephanie Mills
MARTY	Leo Ware

CHARACTERS

(Five men, four women)

GEORGE MORTENSON—An architect in his fifties. The oldest of his siblings.
 VEEANN MORTENSON—His wife, in her fifties.
 MARTY MORTENSON—George's father, a man in his eighties. A former rancher, now confined to a wheelchair.
 MICHAEL MORTENSON—George's youngest brother, in his mid-forties. An insurance salesman.
 FRANKLIN MORTENSON—Second oldest of the Mortenson children, just two years younger than George. The assistant manager of a pharmacy.
 ROBYN MORTENSON—Franklin's daughter. Fifteen.
 DR. CAROLINE O'HARA—George's sister, between Michael and Franklin in age. A pediatrician.
 CHUCK HARSTAD—George and Veeann's son-in-law and the foreman of Marty's old ranch.
 LYNN HARSTAD—George and Veeann's daughter, married to Chuck.

ERIC SAMUELSEN is assistant professor of theater and film at Brigham Young University. His plays have been performed in New York, Indiana, Idaho, California, and BYU. This play is his fourth BYU mainstage production.



I was nineteen, I speak from experience, kiddo. In love for the first time at twelve, sexually active at fourteen, pregnant at eighteen, and divorced by my twentieth birthday. All because of this ridiculous notion that attracting some man is the be-all and end-all of a woman's existence.

ACT ONE

SET: George and Veeann's house, somewhere in Utah. A kitchen on one side of the stage, and a family room attached. Between the kitchen and family room, stairs lead up to George and Veeann's room on the second floor, and a hall leads into the rest of the house; off the hall, we see two doors, Marty's room and a bathroom. In the kitchen are the usual appliances and a light with a buzzer, which was obviously recently added. There's a television in the family room, a stereo, and a huge bookcase. This is removed for Acts Two and Three.

TIME: The present.

Act One Scene One: Late one night, in mid-October.

Act One Scene Two: A Friday night, two weeks later.

Act Two: Saturday morning, the next day.

Act Three: Saturday evening.

SCENE I

George and Veeann's family room-kitchen. It is the middle of the

night. In the family room is a card table covered with an accordion file organizer and numerous papers. We see a flashlight outside the house and hear scratching at the front door. CHUCK's shadowy figure slips into the room. He looks around for a moment, getting his bearings, then heads over to the card table. He pulls out a Polaroid camera and takes a picture of the card table. Then he begins looking through the papers in the file. After he searches for a moment, we hear some movement from the top of the stairs. CHUCK moves away from the table, trips and falls. Grabbing his shoulder, he curses under his breath, crosses to the kitchen, and switches off his flashlight. A light comes on at the top of the stairs. GEORGE appears, wearing a bathrobe. He comes a few feet down the stairs, bends over, looks around.

GEORGE: It's okay, Vee. I don't see anything.

(GEORGE heads back up the stairs. We hear a door close. CHUCK returns to the table. Looks at papers again. Finds the one he needs. He takes out a small notebook, copies down some figures. Then he carefully consults the Polaroid as he puts the papers back on the table the way he found them. He quietly slips out the front door again.)

SCENE II

(*The same room, late one Friday evening, in the fall. GEORGE sits in the living room, watching a taped football game on television, a plate of food on his knee. He is sitting by the card table, looking at papers.*)

GEORGE: Come on, come on . . . nice play! Fourth down, now let's block the punt.

(*Enter VEEANN from MARTY's room. She is carrying a bucket, a soiled Depends, rags, dirty clothes.*)

VEEANN: I suppose it's just crucially important that you see every play.

GEORGE (*a little guiltily*): Something to do while I look this stuff over.

VEEANN: Wait a minute. This isn't the game you taped last Sunday, is it?

GEORGE: Last night.

VEEANN: They played on a Thursday?

GEORGE: It was the Thursday night edition of Monday night football.

VEEANN: That makes as much sense as anything.

GEORGE: Couldn't watch it last night, because of stake priesthood. I thought you liked it when I taped them.

VEEANN: It does beat the dark ages, George, before God gave us women the VCR. Honestly, George, how many Sunday dinners were ruined because you had to sit there, my finest china balanced on your knee, glomming your food down half chewed, watching the Forty-niners, or the Bears, whoever. Racing home from church so you could watch the fourth quarter. The girls and I tiptoeing around so as to not disturb you and Tommy and your precious games.

GEORGE: It wasn't as bad as all that. A good father-son activity, I always felt. Besides, what did you used to do on Sundays? Watch old movies, Tyrone Power and Dorothy Lamour, Danny Kaye, Donald O'Connor. . . .

VEEANN: That's different.

GEORGE: (*He looks over at her.*) How is he?

VEEANN: Asleep.

GEORGE: Good. Was it bad?

VEEANN: I just keep telling myself, after this weekend, it's over.

GEORGE: I'm sorry I couldn't help.

VEEANN: You heard him. "Stay the hell out, George. Veeann! I want Veeann." Always Veeann.

GEORGE: I'm sorry, honey.

VEEANN: It's okay, George. Like I said, after this weekend. (*Crosses to him at the card table.*) What are you finding?

GEORGE: Pretty much what I expected. He bought land.

VEEANN: Where?

GEORGE: Everywhere. A few acres here, an old field there, a worn-out ranch, spread all across the valley. Most of it close to worthless. Probably some of it close to prime.

VEEANN: Done?

GEORGE: Thanks. (*She crosses to him, takes his tray back to the kitchen.*)

VEEANN: Is any of it worth developing?

GEORGE: No way to say unless I drive up north some Saturday and look at it. It's mostly just scrub land, mesquite and tumbleweed. It's that generation. They got into their heads a single thought: "land is a good investment," and never went any farther. They just bought. Did I tell you about that one piece, up the canyon?

VEEANN: With the hot spring?

GEORGE: That's right. Thirty-five acres, all it has are a few scrub pine and a hot spring. But he doesn't own the mineral rights and there's no record of who does. Worst of all, he doesn't have access. We'll have to call the neighbors just to get permission to look at it. It's worthless.

VEEANN: A shame, isn't it?

GEORGE: You know, when I think of my mother, patching up hand-me-downs and cooking on a coal stove for all those years so he could go into debt to buy a stand of trees and a hot springs nobody can get to—(*shakes his head.*)

VEEANN: I know, George.

GEORGE: (*The buzzer sounds.*) I thought he was asleep.

VEEANN: He was.

GEORGE: Do you want me to . . . (*a pause*)

VEEANN: No, no. I'll get it. (*VEEANN crosses back to MARTY's room.*)

GEORGE: It always has to be Dad's way, everything has to be. No thought to . . . (*Back to the T.V.*) Look at that! Seventy-five yards, right down the middle. Young to Rice, I swear he's better than Montana. (*He hits the fast forward.*) Skip the extra point. (*He looks at the papers from the accordion file with distaste, puts them away, picks up a brochure.*) Did I tell you what Meyer wanted for the development? A health club, right in the middle of the subdivision? Racketball courts, a swimming pool, a weight room. He figures they'll have the neighborhood association run the thing. (*VEEANN comes back in.*) Everything okay?

VEEANN: He wanted his pillow adjusted. Dozed right back off again.

GEORGE: Can I help?

VEEANN: No.

GEORGE: I know it gets to you.

VEEANN: It's all right, George. (*Changing the subject.*) You know, a health club, it's not a bad idea.

GEORGE: With the country club six miles down the road? A "y" twenty minutes away in the city? I mean, that's from his advertising, he's talking about nearby facilities in his brochure. But he's one of those skinny jogger types; you can't talk to him. Everything health and fitness.

VEEANN: Well, I know how much this development means to you.

GEORGE: It's a nice coup for us. I may have to hire a new draftsman just to handle some of the routine work. (*VEEANN crosses to the kitchen and begins putting the last touches on a plate of hors d'oeuvres.*) Didn't you think it was strange, what Dad said tonight?

VEEANN: George, there's nothing wrong with his mind. Caroline hasn't been to visit in six months, and Franklin in three. Michael hasn't come down for weeks. No one's even called since his birthday. You tell him they're all coming to visit the same weekend, he has to know something's up.

GEORGE: I suppose you're right.

VEEANN: His children are coming to decide what to do about him.

GEORGE: I know. And he's right. That's what makes it worse.

What're those?

VEEANN: A few hors d'oeuvres.

GEORGE: What are those things on top?

VEEANN: What, these? Crab. And see, I've also got some shrimp, some with paté.

GEORGE: Thanks. (*She brings the tray over to him.*) Okay, the Medicare requirements, last physician's statement, cost of in-home nursing. Looks like everything.

VEEANN: Did you get both doctors? You know Caroline.

GEORGE: Just Hamilton. She'll just want the neurologist.

VEEANN: (*Looking at his list.*) You've only listed the nursing homes.

- Didn't we get that price list?
- GEORGE: It's just one option. I didn't want it to look too specific.
- VEEANN: Too specific?
- GEORGE: Like we'd already decided. Nursing home. It's a frightening word.
- VEEANN: It is.
- GEORGE: "A warehouse where you wait to die." That's what Caroline called it last time.
- VEEANN: I remember.
- GEORGE: It's more a choice. Just another option that they need to be aware of.
- VEEANN: Yes.
- GEORGE: I plan to bring it up, Veeann.
- VEEANN: Don't you think they need enough information to evaluate that choice?
- GEORGE: I've got the price list here, if anyone wants to see it. (*Changing the subject.*) Have you decided where everybody's going to sleep?
- VEEANN: I figured I'd put Caroline in Frannie's old room. When's she getting in?
- GEORGE: Her flight comes in tonight. I offered to pick her up, but she said she'd rent a car.
- VEEANN: Really?
- GEORGE: That's Caroline.
- VEEANN: Michael in Tommy's room and Franklin on the hideabed in my sewing room. Chuck and Lynn are coming with Michael; we'll put them in Lynn's old room.
- GEORGE: I'm still worried about Lynn being here.
- VEEANN: I wanted to see her. Since Michael and Chuck were coming anyway, I thought I'd grab a chance to visit with my daughter.
- GEORGE: Sure. Still, a family council with only one of the grandchildren invited. You know how easily Caroline feels slighted.
- VEEANN: George, that's silly. She could hardly bring Trevor and Philippa from California for this. The next thing you'll be saying is that Caroline might resent my presence at the meeting.
- GEORGE: She might.
- VEEANN: Well, let her resent it. I'm the person most directly affected by this decision; naturally I expect to be part of it.
- GEORGE: I'm just saying . . .
- VEEANN: Caroline may be the youngest, George, but you let her bully you all the same, all of you do.
- GEORGE: Who's watching Lynn's kids?
- VEEANN: She said she was going to leave them with Ruth.
- GEORGE: Ruth. Her and Michael's seven and now Lynn's four. And probably a half dozen neighborhood kids, all in that three-bedroom, one bath.
- VEEANN: And not much of a yard.
- GEORGE: The woman's a saint.
- VEEANN: Well, I don't like to impose on her. But as much as I would love to see my grandchildren, this is an adult gathering. Besides, I want to talk with Lynn.
- GEORGE: About her and Chuck?
- VEEANN: Woman talk, George.
- GEORGE (*uncomfortably*): Well, she's not going to be the only grandchild, as it happens.
- VEEANN: Oh? (*A light dawns.*) Oh no.
- GEORGE: Yes. Franklin told me he is bringing Robyn.
- VEEANN: That's just impossible, George. You didn't say yes?
- GEORGE: I didn't know what to say. Franklin . . . (*He gestures helplessly.*)
- VEEANN: I know. Franklin.
- GEORGE: I told him we didn't have much extra bed space.
- VEEANN: You can't be subtle with Franklin, George. It's like your father's story about the mule and the two-by-four. You have to get his attention first.
- GEORGE: He said he would bring a sleeping bag for her.
- VEEANN: That's not the point, George. What are we going to do with her while we're meeting? You can't expect Lynn to entertain her.
- GEORGE: No, no.
- VEEANN: Well?
- GEORGE: I believe she knows some people here in town.
- VEEANN: Well, of course she does. She'll ring up the local chapter of Teenagers from Hell. Don't you remember last summer?
- GEORGE: The one with the nose ring?
- VEEANN: And the spiked hair? And the eyeshadow? And the music. What was it she was trying to make us listen to? Something about Ted Kennedy?
- GEORGE: I thought it was Dead Kennedy. The Dead Kennedys? Can that be right?
- VEEANN: Honestly, George, this is impossible.
- GEORGE: We could move the VCR up to the bedroom, and let her rent some movies.
- VEEANN: Do you trust Robyn's taste in movies?
- GEORGE: Honey, she's harmless enough. We'll send out for pizza, she'll probably think it's a real treat.
- VEEANN: I shudder to think of what Robyn would consider "a real treat." (*Lights pull into the driveway.*) Well, it looks like somebody's here.
- GEORGE (*crossing to the window*): It looks like Michael's car. You ready?
- VEEANN: (*Nods.*) Ready. (*Crosses to the front door. Opens it.*) Lynn!
- LYNN: Mom! (*Enters, hugs her. A quiet, worn looking, self-possessed young woman, in her late twenties to early thirties. Turns to GEORGE, another hug.*) Dad!
- GEORGE: Lynn, you look great.
- LYNN: Actually, I'm beat. I had pack meeting until late last night, and got home in time to help round up cattle. Another fence down.
- VEEANN: It sounds like a weekend away from it all is just what you need.
- GEORGE: How are the kids?
- LYNN: Great, you know, the usual.
- VEEANN: How's Justin dealing with first grade?
- LYNN: You know, the first day of class, he was all clingy and teary. "I don't want to go, Mommy," all the way to the school. We walked in the classroom, and the first thing he saw was the bookcase full of books. All his favorites, Dr. Seuss, Berenstain Bears, Mercer Mayer, Bill Peet. Then it was, like, "Later, Mom," like I didn't even exist. I cried all the way home.
- GEORGE: Where's your suitcase?
- LYNN: Actually, Chuck could use a hand with it. He was breaking a colt and hurt his shoulder.
- GEORGE: I'll see if I can help. (*Exits.*)
- VEEANN: I'm so glad you were able to get away.
- LYNN: Well, Ruth is just a saint. I'm going to pay her back one of these days, if I have to kidnap her and Michael and drive them to the movies myself.
- VEEANN: Every time you come down, I'm just amazed. You look like such a rancher.
- LYNN: Well, I am a rancher.

VEEANN: And it's going all right?

LYNN (*steadily*): Everything's just great.

VEEANN: Are you sure?

LYNN: Mom, the kids love the ranch. Melissa and Justin are horse crazy. Chuck says he'll buy Melissa a pony for her baptism, if she can show him she knows how to take care of it. You should see her with old Muffin.

VEEANN: And Chuck?

LYNN: Chuck loves the ranch, too. (*Changing the subject.*) How about you and Dad? Hasn't he been working on some new development?

VEEANN: Oh, you know your father. It's the biggest project the firm has ever taken on, and he's always griping about the builder, or the site, or the specs, but you know he's really pleased.

(*The door opens, and GEORGE enters with a suitcase. Following him are CHUCK and MICHAEL. CHUCK is LYNN's husband, good looking in a blue collar sort of way, sullen. Right now, he's wearing his arm in a sling. MICHAEL is the youngest Mortenson sibling. Smaller than GEORGE, intense. A decent man, but pushed beyond his limits.*)

GEORGE: . . . endless problems. We've sprayed and sprayed. Maybe the frost will kill them, start again in the spring. Vee, look who's here.

MICHAEL: Vee, good to see you again.

VEEANN: Good to see you, Michael.

CHUCK: Mom Mortenson.

VEEANN: Chuck, my goodness. What did you do?

CHUCK: Colt bucked me.

VEEANN: That's what Lynn said.

GEORGE: I like the hat. You look more like John Wayne everytime we see you.

LYNN: That's my husband. The Duke.

MICHAEL (*abruptly*): Is Dad up?

VEEANN: Actually, he dozed off watching *Wheel of Fortune*. He'll be up soon.

GEORGE: Well, Lynn, you're in your old room. Let me take this up for you.

VEEANN: I'll get you your linens. (VEEANN, GEORGE and LYNN head upstairs.) So, how's little David doing with the potty training?

LYNN: Well, he seems to have pee pee down pretty well. Poo poo is another matter.

(LYNN and VEEANN exit.)

MICHAEL: Nice touch.

CHUCK: Whaddya mean?

MICHAEL: Bringing your wife along. Good move.

CHUCK: They're her parents.

MICHAEL: We've got too much at stake here, Chuck. I was planning to use the drive down to work out our approach.

CHUCK: Our approach, right.

MICHAEL: You're still in, aren't you?

CHUCK: Maybe.

MICHAEL: Chuck, we've talked this over. This is a sure thing.

CHUCK: Yeah. Like the last sure thing.

MICHAEL: That hasn't fallen through yet.

CHUCK: I may be a goat roper, Michael, I'm not an idiot. Attorney General's office is investigating? And the FBI?

MICHAEL: Nothing's been proven. I got a check, you got a check.

CHUCK: Seed money, Michael. They suckered us.

MICHAEL: Well, don't talk to me. No one was twisting your arm.

CHUCK: And now you got a new scheme, another sure fire thing.

We're all gonna get rich, start using twenty dollar bills for toilet paper.

MICHAEL: Has anyone asked you for money?

CHUCK: Not this time. Not yet.

MICHAEL: This time, it's real, Chuck.

CHUCK: Uh huh.

MICHAEL: You've talked to Jay Bell, you talked to Forsman.

CHUCK: I talked to the guys from Mountain Security, too.

MICHAEL: But this time you've seen the documentation. They have the financing. They'll get the zoning. That's what I'm saying, it's real this time, Chuck.

CHUCK: I heard the sales pitch, Michael.

MICHAEL: And you bought in.

CHUCK: Hey, I got you your information, didn't I? You didn't even know if he owned that one tract. I'm the one you got to sneak into my wife's parent's house middle of the night. I'm in.

MICHAEL: Good.

CHUCK: For now.

MICHAEL: Fine. (*Pause.*) You know, I hate this, don't you?

CHUCK: What?

MICHAEL: This whole thing. The deception.

CHUCK: Me, too.

MICHAEL: It borders on dishonesty.

CHUCK: Borders, yeah.

MICHAEL: I mean, I'm prepared to come clean. Tell them everything. But I need the money.

CHUCK: Me, too.

MICHAEL: And who knows. The rest of the land may be worth even more.

CHUCK: So how do we handle this?

VEEANN (*coming down the stairs*): Michael! There you are! I thought you were right behind us.

MICHAEL: Sorry, Vee.

VEEANN: I'm putting you in Tommy's old room.

MICHAEL: How is Tommy?

VEEANN: He called a couple of weeks ago. Says he loves Corvallis.

(*Ring at the door. Heads for the door.*) We haven't heard from him since, which must mean his money's holding out. (*Opens the door.*) Caroline! (*Shouts up the stairs.*) George! It's Caroline.

CAROLINE (*A professional woman, younger than the others, opinionated, outspoken, a bit disorganized, but basically well-meaning. Kind enough, when not crossed.*): Hello, Vee. Michael, Chuck. (*They all ad lib greetings.*)

MICHAEL: Caroline. How's California?

CAROLINE: Full of oranges. How on earth do you people find your way out of that airport? I think I took the same exit ramp three times.

VEEANN: You look tired. Can I get you something? Diet coke?

CAROLINE: Fine. Really though, 80, 15, 215, this exit, that, I didn't know where I was. And the rental car map was no use at all. As for the drivers in this state, well! Like it's some kind of crime to let you merge in front of them. I never want to hear another word about California drivers as long as I live.

MICHAEL: We'd have been happy to pick you up.

CAROLINE: I like having my own wheels.

GEORGE (*Coming down the stairs.*): Caroline! How's my kid sister?

CAROLINE: George, you've put on weight again. I know you have that stair climber, I bet you haven't used it in a month.

GEORGE: And you're still smoking, aren't you?

CAROLINE: Not this weekend. I've got this nicoderm patch thing I'm trying. Michael, you're getting fat, too.

MICHAEL: Maybe a bit of a paunch.

CAROLINE: So, how's Dad?

- VEEANN: He's sleeping right now.
- CAROLINE: Good. What's the latest from that quack Hamilton?
- GEORGE: I'll give the whole report when Franklin gets here.
- CAROLINE: Did you get me those test results?
- GEORGE: They wouldn't let me have all his charts, but I got most of what you asked for.
- CAROLINE: We're meeting tonight, I hope. I really can't stay past Sunday. It was hard enough getting away for a weekend.
- MICHAEL: Dad said you had brought in a new partner.
- CAROLINE: I did. Obnoxious little twerp named Shahrami. Akeem Shahrami. The nurses all call him Dr. I'm-so-wonderful behind his back. He overheard them and thought it was a compliment.
- VEEANN: Is he a good doctor?
- CAROLINE: I wish he was half as good as he thinks he is. An office politician like you wouldn't believe. I've got to get back and make sure he hasn't stolen half my patients.
- GEORGE: Can I bring in your suitcase?
- CAROLINE: You certainly can. (*Hands him car keys.*) I've got a compact and an overcoat in the front seat, too.
- MICHAEL: I'll give you a hand. (*GEORGE and MICHAEL exit out the front door.*)
- CAROLINE: Where are you putting me, Veeann? In Frannie's old room, as usual?
- VEEANN: If you don't mind the Bon Jovi poster. I had to promise not to take it down.
- CAROLINE: Isn't she about finished?
- VEEANN: One more year. Unless . . . (*crosses her fingers.*)
- CAROLINE: No. Not that geek from Fresno?
- VEEANN: Randy Tanner. And he's a very nice young man. Engineering student.
- CAROLINE: Just what the world needs. Lose a terrific young journalist, gain another lousy housewife. (*To VEEANN.*) No offense.
- VEEANN (*a bit stiffly*): None taken. Anyway, we keep waiting to hear, but no announcement yet. (*MICHAEL and GEORGE carry in baggage.*) George, those go . . .
- GEORGE: I know. Upstairs, Michael. (*He and MICHAEL head upstairs.*)
- LYNN: Actually, Frannie was saying that she thought she'd go on a mission.
- CAROLINE: Another waste.
- VEEANN: Frannie?
- LYNN: We talked on the phone last week.
- VEEANN: She hasn't said a word to me or your father.
- LYNN: She hadn't made up her mind. But I don't think she's planning to marry anytime soon.
- CAROLINE: Good for her. Never a good idea to marry too young.
- LYNN: I was married at twenty.
- CAROLINE: I was nineteen, I speak from experience, kiddo. In love for the first time at twelve, sexually active at fourteen, pregnant at eighteen, and divorced by my twentieth birthday. All because of this ridiculous notion that attracting some man is the be-all and end-all of a woman's existence. Took me two disastrous marriages to knock all that nonsense out of me once and for all.
- VEEANN: In the meantime, you have two terrific kids to show for it.
- CAROLINE: Neither of whom will ever marry, if I have anything to say about it.
- LYNN: Mom, what was it Phillippa wanted for Christmas? Something for her Barbie, I remember. Bridal accessories?
- CAROLINE: Don't you dare! (*General laughter.*) She gets enough gender stereotyping from her stepfather. Let's see, that leaves Alicia. She's still in Idaho?
- VEEANN: That's right. Steve's still in residency.
- CAROLINE: Well, orthodontia is where the bucks are. (*The doorbell rings, as MICHAEL and GEORGE come down the stairs.*) I bet that's Franklin!
- VEEANN: I'll get the door, George. (*She opens the door.*) Franklin! Good to see you! (*Others ad lib greetings. FRANKLIN enters. Kisses her awkwardly. Awkward is the word for FRANKLIN.*)
- FRANKLIN: Hello, Vee. I'm glad you could put us up. (*Nods.*) Michael, Chuck.
- MICHAEL: Franklin, good to see you. (*ROBYN pushes her way into the room. She's wearing a Walkman. Without a word, she slouches over toward the couch.*)
- FRANKLIN: Robyn, could you . . . uh . . . (*Crosses to her, gestures and speaks loudly.*) Could you say hello to your Aunt Vee?
- ROBYN: When this song's over. (*FRANKLIN stands over her ineffectually.*)
- GEORGE: Franklin. Glad you could come.
- FRANKLIN: George, good to see you.
- LYNN: Uncle Franklin.
- FRANKLIN: Lynn. (*They embrace.*) How's life on the ranch?
- LYNN: (*Crossing to CHUCK.*) Pretty overwhelming at times. But the kids absolutely love it.
- GEORGE: Well, of course they do. It's a great place for kids. Horses, livestock, climbing trees. Remember the fun we had sailing pea pods down the irrigation ditch?
- MICHAEL: And chasing jackrabbits on horseback.
- CAROLINE: I'm glad the guys are all feeling so nostalgic. Chores, that's all I remember.
- FRANKLIN: We did chores, Caroline.
- CAROLINE: Sure, the same chores I did, divided three ways. By the time I came along, you were gone. (*Uproar, as they all top each other.*)
- GEORGE: He spoiled you rotten, Caroline!
- MICHAEL: You never mucked out the stables. Right?
- FRANKLIN: Or the goats. I had the goats. That's what I remember.
- MICHAEL: Currying the mare, you remember that one . . .
- CAROLINE: I did just as many chores. (*Talking over them.*)
- FRANKLIN: Did you have to replace fencing? I remember the barbed wire . . .
- MICHAEL: How about replacing windmill bands, did you ever . . .
- GEORGE: Or branding . . .
- ROBYN (*snatching out her earphones*): Do you mind! (*She glares at them, and they all stare at her. She returns to her music.*)
- VEEANN: Well look. It's seven-thirty. Let's get everyone settled, and then we all can get an early start on things. Franklin, I'm putting you on the hideabed in my sewing room upstairs.
- FRANKLIN: That'll be fine.
- VEEANN: I wish I'd known Robyn was coming, too, I'd have made arrangements. Do you think she'll be comfortable on the sofa down here?
- ROBYN (*Emerges from the Walkman.*): Dad will be fine on the sofa. I'm taking the hideabed.
- VEEANN (*under her breath*): Honestly.
- FRANKLIN: Robyn, I think your Aunt Vee . . .
- ROBYN: Dad, the hideabed mattress is too soft for your back. Besides, you're all going to meet in here. You'll want me out of the way.
- VEEANN (*at a loss*): Well, perhaps . . .
- GEORGE: We were thinking we could move the VCR to the T.V. upstairs in our bedroom. Maybe we could order in pizza, you

- could rent a movie.
- LYNN: That sounds fun. Robyn, maybe we can find *The Court Jester*? I'm sure you'd enjoy that, it's an old family favorite.
- ROBYN: I'm meeting some guys I met last time. Don't know when I'll be back.
- GEORGE: Curfew in this house is twelve o'clock, Robyn.
- ROBYN: Oh, that'll be okay, George.
- VEEANN: *Uncle Geor . . .*
- ROBYN: Dad will be downstairs, he can just let me in. Dad, I need some money.
- FRANKLIN: Oh. Very well. I suppose I could front you a little . . .
- ROBYN: You got fifty from the Redi-cash. That'll do.
- FRANKLIN: (*Reaches for his wallet.*) I had actually hoped to have a reserve . . .
- ROBYN: (*Takes his wallet, removes the money.*) Thanks. Anyone give me a ride downtown? (*They all stare at her, dismayed. She shrugs.*) Or I could just hitch.
- CHUCK: I'll drop you off. If your Uncle Michael will lend me his keys.
- ROBYN: Don't put yourself out, Cousin Charles.
- CHUCK: Chuck. And I'm not your cousin.
- ROBYN: Cousin-in-law, then.
- MICHAEL (*handing CHUCK keys and a credit card*): Here. My Shell card. Fill it up while you're out.
- CHUCK: Be back soon. (*CHUCK and ROBYN exit.*)
- CAROLINE: Well!
- FRANKLIN: (*A chuckle that doesn't quite work.*) High spirited teenagers. She . . . can be quite a . . . quite a handful. (*They all murmur ad libbed agreement.*)
- LYNN: She's really quite attractive. It's a look all her own, of course. (*They again murmur ad libbed agreement.*)
- FRANKLIN: Well, I'll just unpack Robyn's things. In the sewing room upstairs?
- VEEANN: That's right, Franklin. Top of the stairs, second right. (*He takes a suitcase up. They watch until he's gone.*)
- CAROLINE: Well, if you ask me, that situation's gone from bad to worse.
- LYNN: Poor Uncle Franklin.
- GEORGE: Since Vickie's death, he's really had it tough.
- CAROLINE: Well, it's high time he pulled out of it. All right, Vickie's gone and we all miss her. But it's been nearly four years, and in the meantime, he's got a daughter to raise.
- GEORGE: Caroline! Keep your voice down.
- CAROLINE: I'll say it to his face if you want. I'm sorry, he's my brother, but Robyn's problems are his fault.
- LYNN: Sometimes I think that way, too, Aunt Caroline. But I see a lot of both of them, and I don't know. She's just a teenager. Maybe a little more rebellious than some.
- GEORGE: Rebellious? You saw what happened. I tried to set a curfew and you saw how far that went.
- CAROLINE: I keep telling you, it's the parenting. Poor kid never had a chance.
- MICHAEL: Well, I'm not sure that's any of our business.
- VEEANN: I agree. Meantime, Lynn, maybe this weekend, the two of us can watch *The Court Jester*. It may be a bit tame for the younger generation, but I think it still holds up.
- LYNN: I always thought I was the younger generation. Not anymore.
- CAROLINE: Well, Vee, your Frannie's not a lot older than Robyn, and she is nowhere near as awful. It's not the age.
- GEORGE: Lynn, honey, do you want me to move the VCR anyway?
- You could still sit upstairs and watch something.
- LYNN: I think I'll just sack out. Four kids on a ranch and you start to think that a decent night's sleep is the biggest luxury life has to offer. Goodnight all. (*They all ad-lib goodbyes as she climbs the stairs.*)
- CAROLINE: Well, I don't know about you, but I think Lynn . . .
- VEEANN: Caroline, don't.
- CAROLINE: Don't? Don't what?
- VEEANN: As soon as someone leaves a room, Caroline, you have to make your pronouncement.
- CAROLINE: I don't.
- VEEANN: You do. You're welcome to talk about Franklin to your heart's content, but leave Lynn alone.
- CAROLINE: Vee . . .
- VEEANN: I mean it, Caroline.
- CAROLINE: I was just going to say how terrific she is.
- VEEANN: Yes, and then the kicker. "Considering her situation." Considering the ranch and the children and the marriage. Don't.
- CAROLINE (*a little hurt*): I don't know what you're talking about. I don't make those kinds of judgments about people. Do I, Michael?
- MICHAEL: All the time, Caroline. Vee's right.
- CAROLINE: Hmmph. (*FRANKLIN comes down the stairs, carrying a largish paper sack.*) Well, I certainly don't mean anything by it. I've always thought the world of Lynn.
- VEEANN: We know. Hors d'oeuvres, anyone?
- MICHAEL: Thanks, Vee, I'd love some.
- CAROLINE: Well, I shouldn't. (*Helps herself from the tray.*)
- GEORGE: It looks like we're all here. Shall we begin, or should we wait for Chuck?
- MICHAEL: Chuck can fill us in on the ranch situation later. I say we start with Dad.
- CAROLINE: I agree. No time to waste.
- FRANKLIN: Just a moment. (*He pulls several items out of a paper sack.*) We had a sale at the pharmacy on stationary supplies. I thought we could use a little something to take notes. (*Slowly and tediously begins handing around legal pads.*) One for Michael, one for George, one for Caroline, one for me. I assume you don't mind sharing with your husband, Vee?
- VEEANN: Fine.
- FRANKLIN: Spiral notebooks, with pockets for handouts. (*Demonstrates.*) See? One for each of us. Michael, George, Caroline, Me. (*CAROLINE lets out an intentionally audible sigh.*) Multicolored pens. I thought we might wish to makes notes in different colors as we deal with various aspects . . . you know. (*Demonstrates.*) See? Red, blue, black, and green. It's really a handy item. One for Michael . . .
- CAROLINE: (*Explodes.*) Franklin!
- FRANKLIN: Yes, Caroline?
- CAROLINE: I've seen colored pens before. I had one in fourth grade. Are you quite finished?
- FRANKLIN (*hurt*): I'm simply trying to help, Caroline.
- CAROLINE: Thank you. I'm sure the supplies will come in handy. Now sit down. George? You have the floor. (*They all sit, look expectantly at GEORGE.*)
- GEORGE (*a bit taken aback*): Let's see. (*Fumbles through his notes.*) First of all, let me say how grateful Veeann and I are that you were able to come tonight. We have some difficult things to talk about. Let's remember that we're a family, that we love each other, that we're all just trying to figure out the right thing to do.

CAROLINE: Hear hear!

GEORGE: Three years ago, when Dad had his fall, we had that meeting up at Michael's place, and decided that Dad just wasn't up to running the ranch any longer. After some persuading, Dad agreed to come here, with Veeann and me. Seemed like the best choice at the time. Then last year, Dad had that incident with his car. The fourth in five years. We met again, we paid Mr. Meserve for the damage done to his shop. We decided together that Dad shouldn't drive any more. Again, it wasn't easy, but what I'm saying is that when we've had tough choices to make, we've gotten together, we've talked about it, we've made a decision. When we talk to Dad together, as a family, united, he's always been reasonable.

MICHAEL: And now it's that time again?

VEEANN: Yes.

CAROLINE: Why? What's changed?

VEEANN: His condition has substantially deteriorated.

FRANKLIN: In what way?

GEORGE: He can't walk. He can't even stand. His legs are too weak to support his body.

MICHAEL: George, your letters have suggested things are getting worse. But then we talk to Dad and he says things are fine.

VEEANN: It's embarrassing to him. He's so weak, sitting on the edge of the bed, he can't lift his legs enough to pull on his trousers. He has just enough arm strength to help us a little getting himself in and out of his wheelchair. That's all. The fact is, I simply can't give him the kind of help he needs anymore. I just can't. That's why we're asking, George and I, for you to get together like this.

GEORGE: You really must believe us. He's gotten much worse. (A pause, as they consider this.)

CAROLINE: What's wrong with him? Official diagnosis.

GEORGE: You remember that Doctor Hamilton thought at first that it might be amyotrophic lateral sclerosis . . .

CAROLINE: Amyotrophic lateral sclerosis.

GEORGE: Right—Lou Gehrig's disease. You had your doubts about that, Caroline, and Dr. Hamilton has come around to the same view. He now thinks it's some kind of nerve damage, caused by Dad's diabetes. A couple of weeks ago, he gave us a fairly definitive prognosis. He feels the process is irreversible.

CAROLINE: Do you have his tests?

GEORGE (handing her a file folder): We've done X-rays, an MRI, and ultrasound. We take Dad to physical therapy four times a week. So far, nothing's helped. I should say immediately that Dad is not in any physical pain, nor is he paralyzed. He's just . . . weak. Dr. Hamilton thinks . . . well, he thinks nothing will ever make him strong again.

FRANKLIN: So it's worse than what he's been telling us.

GEORGE: He can't walk, even with braces and a walker. You should see his legs. No muscle tone at all.

MICHAEL: Caroline, you're the doctor. What are you reading?

CAROLINE (a little testy): The same thing George just said.

MICHAEL: Will you examine him yourself? No offense, George, but we don't know this Dr. Hamilton.

CAROLINE: I'm a pediatrician, not a neurologist, but I can read a chart. Dad has severe neural atrophy, probably caused by diabetes. He'll never walk again.

MICHAEL: All the same, Caroline, I would be more comfortable if you would look at him yourself.

CAROLINE: Do it yourself, Michael. He'll be awake tomorrow. Ask him to walk across the room.

FRANKLIN: What does this mean in terms of Dad's overall health?

CAROLINE: The diabetes is under control. Otherwise, he's in pretty good shape.

GEORGE: That was what Dr. Hamilton said. He could live another twenty years.

FRANKLIN: That would make him a hundred and five.

CAROLINE: How long did Grandpa Mortenson last? Wasn't he ninety-seven? Dad's lived an active, outdoors life. No tobacco . . .

MICHAEL: He chewed.

CAROLINE: But not for years. He didn't smoke. He was a light to moderate drinker, an occasional beer. His weight, his blood pressure, his heart are all good. Diabetes can be scary at his age, but right now, he's fine.

MICHAEL: That's a blessing.

FRANKLIN: I know I've said this before, and I know Caroline's feelings, but I'm going to say it again. I wonder if chiropractic . . .

CAROLINE: Oh, nonsense.

FRANKLIN: Caroline, hear me out. I've seen some miraculous things done with adjustments. I had four serious subluxations myself.

CAROLINE: Subluxations balderdash.

FRANKLIN: I had constant pain in my achilles tendons, I limped, I was irregular . . .

CAROLINE: Anal retentive, you mean.

FRANKLIN (resolutely ignoring her): Chiropractic cured me. After a year of treatment, I have never enjoyed better health. It could do the same for Dad.

CAROLINE (without looking up from her reading): You limped because you spent forty hours a week on your feet in bad shoes. You were irregular because you and Robyn lived on macaroni and jello salad.

FRANKLIN (stubbornly talking under her next speech): I know how I felt then, and I know how I feel now. Say what you want to, Caroline, but I know what it did for me.

CAROLINE: Chiropractors give back rubs. Back rubs feel good. Add a bunch of pseudo-scientific mumbo jumbo to the fact that most back pain is psychosomatic anyway, and you get a lot of people who think they've been cured, and a lot of really rich chiropractors. Chiropractic did nothing for you, Franklin, but empty your bank account. You got better because you bought new shoes and started eating sensibly.

FRANKLIN: We know your professional prejudices, Caroline. I'll say it again. I know how I felt and I know how I feel now. George, I'm just asking. Has Dad seen a chiropractor?

GEORGE: Yes.

CAROLINE: I don't see that in here.

GEORGE: Dr. Hamilton shares your views on the subject.

FRANKLIN: Did Dad have an adjustment?

VEEANN: No, Franklin, he didn't. I took him and I talked to the chiropractor myself. He was very nice, but he said there was nothing he could do. The nerve damage is just too extensive.

FRANKLIN: Well, thank you, Vee, for trying. Laugh if you wish to, Caroline, but it worked for me.

CAROLINE: It didn't.

FRANKLIN: It did.

MICHAEL: All right, George. Dad can't walk at all. It's permanent and its irreversible.

GEORGE: Exactly.

MICHAEL: So how does this change things?

VEEANN: I think that's obvious.

MICHAEL: I don't. I mean, when Dad moved in with you, it was because he could no longer care for himself. Now you're telling us, he can no longer care for himself? How is this different?

CAROLINE: I think Michael makes a good point.

VEEANN: Michael, it's totally different.

FRANKLIN: I don't see that.

MICHAEL: You'll need some extra help, of course. For some of the heavy lifting.

CAROLINE: There's something they use in hospitals, it's called a Hoyer lift. I bet it could be adapted for use here. It's terrific. Get him from the wheelchair to the bed, pick him up anywhere. I can get it from one of the medical supply houses.

MICHAEL: That sounds good, too.

FRANKLIN: We could all pitch in.

MICHAEL: Maybe we should consider hiring a nurse. Part time.

FRANKLIN: And I'll bet there are classes you can take. At the hospital?

VEEANN: I'd better say it, George, this is no time to beat around the bush. The simple fact is, we are, no, I am no longer willing to keep your father.

MICHAEL: What do you mean?

VEEANN: I am asking you to find another home for him.

CAROLINE: Veeann, you and George are the only workable option.

VEEANN: Not any longer.

FRANKLIN: But we all agreed.

VEEANN: You'll have to agree on something else.

FRANKLIN: He's just a little more dependent, a little more in need.

MICHAEL: We'll get you help.

CAROLINE: I think the idea of a part-time nurse is a good one, Michael.

MICHAEL: There are two nurses in our ward, for example, they have families, don't want to work full-time, but would love a little extra cash.

CAROLINE: That's just what I was saying. If we get you this Hoyer lift, you can hook it up and lift him from his wheelchair to bed, swing him into a car, lower him onto a toilet. . . .

VEEANN: I'm sure it's a miraculous invention, Caroline. But it's not just a matter of lifting. I don't want better equipment; I don't want a part-time nurse.

CAROLINE: What exactly is the problem, Vee?

VEEANN: I'm home with him alone nine hours a day. I care for him twenty-four hours. Ten times an hour, when he's awake, that buzzer goes off, he wants a drink of water, fix his T.V. The buzzer runs my life. I hear it in my sleep; I dream about it. And when it doesn't go off, I worry even more.

GEORGE: He's incontinent.

CAROLINE (*referring to the charts*): I don't see that in here.

VEEANN: Well, not really. But he wants to try to go by himself, he can't stand or lift himself, and so there's a mess. He gets constipated, and then he takes laxatives, so that when he goes, it's sudden and violent, and then he can't move quickly enough to get to the toilet. And he won't let George clean him up anymore.

FRANKLIN: What about his diabetes?

VEEANN: That's another job. Three times a day, I have to give him insulin. And it has to be me, always me. He won't let George touch him. Caroline, it's not the lifting. It's the way he expects me to keep him company. I know he gets lonely, just him, alone, with the T.V. He wants to talk, and I try. But all he knows is ranching, which I don't know at all. And the Church, that's out completely, the single most important part of my life. Caroline, I can't do anything, I can't start anything, I'm totally trapped here. That's why I called you here tonight.

CAROLINE: A lot of that could be made easier.

VEEANN: I don't doubt it. I'm sure that medical technology can do wonderful things. But no. The answer is no.

MICHAEL: So you're asking for help.

VEEANN: No, Michael. You must find somewhere else for your father to stay. He is no longer welcome in my home.

(*A long pause as they consider this.*)

FRANKLIN: No longer welcome. George, you're saying your own father is no longer welcome.

GEORGE: I wouldn't have put it that strongly perhaps. But yes. Veeann is pretty adamant.

CAROLINE: But where else is there?

VEEANN: That's what you need to decide.

FRANKLIN: You're talking about a nursing home.

VEEANN: I'm not. Not specifically. I do think it's an option you should consider.

MICHAEL: You know, there are a number of issues involved here, some short term, and some long term. And whatever we decide, there are going to be finances to worry about.

FRANKLIN: What do you mean?

MICHAEL: I've been thinking quite a bit about Dad's situation lately, and I think it's time we talk about his estate. Does Dad have a will, for example?

CAROLINE: Michael, that isn't the point. The fact is, Vee's talking about a nursing home, and I won't have it.

MICHAEL: Caroline, Dad's life was his property, and we could lose nearly all of it if he dies intestate. We can't avoid unpleasant truths.

CAROLINE: Which is precisely what you're doing. George, level with us. How serious are you about this?

GEORGE: We have in fact checked out three local establishments. I have some literature . . .

CAROLINE: I don't want to see it.

VEEANN: Caroline, I don't think you ought to close the door on any reasonable alternative.

CAROLINE: My father will not go into a nursing home.

MICHAEL: I'm with you on that, Caroline. We also have to consider . . .

CAROLINE: Horrible places, warehouses for people waiting to die.

FRANKLIN: I agree.

VEEANN: They're not all like that.

CAROLINE: They are. I will not allow it.

GEORGE: Caroline, Vee and I saw two very nice ones. I wish you'd at least consider . . .

CAROLINE: They keep a reception area nicely painted. They also make sure you come when the three competent nurses are on duty. I'm sorry they took you in, George, but this is my profession, and I tell you, it's all a facade. No, I'm sorry but that is not a choice.

GEORGE: He's my father, too.

MICHAEL: Well, I'm sorry, George, but you're outvoted. Now, on to other matters . . .

VEEANN: Look, can't you just keep an open mind? George and I saw one local home, Shady Pines, it's very nice. It's especially for physically disabled patients. They have lots of activities. They have a high ratio of nurses aides to patients, four, five to one . . .

CAROLINE: Unqualified high school dropouts paid minimum wage, full staff turnover every three months. Doctors who can't get into a decent practice.

VEEANN: You haven't even seen it, Caroline.

CAROLINE: I don't need to. Veeann, you do what you have to, but my father will not go into a nursing home.

VEEANN: Caroline, will you at least . . .

CAROLINE: This is a family council, Veeann. You've said your piece.

VEEANN: But we haven't decided anything.

CAROLINE: No. We haven't. As you pointed out, we have a decision to make. I hope you'll understand when we ask you to step into the other room while we make it.

VEEANN: This is my house. You can't order me out of my living room!

CAROLINE: Then this meeting is over. If I can use your phone, George, I thought I saw a hotel on the way into town.

GEORGE: Caroline!

CAROLINE: Franklin, Michael. Shall I reserve one room or two?

GEORGE: Caroline, Michael, please . . .

VEEANN: George, if they want to go, I certainly wouldn't dream of standing in their . . . *(The door starts to open, they all quit talking. The door opens, CHUCK enters.)* Chuck!

CHUCK: Filled your car up, Michael. *(Hands him the credit card.)*

MICHAEL: Thanks, Chuck.

CHUCK: What did I miss?

CAROLINE: Oh, nothing. *(The others all ad lib assent.)*

VEEANN: So how did you get along with Robyn?

CHUCK: Fine.

FRANKLIN: Where did you drop her off?

CHUCK: Some guy's house. It looked okay.

FRANKLIN: Good.

VEEANN: Did you catch his name?

CHUCK: Tom something. It was just a big party, lots of kids.

VEEANN: Did you see any parents?

CHUCK: I wouldn't have dropped her off if I didn't think it was okay.

CAROLINE: Did she say how she was planning to get home?

CHUCK: She said she'll catch a ride.

GEORGE: Chuck, I hope you don't mind, we went ahead and started without you. Right now, we're discussing Dad.

CHUCK: Time for the old folks home, huh?

CAROLINE: Absolutely not.

FRANKLIN: Out of the question.

MICHAEL: No, we'll figure something else out.

CHUCK: Like what?

FRANKLIN: We'll think of something.

MICHAEL: *(Cuing CHUCK.)* Maybe he could go back to the ranch. *(CHUCK laughs.)*

CHUCK: Ain't nobody gonna live on that ranch much longer. Unless we get some cash and quick.

MICHAEL: How much money do you need?

CHUCK: Thirty thousand dollars, maybe more. A new tractor, new windmill, a new floor for the stalls, couple thousand feet of new fencing. Thirty thou minimum, and even then, I doubt it'd be worth it. *(The buzzer sounds.)*

CAROLINE: Dad's awake.

VEEANN: I thought he wouldn't sleep long. I'll get him.

MICHAEL: I'll come with you.

VEEANN: Fine. *(They go to MARTY's room. As they open the door, FRANKLIN speaks.)*

FRANKLIN: Thirty thousand dollars? For a windmill?

CHUCK: For a lot of things. Place is just falling apart.

GEORGE: The tractor was working fine a few months ago.

CHUCK: Hey, you want to keep fixing it, you're more'n welcome. I'm just a shade tree mechanic, doing the best job I can.

GEORGE: We'll all have to take a look at your budget, Chuck.

(VEEANN and MICHAEL wheel in MARTY. He is a small man, unable to walk, but not even remotely feeble, his eyes alert.)

CHUCK: You got a place that's had no basic preventive maintenance the last ten years, just duct tape and baling wire. You got fence posts down on the southwest boundary that are half rotted, and a tractor I can't get into the stalls, got manure and straw practically filling the place up, I can't clean it out. Look, the place is shot to hell, and that's the truth of it.

MARTY: A lie! That's a lie!

CAROLINE: Dad!

MARTY: Don't you tell me about cleaning out a stable, you lazy son-of-a-bitch!

CHUCK: I'm telling you, I can't get the tractor in the door . . .

MARTY: So what? You got a pitchfork. You got a wagon. You too good to do a little hand work?

MICHAEL: Dad, don't excite yourself.

MARTY: Let go of me! *(Turns on CHUCK again.)* I been a rancher forty years when you were still sucking your mama's tit, and when I was seventy-five I could still clean out that stable, so don't talk to me about a tractor. It's a three day chore, fourteen hour days, with a pitchfork and a shovel, and at the end of each day, Mavis would hose me down in the yard before she'd let me in the house. But it's a job that's got to be done, mister.

CHUCK: Yeah, you done great old man. Half your fences are rottin' away.

MARTY: You gotta replace your fencing, son. You wanna be a rancher, do a rancher's work.

CHUCK: If you'd done the job right, I wouldn't have to do it again now.

MARTY: Get used to it, son. Jobs done over and over, that's what I spent my life at.

CHUCK *(sullen)*: If you'd done 'em right . . .

MARTY: Just shut up and listen, boy! I know what you want. One of them tractors with air conditioning in the cab, FM stereo, some attachment to clean out stables. I've known fellows like you, gotta get every new kinda equipment John Deere makes. Not me. I'm a survivor, rather make do than buy new. Ain't no job too big for a good man with a pick and a shovel. Now, what did I hear about thirty thousand dollars?

CHUCK: We need a new tractor.

MARTY: Give me three hours down there, and I'd have the old one running good as new.

CHUCK: I know how to tune an engine.

MARTY: You don't know nothing. You run my place into the ground.

CHUCK: I ain't had the money to do more.

MARTY: How much money did I have, those years you kids were growing up? I had my hands, my tools, I left behind a ranch that turned a profit every year. You ain't made a dime on it yet, have you?

CHUCK: I'll turn a profit this year.

MARTY: Like hell you will. Michael, he don't need no thirty thousand dollars. Give him some money to buy fencing; I'll give you a check.

CHUCK: You ain't listened to a word I said.

MARTY: You ain't said one worth listening to.

GEORGE *(with a wink to CHUCK that says, "We'll take care of it later")*: Dad, I'm glad you could join us. Are you hungry? Vee, could you get something . . .

VEEANN: I'll whip something up. What would you like?

MARTY: I ain't hungry. *(He shifts in his chair.)* Vee, could you look to this pillow? Jist can't seem to get comfortable.

CAROLINE: I'll help you with that, Dad.

MARTY: I didn't ask you, Caroline, I asked Veeann. *(After a moment,*

VEEANN *crosses to him, adjusts the pillow.*) Look at you. All gathered round.

GEORGE: That's right, Dad, we're all here.

MARTY: Where's the dead calf?

FRANKLIN: What do you mean, Dad?

MARTY: The dead calf? Where is it? Anybody know?

MICHAEL: I don't think so, Dad.

MARTY: Well, I'll tell you. Me. I'm the dead calf. And what kinda birds come gather when livestock dies?

FRANKLIN: Dad, you've obviously misunderstood . . .

MARTY: Vultures. The vultures have gathered. Ain't that what the good book says?

MICHAEL: This isn't necessary, Dad.

MARTY: Ain't that from the good book, Michael?

CAROLINE: You don't read the good book, Dad.

MARTY: No I don't. Neither do you, Caroline. You and me? We don't trust what we can't see. And what I see is vultures, gathered round my carcass.

VEEANN: Fair enough, Dad. We're all vultures. What do we want from you?

MARTY: Flesh. Vultures eat flesh. *(Pinches his arm.)* Not much here. Where is it? It's north. That's my flesh. Four thousand acres worth, scattered over the valley.

CAROLINE: We don't want your land, Dad.

MARTY: Don't want your inheritance, girl? Don't want what's yours?

FRANKLIN: We haven't even talked about the land, Dad.

MARTY: No, course not. Three years ago, you took me off the ranch. I didn't want to go, but you all got together, and off I come. Last year it was my car you took away. Now, all of a sudden, I don't walk so good. Just can't get around. So what is it this time? What you gonna take from me now?

MICHAEL: We're not trying to take anything away.

MARTY: You better not, son.

VEEANN: Marty, what is it you want? What are you trying to tell us?

MARTY: I don't want to go to no nursing home. Back home, one at a time, I seen my old friends get sent to one of those places, Shady Rest, Golden Age Retirement. They never come out again. I like it here, with Vee and George. You say I can't go back to my ranch, all right. I'll die here, with family around.

CAROLINE: Dad, you're not going to die for many years yet.

MARTY: Not as long as I'm here, no I won't. But let me tell you this: You put me in one of them places, I promise, I'll give the land up. Hell, maybe I'll give it to the Church. But I'll say this once and I'll tell you clear, you want the land, your land, your inheritance, then keep me here. Vee takes good care of me. I mean to stay.

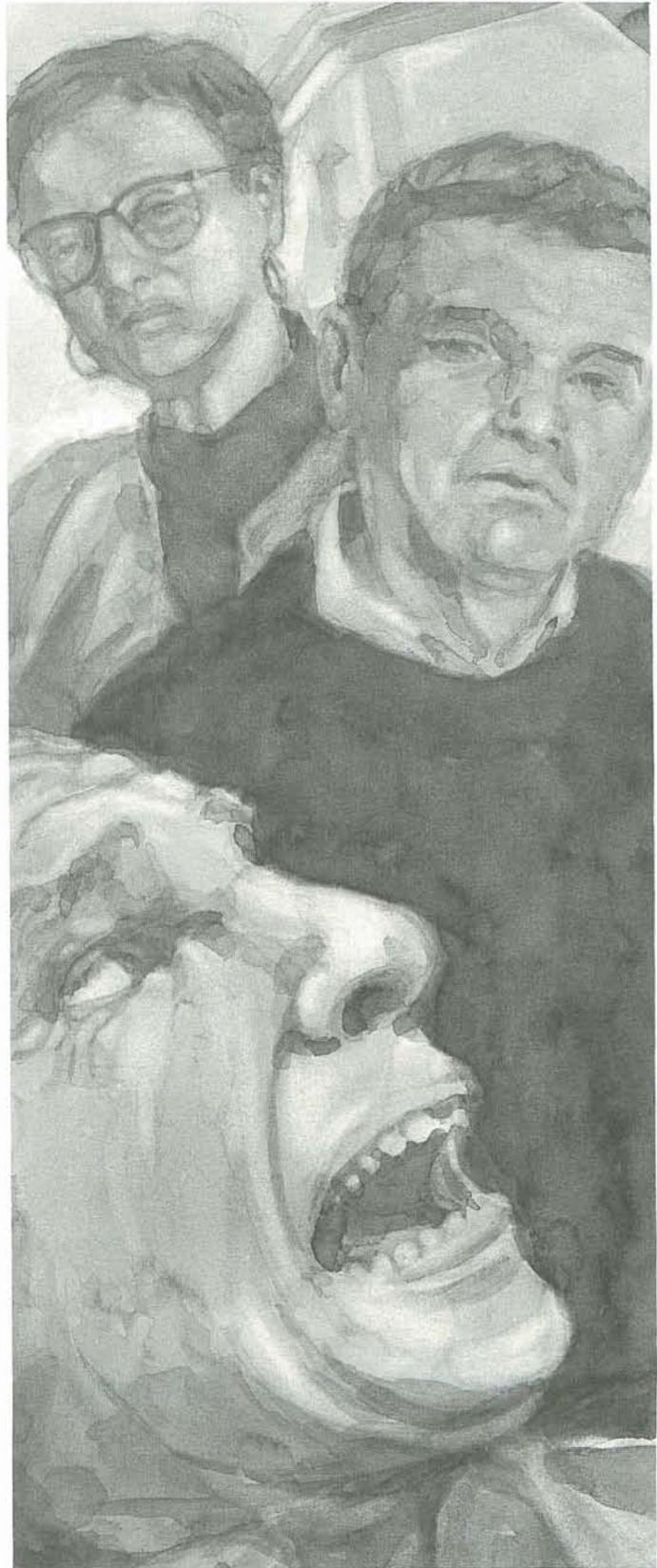
GEORGE: Dad, that may not be possible.

MARTY: I don't want to leave. I ain't a gonna. *(A long, stunned silence.)* And now I am hungry. Vee, what you got for me?

VEEANN: *(Controls herself with an effort.)* Whatever you like, Marty. I'll fix anything you want.

BLACKOUT

END ACT ONE



I was with you all day, Franklin, you and Caroline and Michael, and you didn't do nothin' right the whole time, not a single damn thing.

ACT TWO

SCENE: The next morning. Dishes in the sink, the papers still in disarray. CHUCK is asleep on the couch, wearing jeans and an undershirt. He yawns, pulls on a shirt, crosses to the sink, puts water on to boil. A knock on the door. He crosses to the door, opens it. ROBYN enters.

CHUCK: Oh. It's you. *(Leaves the door open, crosses back to the kitchen. She comes in.)*

ROBYN: Where's my Dad?

CHUCK: Where have you been?

ROBYN: Parties. *(Yawns.)* What time is it?

CHUCK: Seven-thirty.

ROBYN: No kidding? I thought he was supposed to be sleeping down here.

CHUCK: He's at some hotel.

ROBYN: A hotel? That's crazy. He can barely afford gas back home.

CHUCK: After what you left him.

ROBYN: My money. My business.

CHUCK: Him and Michael and Caroline were gonna share a room.

ROBYN: Those three?

CHUCK: Two beds, ask for a cot. It'll be okay.

ROBYN: Right. You know those three, you know my dad. Which one do you think ended up on the cot? His back'll be sore for a week.

CHUCK: I thought he had some chiropractor . . .

ROBYN: That's where the rest of his money goes. *(Looks around.)* What happened?

CHUCK: It didn't go so good.

ROBYN: *(Crosses to telephone.)* Must not have.

CHUCK: Caroline and Vee got into it, Caroline took off, took your dad and Michael with her. They'll cool off.

ROBYN: Do you know which hotel?

CHUCK: Comfort Inn, Days Inn, one of those. I don't remember.

One of the ones with the yellow circle on the sign.

ROBYN: Big help.

CHUCK *(as she looks through a phone book)*: So parties, huh? Plural? *(She doesn't take the bait.)* You have a good time? *(Again, she ignores him.)* At these parties you went to?

ROBYN: Which one?

CHUCK: Which one? How about the one where I dropped you off at.

ROBYN: Oh, yeah, that was you. Cousin Chuck. It was fine. *(Dialing.)*

CHUCK: We're not really cousins, you know.

ROBYN: No, you're married to my cousin. Anyway, the first two were pretty good, the third one was a drag.

CHUCK: Busy night.

ROBYN: Hello, do you have a guest by the name of Franklin Mortenson please? It might be under Michael Mortenson or Caroline O'Hara . . . No, I can't hold, I'm calling from Europe. *(CHUCK rummages through the cabinets for coffee. Settles for an instant cocoa.)* Caroline? Yeah, this is Robyn. All right, Aunt Caroline. *(She rolls her eyes to CHUCK.)* Is my dad there?

CHUCK: Comfort Inn?

ROBYN: Day's. Hi, Dad? Listen, I'm back, everything's cool. No, I'm just going to crash. No, I spent it. How's your back? Yeah? Yeah? Yeah, I think you should do that. Okay. Bye. *(She hangs up.)* He's there.

CHUCK: You want some?

ROBYN: What is that?

CHUCK: No coffee at Aunt Vee's, so I settled for this. Looks like some kind of hot chocolate mix. Add water.

ROBYN: Sure, why not. You know, I don't think I've ever seen this before.

CHUCK: What?

ROBYN: Dirty dishes at Aunt Vee's. Some meeting, huh? I almost wish I'd stayed.

CHUCK: Veeann told them that they couldn't keep Grandpa here anymore.

ROBYN: Really? Good.

CHUCK: Why do you say that?

ROBYN: I don't think he likes it here. I mean, why should he? Living with Vee, I wouldn't last two days.

CHUCK: Why do you say that?

ROBYN: Like last night. I mean, what did Lynn want to do? Watch some movie from a million years ago?

CHUCK: Not for wild Robyn, huh?

ROBYN: They have, like, this picture of how you're supposed to be. A Laurel. With the hair, and the dress, and the missionary you're writing to. Like Lynn was, I guess. I mean, look at Frannie. I like Frannie. She's a lot like me really, wants to try different things, smoke a few j's, get around. But they never see the real Frannie, and if they did, they wouldn't like her.

CHUCK: What about me? Who do you think the real Chuck is?

ROBYN: I told you. The guy that's married to Lynn. You got any aspirin?

CHUCK: No. What did you do last night?

ROBYN: I told you, I went to parties. Looked around, saw what was happening.

CHUCK: What was happening?

ROBYN: Like there were a bunch of guys doing black and whites, you know. You know black and whites?

CHUCK: No, I don't think I do.

ROBYN: White rum, black velvet vodka, mix 'em 50-50 in a beer mug, and chug.

CHUCK: A beer mug? Pure vodka and rum?

ROBYN: Yeah, and then you chug. It's like a contest.

CHUCK: You're kidding.

ROBYN: I was intrigued. These guys weren't exactly rocket scientists, and I was curious, see how far they'd push it.

CHUCK: So what happened?

ROBYN: We had another contest. Drove a guy to emergency, and placed bets on whether the doctors could save him.

CHUCK: Who won?

ROBYN *(offhanded)*: The guy did. I lost ten bucks.

CHUCK: You're something, you know that?

ROBYN: See, I think everyone should do exactly what they want to do. No matter what. That goes for Grandpa, too. All this about, where should we put him? who takes him? Forget it. Just ask him what he wants and let that be it.

CHUCK: You like him, don't you?

ROBYN: I'm probably the only one in the family who does.

Remember, I lived on that ranch for six months. After Mom died. I love it out there. When I was eight years old, he put me on a horse; I thought I was the Lone Ranger.

CHUCK: You're too female to be the Lone Ranger. *(He kisses her. Eventually it ends.)*

ROBYN: And now you've done that. *(She pushes away from him.)*

CHUCK: What I wanted. What did you think?

ROBYN: Oh, like I'm supposed to give you a grade? A minus B plus? Not! Look, I'm going upstairs to crash. *(LYNN appears at the top of*

the stairs.)
 CHUCK: You do that.
 ROBYN: Okay.
 CHUCK: Your door gonna be locked?
 ROBYN: I don't need to lock it. You're married, and I'm underage.
(She goes up the stairs.) Good morning, Lynn. Your husband's in the kitchen. *(She exits. After a moment, LYNN enters.)*
 LYNN: Good morning, husband.
 CHUCK: You sleep okay?
 LYNN: Fitfully, actually. I woke up around one, saw Mom and Dad's light on, and ended up talking to them for an hour. Mom's pretty upset.
 CHUCK: Everyone's upset.
 LYNN: Yes, I suppose so. It's really too bad. I think I'll just clear things off a bit. This isn't like Mom.
 CHUCK: How about you?
 LYNN: What about me?
 CHUCK: You upset?
 LYNN: Should I be?
 CHUCK: You tell me.
 LYNN: I try not to be. Upset. Not without reason.
 CHUCK: Do you think you have a reason?
 LYNN: You tell me, Chuck. Do I have a reason?
 CHUCK: No. You don't. *(A pause.)*
 LYNN: Then I'm not.
 CHUCK: Like hell.
 LYNN: Chuck, twice in the last month, I've suggested that we sit down and talk about things, about our marriage, about where we're headed. You've made it clear to me that that is not a subject you welcome.
 CHUCK: That's right.
 LYNN: Fine. So if you have something to say to me, if there's a problem I should know about, I'm here. Otherwise, well, my days are plenty full, Chuck.
 CHUCK: Like I been saying. Everything's fine.
 LYNN: Then I'm happy. Our marriage is solid, the ranch is doing fine, and I have nothing to complain about.
 CHUCK: Except that ain't how it is.
 LYNN: Then there is something you need to tell me?
 CHUCK: No! But you don't believe me when I say that, do you?
 LYNN: Of course I do. If you say everything's fine . . .
 CHUCK: Don't give me that. I know what you're thinking. You're the martyr, you're the noble one. I know that act. Sitting there so innocent.
 LYNN: As it happens, Chuck, I am innocent. Naive and innocent.
 CHUCK: Well so am I!
 LYNN: Fine. I believe you.
 CHUCK: Do you?
 LYNN: If you tell me I can. *(A pause, as they avoid each other.)* I don't think anyone touched those hors d'oeuvres last night. Shall we try them for breakfast?
 CHUCK: Fine. Sounds good. *(Fidgets for a moment.)* Maybe in a sec. *(Gets up.)*
 LYNN: Where are you going?
 CHUCK: Out. *(Heads for the door.)* Your dad was saying something about the van, the transmission fluid. I'll take a look at it now, before anyone's up.
 LYNN: Fine. I'm sure he'll appreciate that.
 CHUCK: Right. *(He exits. LYNN watches him go. For a moment, it appears as though she's going to cry. But she regains control, and sits there for a moment, eating. Down the stairs comes VEEANN.)*

LYNN: Hello, Mom.
 VEEANN: Good morning, honey. Did I hear somebody come up the stairs?
 LYNN: Robyn.
 VEEANN: Home already?
 LYNN: And Chuck was here a moment ago. He just went out to take a look at the van.
 VEEANN: What are you eating?
 LYNN: From last night. I hope you don't mind.
 VEEANN: Might as well have something good come out of that fiasco. *(Sits next to her, they eat together.)*
 LYNN: They'll come around, Mom. It was just the shock.
 VEEANN: We'll see. Have you heard from Grandpa yet?
 LYNN: I haven't even looked in on him.
 VEEANN: Oh, don't worry. When he wakes up, we'll know about it.
 LYNN: Well, this morning, I'll take care of him.
 VEEANN: You know, I think I'll let you. *(A pause, as they eat together quietly.)* Honey? I don't know how to say this, so I'll just say it. I'm worried about you, Lynn. You and Chuck.
 LYNN: Why?
 VEEANN: Well, I couldn't help noticing that he slept down here. On the couch.
 LYNN: And not with me, on Frannie's twin size? We're hardly newlyweds anymore.
 VEEANN: Lynn, last night, I shut Caroline up when she made . . . innuendos. She doesn't see you often, or know you as well as I do, and she sensed something.
 LYNN: She's wrong about a lot of things, isn't she?
 VEEANN: Yes. And she's right a lot, too.
 LYNN: Maybe.
 VEEANN: Do you still love him?
 LYNN: Oh yes.
 VEEANN: Well, do you trust him?
 LYNN: I don't not trust him. *(Another pause.)* I mean, I pretty much have to trust him, don't you think?
 VEEANN: What do you mean?
 LYNN: Mom, what if things aren't great between us? Hypothetically. What if I think maybe something's going on that isn't right, but I don't really know anything? What then?
 VEEANN: So what are you saying?
 LYNN: I'm saying that I'm not sure what to think. If I should trust him, and don't, then maybe I'm the one who's damaging our marriage.
 VEEANN: But what if you do trust him, and you shouldn't?
 LYNN: Then I'll find out. Meanwhile, I'm going to trust him.
 VEEANN: No matter what?
 LYNN: No. Until he shows me I can't or tells me I can't.
 VEEANN: But honey, your father and I . . . when we see things . . .
 LYNN: You see evidence. I need proof.
 VEEANN: How about the ranch? Is he keeping things going?
 LYNN: He leaves the house every morning early, or most mornings. He's gone until six or seven. Is he out in the fields? Is the work getting done? He says it is.
 VEEANN: But you think it might not be?
 LYNN: I get phone calls. "Your cattle are in my pasture. Tell your husband to fix his fences." Or else it's "Your seed grass okay? Your husband missed his turn with the irrigation." But I ask him about it, and he always has an answer. Maybe this is just life on a ranch.
 VEEANN: But you don't know?

LYNN: That's just it. I don't know. And there's one more thing.

VEEANN: What?

LYNN: He won't let me look at our finances. I don't even have a checkbook. If I need to write a check for something he gives me one check. Mom, I used to do all our bills, all our taxes. Then suddenly, he said he thought he ought to do it. Fine, I gave him all our records. But now, I don't even know where he keeps them. We're always late on bills, nowadays. I'm never sure if they're going to cut off our telephone, our gas. But when I get a late notice, and I tell him about it, then suddenly I'm nagging, I don't trust him, he'll take care of it if I just keep off his back. And then there's Michael.

VEEANN: Michael?

LYNN: Mom, I don't know. But when Michael calls, Chuck goes into the study and closes the door. Mom, I'm trusting him just as much as I can. Loving him the best I can. And hoping. Part of me does just like you, accumulates all the evidence. But that's not a part of me I like very well.

VEEANN: In the meantime . . .

LYNN: In the meantime, you can tell Caroline our marriage is fine.

VEEANN: You're sure?

LYNN: I'm sure that's what I want you to tell Caroline.

VEEANN: Is it true?

LYNN: I don't know. *(After a moment.)* I don't think so.

VEEANN: Oh, honey. *(Reaches over and gives her a hug.)*

LYNN *(in tears)*: Mom, you don't know. You don't know how hard it is just to hang on. Day after day.

VEEANN: Oh, honey. *(They hug for a moment longer. VEEANN chooses her words carefully.)* Lynn, is it possible that the ranch is the problem?

LYNN: What do you mean?

VEEANN: Chuck had no experience ranching before you moved up there. He'd always been a city boy. Maybe it's too much for him. Have you thought about moving? Trying something else?

LYNN: Mom, that ranch is my home.

VEEANN: I know you like it out there, Lynn.

LYNN: I don't just like it, Mom.

VEEANN: All right.

LYNN: It's home, Mom. I don't know how else I can say it. It just feels right for us to be there. Especially the kids.

VEEANN: But what if it's not right for Chuck?

LYNN: Mom, don't give me this. Not now.

VEEANN: I just want you to think about it.

LYNN: I've got enough on my mind right now without this.

VEEANN: I'm sorry, honey.

LYNN: I'm serious, Mom. The way things are going right now, if I had to choose between Chuck and the ranch . . . Well, I don't know which I'd choose.

VEEANN: So that's how it is.

LYNN: That's right. *(The doorbell rings.)*

VEEANN: Damn.

LYNN *(laughing through her tears)*: That's okay, Mom. At home it's one of the kids.

VEEANN *(looking out the window)*: It's Michael's car.

LYNN: Let me just wash my face. *(Heads into the bathroom.)*

VEEANN: All right. *(Shouts up the stairs.)* George! It's Michael! *(Crosses to door, pauses.)* Michael.

MICHAEL: Good morning, Vee. *(Enters the room.)*

VEEANN: We're polishing off last night's hors d'oeuvres for breakfast. I know, not quite what you expect from Veeann. I had a lousy night. You want some?

MICHAEL: Thanks. Sounds good. *(Crosses to bar, sits. LYNN enters from the bathroom. He speaks to her.)* Hi, honey. You okay?

LYNN *(brightly)*: Fine.

VEEANN: So, I hope the three of you had a good night's sleep?

MICHAEL: Terrible, if you want to know the truth. Caroline snores, and Franklin moans.

LYNN: Moans.

MICHAEL: Yeah. All night long. Like this. *(Demonstrates.)*

VEEANN: Good. Serves you right.

MICHAEL: Look, Vee, I just had to come early to apologize.

VEEANN: Oh?

MICHAEL: We had a difference of opinion over a matter that concerns us all. But that was no reason to get as angry as we did. And especially, it was no reason to spurn your hospitality.

VEEANN: No it wasn't.

MICHAEL: Anyway, I'm sorry. Will you forgive me?

VEEANN: Certainly. *(Sees GEORGE coming down the stairs.)* George, it's Michael. He's apologized and I've forgiven him.

GEORGE: Oh. Good.

LYNN: Morning, Dad.

GEORGE: Good morning, honey. Have you been up long?

LYNN: Just a few minutes.

GEORGE: Where are the rest of them, Michael?

MICHAEL: They'll be over soon. I just wanted to be sure I got here first.

VEEANN: To clear the air.

MICHAEL: That's right.

VEEANN *(offering him hors d'oeuvres)*: George, breakfast?

GEORGE: From last night?

VEEANN: That's right. And no, I didn't do the dishes, either. I'm falling down on my job. *(The buzzer sounds. VEEANN looks at it wearily.)* I'd hoped he'd let us have a few minutes more.

LYNN: Like I said, Mom, I'll take him this morning.

VEEANN: I doubt he'll let you.

LYNN: Let me try. You three have some breakfast together. *(As she goes into MARTY's room.)* Good morning, Grandpa.

MICHAEL: Vee, these are just as terrific a day old as they were last night.

VEEANN: The bread's all crusty and the pâté's soggy.

GEORGE: I don't know. It's kind of good when it soaks in like this.

MICHAEL: Do you think the shrimp are still okay?

VEEANN: You've had three, Michael. I guess we'll just watch you and see what happens. *(They all laugh.)* Well, any brilliant ideas since last night?

GEORGE: I wish I could say yes.

MICHAEL: It's a difficult decision all around.

VEEANN: Michael, you need to know that I'm not backing down on this.

MICHAEL: No, I got that impression.

VEEANN: No one seemed to think I was serious last night. I am.

MICHAEL: Of course.

GEORGE: That goes for me, too.

MICHAEL: Well, then, that's it. He'll have to go somewhere else.

VEEANN: Just like that?

MICHAEL: Hard feelings never get anyone anywhere, Vee. Last night, we just hadn't had time to prepare ourselves, that's all.

GEORGE: Well, water under the bridge.

MICHAEL: Agreed. Look, about this nursing home idea . . .

GEORGE: Michael, you and Caroline really should see Shady Pines. I know the idea is a hard one to get used to; it is for me, too. But this place is different, Michael. It's clean, and the people are well

- cared for.
- MICHAEL: Maybe this afternoon we could all check it out.
- VEEANN: Would you?
- GEORGE: We'd be glad to take you.
- MICHAEL: You said it was expensive. Just how much?
- GEORGE: Twenty-two hundred a month.
- MICHAEL: That is steep. And I suppose that Medicaid won't cover it?
- VEEANN: We checked on it. They're pretty persnickety about some of their rules.
- GEORGE: It could work, though. What they told us, you can't have any assets.
- MICHAEL: Assets. The land, in other words.
- GEORGE: Right. He'd have to sell the land, or otherwise divide it between us. It just can't be in his name.
- MICHAEL: But if we sell it, we'd probably have enough to take care of him anyway.
- VEEANN: That's right.
- MICHAEL: But he could give the land to us?
- GEORGE: That's right. He could make a gift of it to each of us, within certain restrictions.
- MICHAEL: You heard him last night. Threatening to just give it all away. To the Church, no less. I don't think any of us want that, do we?
- VEEANN: Why not?
- MICHAEL: It was my father's life, buying that land.
- VEEANN: Michael, you don't ranch it, you don't use it. You sell insurance. Caroline's a physician, Franklin's a pharmacist. What good would ranch land do any of you? George is an architect, and he doesn't even want it. If your dad wants to give it away, fine. The idea is to qualify him for Medicaid.
- MICHAEL: But will they pay for any place we pick?
- GEORGE: That's the problem.
- MICHAEL: A nicer, more expensive place like Shady Pines? They won't.
- VEEANN: No, but they'd help.
- GEORGE: That's right. They pay up to a certain amount.
- VEEANN: We'd have to make up the difference. The family.
- MICHAEL: The family. You and me and Franklin and Caroline.
- VEEANN: Divided four ways.
- MICHAEL: Equally?
- GEORGE: Well . . .
- VEEANN: Certainly, equally. You're all equally his children.
- MICHAEL: Vee, I can't. I'll level with you, Vee. We're just scraping by, month to month.
- VEEANN: Michael, you can't tell me that the insurance business . . .
- MICHAEL: Vee, I'm one of nine independent agents serving a town of less than fifteen thousand people. I've got kids heading to college soon, and missions. I can't help out, Vee, I just can't.
- VEEANN: All right, Michael.
- MICHAEL: And Franklin, well . . .
- VEEANN: No. We won't be able to count on Franklin.
- MICHAEL: That leaves you and Caroline.
- GEORGE: Then we'll cover it.
- MICHAEL: You've got two kids in college yourself. And surely Tommy's planning on a mission?
- VEEANN: We'll just have to do the best we can.
- MICHAEL: But, Vee, George, that's just not necessary. If we can talk Dad into letting us sell the property, we'll be able to support him in style, and still keep the inheritance he worked all his life to give us.
- VEEANN: You heard him last night, Michael.
- MICHAEL: So we need to persuade him. You know Dad. He really wants the property to stay in the family.
- GEORGE: That's true.
- MICHAEL: Look, say we sell one section, 640 acres. Say we get 500 an acre. That'll easily be enough for the next twenty years, Medicaid be damned. The rest we divide up equally. I'm not going to kid you, Veeann. I'll sell mine in a New York minute.
- GEORGE: You're going to get 500 an acre? Up there?
- MICHAEL: I bet we can.
- GEORGE: Most of it's worthless.
- MICHAEL: Not anymore. Things are really booming up there.
- VEEANN: So it all depends on your dad coming around?
- MICHAEL: I'm sure that we can convince him.
- GEORGE: And if we can't?
- MICHAEL: We'd have to explore some other options.
- VEEANN: For example?
- MICHAEL: Well . . . we could declare him incompetent. *(A pause while this sinks in.)*
- GEORGE: No . . .
- MICHAEL: It's something we need to think about, George. He's eighty-four years old, acting irrationally, giving away his land to total strangers. We'd have a strong case.
- VEEANN: Have him committed?
- MICHAEL: Only if we have to.
- GEORGE: A trial.
- VEEANN: You'd get up on the stand, tell everyone your father's crazy.
- MICHAEL: It won't come to that.
- GEORGE: Michael, I won't do it.
- MICHAEL: I'm not saying we'll have to.
- GEORGE: Michael, hear me out. You were only ten when Mother died. I was eighteen. I saw what he did to her all those years. I have as much reason as anyone in this family to hate him. But he is my father, and I won't do it. I won't testify. I can't believe you'd even suggest it.
- VEEANN *(siding with GEORGE)*: Michael, George is right. This is not a good idea. You'd tear the family apart, Michael, and for what? He'd win. He's not crazy. He's still clear in the head, we saw that last night.
- MICHAEL: What if there's no other way?
- GEORGE: No, Michael. No matter what.
- MICHAEL: Well, where does that leave us?
- VEEANN: You need to talk to your father.
- MICHAEL: All right. Then, Veeann, will you keep him in the meantime? *(A long pause.)*
- VEEANN: I'm willing to be reasonable, Michael. I would certainly rather keep him than have you go to court, destroy the family like this.
- MICHAEL: So let me get this straight. You're willing to keep him until we can talk him into letting us sell the property.
- VEEANN: To go into a nursing home. Yes, Michael, I guess I'm saying that I am willing to bend a little. Temporarily. But Michael, you'd better forget this court nonsense. I won't hear any more of it.
- MICHAEL: Well. It looks like we've made some progress.
- VEEANN *(unhappy)*: Maybe so.
- MICHAEL: And I'm sure we can make him see reason. It's just a matter of how we approach him. The timing. We can work it all out if we're patient.
- VEEANN: Patient.
- MICHAEL: I guess the next step is ours, George. We should get started. Dividing it up, who gets what parcel. Finding a buyer. I

- can help. It's not just a matter of putting an ad in the yellow pages. We'll have to take our time, talk to potential buyers . . .
- VEEANN: And in the meantime, he stays here.
- MICHAEL: That's what we just agreed.
- VEEANN: I don't know, Michael. I'm not sure what I just agreed to.
- MICHAEL: You agreed to keep him. For now.
- VEEANN: I did, didn't I? Month after month, while you find just the right buyer. He stays with me. Or else.
- MICHAEL: What? "Or else?" I didn't say . . .
- VEEANN: That was your threat. I keep him, or you'll tear the family to pieces in court.
- MICHAEL: I haven't made any threats, Veeann. I thought we had an agreement.
- VEEANN: Why do you want this so badly, Michael?
- MICHAEL: Why? He's my father, I want what's best for him, what's best for all of us.
- VEEANN: You were talking about declaring him insane in a court of law.
- MICHAEL: Only as a last resort.
- VEEANN: Michael, what kind of time frame are you talking about?
- MICHAEL: Two months, three.
- VEEANN: Six months?
- MICHAEL: Oh, I doubt it.
- VEEANN: A year? Two years? And meantime, he's still here. In my house. And you're still negotiating, still trying to work things out just right. And he's still here with me. Two years. Three years? Four?
- MICHAEL: Vee, be reasonable.
- VEEANN: You're up to something, Michael. I don't know what. But there's more to this, isn't there?
- GEORGE: Vee . . .
- VEEANN: Some kind of scam. You invested money, you lost it, you're seeing this as a way out.
- MICHAEL: No. Vee, come on.
- VEEANN: Michael, we all know you. What is it this time?
- MICHAEL: That's absolutely ridiculous, Vee.
- VEEANN: The deal's off, Michael. I want him gone now, not two years from now, not when it's all been worked out just right. Now.
- MICHAEL: Vee, come on. We've just had a nice conversation, come to an understa . . . (LYNN pokes her head out.)
- LYNN: Mom, I need some help with this.
- VEEANN (to LYNN): What is it, Lynn?
- LYNN: I'm trying to get him changed and I just can't lift him.
- VEEANN: I'll be right there. (To MICHAEL) Michael, the deal's off.
- GEORGE: Can I help, Vee?
- VEEANN: I'll call if I need you. (She goes into MARTY'S room.)
- MICHAEL: Well, back to last night.
- GEORGE: I'm sorry, Michael.
- MICHAEL: George, she's going to have to meet the family half-way.
- GEORGE: Well, I don't know, Michael. She feels pretty strongly.
- MICHAEL: How about you, George? Can't you talk to her, explain our side of things?
- GEORGE: I think she sees your side, Michael. I just don't think she agrees with it. (CHUCK pokes his head in.) Good morning, Chuck.
- CHUCK: Michael.
- MICHAEL: Have you eaten, Chuck?
- CHUCK: No. No time. Caroline just pulled in, with Franklin.
- GEORGE: Oh, no. Back to it.
- CHUCK: Took a look at your tranny, George. You could have a problem. You gotta sec?
- GEORGE: I suppose so. It's better than confronting Caroline again. Michael, if Vee needs a hand, could you—?
- MICHAEL: Sure.
- GEORGE: Thanks. (To CHUCK.) Now, I saw that the fluid was brownish. Is that what you're seeing?
- CHUCK: I'm not really a transmission expert. But what I found was . . . (They exit. MICHAEL sits alone. After a moment, a knock on the door, followed shortly afterwards by CAROLINE and FRANKLIN entering.)
- CAROLINE: I just decided to barge on in.
- MICHAEL: Fine.
- CAROLINE: Where is everyone?
- MICHAEL: Lynn and Vee are getting Dad dressed. George and Chuck are looking at some brown fluid. I don't know where Robyn is.
- FRANKLIN: She called. She's upstairs sleeping, I guess.
- CAROLINE: I was going to ask how it went, Michael. I guess I can see the answer.
- MICHAEL: We made some progress, I suppose.
- FRANKLIN: You told her we were willing to bend on the nursing home?
- MICHAEL: Just like we talked about. Still no.
- FRANKLIN: Can you blame her, really?
- CAROLINE: What do you mean, Franklin?
- FRANKLIN: Well, we're his children. Aren't we? So why are Veeann and Lynn in there getting him dressed? (A sobered silence.)
- CAROLINE: But we've offered to help.
- MICHAEL: So what's next?
- CAROLINE: My turn.
- FRANKLIN: You sure?
- CAROLINE: I've always gotten along with Vee. This is a woman to woman sort of thing.
- MICHAEL: Maybe we should talk to George, Franklin.
- FRANKLIN: You think there's a chance he might bend?
- MICHAEL: Maybe. You heard him last night. "I wouldn't have put it so strongly." He's not completely convinced.
- FRANKLIN: We can try, I suppose.
- CAROLINE: So, we're all set?
- MICHAEL: Round three.
- FRANKLIN (stretching): What a night. What a nightmare. (MARTY'S door opens, and LYNN wheels him out, VEEANN following.) Good morning, Dad.
- MARTY: Morning, Michael, Caroline, Franklin.
- CAROLINE: How'd you sleep last night, Dad?
- MARTY: Lousy. Feelin' my age. How about you, off in that hotel room?
- MICHAEL: We're feeling our age, too, Dad.
- VEEANN: Good morning, Caroline, Franklin.
- CAROLINE: Good morning, Vee.
- MARTY: Veeann, what'd you whip up for breakfast this morning?
- VEEANN: Actually, Marty, I haven't made breakfast.
- MARTY: That don't sound like Vee.
- VEEANN: No, Marty, I suppose it doesn't.
- MARTY: Well, some bread and milk'll do me fine.
- VEEANN: All right.
- CAROLINE: Listen, Dad, why don't we take you out for breakfast?
- VEEANN: Do you mean it?
- CAROLINE: Sure. There's a waffle house around here somewhere, isn't there?
- LYNN: There's that place by the new mall.
- MICHAEL: Sounds great, doesn't it, Dad?
- FRANKLIN: Why don't we take you, Dad?

MICHAEL: Is that okay, Dad?

MARTY: I don't want a lot of fussin'.

MICHAEL: We'll even let you have coffee, Dad. (MICHAEL and FRANKLIN maneuver the wheelchair out the door.)

MARTY: Not Sanka?

CAROLINE: That's right. Vee, coming with us?

VEEANN: Maybe so.

LYNN: Thanks, Aunt Caroline. This sounds fun.

FRANKLIN: Lynn, why don't you and Chuck ride with me?

LYNN: Thank you, Uncle Franklin. I'd like that.

(They all exit, except for CAROLINE and VEEANN.)

VEEANN: This is really very nice of you, Caroline.

CAROLINE: Well, I know that everytime we visit, you put on that fabled Veeann spread.

VEEANN: It's what I'm known for.

CAROLINE: And there's nothing wrong with that either.

VEEANN: Still, it'll be nice to go out.

CAROLINE: Just our way of showing no hard feelings. (VEEANN heads for the door.) Listen, Vee. Before we go.

VEEANN: Ah.

CAROLINE: What do you mean, ah?

VEEANN: You did this nicely, Caroline. Maneuvered the whole thing, just to get the two of us alone.

CAROLINE: What do you mean?

VEEANN: It's what you're known for.

CAROLINE: Fair enough.

VEEANN: Michael took his shot this morning. I figured it would be your turn next.

CAROLINE: You make us sound so calculating.

VEEANN: Aren't you?

CAROLINE: Veeann, we're on the same side of the fence on this. We all just want what's best for Dad.

VEEANN: I suppose.

CAROLINE: But you know, this whole protest of yours. You're lashing out, aren't you? You're angry.

VEEANN: I don't feel particularly angry.

CAROLINE: Well, frustrated, then. Annoyed. Put upon.

VEEANN: All right.

CAROLINE: Well, I've felt just the same. For much the same reason.

VEEANN: And what is that?

CAROLINE: Stereotyping. Female roles. For some reason, everyone assumes that it's a woman's job to take care of ailing elderly relations. We have that natural female compassion that makes this kind of service our obligation. Well, that's nonsense. Why shouldn't George, or Michael, or Franklin take on some of the burden? That's what you're saying, isn't it?

VEEANN: I suppose so. In part.

CAROLINE: Well, I know what you're feeling. "You're a woman, you can't go to medical school. Why don't you try nursing school instead." I mean, once I left Utah, people stopped saying it out loud, but it was always there, implied. You're a woman, you can't be a doctor. You're a divorced woman, you must be promiscuous. You're twice divorced, outspokenly feminist, well, Katie bar the door.

VEEANN: I know it must have been difficult at times.

CAROLINE: You don't know the half of it. I copped out. I wanted to be a surgeon. But, I got tired. I made a more traditional female choice. Pediatrics. Dealing with children. Well, I don't much like children, Veeann. I only tolerate mine because we've been through so much together. I finally stopped fighting the mold they were trying to shove me into and made my

accommodations.

VEEANN: I've always respected you.

CAROLINE: And I've always respected you, Veeann. I think we understand each other.

VEEANN: If you say so.

CAROLINE: I do. And because I understand you, I can say things the guys in the family can't.

VEEANN: I'm listening.

CAROLINE: All right. He's not your father. You're a daughter-in-law, not a blood relation. You have all of the burden. George doesn't help much, and no one else even comes by. But because you're a woman, everyone just assumes that you don't mind. And now you're saying, "Why should I keep doing this? This isn't my job. This isn't my life. I want out." That's what you're saying, isn't it?

VEEANN: In part.

CAROLINE: And, of course, you're right. But sooner or later, you simply have to say "Here I am. It's not where I want to be. But it's close enough." There comes a time to make your accommodations.

VEEANN: What accommodations would you have me make?

CAROLINE: Well, first, let's look at it from our perspective. Here's our dad, permanently crippled. Where can he stay? Franklin? Tiny apartment? Robyn to deal with? Obviously not.

VEEANN: We went through . . .

CAROLINE: Just hear me out, Veeann. Okay, there's Michael. Well, we all know what Ruth is like. A saint.

VEEANN: I would never ask this of Ruth.

CAROLINE: Of course not. Okay, there's me. Now Patrick and I have a spare bedroom, as it happens. But what can we offer Dad? With my practice, gone all day, everyday, most nights? Maybe we could hire a daytime nurse. But would Dad be happy, alone all day? It's possible, barely, that Dad could come out to California, but it's hardly a workable solution. And to be honest, I'm not sure my marriage would survive.

VEEANN: I'm sorry, I thought that you and Patrick . . .

CAROLINE: Oh, we're fine. Don't get me wrong. We see each other twice a month and have great sex and a lot of laughs. It's a marriage that works because we don't put much pressure on it.

VEEANN: I think I understand.

CAROLINE: So what does that leave us?

VEEANN: Shady Pines.

CAROLINE: Well, all right. You know how I hate those kinds of places, but fine, I'll keep an open mind. But shouldn't that be a last resort?

VEEANN: So what are you saying?

CAROLINE: Well, whose children are gone, who has a big house? Who doesn't have a job?

VEEANN: That's not fair.

CAROLINE: I'm just asking that you acknowledge . . .

VEEANN: That I am the one person whose life is not otherwise filled to the brim? That I'm the one person with time on her hands?

CAROLINE: Veeann, we've offered to hire a part-time nurse. We've offered to get you the latest, most state-of-the-art equipment. I'm not closing the door on the nursing home. What I'm saying is, let's see if we can make the other solution work first.

VEEANN: Me being that other solution.

CAROLINE: You, with a lot more help.

VEEANN: Caroline. It's not going to work.

CAROLINE: We haven't really tried.

VEEANN: I have tried. It's not a question of technology, or part-time nurses, or shared female frustration. You didn't listen to a word I

said last night.

CAROLINE: I'm willing to listen . . .

VEEANN: Caroline, do you really think my life is so empty?

CAROLINE: I didn't mean to imply . . .

VEEANN: I have made my accommodations. I have found what I'm willing to settle for.

CAROLINE: Doing what?

VEEANN: What do you mean?

CAROLINE: Your children are grown, you're the finest chef I know, your home could make the cover of *Home Beautiful*. Is that it? What else do you do?

VEEANN: I do many things.

CAROLINE: What do you do that's comparable with what I do? Healing sick children?

VEEANN: I'm not going to lay my life out for you to sneer at.

CAROLINE: I really want to know. What do you plan to do with your time?

VEEANN: Many things. Nothing. How is it your business?

CAROLINE: Oh come now. Don't be modest. You cook, you keep house. What else? Acrylics? Needlepoint? Origami? What?

VEEANN: I don't need to subject myself to this.

CAROLINE: I'm genuinely curious, Veeann. I cure disease. I enable small children to live healthy, active lives. What do you do that compares?

VEEANN: We have such an affinity, you said. Women, engaged in the same holy battle.

CAROLINE: Aren't we?

VEEANN: Listen to yourself. So condescending, so contemptuous.

CAROLINE: Not contempt, Veeann, just curiosity.

VEEANN: I don't have to answer to you.

CAROLINE: You want my sympathy? I'm asking. What do you plan to do all day that won't allow you to care for my father?

VEEANN: What qualifies you to judge what I do?

CAROLINE: My life. My life qualifies me.

VEEANN: I know already what your judgment will be.

CAROLINE: I'm keeping an open mind.

VEEANN: Your mind hasn't opened in years.

CAROLINE: I'm not judging.

VEEANN: You know, Caroline, it used to be that when anyone at church had an emergency, a childbirth, or a death in the family, mine was the first number they called for meals or housecleaning. And I was the best visiting teacher in the Church. Until recently.

CAROLINE: All right.

VEEANN: And if I choose to do origami or needlepoint, what right do you have to sneer? I know you find my churchgoing trivial, my piety ridiculous. But I think I do as much good as you do, Caroline. I just don't get paid for it.

CAROLINE: And that makes it nobler?

VEEANN: I have earned the right to enjoy my life, Caroline, and I mean to have it back.

CAROLINE: You will not put my father in a nursing home.

VEEANN: I will have him out of my house, Caroline. It is my house, and that is a decision I have made.

CAROLINE: We'll see. (GEORGE pokes his head in.)

GEORGE: Are you coming?

VEEANN: I don't think so, George. I think the others are going without us.

GEORGE: Oh. I thought we were all having breakfast.

VEEANN: I'll whip up something for us.

GEORGE: Everything okay?

CAROLINE: Fine, George.

VEEANN: Look, you've got him now. Why don't you keep him all day? Let George and me have a day to ourselves.

CAROLINE: All right. We'll take him for a drive.

VEEANN: And dinner. I think eating here would be awkward for us all. Come back after George and I have eaten.

GEORGE: You mean we're not going to . . .

VEEANN: No. (To CAROLINE.) Say around seven. Then we'll talk about it. All of us.

CAROLINE: Including Lynn and Chuck?

VEEANN: Why not? They have the ranch. Let's include them.

CAROLINE: And Dad.

GEORGE: I don't know.

VEEANN: I think it's a good idea. He should be here, too.

CAROLINE: You're going to have to say it to him.

VEEANN: All right.

CAROLINE: I'm serious, Veeann. You're going to have to look him in the eyes and tell him he is not welcome in your home.

VEEANN: I will, then. But you'll have to take him today. Get him out of the car, listen to him. Change his Depends. (She hands her a diaper bag, Depends, baby wipes, and rubber gloves.) You'll need these.

CAROLINE: All right. A day off for you, a day with my dad for me. Then tonight, we talk.

VEEANN: Yes. Goodbye, Caroline.

CAROLINE: Goodbye, Veeann. (She exits.)

GEORGE: What happened?

VEEANN: Nothing, George. We just have the day off.

GEORGE: Oh. Do you want to go somewhere?

VEEANN: Maybe in a minute. Let me just get things cleaned up. . . . No.

GEORGE: What?

VEEANN: Forget the dishes. Let 'em hang.

GEORGE: Are you sure?

VEEANN: Absolutely. Let's go out and enjoy ourselves. Take in a movie, have lunch together. A one day vacation.

GEORGE: You sure?

VEEANN: To hell with the dishes! (They exit together. After a moment, ROBYN comes down the stairs, yawning. She looks around.)

ROBYN: Wo, Aunt Vee. What's with you these days? (She crosses to the fridge, looks inside.)

BLACKOUT

END ACT TWO





Do you think this has been easy on me? Telling your father he has to go. I care about Marty; I think I care more for him than you do. I don't want to hurt his feelings, I don't want to cause all this trouble for the family. But when this weekend began, I had to tell myself, Veeann, be strong, hang tough these two days. If I weaken at all, I'm lost.

ACT THREE

SCENE: George and Veeann's house, later that evening. It is now a bigger mess than ever. A pizza box on the floor, with half-eaten pizza on the carpet, dirty dishes everywhere. ROBYN is sitting on the sofa amidst a pile of candy bar wrappers, watching MTV. Maybe the Black Crowes singing "Too Hard to Handle," or "Remedy." She is rocking back and forth, perhaps singing along. The phone rings. Without touching the volume, she goes to the phone.

ROBYN: Yeah? Yeah, this is Robyn. *(Craning her neck, trying to watch the T.V.)* Hi, Aunt Caroline. No, they're not back yet. The place? *(She looks around.)* Doesn't look too bad. No, tell Dad I just sent out for something. What? No, I won't take a message. Because I'm busy. Call 'em back yourself. *(She hangs up, goes back to the sofa. The door opens, and VEEANN and GEORGE enter. ROBYN looks over, sees them, pays no attention.)*

VEEANN: Robyn. What are you doing here?

ROBYN: What?

VEEANN: I'm surprised you're here.

ROBYN: I've been asleep.

VEEANN: I see you sent out for pizza. *(No response.)* Pizza?

ROBYN: Yeah.

GEORGE: Has anyone called? *(No response.)* Did anyone call?

ROBYN: What?

GEORGE: *(Crossing to sofa, trying to find the remote.)* The phone.

ROBYN: Oh. Yeah, you just missed Caroline. They said they'd be here soon.

VEEANN: We've got to get this place cleaned up.

GEORGE: Where should I start?

VEEANN: Trash. Can you stuff that pizza box in?

GEORGE: Sure. *(He heads for the kitchen, gets trash, goes on out.)*

VEEANN: I'll get a load of dishes in. Robyn, I think I need you to turn down the volume and pick up in there.

ROBYN: What?

VEEANN: Turn it down. *(ROBYN ignores her.)* Down.

ROBYN: I like this song.

VEEANN: Well, while you listen, could you pick up a little in here?

ROBYN: What?

VEEANN: Could you pick up in there?

ROBYN: Me?

VEEANN: Yes, you. Those candy wrappers. I believe those are yours.

ROBYN: So?

VEEANN: Would you pick them up, please?

ROBYN: *(“Of course not”)* No. Do you mind, I'm trying to watch this. *(GEORGE, in the kitchen, hears this, and hustles out quickly.)*

VEEANN: Robyn . . . *(Turning down the volume herself, then controls herself with an effort.)* Robyn, I would very much appreciate it if you would be so good as to pick up after yourself.

ROBYN: *(Matching her tone.)* No thank you. I would rather not.

(Turns T.V. back up. VEEANN crosses to her. Grabs remote, turns it off.)

VEEANN: Robyn, I'm in no mood to be trifled with. Pick them up now, and help me with the dishes.

ROBYN: I'm not your daughter, and I'm on vacation. The answer is no. *(Crosses to T.V. and turns it up there.)*

VEEANN: *(Walks over to her. Turns off the T.V.)* You do not talk to me that way in my house, Robyn!

ROBYN: I'm watching this.

VEEANN: Out! *(Controls herself again.)* The upstairs T.V. gets cable.

You can watch up there.

ROBYN (*martyred*): You made me miss my video!

VEEANN: Upstairs! Now!

ROBYN: All right! (*Gets up, picks up wrappers. Marches in a huff upstairs.*) Geez.

VEEANN (*amazed*): Robyn?

ROBYN: What?

VEEANN: Nothing. You can put those in the trash in the upstairs bathroom.

ROBYN: Fine. (*Goes upstairs, as VEEANN stares after her, as GEORGE comes in with the garbage.*)

VEEANN: Did you catch any of that, George?

GEORGE: Part of it.

VEEANN: I was in such a good mood. Then that little snip . . . And what makes it worse, she was doing it on purpose.

GEORGE: I know Franklin's had a lot of trouble with her.

VEEANN: If any of our kids had talked to me that way, George . . .

GEORGE: Oh, they had their moments.

VEEANN: Not like Robyn.

GEORGE: No. Not even Frannie at her worst.

VEEANN: Honestly. And then, she picked up the wrappers anyway. I mean, what was that all about? I'll never understand that young woman, never in a million years.

GEORGE: Speaking of picking up . . .

VEEANN (*tossing him a sponge*): Wipe the counters.

GEORGE: Counters, right. (*Begins working.*)

VEEANN: You know, George, this really was a good day today.

GEORGE: I thought so, too.

VEEANN: We needed this, a day just to ourselves.

GEORGE: We did. You know, an occasional day like this, maybe if Franklin can come down, or Michael, or maybe even Lynn. It'll help a lot, don't you think?

VEEANN: (*Stops cold.*) What do you mean?

GEORGE: I mean with Dad.

VEEANN: George, your dad is not going to be staying with us. If Franklin or Michael come down, they'll be bringing him, not visiting.

GEORGE: Eventually, of course.

VEEANN: He's leaving as soon as we can arrange it, George. That's what this whole weekend's been about. That's what this whole day was about, George.

GEORGE: I know.

VEEANN: So what's all this about Franklin coming down periodically?

GEORGE: Realistically, Veeann.

VEEANN: All right. Realistically, he's leaving.

GEORGE: All right.

VEEANN: George, do you think this has been easy on me? Telling your father he has to go. I care about Marty; I think I care more for him than you do. I don't want to hurt his feelings, I don't want to cause all this trouble for the family. But when this weekend began, I had to tell myself, Veeann, be strong, hang tough these two days. If I weaken at all, I'm lost.

GEORGE: I'm just saying, Veeann, we may have to bend a little, too.

VEEANN: Not if we hang tough. Don't go all noodley on me, George. I need you in my corner.

GEORGE: I know. (*Doorbell.*) That'll be them.

VEEANN: How's the place look?

GEORGE: Not up to your usual standards, but it'll pass. (*GEORGE opens the door. In walk CAROLINE, MICHAEL, LYNN, CHUCK, and*

FRANKLIN *pushing MARTY in the wheelchair.*)

CAROLINE: Oh. Veeann. George.

VEEANN: You sound surprised.

CAROLINE: Actually, I am a little. Robyn said you hadn't come home yet. At least, I think that's what she said; she seemed to be speaking from a boom box.

VEEANN: We got here just after you called. Lynn, Chuck. Good to see you.

LYNN: Hi, Mom.

GEORGE (*to MARTY*): Did you have a nice time, Dad?

MARTY: Tolerable, George. Good to be home.

VEEANN: How about you, Caroline, Michael? Did you have a good day with him?

CAROLINE: Actually, we did. We drove around, had a very nice visit.

VEEANN: Good. Are you tired, Marty?

MARTY: All that in and outa cars, sightseeing. Didn't get my nap. Feel like I've been rode hard and stabled wet.

VEEANN: We'll get you to bed pretty soon.

MARTY: Not tonight, Vee. We got steers to round up, heifers to brand. I can stay in the saddle a good while yet.

VEEANN: Are you hungry?

MARTY: Ain't rightly hungry, Vee, but I could use some warm milk.

VEEANN: I'll get it for you. (*She goes into the kitchen, puts milk in a glass in the microwave.*)

GEORGE: So, where'd you go?

FRANKLIN: Actually, we drove by that new development of yours.

GEORGE: Did you? What did you think?

MICHAEL: It's going to be nice, George. Great location, some beautiful lots. I can see the potential.

CAROLINE: What did you think of it, Dad?

MARTY: What?

GEORGE: The development. The subdivision I'm working on.

MARTY: I don't remember.

CAROLINE: Dad, are you okay?

MARTY: You deaf, girl? I'm tired. (*An awkward pause.*)

CAROLINE: So anyway, we saw the development, bought some KFC, and had a picnic in the park. A nice day.

VEEANN: I'm glad.

MICHAEL: It was good to feel like a family again.

GEORGE: Good. (*Another awkward pause. The microwave dings.*)

VEEANN: That'll be your milk, Marty.

CAROLINE: I'll take it to him.

VEEANN: I'd rather, Caroline. If he spills . . .

CAROLINE: Nonsense. I'm getting it, Dad.

MARTY: I want Veeann. (*VEEANN and CAROLINE glare at each other.*)

FRANKLIN: I'll give it to him. (*Snatches the mug.*) Here, Dad. A nice glass of warm milk.

MARTY: I don't want it from you! I don't want it from anyone! I want Veeann to give it to me. Veeann! (*After an uncomfortable pause, VEEANN crosses to MARTY with the milk.*)

VEEANN: Here, Marty.

MARTY: I was with you all day, Franklin, you and Caroline and Michael, and you didn't do nothin' right the whole time, not a single damn thing. Food too greasy, too much ice in the coke. Too hot in the car, too cold in the park, never did get my pillow adjusted right. Veeann knows how I like things. I want Veeann. (*A pause.*) Thanks for the milk, Vee.

VEEANN: You're welcome, Marty.

MARTY: You take good care of me, Vee.

VEEANN: Yes. I do.

MARTY: I want you to keep taking care of me.

VEEANN: Marty, I don't think I can much longer.
MARTY: I don't want to go.
VEEANN: Caroline, Michael, did you discuss this at all with him?
CAROLINE: Some.
MARTY: Keep me here, Veeann. Keep me here.
CAROLINE: Go ahead, Veeann. Explain it to him. Tell *him* no.
VEEANN: Caroline, please! (*A pause. She turns to MARTY.*) Marty, I know you want to stay here. But wouldn't it be better to be somewhere where they can take care of you properly?
MARTY: You do fine.
VEEANN: Not really, Marty. And I'm not good company for you. I think you'd be happier somewhere else.
MARTY: Shady Pines. I've seen it before, Veeann. You're gonna stick me off someplace and forget about me.
VEEANN: No! We're not talking about leaving you alone. George and I would be out to visit every day. (*To the others.*) Did you take a look at Shady Pines?
CAROLINE: We did.
VEEANN: What did you think? (*CAROLINE shrugs her shoulders.*)
MICHAEL: It looked fine. Franklin, didn't you think so?
FRANKLIN: It didn't seem bad at all to me. Dad seemed to like it.
MARTY: It ain't as bad as some.
VEEANN: So what did you think, Marty? Would you consider living there? (*Pause.*)
MARTY: Might.
GEORGE: Dad? You're going to agree to go to Shady Pines?
MARTY: I ain't said yes, I ain't said no.
VEEANN: But you'd consider it?
MARTY: I ain't said yes, I ain't said no.
VEEANN: But you all agree? Caroline?
CAROLINE: I'm not turning cartwheels over it. But it didn't look quite as bad as most of those . . . places. Yes, I'll go along. On certain conditions.
VEEANN: Conditions.
MICHAEL: Look, Veeann, we want to be as honest as we can possibly be about this whole thing. You've been upfront with us, we need to be the same.
FRANKLIN: You've put us all in quite an awkward position. We're not quite sure how to proceed from here. That's as honest as we can possibly be.
VEEANN: I'm still listening.
MICHAEL: We talked about each of our situations, Veeann, over and over. We all of us still hate the thought of a nursing home. Your house has seemed like, and continues to seem like, the best answer.
VEEANN: But it's not an answer anymore.
FRANKLIN: We understand that.
MICHAEL: We do. So you win, Veeann. Shady Pines it is.
FRANKLIN: I think it's the best choice for everyone.
GEORGE: So that's it?
MICHAEL: That's it.
GEORGE: It's over? The decision is made?
MARTY: No! The decision ain't made! I ain't decided!
GEORGE: But the rest of you? No more objections?
CAROLINE: That's right, George.
GEORGE: Well I think that's wonderful! Absolutely wonderful! I can't tell you how relieved I am. Veeann and I were sure from the start that this would be the right decision.
MICHAEL: We think so, too.
GEORGE: So, we'll need to work out the details. I'll call the administrator on Monday, and we can begin unravelling all the red tape.
MARTY: George! I ain't agreed to this!
CAROLINE: You do that, George.
GEORGE: Dad, it won't hurt to get the paperwork started. Save time if you do decide.
VEEANN: What are your conditions?
GEORGE: What do you mean, Veeann?
VEEANN: You mentioned conditions, Caroline.
MICHAEL: We would like you to keep him for a few more months. Until we can find a good buyer for the land.
VEEANN: No. (*An explosion. They all begin talking at once.*)
GEORGE: Veeann . . .
VEEANN: The answer is no.
MICHAEL: Veeann, we're talking a few weeks, maybe three months, tops.
VEEANN: Michael, I can't wait until after you've found a buyer, 'til it's more convenient. I want a final decision now.
CAROLINE: Absolutely unreasonable . . .
VEEANN: This is the same deal you offered this morning, Michael. Did you think I'd forget?
MICHAEL: We'll give you a time frame. We'll set a deadline.
VEEANN: Not good enough. I want a decision this weekend.
FRANKLIN: Veeann, this isn't like you, this isn't . . .
MICHAEL: We're meeting you more than halfway . . .
CAROLINE: Yourself, that's it, that's all you're interes . . .
MARTY: I ain't decided nothing!
GEORGE: Veeann, I don't know about this.
VEEANN: Well, I do, George, if you don't. This is not acceptable.
CAROLINE: Utterly selfish.
MARTY: I ain't come to a decision, Vee.
MICHAEL: Caroline, please. Veeann, listen to me . . .
VEEANN: I did listen, Michael. This morning, remember?
MICHAEL: We can't meet you any further, Veeann.
VEEANN: Oh, I think you can, Michael. You can start by telling the truth. (*She shouts this last line over the hubbub. It stops them. A pause.*)
GEORGE: Veeann . . .
VEEANN: Let's be honest with each other, Michael, let's be right upfront. What kind of scam is it this time?
MICHAEL: I don't know what you're talking . . .
VEEANN: The long conversations with Chuck, doors closed. The sudden, absorbing interest in your father's estate. We're all being honest here, Michael. Why don't you start? What kind of scam are you involved in?
MICHAEL: I'm not involved in any scam.
LYNN: While we're at it, Chuck. I'd appreciate some answers, too.
CHUCK: I handle the finances, Lynn.
LYNN: Our finances, Chuck.
CHUCK: Leave it alone, Lynn.
VEEANN: We know your history, Michael, we know you. Remember your Amway days? The water softener fiasco? The little grey vacuums? Remember, Michael?
GEORGE: Veeann, no.
VEEANN: George, I simply want Michael to be honest with us. Like he said. Upfront.
MICHAEL: Veeann, I'm trying to work out a compromise . . .
VEEANN: You've got something going. What is it?
MICHAEL: I don't do that kind of thing anymore, Vee.
VEEANN: Lynn thinks you have.
LYNN: I know you have, Uncle Michael. You and my husband.
VEEANN: What is it? Condo-shares? Diamond mines? Mountain

Secur. . . ? Mountain Security. (A pause. The word just hangs there.)
It is, isn't it? You invested in Mountain Security.

CAROLINE: What?

GEORGE: Oh, Michael.

MICHAEL: It's not true.

FRANKLIN: I think you're right, Veeann. Michael, remember, a few months ago, you were talking it up to me?

MARTY: Hell, I think you're right, Vee. Michael never did have the sense the good Lord give a grasshopper's behind.

CAROLINE: Mountain Security? What?

GEORGE: It's been a big item in the news here. One of the largest securities frauds in state history.

CAROLINE: Michael?

LYNN: Chuck?

MICHAEL: I don't know what you're talking about . . .

CHUCK: We ain't invested no money in no Mountain Security.

LYNN: You swear it, Chuck? Not one cent of our money has gone into Mountain Security?

CHUCK: I swear it.

LYNN: Chuck, that's the first lie that I know is a lie. Right, Uncle Michael?

VEEANN: What about it, Michael?

MARTY: I'd kinda like to know, too, Michael. Seein' as how you were talking about selling my land to pay your debts.

VEEANN: That's it, isn't it? From the first day, you've been talking about estate planning. That's why. To pay off your debts. That's what you and Chuck have been up to.

MICHAEL: We're talking about my father.

VEEANN: Not right now, we're not, Michael. Right now we're talking about you.

LYNN: And me. And my husband. And my children.

MICHAEL: All right!

VEEANN: So you did after all?

MICHAEL: Yes.

GEORGE: You invested in Mountain Security?

MICHAEL: Yes.

LYNN: And you invested with him, Chuck?

CHUCK: Yes.

CAROLINE: How much?

MICHAEL: Twenty-eight thousand dollars.

FRANKLIN: Twenty-eight . . .

CAROLINE: Michael, where did you get twenty-eight thousand dollars?

MICHAEL: A second mortgage. We took out a second mortgage on the house.

FRANKLIN: Wow.

LYNN: Chuck, you didn't invest that kind of money, did you?

CHUCK: No.

LYNN: How much?

CHUCK: Not as much as him.

LYNN: The exact total, please.

CHUCK: A few thousand.

LYNN: A few thousand? Exactly how many thousand?

CHUCK: I ain't sure, exactly.

LYNN: One lie follows another, Chuck. I'm starting to not believe anything you've told me.

CHUCK: All right! A little over six thousand.

LYNN: Six thousand!!!

CHUCK: A little over that.

LYNN: Chuck, I've been driving twenty miles to do my grocery shopping at a warehouse market. Dressing the kids in Ruth's

hand-me-downs and DI specials. Where in the world did you get six thousand dollars?

CHUCK: Cashed in our life insurance.

LYNN: Chuck . . . (She's speechless.) Oh, Chuck.

MARTY: So that's why you wanted to sell my land.

MICHAEL: That's right, Dad! We have two families that need it. Desperately.

VEEANN: I'm sorry, Michael.

MICHAEL: So am I, Vee. And I know what you're thinking. Stupid Michael. Another get-rich-quick scheme blows up in his face. Drags Chuck down with him. Serves him right. But you don't know.

GEORGE: No, Michael, we don't.

MICHAEL: It was our old bishop, if you can believe that. He called me. Just one year ago last week. He said that he'd found this wonderful investment possibility, that he'd checked it out, that it was a great way for struggling young families to pay some extra tithing. That's just how he put it, too, pay some extra tithing. High yield, no risk, guaranteed return. So I started small, wrote out a check for two hundred dollars. Within the month, I'd received six hundred in dividends. So I plowed it back, added another thousand to prime the pump. The checks just kept coming, my investment plus. So I decided, this was it. My big break. And so I took out the mortgage.

GEORGE: And the bank just approved it?

MICHAEL: Bryce Taylor was the loan officer. He was into it for forty thou himself. Oh, it went through, smooth as silk.

LYNN: Was it old Bishop Ahlstrom?

MICHAEL (nodding): His wife caught him swallowing sleeping pills, rushed him to the hospital just in time.

LYNN: I'd heard something, didn't think it could be true.

CHUCK: Wish he had done it. Crook.

LYNN: Chuck, Mark Ahlstrom is one of the kindest men I know.

Don't blame him for your stupidity.

CHUCK: Don't call me stupid, Lynn.

CAROLINE: Why not? You are. Both of you. Idiots.

MICHAEL: You're not telling me anything I don't already know, Caroline. Anyway, Dad, I doubt this makes any difference. I know that you've got more to worry about than my mistake. But I could lose my home.

MARTY: You should. You deserve it, both of you.

MICHAEL: But Ruth doesn't deserve it, Dad. Neither does Lynn.

LYNN: Never mind me, Grandpa. Sell any land you like. Except the ranch, and I know you'll never sell that.

CHUCK: Don't be so sure about that ranch, Lynn.

LYNN: What do you mean?

MICHAEL: Chuck, no.

CHUCK: Michael, shut up. Look, it's about time we told people what's goin' on. They know the bad stuff, let's tell them the good.

CAROLINE: You have some good news, Chuck?

CHUCK: You bet it's good news. We got a buyer. For the ranch and for the 600 acres to the south of it. They're offering 500 an acre. That's 680,000 dollars for both plots together.

FRANKLIN: That's nearly \$200,000 apiece.

MARTY: You can't sell the ranch.

CHUCK: I'm livin' on that ranch, old man, not you. And Franklin, I got a contract with the family, I get my cut. You divide it five ways, not four.

GEORGE: Who's the buyer?

MICHAEL: It's a developer named Jay Bell. He's planning to build a major shopping mall in the area.

GEORGE: Jay Bell?

CAROLINE: George, do you know him?

GEORGE: I've heard of him.

CAROLINE: You sound wary.

GEORGE: Well, he's supposed to be a slick customer. Controversial, operates just this side of the law. I know some people he's made very, very rich.

MICHAEL: And we could be one of those people.

CAROLINE: Or one of us could be.

MICHAEL: Look, it was never my intention to take all the money for myself. I'm in trouble right now, I'll admit it. I was hoping to get Dad to sign that particular property over to us. I could use a hundred thousand dollars right now. Couldn't you? Franklin?

FRANKLIN: Not like this.

MICHAEL: Franklin, think about it. A hundred and thirty-six thousand dollars. That's your share. One fifth of 680 thousand.

MARTY: Michael, seems to me you're forgetting somethin'. You got no deal without a signature on a piece of paper. And I ain't signin'. We ain't selling the ranch.

MICHAEL: Dad, think about it. All those years, every spare cent you had, you bought land. Every Sunday, we'd climb in the back of the pickup. Remember? Bouncing along on some dirt road for hours, we'd be hanging on in back. Always, looking for land, look over some new plot you were thinking about buying. And we'd climb out of the truck and you'd say to us, "Don't look like much now, boys, but land's always the best buy you can make. Someday, somebody's gonna see this land, and they're gonna want to build a factory or a store. And that'll be your inheritance." Remember?

FRANKLIN: I remember.

MICHAEL: Dad, we need it now. I'm in terrible shape financially. My fault, I know. Still, you always intended it for us, and right now we need it. Please, Dad.

MARTY: What'll happen to me?

MICHAEL: Shady Pines is a good place, Dad. You'll be happy there. I don't want to have to fight you in court.

GEORGE: No Michael . . .

FRANKLIN: What are you talking about?

MICHAEL: If Dad's declared incompetent in court, I can get a power of attorney and sell the land myself.

CAROLINE: Wait just one second here . . .

FRANKLIN: Michael, no . . .

MARTY: You would do that?

MICHAEL: Dad, I'm desperate. I need that money, and I need it soon.

GEORGE: You'll fight him alone.

CAROLINE: You bet you will.

MICHAEL: Then I will.

LYNN: Michael, you have to have the ranch, too?

CHUCK: Lynn, don't you start.

LYNN: The ranch is my home, Chuck.

CHUCK: Lynn, we're selling the ranch. I've already agreed to it.

LYNN: But I haven't.

MARTY: I ain't either.

CHUCK: A hundred thousand dollars, Lynn. Don't be stupid.

LYNN: I'm not.

MICHAEL: Dad, how about it. You can live like a prince at Shady Pines. I'll come down every weekend, George and Veeann will visit every day. In the meantime, our inheritance can be doing what you always intended it to do. Bail us out.

MARTY: I don't know.

MICHAEL: And Veeann. You want a time-frame. We can give you

one. We have to be finished by June or the whole deal falls apart. I'm telling you all, this is the solution. This is the answer. (A pause. Enter ROBYN, down the stairs.)

ROBYN: Hi, Dad.

VEEANN (under her breath): Oh, no.

FRANKLIN: Hello, Robyn. Have you had a good day?

ROBYN: Kinda boring, really.

VEEANN: I thought you were watching a show.

ROBYN: It's Yo MTV raps. I hate rap.

VEEANN (clueless): Ah.

CAROLINE: Franklin?

FRANKLIN: Robyn, it really would be better if you were to go back upstairs for a few moments. It's rather awkward right now for you to be here.

ROBYN: Tough. I'm staying.

CAROLINE: Robyn, I don't think . . .

ROBYN: I'm not going, so stop trying to get rid of me.

VEEANN: Robyn, please!

ROBYN: Look, what's the big deal? I know what you're talking about, why all the secrecy? (Crosses to MARTY. Looks him in the eye.) Grandpa Mortenson. They're talking about putting you in an old folks home. You know that, don't you?

MARTY: Yes, honey. I know.

ROBYN: You want to go?

MARTY: No, honey, I don't want to. I'm thinking, maybe it would be best if I did, though.

ROBYN: Forget it, grandpa. Don't let them talk you into something you don't want to do.

MICHAEL: I think that's enough out of you, young lady.

ROBYN: I'm a member of this family, too, Uncle Michael.

CAROLINE: Robyn, that's enough.

ROBYN: Oh, shut up.

CAROLINE: Franklin!

FRANKLIN: Honey . . .

ROBYN: Look, screw all of you. Okay? Just go screw yourselves. You don't want what's best for Grandpa. You just don't want to feel guilty about things.

CAROLINE: Robyn, I've heard enough . . .

ROBYN: Am I right?

LYNN: You may have a point, Robyn.

ROBYN: Right on, Lynn. Fight 'em, Grandpa!

VEEANN: Out! Robyn, out of this room!

ROBYN: Grandpa, can I stay?

MARTY: I like having you around, sweetheart.

ROBYN: There you go. I stay.

CAROLINE: Franklin, will you talk to her?

ROBYN: Aunt Caroline, I don't listen to him either.

MARTY: Good for you.

ROBYN: Come on, Grandpa. Be obnoxious. The young and the old, let's tell 'em what we think.

MARTY: Honey, I wish it were that easy. George, Caroline, Veeann, Franklin. Here's how it is. I ain't gonna die with strangers. If I can stay here, with Veeann, you can sell the ranch. Otherwise, I'll get rid of it.

MICHAEL: This is your fault, Robyn.

MARTY: No, it ain't, Michael. Robyn just helped me see it clear.

GEORGE: Dad, why? You know Veeann doesn't want you. Why use this kind of blackmail?

MARTY: I want what I want.

MICHAEL: That goes for me, too, Dad.

MARTY: You'll have a fight on your hands.

MICHAEL: Fair enough.

VEEANN: But if I just can't have you anymore?

MARTY: Then it goes. All of it, over to the Church. You cut me off from you, I cut you off from me. You want an inheritance, Franklin? Michael, you want help with your debts? I stay here.
(The next four lines are spoken simultaneously with the four lines following.)

CAROLINE: Bickering and blackmailing . . .

FRANKLIN: Terrible.

ROBYN: You're always like this? What's new?

CAROLINE: Robyn . . .

MICHAEL: (Simultaneous with above.) So you'll let us sell the ranch if you can stay with Vee?

MARTY: If I can stay with family, yes.

VEEANN: Marty, that may not be possible.

MARTY: You heard what I said.

VEEANN: Dad, we need to talk about this. Okay?

MARTY: Fine. (VEEANN, MICHAEL, CAROLINE, GEORGE, and FRANKLIN cross to the kitchen, gather close to the stove. ROBYN moves to MARTY with LYNN.)

VEEANN: Look, he's angry, it's normal. He'll get over it. He's going to like it at Shady Pines.

FRANKLIN: He'll give away the land.

VEEANN: That's just a bluff.

MICHAEL: Veeann, 600,000 dollars.

VEEANN: Michael, don't talk to me about your deal.

CAROLINE: I agree.

FRANKLIN: It's not just Michael. I can't take the chance of losing it either, Veeann. I just can't.

CAROLINE: Franklin?

FRANKLIN: It's all I have. (They stare at him.) I'm the assistant pharmacist at a small local drug store, paid an hourly wage barely sufficient for my needs. It's an entry level job, Veeann, a beginner's job, and I've been there for eighteen years. No insurance, no pension, no retirement program. No savings. I'll never rise in the world. When Vickie died, I stopped even wanting to. Veeann, the land my father accumulated through the years is my future. Over a hundred thousand dollars? I have to have it.

CAROLINE: Do you see, Veeann? Do you see now? Michael needs it. Lynn needs it. Franklin needs it.

MICHAEL: Look, it's late tonight. We'll talk to him, reassure him. In a few months, we'll bring it up again. Plant the seed.

CAROLINE: Get him used to the idea.

FRANKLIN: Work up to it slowly.

MICHAEL: Meanwhile, I'll prepare the power of attorney.

CAROLINE: And we'll get you that equipment.

MICHAEL: Absolutely. And some part-time help.

FRANKLIN: In a few months, we'll have it all worked out.

VEEANN: In a few months.

FRANKLIN: So you agree? He stays? Just for now? (There is a long pause.)

VEEANN: George?

GEORGE: Veeann, I think it's best, too.

VEEANN: I thought you were on my side on this?

GEORGE: You see the situation. This is where we are.

VEEANN: Where we've been all along. I hoped I'd have your support, at least.

GEORGE: We compromise, honey. For everyone's best.

VEEANN: Lynn?

LYNN: The ranch is my home, Mom. I want to keep it.

CHUCK: We're out either way.

LYNN: And you're happy about that, aren't you, Chuck?

GEORGE: Veeann, what else can we do?

VEEANN: And you'll get me plenty of help, right? All of you?

GEORGE: It's all going to be different, honey, just as you say.

VEEANN (affectionately): George, with the exception of two days off after the births of our four children, I have cooked every meal and washed every dish for the thirty-four years of our marriage. Cleaned every toilet, changed every diaper, wiped every nose. I do love you, George. But old habits die hard. Good intentions last a few weeks, and then everything goes back to normal. Again I refuse. The answer still is no. (Shocked silence.)

GEORGE: Then that's my answer, too.

MICHAEL: I don't believe . . .

CAROLINE: Absolutely imposs . . .

FRANKLIN: Didn't you hear what I said, Vee?

VEEANN: I did, Franklin. I'm so terribly sorry. But I can feel the walls closing in on me, and I can't push them away. No.

CAROLINE: Why?

VEEANN: Because I can't.

CAROLINE: Why?

VEEANN: Because it's impossible.

CAROLINE: No. Why?

VEEANN: Because I'm sick. I'm tired. I have given given given all my life and I have no more to give. Because I have earned my rest, and I mean to have it!

CAROLINE: This is ridiculous.

MICHAEL: That's it, huh? Final decision.

VEEANN: Final decision.

MARTY: Well, I'm sorry to hear that, Veeann. Put me to bed, I'll call my lawyer in the morning.

MICHAEL: Dad, please.

MARTY: Put me to bed! I'm tired, and I've got a busy day tomorrow.

FRANKLIN: Come on, Robyn, let's go.

MICHAEL: We'll fight you, Dad.

ROBYN: There's gonna be a fight, I wanna watch it.

MARTY: You'll lose.

CAROLINE: You don't even care, do you? Just me me me.

LYNN: Excuse me.

VEEANN: I noticed how anxious you were to sacrifice your life style.

MARTY: A nursing home! You watch, you'll see what it's like. You'll be there soon enough. Lynn and Frannie, they'll be fightin' and squabblin' "whata we do with Dad, I can't take him, I can't take him—

LYNN: Excuse me.

GEORGE: I'm sorry, Dad.

MICHAEL: Dad, Veeann. Maybe we can work something out. Maybe there's—

MARTY: I'm tired.

LYNN: Excuse me.

CAROLINE: I'm booking a flight out tonight.

VEEANN: What is it, honey?

MICHAEL: Wait! Everyone, wait!

LYNN: I may have a solution.

MARTY: Put me to bed!

VEEANN: That's fine, honey. (To MARTY.) In a second, Marty.

MARTY: Not you. Franklin or Michael. One of my—

ROBYN: Hey! You guys are great, you know that? Church every Sunday, but something like this happens, and you forget all about it.

VEEANN: Do you have something to say, young lady?

ROBYN: Not me. Lynn.
 GEORGE: Honey?
 LYNN: I may have a solution.
 CAROLINE: And what is your solution, Lynn?
 LYNN: What if Grandpa were to move back to the ranch, with me?
 MARTY: Back to the ranch? Veeann, you moving back to the ranch?
 MICHAEL: Lynn, that's just not possible.
 LYNN: Why not?
 VEEANN: No, Marty—
 CAROLINE: Honey, he can't ranch any more.
 LYNN: I'll take care of you, Grandpa. If that's all right—
 CHUCK: Lynn, what is this—you can't seriously be thinking about taking in some eighty-four-year-old. What about the kids?
 LYNN: He knows more about ranching than all of us put together. Maybe he can't work himself, but he can still supervise.
 VEEANN: I don't know about thi—
 MICHAEL: We're going to have to sell the ranch, Lynn. It's part of the whole—
 CHUCK: He ain't gonna boss me around—
 MARTY: You got no say in what happens to my—
 CAROLINE: It sounds like a good—
 LYNN: Grandpa, I'll take care of you.
 MARTY: You? Not Vee?
 LYNN: That's right, Grandpa. Aunt Caroline, you talked about some special equipment? Part-time nursing help?
 CAROLINE: For Veeann, sure.
 LYNN: Give me the help, give me the equipment, and I'll take care of him.
 VEEANN: Lynn, you don't have any idea what kind of job this is.
 MARTY: Caroline, Vee, she's gonna take me back to the ranch!
 LYNN: I know what I'm doing, Mom.
 MICHAEL: Of all the unrealistic—
 GEORGE: Lynn, what about your children?
 LYNN: It would do them good to get to know their grandfather. Mom, I can do a lot more than you think—
 VEEANN: You're talking about caring for an elderly invalid and your—
 LYNN: Caroline, Michael, Franklin, I'm going to need all the help you promised Mom.
 CAROLINE: Lynn, I don't think—
 LYNN: I'm serious, Aunt Caroline. I'll be calling you.
 CHUCK: Lynn, forget it.
 MICHAEL: Franklin, this is a disaster—
 LYNN: He's my grandfather, Chuck. I'll do the work.
 FRANKLIN: Michael, I don't know—
 CHUCK: I told you, you ain't bringing him on my ranch.
 MICHAEL: She's screwing up the whole—
 LYNN: Chuck, it is not your ranch. It's still Grandpa's. And, yes, Chuck, I am taking him in.
 FRANKLIN: What if it works out—
 MICHAEL: Think of your share, Franklin, think of the money—
 CHUCK: No way.
 FRANKLIN: I'm thinking of Dad.
 LYNN: Chuck, we haven't been profitable one year since we took the place over. He's got over sixty years of experience. If we can humble ourselves and listen, it may be exactly what we need.
 MARTY: You bet. I'll learn you.
 LYNN: Exactly, Grandpa.
 CHUCK: No!
 MARTY: The ranch again!
 LYNN: We'll get you packed and moved up this week.

MICHAEL: Chuck, you've got to talk to her.
 CAROLINE: Michael, I suggest you stay out of—
 CHUCK: Lynn, stop it. This is stupid.
 LYNN: I don't think so.
 CHUCK: What if I take my share of the 600,000 and start my own business.
 LYNN: There isn't going to be any 600,000. We are going to do this, Chuck.
 CHUCK: And you're just gonna throw away my money, huh?
 LYNN: It's not your money.
 CHUCK: Lynn, this is the big break of my life. You ain't gonna wreck it.
 LYNN: We're taking him in.
 MICHAEL (*overlapping*): Chuck, talk to her.
 CHUCK: Lynn, we ain't gonna do this.
 LYNN: We are going to do this, Chuck.
 CHUCK: Some eighty-year-old know-it-all looking over my shoulder—
 LYNN: I hope he does, Chuck.
 CHUCK: . . . nothing right . . . everything I do . . .
 LYNN (*overlapping*): I hope he looks over your shoulder. I hope he sees things I can't see.
 CHUCK: Lynn, I ain't gonna put up with it.
 LYNN: Then leave.
 CHUCK: What did you say?
 LYNN: Leave.
 VEEANN: Honey—
 LYNN: Mom, this is between—
 CHUCK: You're serious.
 LYNN: I am. I'll run the ranch myself.
 GEORGE: Lynn—
 CHUCK: Without me? You wouldn't last two days.
 LYNN: Try me.
 CHUCK: Lynn, I love you, babe.
 ROBYN: HA!
 CHUCK: You shut up.
 LYNN (*overlapping*): Robyn?
 ROBYN: Tell her, Chuck. Tell her about this morning.
 LYNN: What happened this morning?
 CHUCK: Nothing.
 ROBYN: You want your grade now, Chuckles? I give you a D. Started kissing me this morning, then, like, wanted me to grade—
 CHUCK: Shut up!
 LYNN: Chuck, I don't know you anymore.
 CHUCK: She's lying.
 LYNN: The insurance. The long days, with nothing accomplished at the end of them. All the waitresses at the truckstop café calling you by your first name. Calls late at night, "Keep your husband away from my daughter." Now this with Robyn. You say you love me. What am I supposed to think, Chuck?
 CHUCK: Bunch of old gossips in that town. A crazy punk kid. Who you gonna believe?
 LYNN: Am I supposed to believe you? Look, Chuck, I'm angry; I think I have a right to be. But our children need a father. I don't want to close the door.
 CHUCK: Then forget the ranch, Lynn. Let's take our share of the six-hundred-thou and start all over.
 LYNN: Wrong answer.
 VEEANN: Look, Chuck, I think it would be better if you left now.
 GEORGE: I agree.
 LYNN (*overlapping*): I'm okay, Mom.

CHUCK: I ain't leaving! Lynn, you're crazy, you know that? A woman and a crippled old man. You gonna run a ranch?

LYNN: That's right.

MICHAEL: Just a second, though. Chuck does have a point, wrong though he may be—

VEEANN: Michael—

MICHAEL: Pounding fence posts? Cleaning out stables? Lynn, it's a man's work.

LYNN: Maybe I'll get a man to help me.

CHUCK: A hired hand? How you gonna pay—

LYNN: Uncle Franklin.

ROBYN: Hey!

FRANKLIN: What?

LYNN: You ranched for years, Uncle Franklin, growing up. Come back home. Let's ranch together.

FRANKLIN: Lynn? Do you mean it?

GEORGE: Honey—

LYNN: It's worth trying, don't you think?

ROBYN: Cool! I always wanted to be a cowboy!

LYNN: If we do this, Robyn, I'm the boss.

ROBYN: Sure.

LYNN: I mean it. I'll establish a curfew, up early, no late parties. Chores.

ROBYN: Hey, I'm cool about that. Dad, did you hear? We're gonna be ranchers!

GEORGE (*overlapping*): Just the same—

FRANKLIN: Robyn, please, nothing's been—

CHUCK: This is the stupidest thing I've ever heard. Throwing away good money to take care of some old cripple.

LYNN: Stupid or not, this is what we're doing. Mom, the ranch is my home. I'll do anything to keep it.

VEEANN: Lynn, listen to me—

ROBYN: Grandpa, we're gonna be ranchers!

FRANKLIN: Ranching after all these years. And if it doesn't work out, then what? I'll have burned my bridges.

VEEANN: Lynn, honey, do you have any idea—

CHUCK: Stupid, stupid, stupid—

(*The following lines should be delivered overlapping each other.*)

MICHAEL: Chuck, you've got to stop her!

LYNN: Dad, I'm doing this.

CHUCK: Shut up, Michael. This is between me and—

GEORGE: Honey, I don't know—

VEEANN: Chuck, that's enough. Lynn, if you're sure—

MARTY: Back to my ranch!

GEORGE: Lynn—

VEEANN: I'm not free of this, I'm not—

MICHAEL: I'll fight you, Lynn. I'll take you to court.

CAROLINE: Yes, I'd like to see about flights to California.

VEEANN: Honey, if you need help—

MICHAEL: You don't want to mess with me, Lynn—

CAROLINE: Tonight.

LYNN: Come on, Grandpa.

VEEANN: Call me.

MICHAEL: Six hundred thousand dollars!

(*Final tableau as ROBYN, LYNN, and FRANKLIN gather around MARTY'S wheelchair; looking uncertainly at each other, at the future.*)

BLACKOUT

END



ISLANDS

In Memoriam:
Bryan and Monte Bolton
January 5, 1992

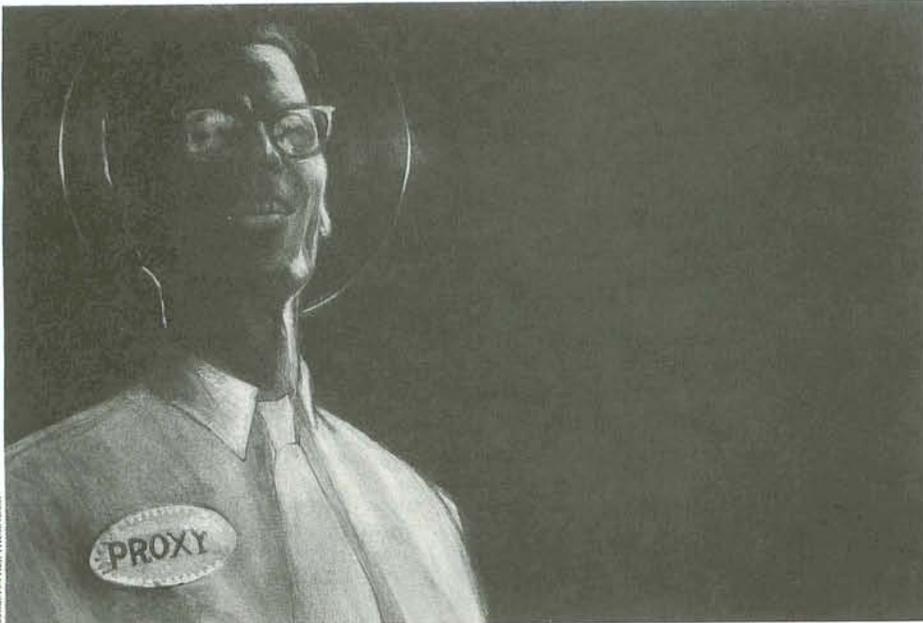
From the shore, the Channel Islands mound
Indistinctly grey against grey skies;
Barely separate from waters that surround,
They rest like invert wombs. Sheer turrets rise
At Cathedral Point—but we cannot see
Such detail from our shore. It strains our eyes
Just to trace dark, arcing curves of scree
That mark sharp land from mapless ocean ways.
Cloud-shrouded, the islands keep their mystery
From those of us on shore. Their lead-grey bays
And coves hide secrets frightening and dark;
Beneath thick storm-whipped spray and dusky haze,
The islands terrify. Their outlines mark
blind boundaries of our human, mortal vision.
Grey shapes, they stand stark symbols of the dark,
Of loss, of harsh unbearable collision—
Love with Faith. To live without the Love . . .
Unthinkable; to endure the indecision
Loss implies . . . impossible. Above
Deep mist-grey mounds, cloud cover billows, parts
For one sufficient moment. Like a dove
Of sheerest light, the sun breaks through with darts
That glance from rock to sea and back again.
A gleam . . . a fragment light . . . then gone. . . . But hearts
That wear the weight of grief and twisting pain
Reach up, entwined with that faint light—rebound
With faith and love to rest on Heaven's plain:
Barely held by waters that surround,
Infinite blue beneath celestial skies,
Seen from *our* shores, the Channel Islands mound.

—MICHAEL R. COLLINGS

LIGHTER MINDS

GOODWORKS, INC.

By J. Frederic Voros Jr.



CHRISTOPHER THURNACK

Too busy to attend sacrament meeting on a regular basis? GoodWorks can handle it. Hey, if you can serve as a proxy for a dead person, why can't you serve as a proxy for a live person?

A FAMILIAR SCENE. A well-appointed office, apparently in the Church Office Building, looks south over the central business district of Salt Lake City. An executive sits at a desk, his back to the window, staring at his computer screen. The first twelve notes of the hymn "Because I Have Been Given Much" sound in electronic tones. He continues staring. The phrase repeats. As the phrase starts a third time, the executive lifts his telephone receiver, abruptly ending the tones.

Hello?

Hi, it's me. Busy?

No.

Right. I forgot.

Hey, we work hard. I was just stuck on

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something, is all.

It doesn't matter. You're quitting anyway. Tell them to take this job and—

Settle down. Why in the world would I ever want to quit a cushy job like this?

Because, my friend, you are about to cash in on the greatest idea to hit Mormonism since, well, my last one about paying commissions on the tithing of people you sponsor into the Church. Only this is even better, because we don't have to talk the Church into changing any policies or anything, which is, as you know, virtually impossible.

I've heard that.

Anyway, the Church plays a major role in this deal, major. But without even knowing it or intending to. That's the beauty of it.

Why do I already know I'm going to hate this scheme?

Because your mind's hermetically sealed

against all new ideas. It's an occupational hazard.

Hey . . .

Prove me wrong. Listen a minute. I guarantee you'll be glad you did.

Okay, okay. You've got five minutes.

That's all I need. This idea represents the coming together—the marriage, if you will—of two gospel themes. First: good works. Elementary gospel principle. Bedrock gospel principle. Resurrection's a free gift to everyone, even if they would rather stay unresurrected. That's salvation. But exaltation, that's different, you've got to earn it. Prove yourself worthy.

I do have a rudimentary understanding of the gospel. Get to the new part.

Okay. How do you prove yourself worthy? By watching TV and going to Jazz games?

Of course not. You attend your meetings, pay your tithing, obey the Word of Wisdom, read the scriptures, do your home teaching, do your family history, the list goes on and on.

And on. Almost too much for one person to do, right?

Perfection is a high goal.

Right. Anyway, the point is, we have to do lots of good works. Enough so that, well, really we never have time to watch TV or go to Jazz games.

Fine, I'll call someone else the next time I get the tickets.

I'm speaking theoretically. But stay with me. Second principle: works by proxy. You're dead. You want to get baptized, but you can't, because you have nothing for someone to immerse in the water. No body. So someone else is baptized for you—your proxy. Just as good as if you did it yourself. Completely, absolutely as good.

I'm still listening.

You don't see it? You don't see a business opportunity crying out for two smart guys to exploit?

Uh, not really, no.

Let me spell it out for you. If I can serve as a proxy for a dead person, and the work is done just as much as if he had done it himself, why can't I serve as a proxy for a live person?

Why would a live person ever want you to?

That part doesn't concern us. Who cares why the client can't do the deed personally. Too busy? Out of town? Doesn't enjoy it? The point is, you and I—or rather our employees—can do it for him. By proxy. For a small fee, of course.

You do have a way of selling every gospel principle for money.

What's the big deal? We do it now.

We certainly do not.

Oh yeah? Open your drawer, pull out your yellow pages, and open to the heading "genealo-

gists." You'll find a dozen or two professional genealogy businesses. I suppose you think they give away their services?

Please, it's "family history" now.

Whatever. It's a commandment. Absolute. Joseph Smith said our greatest responsibility is to seek after our dead. But he didn't say we had to do it personally. He didn't say we have to read every microfilm personally. Fill out every group sheet personally. He didn't say that.

Okay, I'll grant you this one area. But that's only because family history requires particular technical expertise that not everybody has.

That's not what they say in my ward. "Anybody can do it. It's easy." Besides, it's not limited to genealogy.

Oh yeah? Name one other area.

By the way, what were you working on when I called?

Nothing. Writing—touching up, rather—Elder You-know-who's next conference talk. It's pretty good.

Well, aren't you doing the very same thing? Aren't you literally being paid for doing Elder So-and-so's works? You have to admit, preaching the gospel is non-technical, and given his calling and all, it's a good work he has to do.

That's different. I'm a Church employee.

Well, you're about to become the employee of GoodWorks, Inc. Think of it as expanding your potential market. We'll do lots of people's good works, not just the Brethren's. Ghost-do them, you might say.

What an imagination you have.

Thank you. It's so easy. Genealogy's pretty well covered by the guys with, as you say, technical expertise. We'll concentrate on other areas.

I'm almost afraid to ask what.

Well, home teaching springs to mind. "Hi, we're Joe and Tony. We're here to home teach you on behalf of Bill Jones. Bill's out of town this weekend on business, but he really cares about you. So he sent us. May we come in?"

Who would ever, ever trust his home teaching families to a couple of hired strangers?

You're right. Our home teachers must be top notch. Wear ties, carry scriptures, and present a lesson based on the First Presidency message in the current Ensign. Major selling point: we will not only do the home teaching as well as you would yourself, we'll do it better. We'll come early in the month, not late like you. We'll come every month, not sporadically like you. We'll even make a second visit, or a third, depending on how much you . . . well, care about the families. Isn't this beautiful?

But how do I even know who these guys are? They could be gangsters, for all I know.

Nobody's licensed in this field, you know.

I thought of that, and you're absolutely wrong. I bet you've got your license in your pocket right now.

You don't mean—

Of course. It's almost as though the Brethren prophetically anticipated our very need. I can hear it now: "Our home teachers are all faithful, temple-worthy, fully recommended priesthood holders." That's an absolute must.

This is insane.

Of course, you'll get to exercise your speciality. "Too busy to prepare that sacrament meeting talk? Not to worry. With GoodWorks, your talk will be prepared by prayerful, inspired authors whose work has appeared in Music and the Spoken Word and LDS general conference." Killer.

Now that part of it—just that part—is a possibility.

Why stop at talks? "Too busy to attend sacrament meeting on a regular basis? GoodWorks can handle it. We will attend and record the service so you can listen to it in your car as you commute during the week. We'll even bring home your portion of the sacrament to partake in the comfort and convenience of your own home." Hey, we already do something like that for the homebound.

But they can't come. It's not the same for someone who just won't come.

Who says they just won't? Maybe the client is on call, or away on business, or has to work some Sundays. Who are we to judge? Don't they deserve the blessings of the gospel as much as a guy like you, who gets Sundays off?

Look, I know this seems to make sense in a twisted sort of way. But there's something about it that's just wrong. It sounds too Catholic or something. This is just a way for rich guys to buy their way into the celestial kingdom.

I hear you. I agonized over that at first, too. Then I saw that it's really no problem. First, if that's what they want to do with their money, it seems like we should applaud, not criticize. Would we feel better if they spent the dough on diamonds and second homes? Why not an eternal mansion, so to speak? And, second, we can't do every necessary good work anyway.

We can't? Why not?

Well, we can't not commit adultery for somebody. He has to do that himself. Although we might be able to confess to the bishop if the guy is really too busy to get in there.

Get serious.

Okay, okay, maybe we couldn't do that. Also, we can't not kill by proxy, not smoke by proxy, etc., etc.

I get it. Everybody has to avoid sins of

commission on their own. But sins of omission are different. Those can be subbed out.

Yeah, you've got the vision. This will work. There's plenty to be subbed out. We'll do your missionary work, service projects, genealogy, even temple work. That's my favorite. Proxy work by proxy.

You said the Church fits into this in some devious way.

Oh yeah, they're our advertising arm.

You can forget that. They will never agree to that.

Don't have to. What is the single most important function of commercial advertising?

Increasing name recognition.

Wrong. Need creation.

Need creation?

Need creation. Take a simple example: Veg-a-matic. Who would ever have seen the need for that simple device without those great commercials? People weren't standing at their drainboards chopping onions thinking, boy what a waste of time. Can't someone automate this process? But after they saw the commercial, they thought, what am I doing wasting my time chopping by hand when there is a machine that will do it for me.

Well, the Church obviously isn't going to be telling people that they need to hire proxy workers for themselves.

No, but think about it. What is every lesson about?

I don't know, the gospel, I guess.

But they all end up in the same place. Another simple example. First commandment: "Thou shalt love the Lord thy God." What does it mean to love God?

Well, he said "If you love me, keep my commandments."

Bingo. Then the class makes a list of good works at least half of which at least half the class isn't doing. Which means, according to the premise of the lesson, that they don't love God. Which further means that they are not likely to be celestialized. That lesson just created a need for our service. It's perfect. Think how easy it would be to sell life insurance if every church lesson were on the horrors of leaving your family without adequate financial protection.

You know, listening to you talk like this almost makes me wish we believed in grace.

No way. What's the point? No one would need our services then. Besides, there's no such thing as a free lunch, right? Here or hereafter. Everything's got its price.

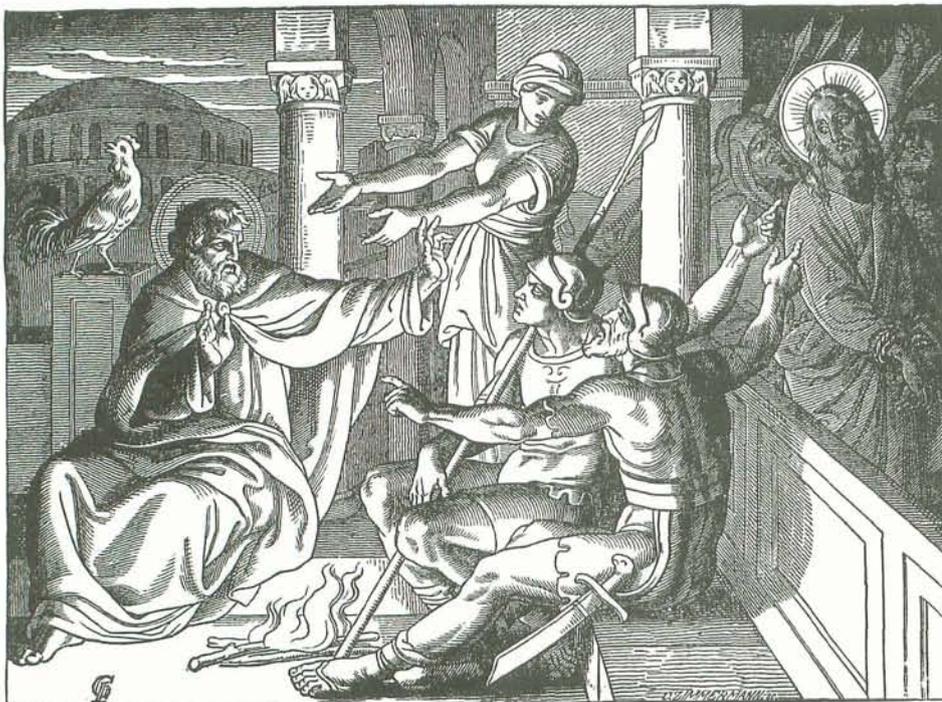
Which reminds me, my computer screen is calling.

Oh yeah, I forgot. My five minutes is up. Well, you just keep doing those works for hire. You've got the idea, just expand your horizon. Privatize. And keep smiling. ☑

THE WORD AMONG US

SEARCHING FOR THE
"HISTORICAL JESUS"

By Stephen E. Thompson



Does it really matter whether the rooster crowed once or twice while Peter was denying Jesus?

IN THE PAST few years the attempt to recover, insofar as possible, what Jesus was most likely to have said and done during his lifetime has received considerable attention. Several books on the topic of the "historical Jesus" have been directed at a general, rather than professional, audience.¹ Recently, a work presenting the results of The Jesus Seminar, a group of scholars who meet and discuss the probability of whether or not Jesus said the things attributed to him in the Gospels, has received media attention largely because of their conclusion that 80 percent of the words attributed to Jesus in the Gospels were never uttered by him.² For

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some the question might arise, why must one search for the historical Jesus, when his deeds and words are plainly described in the Gospels? Why do scholars insist on questioning the accuracy of the Gospels?

In order to answer this last question, we must turn to the Gospels themselves. In a recent article published in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, Catholic scholar Dominic Crossan observed that when read sequentially, the Gospels leave "a persuasive impression of unity, harmony, and agreement," but when closely compared to one another, "it is disagreement rather than agreement which strikes you most forcibly."³ For example, in Mark, Jesus sends out the Twelve and instructs them "not to take anything on the road, except a staff: no bread, no knapsack, no spending money, but to wear

sandals, and to wear no more than one shirt."⁴ (Mark 6:8–9.) In Matthew's version of the same event, Jesus tells the Twelve: "Don't get gold or silver or copper coins for spending money, don't take a knapsack for the road, or two shirts, or sandals, or a staff; for 'the worker deserves to be fed.'" (Matt. 10:9–10.) Note the difference. In the first, the Twelve are to take sandals and a staff. In Matthew, however, Jesus specifically forbids them from taking either.

Such instances of disagreement in details are numerous within the Gospels. The following are just a few additional examples. In the account of Peter's denial of Jesus, Mark (14:30) states that Jesus tells Peter that he will deny him three times before the rooster crows twice, while in Matthew (26:34) the rooster will crow only once. Not unexpectedly, the events unfold in the respective Gospels in the manner foretold in each. In Matthew (21:12–13), Mark (11:15–19), and Luke (19:45–48), Jesus "cleanses" the temple during the last week of his life, while in John (2:13–17) this activity is described as occurring at the beginning of his mission. The order of Satan's temptations of Jesus is different in Matthew (4:1–11) and Luke (4:1–13). In the accounts of Jesus' healing Jarius's daughter, Matthew (9:18–26) describes the girl as dead at the beginning of the story, while in Luke (8:40–56) and Mark (5:21–43) she is only very ill. In the story of Jesus and the Centurion, Jesus speaks directly with the Centurion in Matthew (8:5–13), while in Luke (7:1–10) he speaks only with his servants.⁵

There are examples that show that Matthew and Luke occasionally edited Mark to iron out what for them were theological difficulties. In the account of the rich man and Jesus, Mark (10:17–18) tells us that "as he was traveling along the road, someone ran up, knelt before him, and started questioning him: 'Good teacher, what do I have to do to inherit eternal life?' Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call me good? No one is good except for God alone.'" Note the significant change in Matthew's version of this exchange (19:16–17): "and just then someone came and asked him, 'Teacher, what good do I have to do to have eternal life?' He said to him, 'Why do you ask me about the good? There is only one who is good.'" In Mark's version, Jesus denies that "good" applies to him. Matthew, however, alters the exchange so that it has nothing to do with Jesus' nature.⁶ As a result, the last sentence in Matthew makes little sense in its current context.⁷

Examples such as these, and they can be

greatly multiplied, cannot be put down to varying accounts of different eyewitnesses. When compared with each other, the verbal similarities between the Gospels make it evident that Matthew and Luke were working from a written version of Mark, which they edited to highlight certain themes, and to which they added information. At this point, the reader may feel justified in asking "so what?" Does it really matter whether or not

the rooster crowed once or twice while Peter was denying Jesus? Does it really matter whether or not the Twelve took a staff or wore sandals?⁸ When I was teaching a gospel doctrine class and would raise similar issues regarding both the Old and the New Testaments, invariably someone in the class would comment, "Well, it really doesn't matter whether X or Y happened, because if it did, God would have given us the answer

through his prophets." Mormons don't like ambiguity. They prefer to know what the truth is, and any information that threatens this knowledge is greeted uncomfortably at best, and, at worst, with hostility. Burying one's head in the sand does not, however, make such issues go away. It is in attempting to explain how the Bible came to contain such contradictions as those discussed above that "biblical criticism" arose. Scholars did not set out to "tear asunder" the biblical text, or to impose a particular critical viewpoint on the text. Instead, it was noted that the Bible is frequently in tension with itself, and the critical scholar attempts to determine how this tension arose.⁹

The significance of the differences noticeable in the Gospel accounts has been eloquently stated by James Barr. He noted that such discrepancies

are a clear indication that some of these accounts, if not all, are not completely accurate in their depiction of the event. They show that motives other than the simple accurate reporting of the facts have entered into the composition of them. *They shift our perception of the total nature of the biblical material.*¹⁰

I will return to this topic at the conclusion of my discussion.

When one faces several different accounts of the same event, the natural question is "What really happened?" Unfortunately, it is rarely possible to determine with any degree of certainty the facts that lay behind many of the Gospel narratives, and some scholars have argued that there is no point in doing so.¹¹ Others, however, have developed criteria that serve to help determine the likely "historical" core of the individual narratives.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

An example of how scholars examine differences in the various accounts.

To see how this is done, perhaps a discussion of the accounts of the baptism of Jesus is in order. For many scholars, this is one of the few certain facts that we have about Jesus. A close look at the accounts of this event in the Gospels will reveal why (see sidebar).

Mark's account is relatively straightforward. Jesus went to John for baptism. Following his baptism, as Jesus arose from the water, he saw "the spirit coming down toward him like a dove" and heard a voice from heaven declare, "You are my favored son—I fully approve of you."

In Matthew's account, we note some dif-

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS

The different versions in the four gospels show the difficulties one faces when attempting to reconstruct what really happened. In Mark and Matthew, John baptizes Jesus, while Luke does not tell us who performed the baptism, and in John there is no mention of baptism at all.

Mark 1:9–11

⁹During that same period Jesus came from Nazareth in Galilee and was baptized in the Jordan by John.
¹⁰And just as he got up out of the water, he saw the skies torn open and the spirit coming down toward him like a dove.
¹¹There was also a voice from the skies: "You are my favored son—I fully approve of you."

Matt. 3:13–17

¹³Then Jesus comes from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.
¹⁴And John tried to stop him with these words: "I'm the one who needs to be baptized by you, yet you come to me."
¹⁵In response, Jesus said to him, "Let it go for now. After all, in this way we are doing what is fitting and right." Then John deferred to him.
¹⁶After Jesus had been baptized, he got right up out of the water, and—amazingly—the skies opened up, he saw God's spirit coming down on him like a dove, perching on him,
¹⁷and—listen!—there was a voice from the skies, which said, "This is my favored son—I fully approve of him!"

Luke 3:21–22

²¹And it so happened when all the people were baptized, and after Jesus had been baptized and while he was praying, the sky opened up,
²²and the holy spirit came down on him in bodily form like a dove, and a voice came from the sky, "You are my son; today I have become your father."

John 1:32–34

³²And John continued to testify: "I have seen the spirit coming down like a dove out of the sky, and it hovered over him.
³³I wouldn't have recognized him, but the very one who sent me to baptize with water told me, "When you see the spirit come down and hover over someone, that's the one who baptizes with the holy spirit."
³⁴I have seen this and I have certified: This is God's son."

For some scholars it is rarely possible to determine with any degree of certainty the facts that lay behind many of the Gospel narratives; some have argued that there is no point in doing so.

ferences. There is a lengthy exchange between John and Jesus in which John protests that Jesus has no need of baptism. Jesus assures him, however, that "in this way we are doing what is fitting and right."¹² Note that in Matthew, Jesus sees the dove descending, but the voice is addressed to the bystander(s).

Luke's account differs considerably from the other two. Just before his account of Jesus' baptism, Luke mentions that John had been imprisoned by Herod (Luke 3:20). Luke rushes by the baptism of Jesus and notes that it is after Jesus's baptism, while he was praying, that the Holy Ghost descended in the form of a dove, and the heavenly voice spoke directly to Jesus. The content of this message differs somewhat, however. In some manuscripts, the quotation seems to be derived from Psalms 2:7 ("today I have begotten you"), rather than from Isaiah 42:1 ("in you I have taken delight").¹³ It is important to note that Luke does not say who baptized Jesus, and from Luke's account it would seem impossible that it was John, since he was imprisoned before Jesus's baptism. This cannot be attributed to Luke's having had faulty information, since he had a version of Mark's gospel before him.

Lastly, in John there is no mention of Jesus' baptism at all. The descent of the spirit on Jesus in the form of a dove serves as a sign

to John that Jesus is indeed the one who will come to baptize with the Holy Spirit. John's gospel also seems to go to great lengths to subordinate John to Jesus. We are told that John "was not the light" (1:8), that he stated that he was not the Messiah or Elijah (1:20-21). Jesus is said to have been "recruiting and baptizing more disciples than John" (4:1). When one of John's disciples complains that Jesus is now conducting baptisms, and gaining a large following, John is made to reply that "he [Jesus] can only grow in importance; my role can only diminish" (3:30).

Now the question that scholars ask is why the baptism of Jesus should have given the evangelists (Gospel authors) such problems. They seem to be attempting to explain two difficulties occasioned by the account in Mark. Why would a sinless Jesus need baptism? Why would he have to undergo this ritual at the hands of one inferior to him? Matthew answers these questions by creating an elaborate dialogue between Jesus and John.¹⁴ Luke, however, constructs his narrative in such a manner that it was impossible for John to be the one who baptized Jesus. John's gospel simply fails to mention the fact that Jesus was baptized at all!

The reason that most scholars see the baptism of Jesus as one of the secure facts known about him is that it is unlikely that

the evangelists would invent an event that gave them such obvious theological difficulty. One of the criteria used to determine whether or not a particular saying or deed goes back to Jesus himself has been called the criterion of "embarrassment" or "contradiction." Meier has noted that

the point of the criterion is that the early Church would hardly have gone out of its way to create material that only embarrassed its creator or wrecked its position in arguments with opponents. Rather, embarrassing material coming from Jesus would naturally be either suppressed or softened in later stages of Gospel traditions, and often such progressive suppression or softening can be traced.¹⁵

Speaking of the accounts of Jesus's baptism, Meier observes that

quite plainly, the early Church was 'stuck with' an event in Jesus' life that it found increasingly embarrassing, that it tried to explain away by various means, and that John the Evangelist finally erased from his Gospel. It is highly unlikely that the Church went out of its way to create the cause of its own embarrassment.¹⁶

The historical core of these narratives seems to be that John baptized Jesus. What was the significance of this event? In order to answer this question, we need to examine the Gospel accounts of John's message. In Luke 3:16-17, we are told that John was preaching that "someone more powerful than I is coming, whose sandal straps I am not fit to untie. He'll baptize you with [holy] spirit and fire. His pitchfork is in his hand, to make a clean sweep of his threshing floor and to gather his wheat into the granary, but the chaff he'll burn in a fire that can't be put out." Now this message has been interpreted as a reference to Jesus. But is it? If John the Baptist's mission was to prepare the way for Jesus, how did this message accomplish that goal? John warned the people of a "coming one" who would destroy the unrepentant by fire. In Luke 3:7, John speaks of an "impending doom." This is an expression borrowed from the Old Testament used to refer to "God's judgment by which evil is to be wiped out; it is associated with the Day of the Lord."¹⁷ Traditional interpretations take



"In a way, Bryan never really returned from his mission."

these descriptions to refer to events that will occur at Jesus's second coming. How would preaching about Jesus's second coming help prepare the way for his mortal ministry? How would describing such events help people to recognize who Jesus was? To many scholars, the conclusion seems inescapable: John's message was originally not about Jesus, but "was an announcement of imminent apocalyptic intervention by God."¹⁸ Jesus, by submitting to baptism by John, would seem to have accepted John's message. In fact, Matthew describes the message of John and Jesus in identical terms: "Repent ye, for the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand." (Matt. 3:2, cf. Matt. 4:17, KJV.) It is possible that Jesus was at one point a disciple of John.¹⁹ Matthew (4:12-17) and Mark (1:14-15) indicate that Jesus's public ministry did not begin until after John's arrest, that is, when the movement started by John would have needed a new leader. This would account for the tendency in the Gospels to attempt to downplay John's status in relationship to Jesus. John was originally, perhaps, the more popular leader.²⁰ Also, when one approaches the accounts of Jesus's baptism with no preconceived notions concerning Jesus's nature or the necessity of baptism for all, one is led to the conclusion that Jesus's acceptance of John's message indicates that he recognized his own need for repentance.²¹

Of course, this only represents one possible interpretation of the information available. Once one gives up the idea of an inerrant, strictly historical, biblical record, it must be admitted that there is little in the life of Jesus that can be known with certainty. Paula Fredrikson has written that what really happened during Jesus's ministry is not recoverable from the evangelical descriptions of what happened. But by examining these descriptions in light of our knowledge of Jesus's historical context, we can establish with reasonable security what possibly happened, what probably happened, and what could not possibly have happened.²²

There is more, however, to a study of the Gospels than simply determining the historical events that lay behind the narratives. To return to Barr's point about the significance of the discrepancies between the Gospels, once we understand that the primary purpose of the evangelists was not the communication of historical detail, we can then move to the next step of understanding the Gospel record. Why did the evangelists choose to describe the events they did, in the manner they did? What theological information, in contrast to historical information, were they trying to communicate? ☒

NOTES

1. J. D. Crossan, *The Historical Jesus: The Life of a Mediterranean Jewish Peasant* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1991); J. P. Meier, *A Marginal Jew: Rethinking the Historical Jesus*, vol. 1: *The Roots of the Problem and the Person* (New York: Doubleday, 1991); A. N. Wilson, *Jesus: A Life* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992); G. Vermes, *The Religion of Jesus the Jew* (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1993); B. L. Mack, *The Lost Gospel: The Book of Q and Christian Origins* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1993); J. D. Crossan, *Jesus: A Revolutionary Biography* (San Francisco: HarperSanFrancisco, 1994); E. P. Sanders, *The Historical Figure of Jesus* (London: Penguin Press, 1993).

2. R. W. Funk, R. W. Hoover, and the Jesus Seminar, *The Five Gospels: The Search for the Authentic Words of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1993).

3. J. D. Crossan, "Jesus the Peasant," *Dialogue* 26(Spring 1993): 157.

4. This and all quotations from the Gospels are taken from *The Five Gospels* unless otherwise noted.

5. For a discussion of the significance of the discrepancies in the story of the Centurion's servant, see J. D. G. Dunn, *The Evidence for Jesus* (Louisville: The Westminster Press, 1985), 14-16. On the issue of the non-historical nature of the Gospels, see chapter one of Dunn's book.

6. For a detailed discussion of this account, see Dunn, *Evidence*, 20-21.

7. This indicates that the Gospels' authors followed the principle of textual conservatism that David Wright has noticed to be characteristic of Joseph Smith's use of biblical passages when creating new scripture. See D. P. Wright, "In Plain Terms That We May Understand: Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12-13," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. B. Metcalfe (Salt Lake: Signature Books, 1993), 172-78, 208. See Dunn, *Evidence*, 21, on this trait in the Gospels.

8. James Talmage also downplays the importance of the discrepancies between the Gospels. See his *Jesus the Christ*. (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1982), 1, and the comments on this passage in M. R. Thorp, "James E. Talmage and the Tradition of Victorian Lives of Jesus," *SUNSTONE* 12(Jan. 1988): 11. James Barr notes that this response is typical of the fundamentalist approach to the Bible. See J. Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism* (Philadelphia: The Westminster Press, 1984), 81.

9. See Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 71.

10. Barr, *Beyond Fundamentalism*, 78, emphasis added.

11. A prime exponent of this position was R. Bultmann. For an overview of the history of the search for the "historical Jesus," see Meier, *Marginal Jew*, chap. 1 and N. T. Wright, "Jesus, Quest for the Historical," in *The Anchor Bible Dictionary* (ABD) D. N. Freedman, et al., ed. (New York: Doubleday, 1992), 3:796-802.

12. It is not at all certain what Matthew means by this phrase. For a review of scholarly opinions, see W. D. Davies and D. C. Allison Jr., *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on the Gospel According to Saint Matthew*, vol. 1 (Edinburgh: T & T Clark Limited, 1988), 325-27. Significantly, they note that "for Matthew 'righteousness' does not mean formal obedience to the divine commands," and that the phrase "to fulfill all righteousness" refers to "Jesus fulfilling prophecy," which is a prominent theme in Matthew's gospel, so much so that he was willing to create prophecy where there was none (Matt. 2:15, compare Hosea 11:1), and to manipulate his sources to make events fit his (mis)understanding of prophecy (Matt. 21:1-7, compare Zech. 9:9, Mark 11:1-7.)

13. For a discussion of which is the best text, see J. A. Fitzmyer, *The Gospel According to Luke* (1-IX), *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 28 (New York: Doubleday, 1981), 485. Fitzmyer prefers "in you I have taken delight" to "today I have begotten you."

14. That this dialogue was created by Matthew is evident from the fact that it contains "language typical of the evangelist." See Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 169, and Davies and Allison, *Matthew*, 323-24.

15. See Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 168.

16. Meier, *Marginal Jew*, 169.

17. Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 468. On the Day of the Lord, see Isaiah 13:9, Zephaniah 1:14-16; 2:2; Ezekiel 7:19.

18. Crossan, *Historical Jesus*, 235. Leivestad notes that the descriptions of John's message in the Synoptic Gospels (Matthew, Mark, Luke) "are not likely to encourage anyone to think particularly of the earthly Jesus." See R. Leivestad, *Jesus in His Own Perspective*, trans. by D. E. Aune (Minneapolis: Augsburg Publishing House, 1987), 36. P. W. Hollenbach states that "John's message must have been that the wrath of God was coming on . . . faithless Israelites. Only if they repented of their apostasy . . . would they escape God's wrath" ("John the Baptist," *ABD* 3: 893).

19. See Fitzmyer, *Luke*, 482 and John 1:29-50; 3:26; Wilson, *Jesus*, 108.

20. P. Fredrikson, *From Jesus to Christ: The Origins of the New Testament Image of Jesus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1988), 98.

21. The possibility that Jesus was not originally thought of as sinless is also evidenced in Hebrews. See G. W. Buchanan, *To the Hebrews*, *The Anchor Bible*, vol. 36 (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 130 and the references cited there.

22. Fredrikson, *From Jesus to Christ*, 97.



A TOUCH OF SUN

I stand at the smooth side
of a wall where we feel
the morning sun,
there where it enters our yard.
The air is cold.
I touch my palm
to the warm stone surface
as if it were the cheek
of my love
and would bring me
a small corner of God's
soft land out of that
brightness that binds
within its sanctity.

—RICHARD SHORTEN

REVIEWS

FUNDAMENTALIST POLYGAMY: TOLERATING THE INTOLERABLE

KIDNAPPED FROM THAT LAND:
THE GOVERNMENT RAIDS ON THE
SHORT CREEK POLYGAMISTS

by Martha Sonntag Bradley
University of Utah Press, 1993
260 pages, \$29.95



Reviewed by Massimo Introvigne

THE SHORT CREEK, Arizona, raid of 26 July 1953 is the most notorious episode in the story of the post-Manifesto confrontation between U.S. authorities and Mormon polygamous fundamentalists. Martha Sonntag Bradley's *Kidnapped from That Land* is the first book-length treatment of that infamous episode within the general context of the story of Mormon fundamentalism. The first section of the book offers a short overview of pre-Manifesto polygamy from Joseph Smith's revelations to 1890, although a reader unfamiliar with Mormon history might want to consult Richard S. Van Wagoner's *Mormon Polygamy*¹ and Carmon Hardy's book *Solemn Covenant*² in order to understand the historical complexities of the subject. Bradley also explains the roots of modern-day fundamentalism and the history of the pioneer settlements in the Short Creek area. The largest portion of the book is devoted to a description of the fundamentalist community in Short Creek, its relations with fundamental-

ists in the Salt Lake area, and the raids by Arizona and Utah authorities culminating in the 1953 raid. The 1953 raid is usefully placed within the context of both United States and Arizona politics of the 1950s, with an outline of the political career of Arizona Governor Howard Pyle, a close associate of Barry Goldwater, and the prime mover behind the raid. Although an evangelical Protestant, Pyle kept the Mormon church in Salt Lake fully informed concerning the raid, and his project was warmly endorsed by some general authorities in Utah. The book offers a detailed chronicle of the raid and of subsequent events, including a number of different legal cases. Finally, Bradley reports on her own visits to what was once called Short Creek (now the twin villages of Hildale, Utah, and Colorado City, Arizona) and surveys the current status of the fundamentalist community in 1992. Two appendices include a list of the families involved in the 1953 raid and the full text of the statement by Governor Pyle, a typical piece of 1950s patriotic rhetoric exposing the fundamentalists' activities of "insurrection within [Arizona's] own borders."

While describing the lifestyle of the polygamous families in Short Creek and the 1953 drama, Bradley is at her best. She exhibits impressive command of primary sources and considerable literary skills. Although Bradley clearly does not share the fundamentalists' theology or world view, she has obviously developed both respect and

sympathy for their peculiar and at times paradoxical lifestyle. Even while arguing from a feminist point of view, Bradley disagrees with Governor Pyle's characterization of the women of Short Creek as "white slaves." Quite to the contrary, Bradley maintains that fundamentalist women had fulfilling relationships with both their religion and their husbands in a patriarchal setting. "Paradoxically," she writes, "it could be maintained that fundamentalist women triumphed by accepting limitations" (111). Another important point Bradley makes is that fundamentalism was not—and is not today—about plural marriage alone. In fact, she offers a detailed analysis of Short Creek's peculiar economic communal organization, the United Effort Plan, and explains its similarities with early Mormonism's social experiments. It is also true that fundamentalist groups exist that do not practice plural marriage, such as the Aaronic Order, which has been described in sociological terms by Hans Baer in his important book *Recreating Utopia in the Desert*.³ Like Baer's book, Bradley's analysis confirms that fundamentalism is a larger phenomenon that cannot be stereotypically reduced to polygamy. Fundamentalists maintain a number of features of nineteenth-century Mormonism that disappeared after the Manifesto and the "Americanization" of Utah. Ultimately the dialectics between the fundamentalist groups and the mainline LDS church are the well-known tensions between community and society, *gemeinschaft* and *gesellschaft*, which has been observed in many communities, particularly during the crucial passage from the nineteenth to the twentieth century. It was, in a sense, unavoidable that Mormon community developed into Mormon society. Fundamentalists—whether polygamists or not—did not accept this passage, but elected to keep their small *gemeinschaft*, in a desert society, real (Short Creek's) or psychological (clandestine life in metropolitan Salt Lake City).

There is little doubt, according to Bradley, that the raid itself was an ill-fated venture and a political disaster for Governor Pyle and other state officials. It was also ultimately embarrassing for Mormon authorities and the press who initially endorsed it. It did not achieve any of the intended results (more than forty years after the raid, polygamy is alive and well in Utah and Arizona), and it brought unnecessary suffering to men, women, and children, which is movingly detailed in the book. Apparently, however, the lesson of Short Creek has not been universally understood. The publication of Bradley's book coincided with raids very sim-

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ilar to Short Creek. In 1992 assaults against colonies of The Family, a religious group that traces its origins to the Children of God, occurred in Australia and Spain and the following year in Argentina and France. The Family was accused of perpetuating a way of living typical of the early Children of God, including polygamy, child abuse, and the use of sexual advances by female missionaries to secure converts ("flirty-fishing"). In the 1992-93 raids, hundreds of children were taken from their mothers in these four countries and made temporary wards of courts. Further investigations revealed that the notorious "flirty-fishing" had been discontinued

and that there was no evidence of sexual abuse of children. The only allegation that remained was polygamy and the charge that older men took juvenile wives. Although this may have been true in some countries, public opinion did not react as the authorities may have expected. Instead of being shocked by The Family's polygamy, the public reacted negatively against reports and photographs of children being taken from their mothers and placed in foster homes or public institutions against their will. Before the end of 1993, all children were returned to their mothers and to their religious communities in all countries involved. Although legal

cases are still pending in Argentina and France (with a parallel case in the United Kingdom), it is clear that the political careers of the authorities involved in the raids will suffer and that the support of some of the mainline churches of the raids against The Family was misguided.

The similarity between these recent events with the scandal of Short Creek is striking. The raids involving The Family demonstrate that Bradley's book not only addresses an historical episode, but also touches sensitive issues still important and relevant in the 1990s. The rhetoric of "protecting children" and the idea that child

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abuse is unavoidable in fringe communities with unorthodox beliefs is still promoted by secular anti-cult and evangelical counter-cult movements, and lies behind the grossly exaggerated charges of "ritual" sexual abuse of children, which are advanced (but almost never proved) against occult, neo-pagan, and various New Age groups.

Both the legal and theological aspects of the raid are exceedingly complicated. Bradley offers a useful summary of legal cases involving the Short Creek polygamists, and emphasizes the importance of the Vera Black case (1954). Readers of the book may not clearly understand why Vera was allowed to keep her children, despite her anticipatory breach of her 1956 pledge renouncing polygamy. Readers not familiar with Arizona law (and perhaps Arizona politics in the 1950s) may wish to consult Ken Driggs's article "Who Shall Raise the Children? Vera Black and the Rights of Polygamous Parents."⁴ As far as the theology is concerned, the reader may have asked for more information about distinctions between the Short Creek community and other fundamentalist polygamist groups who separated themselves from the Mormon church. Although Bradley at times leaves the impression that the separation between Short Creek and other fundamentalist movements occurred primarily because of leadership questions, there were also differences in theology which should be considered in future research. D. Michael Quinn addressed some of these issues in his article "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism,"⁵ but a complete survey of the many different groups and subgroups of Mormon fundamentalism remains to be completed.

Bradley's book proves that history of controversial episodes can be rescued from mere legend and analyzed with appropriate scholarly tools. Her masterful treatment of Short Creek will not only become a standard reference for students of Mormon polygamy, but will also be appreciated by a larger audience as a much needed lesson on cross-cultural understanding and religious tolerance. ☒

NOTES

1. Richard S. Van Wagoner, *Mormon Polygamy* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1986).

2. Carmon Hardy, *Solemn Covenant: The Mormon Polygamist Passage* (Urbana & Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1986).

3. Hans Baer, *Recreating Utopia in the Desert* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1988).

4. Ken Driggs, "Who Shall Raise the Children? Vera Black and the Rights of Polygamous Parents," *Utah Historical Quarterly* (Winter 1992): 27-46.

5. D. Michael Quinn, "Plural Marriage and Mormon Fundamentalism," in *Fundamentalisms and Society: Reclaiming the Sciences, the Family, and Education*, ed. Martin E. Marty and R. Scott Appleby (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993).

A CASE STUDY OF A MORMON WARD

MORMON LIVES: A YEAR IN
THE ELKTON WARD
by Susan Buhler Taber
University of Illinois Press
376 pages, \$27.00



Reviewed by Gordon Shepherd

ACCORDING TO AUTHOR Susan Taber, *Mormon Lives* "is primarily an attempt to portray what it is like to be a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints at a particular place and time" (4)—what it is like, that is, to be a modern Mormon living in the contemporary United States.

The time depicted by Taber is circa 1985, while the place is not the Mormon heartland of Utah or its Rocky Mountain environs, but the Elkton Ward, a smallish LDS congregation in Newark, Delaware. Thus, in part, the lives of these particular Latter-day Saints must be understood as unfolding at a time and place where they are not the complacent majority, but a distinct religious minority. This position, of course, is still the rule and not the exception for most Mormons throughout the world. To live as a religious minority can strengthen members' sense of camaraderie while simultaneously, and ambiguously, intensifying commitment challenges to remain faithful. This is especially true for new converts to a missionary church that requires unstinting lay participation at the congregational level in order to function. The concurrent sacrifices and rewards of Mormon lay participation, in conjunction with the demands of daily life in modern society, emerge as the *leitmotif* of this book.

Mormon Lives had its origins in a unique project (for Mormons) of congregational self-examination, initiated by well-known LDS

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scholars Richard and Claudia Bushman, who were themselves members of the Elkton Ward. Their idea was to collect an extensive set of documentary materials about the functioning of the ward and its members to serve as a data base for future historians and scholars of community life to analyze. Bushman, who was then the Elkton Ward bishop, obtained permission from Church headquarters to organize a year long data-gathering project, which included a member attitude survey, numerous written accounts of special ward events, minutes of meetings, personal journals, and oral histories taken from over 100 ward members. As a member of the Elkton Ward's "Record Year Committee," Taber agreed to develop interview protocols for the oral histories. Eventually, it was these oral histories, superbly organized and edited by Taber, that became the substantive focus of *Mormon Lives*. The project's entire collection of material has been deposited in the Brigham Young University archives.

As in most good case studies, the richness of ethnographic detail in *Mormon Lives* is achieved at the expense of confident and precise statistical generalizations based on representative samples. Is the Elkton Ward a reliable microcosm for comprehending the nature of Mormon life at other times and places? No doubt it is not in many respects, but, impressionistically at least, there are certain consequences of Mormon organization and belief that appear to be experienced more or less universally by participating members, whether they are in Provo, Utah;

Mexico City; or Newark, Delaware. In my judgment, many of the oral history accounts given by members of the Elkton ward resonate in varying degrees with the experiences

of Latter-day Saints throughout the world. The way to test this impression, as well as to identify group patterns that are particularistic and not universal, would be to conduct a se-

ries of additional congregational studies, controlling for regional and national differences. Official Church reluctance to sanction such studies by independent scholars who

RECENTLY RELEASED

Compiled by Will Quist

This section features recent titles from the Mormon press; the descriptions are often taken from promotional materials. Submissions are welcome, especially for books of LDS interest that are not by the major LDS publishers. SUNSTONE neither promotes nor sells these titles.

CHRISTIAN LIVING

Follow the Living Prophets: Timely Reasons for Obeying Prophetic Counsel in the Last Days. By Brent L. Top, Larry E. Dahl, and Walter D. Bowen. Bookcraft, hardback, 208 pages, \$11.95.

Written to combat the "notable increase in doubt, disbelief, disregard and even defiance of counsel given by Church leaders."

From Pain to Peace: Help for Parents with Wayward Children. By Sharon Clonts and Janice Chalker. Bookcraft, hardback, 155 pages, \$9.95.

Written "from their combined backgrounds of experience, observation, and study" to provide "comfort, help, and hope" to parents and families.

Gone Too Soon: The Life and Loss of Infants and Unborn Children. By Sherri Devashrayee Wittwer. Covenant Communications, paperback, 97 pages, \$7.95.

An LDS mother's "book of comfort and counsel for those who have lost (or know someone who has lost) little [or unborn] children."

Suicide: Some Things We Know, and Some We Do Not. By M. Russell Ballard. Deseret Book, hardback, 64 pages, \$6.95.

"This message gives help and provides hope to those who've felt the sting when a loved one or friend takes his or her own life."

HISTORY & BIOGRAPHY

Father of the Prophet: Stories and Insights from the Life of Joseph Smith, Sr. By Mark L. McConkie. Bookcraft, hardback, 198 pages, \$12.95.

Joseph Sr.'s life is treated thematically to show who he was, what role he played in the lives of others, and why his own life is a worthy example to follow.

Having Authority: The Origins and Development of Priesthood during the Ministry of Joseph Smith. By Gregory A. Prince. John Whitmer Historical Association

Monograph Series, Independence Press (Herald House), paperback, 99 pages, \$6.00.

The author's "years researching the evolution of the Mormon priesthood . . . offer a useful corrective and a much-needed expansion on previous conceptions."

In the Company of Prophets: Personal Experiences of D. Arthur Haycock with Heber J. Grant [to] Ezra Taft Benson. By Heidi S. Swinton. Deseret Book, hardback, 124 pages, \$12.95.

Haycock, who worked with these presidents for almost five decades, "provides an inside look at the [ir] lives and personalities."

Joseph Smith: The Prophet, the Man. Ed. by Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate, Jr. Religious Studies Center, BYU, hardback, 352 pages, \$12.95.

Contains the proceedings of the dedication of BYU's new Joseph Smith Memorial Building and 23 papers from the 1992 Joseph Smith Symposium.

Life before Life: A Collection of Mother's Experiences with Their Pre-Born Children. Comp. by Sarah Hinze. Cedar Fort, hardback, 153 pages, \$13.95.

These stories from mothers about their children "make a powerful statement about the sanctity of life and its origins."

The Millennial World of Early Mormonism. By Grant Underwood. University of Illinois Press, hardback, 213 pages, \$24.95.

"Shows how Mormonism from 1830 to 1846 was profoundly influenced by its views of an imminent second coming of Christ and millennial transformation of the earth."

The Mormons' War on Poverty: A History of LDS Welfare, 1830-1990. By Garth Mangum and Bruce Blumell. University of Utah Press, hardback, 320 pages, \$29.95.

"Identifies the welfare principles advocated by the Mormon church and traces their application through a century and a half of experimentation."

My Best for the Kingdom: History and Autobiography of John Lowe Butler, a Mormon Frontiersman. By William G. Hartley. Aspen Books, hardback, 511 pages, \$24.95.

Early convert, Danite captain, Joseph Smith bodyguard, missionary, and polygamist—this is "a rich source for numerous events in Mormon history."

Utah People in the Nevada Desert: Homestead and Community on a Twentieth Century Farmers' Frontier.

By Marshall E. Bowen. Utah State University Press, hardback, 150 pages, \$24.95.

This book draws on "an impressive array of both standard and rarely used records to recount [the] history" of these twentieth-century settlements.

SCRIPTURE & THEOLOGY

Review of Books on the Book of Mormon, vol. 6, no. 1. Ed. by Daniel C. Peterson. Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, paperback, 566 pages, \$12.95.

The entire issue of this periodical responds to *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology* (Signature Books, 1993); different essays review the book in whole or in part.

Scriptural Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith. Sel. and arr. by Joseph Fielding Smith; annotations and introduction by Richard C. Galbraith. Deseret Book, hardback, 539 pages, \$19.95.

"The scriptures the Prophet used" have been referenced in this version of an LDS classic to "help all students of the gospel to better understand the Prophet's profound teachings."

Sermons and Writings of the Restoration, Volume 1. Comp. by Ogden Kraut. Pioneer Press, paperback, 269 pages, \$6.00.

"The first in a series of several volumes containing sermons and writings of early LDS Church leaders . . . contains information from 1840 through 1850," with additions from the 1830s.

Teachings of the Prophets: Statements of LDS Leaders on Contemporary Issues. Comp. by R. Clayton Brough. Horizon Publishers, hardback, 176 pages, \$13.98.

Under 62 major subject headings, this book "fills the growing need for quick, easy access to recent statements of LDS leaders."

Unpublished Revelations of the Prophets and Presidents of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Volume 2. Comp. by Fred C. Collier. Collier's Publishing Co., hardback, 319 pages, \$24.95.

Includes variant accounts of the First Vision, visions of Moroni, testimonies of the Three Witnesses, and various Spirit manifestations, to the close of the Missouri period.

wish to publish their results, however, makes an extended undertaking of this sort unlikely. It also makes Taber's book all the more valuable as a pioneering achievement.

As an organizing format, Taber introduces readers to her subjects' personal accounts in the context of their participation in particular ward events or lay callings during the record year of observation. Thus, for example, there are chapters organized around baptisms, a marriage, a stake temple excursion, choir rehearsals and performance, a missionary farewell, fund raising and welfare projects, ward conference, personnel changes in the bishopric and auxiliary organizations, youth activities and Primary children's events, testimony meeting, the persistent problem of inactive members, priesthood meeting, Relief Society socials, and so on. One important result of this format is that we clearly begin to see ward members not merely as individuals but as social actors, whose experiences are mutually shaped by their interlocking roles in the religious community. One begins to get a good sense of the demanding yet supportive—oftentimes encapsulating—character of Mormon group life.

In each chapter the spotlight falls on three to ten ward members whose oral history interviews have been selectively transcribed into seamless monologues. Those interviewed talk about how they came to be members of the Church, about their religious and secular backgrounds; their families, occupations and working lives; their church callings and lay involvement over time; their beliefs, priorities, and aspirations; their personal concerns and struggles in life. The book's success ultimately depends on the clarity and insights offered by these monologues. Collectively, they make for engrossing and, at times, poignant reading, as members of the Elkton Ward speak with simplicity and apparent candor about their lives in the Church. As they tell their stories, a constellation of basic themes gradually emerges.

Like adherents of other faiths, Elkton Ward members find transcendent meaning and comfort in the teachings of their church. At the same time, Mormon doctrines seem to offer them not just pious abstractions, but common sense solutions to the problems of everyday existence. They are attracted by the LDS concept of a personal God, a literal father who watches over them daily and cares for them individually; a father in heaven who, they believe, entrusts them with sacred lay responsibilities in the only true church, inspires their leaders through revelation, and guides them in making life decisions. Trust in the efficaciousness of personal prayer and the

power of the LDS lay priesthood are especially important to them as vehicles for attaining supernatural aid and comfort in times of trouble or crisis.

Parallel to the reiteration of these basic beliefs, many ward members allude to the dilemmas of exercising personal conscience and individuality, virtues celebrated by certain LDS scriptures, in an authoritarian organization that places a premium on orthodoxy and conformity. Through their oral histories we, in fact, see revealed the diversity of active members' personal beliefs, motives, and religious attachments. We are drawn to the proposition that the LDS religion appeals to a fairly broad range of individuals, who come from many walks of life and possess differing levels of educational attainment; who often selectively emphasize those aspects of Mormonism that are most congenial to their own intellectual dispositions or existential needs, while they pragmatically ignore or de-emphasize the importance of other tenets and/or practices of the faith.

Significantly, ward members frequently speak of striving to balance the structural strains and satisfactions of Mormon community life; of the need to accommodate the competing demands of work and family with the insistent claims that lay callings impose on their time and resources. A fair amount of ambivalence is expressed by both men and women toward the changing status of women in society, especially women's traditionally subservient roles in a church dominated by priesthood hierarchy. The principal concerns of Elkton parents, however, tend to revolve around the religious development of their children. For them, religious loyalty and intensive family activity in LDS programs typically are justified as the best way to protect their children from the moral chaos of the outside world. Many members, of course, assign a priority value to their church involvement because it keeps them in sustaining contact with a supportive community. Lay participation in an LDS community provides them with a social identity, a sense that they have a meaningful place in the world, that they are contributing personally to a great cause. It appears, however, that it is more difficult for single adults to maintain their communal attachments with the ward than it is for those participating together as a family.

For at least some ward members interviewed by Taber, lay activity, with all the attendant demands and sacrifices it entails, clearly functions to satisfy their moral longings to purify themselves in the service of others. Thus, in his interview, Richard

Bushman concludes:

I believe that a calling is redemptive. I see this [for example] in women who will lose patience with their children at home, but in primary class they are marvels of patience, kindness, and understanding. Learning to act that way provides an anchor and a place to refer back to. For me, having to counsel people, having to say something in difficult situations that will be useful and kindly has deeply affected my personality and character. . . . One of the primary reasons that the church is powerful in peoples' lives is that it compels them to move into a role where they have to act for God (180).

BYU sociologist Larry Young recently cited *Mormon Lives* as a notable exception to the current dearth of Mormon congregational studies. According to Young, congregational studies offer a potentially critical analysis to Mormon scholarship because they typically "address questions of leadership, policy, and power. Frequently they provide models that explain differential rates of performance across congregations."¹ Certainly leadership, policy, and power emerge both directly and indirectly as highly important topics of concern for ward members in many of Taber's interviews, but she does not attempt any systematic critique, nor does she formulate any explanatory models of Mormon power arrangements. Her book is almost entirely descriptive. It lacks an explicit theoretical framework and has no rigorous thesis to argue beyond: (1) the basic methodological premise of the book that, assembled in sufficient quantity and appropriate context, oral histories shed light on the meaning of Mormonism as experienced by ordinary members themselves; and (2) Taber's statement in the introduction that "Mormon belief and activity in the church require the working out of a dialectic between two of the religion's fundamental principles—free agency and obedience to authority. . . . I have tried to portray how members confront and resolve this dialectic" (6–7). It is primarily *verstehen*, or empathic understanding, that Taber has sought to achieve through the voices of her subjects, not critical analysis. ☐

NOTE

1. Lawrence A. Young, "Confronting Turbulent Environment: Issues in the Organizational Growth and Globalization of Mormonism," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspective*, ed. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 350.

O N T H E R E C O R D

DILEMMAS OF FEMINISTS & INTELLECTUALS IN THE CONTEMPORARY LDS CHURCH

By D. Michael Quinn

The following speech was given at Snow College on 1 March 1994. He later gave a version of it at Southern Utah University. See the news story on page 75 for more context of the speech.

I'M PLEASED TO speak with you at Snow College. I'll begin with the introductory remarks I had planned before I learned that I was denounced as an apostate in every congregation of your college LDS stake last Sunday. As a truth in advertising notice, you'll be hearing me say a lot today about the current LDS church, about the Mormon tradition, about the intellectual tradition, and about my personal regard for all three.

For two reasons I have fond feelings toward many of Sanpete's people who may be the parents or grandparents of students here today.

Twenty years ago, a Jewish graduate student from Yale University came to live in your valley. His name was Michael Raber, and he was doing research for a Ph.D. in anthropology about Mormons. For two years he lived in Spring City, but spent a lot of time doing research in Ephraim. He told me frequently about how easily he was accepted as a Jewish "Gentile" in your Mormon community, how friendly people were to him, how

eager to help, and how accepting they were of his differences. He grew to love the people of Sanpete. In case he never expressed that, I wanted to tell you on his behalf today.

As for myself, during my twenties, I visited your valley every month or so for several years. I stayed only a few hours each time—just long enough to participate in an endowment session at the Manti Temple. I made those trips (first from Provo and later from Salt Lake City) because your temple was my favorite of the several from London to Los Angeles in which I participated in sacred ordinances. Manti was my favorite because its temple workers had a warmth and down-to-earth friendliness that I didn't find in other temples, even though workers elsewhere were also good people. I don't think I ever told the Manti temple workers how much I appreciated them, so I hope you'll tell them that their warmth and loving ways are remembered by people from distant parts.

My topic today is "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in

the Contemporary LDS Church." I learned yesterday that the stake presidency wrote a letter to be read in every ward of the College Stake last Sunday advising all loyal LDS church members to stay away from my presentation. As a result, I'm sure many have stayed away who would otherwise be here, and I'm also sure that others of you came here *only* because you were told to stay away.

However, last Sunday's announcement was itself an example of the problem I'm here to discuss. In an environment of religious intimidation, many Latter-day Saints are now forced to choose either free inquiry or obedience to the demands of LDS leaders. That is an unnecessary dilemma, and one which injures both mind and spirit. Uninhibited inquiry and spirituality nourish each other and are compatible.

If your stake president doesn't see it that way, ask him how he would regard the following situation. A speaker has been invited to a college located three hours from Rome, Italy, to speak on the topic: "Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in the Contemporary Catholic Church." At the Sunday Mass before the scheduled meeting, perhaps by advice of one of the Cardinals in the Vatican, each parish priest in the Italian college town reads a statement to his Catholic parishioners warning that they will endanger their spiritual welfare if they listen to that talk. In such a case, I think your LDS stake president would ask: "What has that Cardinal or that Italian priest to fear from open inquiry and discussion?" What would be true of Catholic Italy is true of Mormon Utah in similar circumstances.

Mormonism is not beyond comparison. It has many of the same strengths, weaknesses, and challenges of other religions that have been around a lot longer than 164 years. The medieval Roman Catholic Church made Galileo into a heretic merely for publishing a discussion of alternatives to the official Catholic

view of the solar system, and he recanted rather than endure torture from the Inquisition. The Catholic Church repeated that mistake by turning Martin Luther into an apostate when all the German priest originally wanted was faithful discussion of the church's policies and definitions. In the process, moderates like Erasmus (a Dutch priest who had published light-hearted criticisms of abuses within the Catholic Church) felt it necessary to demonstrate their loyalty by condemning Luther and other reformers. The polarization of moderates delayed needed changes within the church, and made the changes more painfully wrenching when they finally did come.

Mormons can learn from the history of other religions or can repeat the mistakes of other churches while reassuring ourselves that "we're true and they're false." Perspective is one of the values of history and of free inquiry.

I DIDN'T intend to create a controversy within your community by speaking here, nor to be a spiritual threat to the believing Latter-day Saints among you. And so before I begin to address the main topic, I'll give a several-minute statement I made in Provo last November and that I'll repeat at the Sunstone symposium in Washington, D.C., later this month. It focuses on the central dilemma of most Mormon feminists and intellectuals today—we are believers in a church that defines us as a threat and regards us as expendable.

Because I've been involved in a regrettable polarization in recent Mormon experience, I want to emphasize things upon which I hope there is common ground.

Although I've been excommunicated from the LDS church, I remain a Mormon in heritage, culture, and belief. I was born a seventh-generation Mormon, and remain so. Mormon culture—with all its strengths and

weaknesses—is my culture. The Mormon people—with all their triumphs and shortcomings—are my people. Leaving aside matters of faith, I'm still a Mormon for the same reasons that secular Jews (even the atheists among them) are still Jewish.

In essentials of Mormon faith, I also remain Mormon. I share the LDS beliefs that God is the literal father of the spirits of all humanity, and that he loves all his children equally—Judas as much as John the Beloved, the singer Madonna as much as Mother Theresa. I honor the Mormon belief that this unconditional love is shared by God's eternal companion, our Mother in Heaven. I rejoice in the Mormon faith that Jesus is the agent of our individual salvation through his atonement, and that Christ was literally resurrected as the first of all humanity to rise from their graves to eternal life. I have experienced the comfort of God's spirit that "passes all understanding" (Col. 1:9), and I acknowledge the inability of human intellect to comprehend the Divine. I can affirm God's intervention and protection at crucial moments in my life, but I am powerless to explain why God has not intervened in the lives of others less fortunate and more deserving.

I regard Joseph Smith as a prophet in the same way that Moses was. To me, the gold plates of the Book of Mormon were as literal as the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments. I regard the Book of Mormon as literal in its history and doctrine as is the Bible.

I regard the LDS church as God's church on earth, and that its priesthood and ordinances have eternal consequence for all who make them part of their relationship with God. Therefore, I continue to rejoice in the dedication of young Mormon missionaries who sacrifice their time—and sometimes their lives—to share the Latter-day gospel with the peoples of the earth. And I regard as prophets, seers, and reve-

lators, the LDS general authorities who advised on and consented to my excommunication by local LDS leaders.

I share those beliefs with most, if not all, believing Mormons.

Nevertheless, many (perhaps most) Mormons regard me as a dissenter and apostate. For, despite my Mormon beliefs and testimony already expressed, I feel more in common with certain aspects of nineteenth-century Mormonism than I do with certain aspects of the contemporary LDS church. I felt that one could affirm Mormonism's "old time religion" and still remain a loyal member of the Church. Obviously, some current LDS leaders don't endorse that position.

Therefore, I'll state my views that some may agree are proof of apostasy, or others may silently affirm as their own beliefs. In either case, there will be a certain amount of agreement.

Even though I believe God established the LDS church and still leads it through literal prophets, I affirm what Joseph Smith and Brigham Young taught about the limits of the Church and its prophets.

First, no one is infallible, and even living prophets can (and do) make mistakes in matters of faith and morals. If LDS leaders cannot make such serious mistakes, then they are sinless rivals of Jesus Christ. The Apostle Paul and the Prophet Joseph Smith both affirmed that one can have the apostolic and prophetic *right* to revelation, and yet still utter personal opinions in the name of the Lord.

Second, a member of the LDS church can dissent from the decisions of its leadership—even publicly—and remain a loyal Mormon. This was true of the entire general conference in 1843 that refused to sustain Joseph Smith's proposal to remove Sidney Rigdon as his counselor.

Third, there are truths and divine revelations possessed by other peoples and cultures from

which Mormons can individually benefit. In other words, the LDS church has no monopoly on truth, and Mormonism (at least the Mormonism I believe in) embraces all truths from whatever source. To me, that is what makes Mormonism the most encompassing of all the world's religions.

Fourth, there is no absolute standard of conduct for an individual except to follow God's will for her or him individually. Each person can discover God's will for her or him only by giving attention to *all* three of the following sources: The record of God's dealings with former prophets, the pronouncements of God's living prophets, and the "still small voice" of revelation to each person. As Moses, Joseph Smith, and Brigham Young taught, God wants all his Children to be prophets and prophetesses for their own lives.

In regard to my work as a Mormon historian, some LDS apostles accused me in 1985 of "speaking evil of the Lord's anointed" for my article in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* about the First Presidency's secret authorization of new polygamous marriages for fourteen years after the Church officially abandoned polygamy by the Manifesto.¹ In 1993, my new stake president officially accused me of apostasy for publishing the heavily documented article, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843." Under pressure from Apostle Boyd K. Packer, the stake president (who was also a Church employee) excommunicated me a few months later.²

Nevertheless, in my view, it is legitimate to research, discuss, publish, and read what Mormon leaders have said and done in the conduct of their ministry. I regard it as beneficial and loyal to conscientiously examine even the most controversial areas of the Mormon past and present. As a believing Mormon, I'll continue to do so, but no Mormon should have to surrender LDS church

privileges or membership as the price of free inquiry and expression.

I accept the sincerity of LDS leaders who speak and act as if they are fathers of vulnerable Church members. However, I cannot understand how these same LDS leaders can excommunicate their wayward children from the Family. If God grieves over the loss of one soul, would the Spirit of God inspire anyone to gloat over the excommunication of an "apostate" or "dissident"? Does the spirit of Christ inspire a boast that the loss of six persons from LDS membership is insignificant when compared with the convert baptism of 6,000 the same month? Does that mean the death of an older child should be shrugged off by its parents who happen to give birth that same month to triplets?

Some people seem to regard the LDS church as if its vitality and health can be measured by the standards of a business corporation. However, I see the LDS church as family, currently a dysfunctional one. Dysfunctional or not, the family is still yours. You remain part of the Church-family even if it disinherits you or you become a run-away. Your loss is its loss.

My comfort as an excommunicated member of the earthly church is that Mormon doctrine affirms that any ordinance on earth must be ratified in Heaven to be valid eternally. I trust in my relationship with God, my eternal Father.

That is the end of my prefatory statement.

FALSE EITHER/OR DILEMMAS

THIS presentation is about "dilemmas," and I apologize that I've already used the word a few times without explaining what I mean. A dilemma is when you must choose only one of two equally good things or one of two equally bad things. Although a choice between two goods might seem preferable, it can actually be more painful be-

I have experienced the comfort of God's spirit that "passes all understanding" and I acknowledge the inability of human intellect to comprehend the Divine. I can affirm God's intervention and protection at crucial moments in my life, but I am powerless to explain why God has not intervened in the lives of others less fortunate and more deserving.

cause you lose something as important to you as you gain.

Even though it is very real, the current dilemma of Mormon feminists and intellectuals is unnecessary and artificial. It is unnecessary whether you are a housewife without an outside job or a female member of a law firm. It is unnecessary whether you are an auto-mechanic who reads SUNSTONE's articles or a student who only looks at its cartoons. It is unnecessary whether you are an LDS professor at Brigham Young University, Ricks College, or Brandeis University. It is unnecessary whether you are seminary student or a college student. It is unnecessary whether you *know* the LDS gospel is true or whether you only hope it is.

Nevertheless, the dilemma exists and was publicized last year in newspaper reports of a talk by Apostle Boyd K. Packer who has had a significant role in actually *creating* the dilemma. Either you're an independent woman *or* you're a loyal Mormon. Either you encourage the independence and rights of women *or* you're a loyal Latter-day Saint. Either you're an intellectual *or* you're a loyal Church member. Either you participate in free inquiry *or* you're a loyal Latter-day Saint.

The current dilemma in the LDS church is as unnecessary and artificial as being required to choose between one's individual freedom and one's loyalty to any institution. It's like being told by your father: "*Choose whether you are going to be an independent person or whether you are going to remain a member of the family, and your decision must be final!*"

Those are not either-or choices, but two desirable conditions that complement each

other. Often there is tension between your individual freedom and the demands of your family, or school, or job, or church, or country, but you should not have to give up one for the other. There's always some tension between individual freedom and the authority of any institution you belong to. That's healthy. It's unhealthy for you to value your freedom above every consideration of loyalty to others, and it's unhealthy for you to value other loyalties above every consideration of your personal needs and freedom.

Before I start talking about feminists and intellectuals in the Mormon tradition, I'd better define what I mean here as well. In my view, feminists are persons of both genders who emphasize the dignity and rights of females in societies where male dignity, power, and rights have dominated. Feminists are not necessary in cultures where there is a tradition of equality in opportunity, in power, and in self-esteem for both genders. Even the most mild-mannered feminist is a source of tension for those who benefit from the inequalities of patriarchal societies. A feminist also seems threatening to those who resist change within patriarchal cultures, even if these resistant males and females are privately unhappy about some of the status quo.

An intellectual is someone who likes exploring ideas for their own sake. I've known car mechanics who were intellectuals, and lawyers who were not. And there are college professors who are anti-intellectual and proud of it. An intellectual is a source of tension for those in authoritarian societies who want ideas and discussions always to be in service to loyalty.

Intellectuals also irritate task-oriented people who want ideas and discussions to achieve practical results—and quickly.

As a social historian, I like looking at the past to provide comparative perspective for the present. I've said that the current dilemmas of feminists and intellectuals within the LDS church are unnecessary and artificial. With prominent examples from the Mormon tradition,³ I hope to illustrate that both feminism and intellectualism were once compatible with the priesthood authority of the LDS church and its patriarchy. Undeniably there were tensions and some give-and-take situations, but that is always true in the interaction of good things.

MAJOR EVENTS IN MORMON FEMINISM

CONCERNING feminism in the Mormon tradition:

- 30 March 1842: Joseph Smith instructed the women of the Relief Society that "the Society should move according to the ancient Priesthood" and that he "was going to make of this Society a 'kingdom of priests' as in Enoch's day, as in Paul's day." Mormonism's founding prophet "ordained" women to heal the sick at this time.

- 28 April 1842: Joseph Smith told the Relief Society women that "the keys of the kingdom are about to be given to them that they may be able to detect everything false, as well as to the Elders . . . I now turn the key to you in the name of God." For nineteenth-century LDS women, Joseph Smith's words became an inspiration to advance themselves spiritually, intellectually, socially, professionally, and polit-

ically.

- 28 July 1843: Presiding Patriarch Hyrum Smith, an original member of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, blessed Leonora Cannon Taylor: "You shall be blest with your portion of the Priesthood which belongeth to you, that you may be set apart for your Anointing and your indument [endowment]."

- 28 September 1843: Joseph and Emma Smith were the first couple to receive the second anointing in which each was "anointed & ordained to the highest & holiest order of the priesthood."

- 8 October 1845: Lucy Mack Smith was the first woman who spoke to general conference. Church authorities did not invite another woman to address the LDS conference for 143 years.

- 27 December 1845: Patriarch John Smith, a member of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, gave this blessing to a woman whose husband was non-LDS: "the Priesthood in its fullness shall be conferred upon thee in due time[—]thou shalt have pow[e]r ov[e]r thy relatives & friends & thy husband & children to lead them whethersoever thou wilt in as much as you seek faithfully & truly to preserve them in the bonds of the new & ev[er]lasting covenant."

- 6 February 1855: the Polysophical Society organized with Apostle Lorenzo Snow as president. Women and men lectured and participated in discussions on an equal basis.

- 7 April 1855: Brigham Young established the Deseret Theological Institute for presentations and discussions of Mormon doctrine. Unlike the School of the Prophets, this was open to women who comprised 37 percent of its membership.

However, women did not lecture on the equal footing they experienced in the non-official Polysophical Society, Mormonism's first example of a faithful "alternative voice."

- 28 November 1869: Brigham Young organized the Young Ladies' Retrenchment Association among his daughters at the Lion House. Aside from the Relief Society, this was the only other Church auxiliary which was organized by the Church president at its outset. Renamed Young Ladies' Mutual Improvement Association, its first president was Elmina Shepherd Taylor in 1880. Renamed Young Women's MIA, it is now known simply as Young Women in the 1970s.

- 12 February 1870: Utah enfranchised women who were among the first in the nation to vote on 14 February, when Miss Seraph Young cast the first female vote. Wyoming adopted woman's suffrage in 1869. This 1870 law did not allow women to hold elective office, and Utah's non-Mormon governor vetoed a bill of the Mormon-controlled legislature in 1880 that would have given full civil rights to women.

- 3 February 1872: two women were on the Committee of Seven that selected the LDS church's political party, People's Party, nominees for the upcoming election.

- June 1872: publication of first Mormon women's periodical, *Woman's Exponent*, that advocated giving women the vote and all rights equivalent to those of men in American society.

- 21 September 1872: Phoebe W. Cousins and Georgeanna Snow became the first women admitted to the practice of law in Utah.

- 17 June 1874: Elsa Johnson was the first woman to become a naturalized citizen in Utah.

- 28 June 1874: Brigham Young preached, "Now brethren, the man that honors his Priesthood, the woman that honors her Priesthood, will receive an everlasting inheritance in the

kingdom of God."

- 1 December 1877: *Woman's Exponent* published Presiding Bishop Edward Hunter's sermon concerning LDS women: "They have the Priesthood," he said, "a portion of the priesthood rests upon the sisters."

- 14 March 1878: Ellis Reynolds Shipp was the first Mormon woman to obtain the M.D. degree (from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania).

- 28 May 1878: Patriarch Joseph Young, senior president of the First Council of Seventy and a member of Joseph Smith's Quorum of the Anointed, blessed Brigham Young's daughter Zina Young Card: "These blessings are yours, the blessings and the power according to the holy Melchisedek Priesthood you received in your Endowments, and you shall have them."

- 27 July 1878: Emmeline B. Wells, Isabella M. Horne, and Sarah M. Kimball became the first female delegates to a county convention of the LDS church's People's Party of which they also became members of the Salt Lake County central committee. However, the convention had to withdraw the nomination of Emmeline B. Wells as People's candidate for county treasurer because "though the statute provided for the enfranchisement of women, it does not admit of their holding office." Instead, Emmeline B. Wells joined with Bathsheba W. Smith on 7 October as the first female members of the territorial central committee of the People's Party.

- 25 February 1881: *Deseret News* reported that first counselor Joseph F. Smith and Apostle Wilford Woodruff had set apart seven recent graduates of Dr. Romania B. Pratt's course in midwifery.

- 17 July 1882: the first Mormon-operated hospital was the Deseret Hospital, founded by prominent LDS women Eliza R. Snow, Emmeline B. Wells, Zina D. H. Young, Jane S. Richards, Phebe Woodruff, Marinda N.

Hyde, Bathsheba W. Smith, Isabella M. Horne, and Dr. Romania B. Pratt.

- 17 October 1882: Annie Gallifant Connelly, despite her pregnancy, became the first Mormon woman sentenced to the penitentiary for refusing to answer questions from a grand jury seeking to indict her polygamous husband. For a similar refusal, the better-known Belle Harris was in the penitentiary with her infant child from 18 May to 31 August 1883.

- 30 January 1884: a counselor in the Salt Lake Stake presidency explained why women anointed and blessed women in LDS healing ceremonies: "There are often cases when it would be indelicate for an Elder to anoint, especially certain parts of the body, and the sisters are called to do this and [the] blessing follows."

- 3 March 1887: enactment of the Edmunds-Tucker Act in U.S. Congress that took away the voting power from all Utah women.

- 19 February 1891: a delegation of Mormon young women and plural wives attended the first meeting of the National Council of Women, which accepted the Relief Society as a charter member of the feminist organization.

- 26 August 1894: "first time a woman has spoken in the [Salt Lake] Tabernacle on the Sabbath at the regular service—the people do not know what to make of it—it must bode good for women." The speaker was non-Mormon.

- 4 March 1895: the Utah territorial convention (with Apostle John Henry Smith as its president) drafted a proposed state constitution that included woman's suffrage, thus re-granting them the right to vote that Congress had taken away.

- 13 July 1895: at the Utah Democratic convention "women are delegates in about equal number with men."

- 30 January 1896: First Presidency (under President

Wilford Woodruff) and Quorum of Twelve decided that women should not have their own prayer circles or participate with their husbands in prayer circle meetings.

- 3 April 1896: Apostle Franklin D. Richards told the Relief Society conference that women had the right "to rebuke disease in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ & [to say the words:] by virtue of the Holy Anointing which I have received."

- 3 November 1896: Martha Hughes Cannon was elected as a Democratic member of the Utah State Legislature, and defeated her own husband who was a Republican candidate. She was the first woman in the United States to serve as a state senator. When a newspaper reporter asked how she, as a "modern woman," could be a plural wife, Senator Cannon replied: "If her husband has four wives, she has three weeks of freedom every single month."

- 21 April 1898: arrival in the British Mission of Amanda Inez Knight and Lucy Jane Brimhall, the first unmarried women to serve as full-time missionaries. Previously, lady missionaries were married women who were set apart as companions to their husbands, usually mission presidents.

- 1899: Mary Teasdel joined the Julian Academy of Art in Paris, France. She was the first female Mormon artist whose work eventually became part of the collection at the National Gallery in Washington, D.C.

- 10 November 1901: a special conference voted for the new First Presidency and a new Relief Society Presidency, with the men standing by priesthood quorums and women standing as a group. "This was the first time women had been honored in being presented before the solemn assembly in that way."

- 9 January 1904: Emmeline B. Wells, editor of *Woman's Exponent*, wrote: "Aunts Presendia [H. Kimball] & Zina

In an environment of religious intimidation, many Latter-day Saints are now forced to choose either free inquiry or obedience to the demands of LDS leaders. That is an unnecessary dilemma, and one which injures both mind and spirit.

[D. H. Young] used to interpret dreams for us but now there is no one to do it." This is one of the earliest comments about a loss of spiritual gifts within Mormonism.

- 7 November 1911: the Utah Socialist Party's high point of power. Despite the Socialist Party's radical reputation, 40 percent of its men were Mormons, including a bishop and his first counselor. Of women socialists in Utah, 28 percent were Mormons.

- 7 November 1911: Mary Woolley Chamberlain, a post-Manifesto polygamous wife, was elected mayor of Kanab, Utah, with an all-female town council. This was the first such political event in U.S. history.

- 27 November 1919: Sarah Jenne Cannon was the first woman who spoke at a temple dedication (at the Hawaii Temple).

- 3 November 1936: Reva Beck Bosone was elected as the first woman judge in Utah, serving as Salt Lake City judge until 1948.

- 21 April 1945: *LDS Church News* reported that due to a ward's lack of deacon-age boys, the bishop had officially called young girls (ages twelve to fourteen) to perform the functions of deacons such as collecting fast offerings and apparently also passing the sacrament.

- 29 July 1947: Quorum of Twelve letter to the general Relief Society presidency stating that women should seek blessings of health from priesthood holders and not from other women. This officially ended more than a century of women's anointing and sealing blessings of health upon other women, and sometimes upon men.

- 2 November 1948: Reva Beck Bosone was elected as democratic member of U.S. House of

Representatives, the first woman so elected from Utah.

- 25 January 1950: first counselor J. Reuben Clark advised the Relief Society presidency not to oppose "the bill for equal rights for women" because "there will be some of the women who will think it is a fine thing."

- 20 January 1953: President Eisenhower appointed Ivy M. Baker Priest as the first Mormon to serve as U.S. Treasurer, and as the first LDS woman in such a high government office.

- 12 August 1961: President John F. Kennedy appointed Ester W. Eggertsen Peterson as the assistant secretary of the U.S. Department of Labor.

- July 1967: the *Priesthood Bulletin* prohibited women from praying in sacrament meeting.

- 17 July 1970: First Presidency letter ended the financial independence of the Relief Society by stopping the payment of dues, prohibiting the traditional Relief Society bazaar ("a noisy, carnival-like or commercial atmosphere"), and requiring that individual "Relief Societies should immediately turn over to the appropriate Stake, Mission, Ward, Branch, or District presiding officers all assets which they have accumulated."

- July 1974: first issue of *Exponent II*, "the Spiritual Descendant of the *Woman's Exponent*, 1872-1914." Established in Arlington, Massachusetts by Mormon Sisters, Inc. to re-invoke the faithful consciousness-raising of the original *Woman's Exponent*. Founded by Cladia Lauper Bushman who was a professor, author of *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, and also the wife of a stake president and later regional representative.

- 18 October 1975: BYU placed an advertisement in various newspapers that the university

refused to comply with six regulations of the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare's Title IX regulations for non-discrimination on the basis of gender.

- 22 October 1976: First Presidency statement against ratification of the Equal Rights Amendment to the U.S. Constitution "which could indeed bring them far more restraints and repressions. We fear it will even stifle many God-given feminine instincts." In a supplemental letter of 29 December, the First Presidency urged all mission presidents and stake presidents "to join others in efforts to defeat the ERA." This led to coordinated efforts by Mormons in Idaho, Florida, Illinois, Nevada, and other states to successfully lobby state legislators against ratification of the ERA.

- 3 June 1977: Ezra Taft Benson, as President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, sent a letter instructing that each ward bishop send ten women to the Utah state meeting of the International Women's Year. This literally packed the under-prepared Salt Lake City meeting with nearly 14,000 women who had instructions to vote down any proposal that sounded "feminist" or favorable to the Equal Rights Amendment, including equal pay for equal work and protections for abused or raped women.

- 16 September 1978: first conference for LDS females over age eleven broadcast over closed-circuit radio to meeting houses. Although not part of general conference, as was the male equivalent, this was the first step in giving LDS females a meeting similar to that which Mormon males have experienced since 1830.

- 29 September 1978: First Presidency allowed women to pray in sacrament meetings again.

- 5 December 1979: announcement of the excommunication of Sonia Johnson, president of Mormons for the ERA (Equal Rights Amendment). Charged with apostasy, she unsuccessfully appealed the decision to the First Presidency (which had already authorized this "local action"). Sonia Johnson's case became a top story (even cover story) in *New York Times*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *Washington Post*, *Time*, *Newsweek*, and on network television news. The resulting non-Mormon criticism of the Church and Johnson's own subsequent radicalization actually drove many LDS moderates away from their prior support of the ERA and into acceptance of the Church's anti-ERA position.

- 4 November 1980: Florida elected Paula Hawkins as the first LDS woman to become a U.S. Senator, and the first female Senator who was not the daughter or wife of a politician.

- 16 January 1981: Esther W. Eggertsen Peterson received the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She was the first Mormon to receive the nation's highest civilian honor.

- 8 September 1981: Utah's Democratic governor named Christine Meaders Durham as the first female member of the Utah State Supreme Court. A graduate of Wellesley with a J.D. degree from Duke University, Justice Durham was a Mormon who shared graduate study, housework, and parenting with her physician-husband.

- 15 April 1982: Elaine A. Cannon, general president of LDS Young Women, was elected vice-president of the National Council of Women for a two-year term.

- August 1988: organization of the Mormon Women's Forum.
- 11 March 1989: *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that several Mormon men had telephoned death threats to Edwin B. Firmage for his advocacy of the ordination of LDS women to priesthood offices. Two days earlier, the *Tribune* had reported those public remarks by Firmage, a University of Utah law professor, former bishop, and grandson of former First Presidency counselor Hugh B. Brown.
- 11 April 1992: *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that general authority Loren C. Dunn had censored a Church display commemorating the sesquicentennial of the Relief Society. He ordered the removal of Joseph Smith's statements regarding the priestly role of women.
- 18 May 1993: Apostle Boyd K. Packer told the All-Church Coordinating Council that the Church faced three major threats, including: "The dangers I speak of come from the gay-lesbian movement, the feminist movement (both of which are relatively new) . . ."
- September 1993: under instructions from LDS headquarters (and Boyd K. Packer, in particular), local LDS leaders disfellowshipped Lynn Kanavel Whitesides (president of the Mormon Women's Forum), excommunicated Maxine Hanks (editor of the recently published *Women and Authority: Reemerging Mormon Feminism*), and excommunicated Lavina Fielding Anderson (editor of *Journal of Mormon History*) for her article which chronicled recent LDS church pressures against feminists and intellectuals.

EVENTS IN MORMON INTELLECTUALISM AND DISSENT

CONCERNING intellectual diversity and dissent in Mormon tradition:

- 8 February 1843: Joseph Smith "talked with a brother and sister from Michigan, who thought that 'a prophet is always a prophet,' but I told them that a prophet was a prophet only when he was acting as such."
- 8 April 1843: Joseph Smith preached concerning the Nauvoo high council trial of Pelatiah Brown Sr.: "I do not like the old man being called up for erring in doctrine. It looks too much like the Methodist[s], and not like the Latter-day Saints. Methodists have creeds which a man must believe or be asked out of their church. I want the liberty of thinking and believing as I please. It feels so good not to be trammelled. It does not prove that a man is not a good man because he errs in doctrine." The high council had tried Brown on 19 March "for teaching false doctrine."
- 20 February 1853: Brigham Young spoke concerning Mormons who said the judgment of living prophets "is superior to mine, and consequently I let you judge for me." He said that such Latter-day Saints do not possess "the true independence of heaven" and consequently "will never be capable of entering into the celestial glory, to be crowned as they anticipate; they will never be capable of becoming gods."
- 12 June 1853: Apostle John Taylor preached: "If there is any truth in heaven, earth, or hell, I want to embrace it."
- 30 August 1857: Apostle John Taylor preached that Mohammed "might have been a true one [prophet], for aught I know."
- 6 December 1857: Apostle Wilford Woodruff preached: "God himself is increasing and progressing in knowledge, power, and dominion, and will do so, worlds without end."
- 4 March 1860: Brigham Young preached that "it floods my heart with sorrow to see so many Elders of Israel who wish everybody to come to their standard and be measured by their measure. Every man must be just so long, to fit their iron bedstead, or be cut off to the right length."
- 13 July 1862: Brigham Young preached, "And I will even venture to say that if the Book of Mormon were now to be rewritten, in many instances it would materially differ from the present translation."
- 13 January 1867: Brigham Young preached, "According to his [Apostle Orson Pratt's] theory, God can progress no further in knowledge and power; but the God that I serve is progressing eternally. . . ."
- 10 February 1867: Brigham Young preached, "Men who know nothing of the Priesthood receive revelation and prophecy. . . ."
- 17 November 1868: Stake President (and former Nauvoo resident) Abraham O. Smoot told the Provo School of the Prophets that Hyrum Smith "used to say [about] prophecy if you hit once in 10 times that is alright."
- 20 February 1870: Brigham Young preached, "Now the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints believes every word of truth believed in by the holy Catholic Church."
- 7 October 1872: Apostle John Taylor told the general conference: "And if we have Presidents or Apostles or anybody that we do not like, let us vote them out, and be free men. . . ."
- 23 June 1889: at a stake conference, "The name of Wm. Marsden was submitted to the Priesthood for Stake Patriarch and 51 voted in his favor and 65 against him." Therefore, Apostles Francis M. Lyman and John Henry Smith withdrew the unpopular nomination, and "James Dalley was submitted to the people for Patriarch and unanimously received by vote."
- 1 October 1891: First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles considered this question: "Shall the Priesthood nominate and the people accept, or shall the people nominate?" The decision of the meeting: "It is quite proper for the brethren before making appointments to consult with the local authorities and be sure to select men for position whom the people will be glad to sustain."
- 11 September 1892: Apostle Francis M. Lyman preached to the St. George stake conference: "in Prest Brigham Young's time an effort was made to make a certain man as Bp of the 3rd Wd Salt Lake City. Bro Young named him but the people did not want the man for a Bp. and did not have him. Prest Young wanted Bro. Jesse N. Smith to be Prest of Parowan Stake But the people did not want him and would not have him and he was not their President. Prest. Woodruff felt desirous to having a certain man ordained a Patriarch in Parowan Stake but the people did not want him and would not and did not have him. [Apostle Lyman concluded:] This indicates the liberty of the Latter Day Saints."
- April 1940: upon announcing a decision of the First Presidency to general conference, first counselor J. Reuben Clark said: "We are not infallible in our judgment, and we err, but our constant prayer is that the Lord will guide us in our decisions, and we are trying so to live that our minds will be open to His inspiration."
- 16 April 1948: Apostle Mark E. Petersen asked for permission to begin excommunication trials for persons he suspected of having disloyal attitudes toward the LDS church. First counselor J. Reuben Clark warned Apostle Petersen "to be careful about the insubordination or disloyalty question, because they ought to be permitted to think, you can't throw a man off for thinking."
- 31 July 1954: the *LDS Church News* published J. Reuben Clark's talk to all LDS seminary and institute teachers, in which he declared that "even the President of the Church has not always spoken under the direction of the Holy Ghost."
- 18 May 1993: Apostle Boyd K. Packer told the All-Church Coordinating Council that the Church faced three major threats including "the ever-present challenge from the so-called scholars or intellectuals."

• September 1993: under instructions from LDS headquarters (and from Boyd K. Packer, in particular),⁴ local LDS leaders excommunicated three men for apostasy: Hebrew scholar Abraham Gileadi for his published interpretation of the Book of Isaiah, Paul Toscano (a lawyer and president of the Mormon Alliance against LDS spiritual abuse) for his public admonitions to LDS leaders to "choose love not power," and historian D. Michael Quinn for his recent publications about Mormon history.

PUBLIC DILEMMAS OF
FEMINISTS AND
INTELLECTUALS
PUSH AN "US vs. THEM"
POLARIZATION

I DON'T want to take much longer before giving you opportunity for questions. In summary, these are the dilemmas of feminists and intellectuals in the contemporary LDS church as I see them. First, "feminist" has become such a negative word in the LDS church that even the most independent thinking, highly educated, and professionally working Mormon women leap at the opportunity to deny that they are a dreaded "feminist." Second, "intellectual" has become such a negative word that many Mormons borrow copies of *Dialogue* and *SUNSTONE* to read, rather than be on some subscriber list that they fear might end up in the surveillance files of the Church's "Strengthening the Members Committee."⁵ Third, that climate of intimidation is publicly reemphasized by general authorities like Elder Boyd K. Packer and by local leaders like the president of your college stake. Fourth, rather than accepting differences of personality and interest that are God's gifts to humanity, this climate of intimidation and fear divide Mormons into "us versus them" camps rather than the "gospel net" of the Savior's parable that draws together all

kinds of familiar and unusual beings. (Matt. 13:47-50.) Fifth, there is every reason on earth and in heaven that your college experience, Church experience, and life experience should reflect the following passages from the Book of Mormon and the New Testament: "All are alike unto God—male and female" (2 Ne. 27:33), "Prove all things; hold fast that which is good" (1 Thes. 5:21), and "For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind" (2 Tim. 1:7.) ☒

NOTES

1. For details about this circumstance, see "On Being a Mormon Historian (And Its Aftermath)" in *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992).

2. This requires explanation. In his first letter to me, stake president Paul A. Hanks (a senior employee of the LDS Church Educational System) listed the following as evidences of apostasy: my article "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843" *Women and Authority: Reemerging Mormon Feminism*, ed. Maxine Hanks (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992); my article, "150 Years of Truth and Consequences about Mormon History," *SUNSTONE* 16:1 (February 1992:12-14); and my statements in "Historian: LDS Church Wants 'Cookie-Cutter' Members," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 December 1992, C-2. In the months that followed, he held three disciplinary councils: the first put me on formal probation, the second disfellowshipped me, and the third excommunicated me. I declined to attend any of them because I regarded their outcome as pre-determined, a view I expressed in my letters to the stake president in response to his.

I was informed by a person who was at my excommunication court that the stake president and high council spent several hours discussing (and even debating) the meaning of apostasy in regard to my published writings and tape-recordings of my talks at Sunstone symposiums. During these discussions at my third disciplinary council, the stake president acknowledged that for months he had been under pressure from Apostle Boyd K. Packer to excommunicate me. My Stake President had previously denied that fact to me and to the media. In his final letter to me, my

stake president stated that I was excommunicated for my refusal to appear at the disciplinary council. From this I concluded that the stake high council regarded the evidence as insufficient to excommunicate me on the original charges of "apostasy" and "conduct unbecoming." However, facing the "counsel" of an apostle to excommunicate me, the stake president (a Church employee who could also be demoted or fired by "counsel" of Apostle Packer) chose this reason for excommunicating me: "your refusal to discuss serious allegations." That charge, according to the written notice of my excommunication, was what the disciplinary council finally defined as my "conduct contrary to the laws and order of the Church," for which they excommunicated me. For obvious reasons, I chose not to appeal this decision to the presiding councils of which Boyd K. Packer is a member. (Paul A. Hanks to D. Michael Quinn, 7 February 1993 and 26 September 1993; statements to Quinn on 16 October 1993 by a person whose name is withheld by request.)

3. The following dated examples are taken from the appendix titled, "LDS Church Chronology: A Mosaic of Mormonism" in D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power*

(Salt Lake City: Signature Books, forthcoming in 1994).

4. For Elder Packer's involvement, see previous note and "Internal Disputes Troubling Mormon Church," *Arizona Republic*, 10 October 1993, A-22; "LDS Apostle Denies Ordering Dissident's Excommunication," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 October 1993, D-1, D-2; "More Stories Point to LDS Leaders As Source of Dissident Crackdown," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 16 October 1993, B-1, B-3; "Packer Says He Was Concerned by Request for Meeting, But Apostles Endorsed It," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 October 1993, B-1, B-2; "Dissidents Raise Question of Unrighteous Dominion," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 17 October 1993, D-1; "Benson Replies, Charges Oaks with Dissembling," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 25 October 1993, A-5; Steve Benson, "Oaks Dissembled Packer's Role in Toscano Excommunication," *SUNSTONE* 16 (December 1993): 69.

5. "LDS Official Acknowledges Church Monitors Critics," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 August 1992, D-1; "LDS Leaders Say Scripture Supports Secret Files on Members," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 August 1992, B-1, B-2; "Secret Files," *New York Times*, Sunday, 22 August 1992, 9.

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AWARDS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

1993 awards given at the annual symposium, 22 January 1994, with excerpts from the awards

An Award in Autobiography

PHYLLIS BARBER

How I Got Cultured: A Nevada Memoir

Athens, GA: University of Georgia Press, 1992.

This book is simply the best memoir of Mormon girlhood written in this century. In her loving revisitations and evocative recreations, the conventional and traditional become transformed by compassion and love into gestures of grace.

An Award in Children's Literature

MICHAEL O. TUNNELL

Chinook!,

*The Joke's on George, and
Beauty and the Beastly Children*
(Tambourine Books) New York:
William Morrow, 1993.

Young and old will be drawn to the pictures, but they will return to these books for the text. The books are strong with the delight of subtle humor.

An Award in Drama

NEIL LABUTE

In the Company of Men

produced at Brigham Young University,
December 1992.

Labute eschews plays of comfort and congratulation about Mormon culture, choosing instead to write searing dramas in which his frequently insensitive characters pursue their often horrific objectives. His effective portrayal of evil reveals its brutality, and shows it to be utterly repugnant.

An Award in the Essay

EUGENE ENGLAND

"Monte Cristo"

Wasatch Review International 2:1
(June 1993): 83-102.

England shares his savoring of the spiritual manifested in his initiation into fly fishing. Woven into the details of the journey are memories—Eugene's, his friend Frank's, ours. We learn to admire these two men deeply committed to precision in their respective arts.

An Award in the Novel

GERALD N. LUND

Thy Gold to Refine

(volume 4 of *The Work and the Glory*)
Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.

Lund continues the saga of the Steed family as they confront the Danites, hear Governor Boggs's Extermination Order, and live through the Haun's Mill massacre. This book entertains

as it lets its readers experience Mormon history and appreciate the Mormon heritage.

An Award in the Novel

LESLIE BEATON HEDLEY

Twelve Sisters

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993.

Twelve Sisters could be considered a short-story collection, but the intrinsic interrelationships of the characters and the cumulative effect of the chapters turn it into a novel. These complex Mormon women living faithful but difficult lives are always buoyed up by grace.

An Award in Poetry

LINDA SILLITOE

Crazy for Living

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993.

Sometimes enigmatic, the collection has a larger integrity defined by the three-part division of the poems: *Journalist*, *Journeys in Tandem*, and *Journeys Between*. The pun on *journalist/journey* ties the three together, with the sense of both poems and life as journeys, well worth the exploring.

An Award in Young Adult Literature

MARTINE BATES

The Dragon's Tapestry and *The Prism Moon*
Red Deer, Alberta: Red Deer College Press,
1992 & 1993.

Bates uses fantasy to explore attitudes, feelings, relationships, for dealing with truth; to see how powerful evil can be, but also how attractive; to see that good can triumph, but that the battle never really ends.

An Award in the Sermon

CHIEKO N. OKAZAKI

Lighten Up!

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1993, and
Cat's Cradle

Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993.

Authors of most literary forms speak through masks. A certain kind of sermon, however, uses no masquerade. Because Chieko Okazaki has suffered for His name, she can show us how to become disciples of Christ. Especially today do we need such bridge builders.

An Award in the Short Story

DARRELL SPENCER

Our Secret's Out

Columbia: University of Missouri Press, 1993.

We embrace characters Spencer finds in some of the West's most unlikely places. Spencer's

stories feature the urbane and the profane, the resolute and the dissolute, the outrageous and the courageous. Unlike the Jell-O so common in mainstream Mormon "culture," there is the hard substance of life here.

An Award in Editing

M. SHAYNE BELL

Washed by a Wave of Wind:

Science Fiction from the Corridor

Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993.

Those who are avid readers of science fiction know how the futuristic "world creation" grows from the intimacy and love of familiar settings, and from a deep, imaginary sense of what might be. The authors' memories, and their art, work well beyond the boundaries of the Mormon West.

An Award for Service to Mormon Letters

**NEILA SESHACHARI &
WEBER STATE UNIVERSITY**

Weber Studies

Vol. 10, no. 3, the Tenth-Anniversary Issue.

Seshachari and her editorial board published an invaluable special issue of *Weber Studies* that brings together some of the best writing and thinking in contemporary Mormon letters.

Honorary Life Memberships

LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH

Ulrich has contributed significantly to the Mormon mind and spirit. For years her writing has contributed to Mormon letters. As for her scholarly books, particularly *A Midwife's Tale*, what can we add to her Pulitzer and many other prestigious prizes, except our rejoicing and our honor to claim her as one of our own?

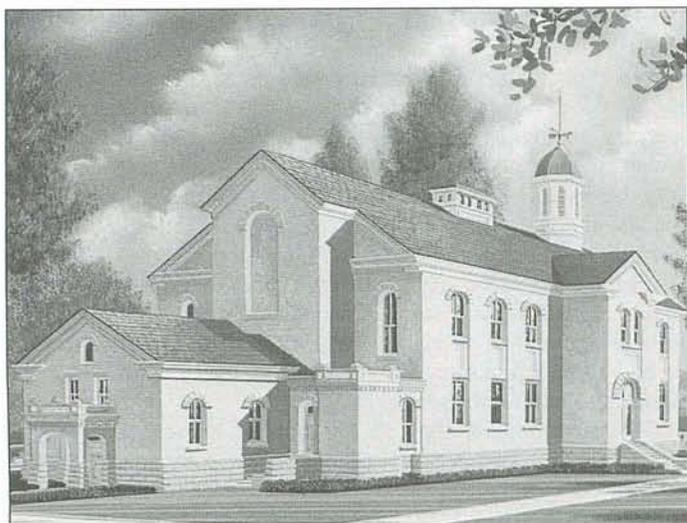
STEVEN P. SONDRUP

For eighteen years, from its very first meeting, Steven has been the secretary/treasurer of the Association for Mormon Letters. For the lifetime of AML, he has taken care of most of its functions: the business, legal, and physical details that keep an organization operating. Except for Steve, AML could easily have slipped into memory.

SAMUEL W. TAYLOR

Taylor's personality, as it appears in his writing, is experienced, skeptical, even a little cynical, but always funny and cogent. His style reads easily and finds its felicitous metaphors among the speech of ordinary people. His is a life and a career Mormons and their friends can be proud of.

UPDATE



An artist's rendering of what the historic Vernal tabernacle will look like once it is renovated for use as a temple.

VERNAL TABERNACLE TO BECOME A TEMPLE

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY announced in mid-February that for the first time in Church history an old building will be renovated for use as a temple. The site is to be the 1907 Vernal, Utah, tabernacle.

"After giving prayerful consideration to the matter and following extensive study, we have concluded to use the shell of the building, restoring its original outside appearance, and creating within it, a beautiful temple," a letter from the Church reads.

The tabernacle has been unoccupied and in disrepair for many years and renovation costs could come to more than \$750,000. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reports that government approval still needs to be obtained before work can begin, which will preserve the historic shell and construct a new building inside. This will be Utah's tenth temple and the fifty-seventh in the Church.

STAKE PRESIDENCY OPPOSES QUINN'S SPEECH

WHILE MANY at Snow College weren't opposed to excommunicated historian D. Michael Quinn's on-campus speech, some local Church leaders were so concerned that they actively encouraged students and faculty to boycott. On 27 February, just a few days before Quinn's lecture, a Snow College stake presidency distributed the following letter:

Dear Bishop,

We request that you read the contents of this message in your Sacrament meetings today:

Without approval from the Snow College Administration, a professor in the humanities division has scheduled Michael Quinn—an apostate from the LDS church, as a speaker this Tuesday at the humanities art gallery. His speech will conflict with an address by Lt. Jim Bell, Commander of the Salt Lake Area Gang task force, who is the regularly scheduled Convocation Speaker at the Crane Theater. We urge you to attend Lt. Bell's lecture. If you choose to attend Mike Quinn's lecture, you should re-

member that he was excommunicated for apostasy relating to the topic on which he is speaking.

The rest of the memo is composed of quotes from Elder James E. Faust's general conference address in which he gave a definition of apostasy (see "Keeping Covenants and Honoring the Priesthood," *Ensign*, Nov. 1993).

Interestingly, the stake presidency's memo contained at least two inaccuracies: Bell's lecture was scheduled for noon and Quinn's wasn't scheduled until 4 P.M. Also, Snow College President Gerald Day told the *Deseret News* that Quinn's invitation came through normal channels and had his approval. As it turned out, the stake presidency's efforts had little effect: students and faculty packed Quinn's lecture (for full text, see page 67).

Meanwhile, individuals at Southern Utah University extended a second invitation to Quinn to speak there in April. When Quinn's first lecture was canceled by SUU administrators, close to twenty students rallied in protest ("SUU Cancels Quinn Lecture," *SUNSTONE*, Feb. 1994). SUU President Gerald Sheratt explained he didn't want to get in the middle of BYU's problems by sponsoring a speech centered on current tensions between intellectuals and feminists and the Church. He later added that it was not appropriate for SUU, a tax-supported school, to sponsor a religious address.

Quinn proposed other topics, but his SUU address was the same one Sheratt opposed: "Dilemmas of Intellectuals and Feminists in the Contemporary LDS Church." The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that the lecture's sponsors, a group of private citizens and faculty who raised the funds to cover travel and speaking fees, chose the topic because they felt it was important to discuss relevant, current problems in the Church.

While the University did nothing to promote Quinn's second invitation, Sheratt was described as being "appropriately supportive." A "Public Celebration" party was held after the speech in Quinn's honor.

ELDER MARVIN J. ASHTON DIES

AFTER MORE than two decades of service in the Church's general leadership, LDS apostle Marvin J. Ashton died of complications from a blood disease. He was 78. "Elder Ashton was a superior human being—intelligent, forthright, and gentle," former Church historian Leonard J. Arrington told the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Among other things, Elder Ashton's brother, Wendell, remembers him as a fierce competitor: "All brotherhood ceased when we played tennis. . . . 'No prisoners taken' was our motto."

In his remarks during Elder Ashton's funeral, President Thomas S. Monson, second counselor in the First Presidency, characterized him as a talented, loving, gentle man of God. "Frankly, I always looked



Elder Marvin J. Ashton

forward to Mary's turn to pray in our temple meetings. . . . He literally talked to God."

During his years of service, Elder Ashton was a member of the Church Board of Education, a trustee of BYU, and chair of the boards of both ZCMI and Deseret Book Company. He was also on the national committee of the Boy Scouts of America, served in the Utah Senate, and was a member of the state Board of Regents. Prior to his general authority calling, Elder Ashton was in the wholesale lumber business.

ARTHUR HAYCOCK DIES AT 77



Arthur Haycock

ARTHUR HAYCOCK, former secretary to five Church prophets, died 25 February 1994 following complications from recent heart surgery. Author Heidi S. Swinton, who helped record Haycock's memories in *In the Company of Prophets*, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that his thoughts and emotions became so intertwined with the men he served that he once said, "What made the president happy made me happy, and anything that troubled him troubled me."

Haycock was also known for his unquestioning loyalty. Once, President Spencer W. Kimball

decided to go on a diet. " 'Arthur,' says President Kimball, 'we're going on a diet,' " Swinton told the *Tribune*. For weeks, Haycock starved himself and lost weight while Kimball seemed undisturbed. A few weeks later, Haycock found cookies, nuts, and other goodies squirreled away in the prophet's desk.

In the late 1930s, Haycock started in the Church's financial department during President Heber J. Grant's administration. He was later personal secretary to Presidents George Albert Smith, Joseph Fielding Smith, Harold B. Lee, Spencer W. Kimball, and Ezra Taft Benson. Among other Church callings, Haycock served as president of the Hawaii mission in 1958.

CHURCH ALTERS POLICY FOR DIVORCED MEN

AT THE end of February, the Church issued a letter announcing that Mormon men who divorce after a temple marriage must now obtain permission from the First Presidency before remarriage in the temple. Previously, only women needed permission. The following letter was sent to Church leaders:

Effective immediately, a man who has been previously sealed and later divorced, who desires to be married and sealed in the temple must first obtain a clearance from the First Presidency.

It is intended that this requirement will help to re-emphasize the significance and sacredness of the temple marriage covenants.

Aileen Clyde, second counselor in the Relief Society presidency, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that the policy change is the most important thing that has happened for women since her calling into the presi-

dency. "Remarrying has always been an easier process for men than women in the Church," she said.

For others, the vaguely-worded letter has just raised new questions. Paul Richards, former BYU spokesperson, talked to the *Tribune* about his first temple marriage that ended in divorce. "When I divorced and remarried, I didn't need permission," he said. "But when my ex-wife decided to remarry, she needed permission plus a cancellation of sealing. I had to write a letter saying it was OK with me. Under the new policy, does the ex-husband have to get permission from his ex-wife to remarry? Does it mean that when he remarries, the first marriage sealing is canceled or does it remain on the books as a temple sealing until she [the ex-wife] remarries?"

Church spokesperson Don LeFevre confirmed that only women require both a sealing cancellation and First Presidency permission for a second temple marriage. "But that's just a technical difference," he said. "The important thing is that both men and women need permission from the First Presidency."

Women must have their sealing canceled because, according to Church doctrine, women can only be married to one man, but in the eternities, a man may be married to many women.

BYU FEMINISTS RECRUIT NEW ADVISOR



In Provo, BYU feminist club VOICE stages its annual "Take Back the Night" protest.

IN A shift away from its radical beginnings, VOICE, the BYU feminist group that received national media attention two years ago when students rallied to protest violence against women, is seeking a more mainstream membership through its new University-approved club status. The biggest barrier to broader University acceptance was finding a new faculty advisor. Cecilia Konchar Farr, the outgoing VOICE advisor who was denied tenure last year, told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "We asked several [women professors] and they all thought it would be too dangerous." Many felt Farr was fired primarily because of her high-profile activism with VOICE and her public pro-choice statements.

Eventually, BYU law professor Fred Gedicks volunteered for the job. Gedicks, who has discussed feminist issues in campus forums and classes, said he looks forward to his involvement with the group. "VOICE is an important part of the intellectual community at BYU and I wanted to make sure it remained that."

CHURCH OPPOSES GAY MARRIAGES

THE FIRST PRESIDENCY has issued a statement encouraging members to fight the legalization of homosexual marriages. The following statement was sent to Church leaders in February:

The principles of the gospel and the sacred responsibilities given us require that The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints oppose any efforts to give legal authorization to marriages between persons of the same gender.

Marriage between a man and a woman is ordained of God to fulfill the eternal destiny of His children. The union of husband and wife assures perpetuation of the race and provides a divinely-ordained setting for the nurturing and teaching of children. This sacred family setting, with father and mother and children firmly committed to each other and to righteous living, offers the best hope for avoiding many of the ills that afflict society.

We encourage members to appeal to legislators, judges,

and other government officials to preserve the purposes and sanctity of marriage between a man and a woman, and to reject all efforts to give legal authorization or other official approval or support to marriages between persons of the same gender.

Church spokesperson Don LeFevre said the statement was motivated largely by the current movement in Hawaii to legalize homosexual marriage, and does not reflect any trends in Utah politics. LeFevre added in an interview with the *Salt Lake Tribune* that the LDS church has nearly nine million members world-wide and "their concern is everywhere." Besides, he said, "if [lifting the ban against homosexual marriages] were successful, that would be a foot in the door."

Duane Jennings, co-director of Affirmation (a group for homosexual Mormons, their families, and friends), said he thinks there are problems with the Church's position. "It's a reaction that goes against the Constitution of the United States," he told the *Tribune*. "It violates civil rights, and it violates the separation of religious beliefs from so-

SUNSTONE CALENDAR



THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS will present papers during a conjoint session of AML and the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association Annual Meeting, **27-29 October 1994**, at Antlers Doubletree Hotel in Colorado Springs, Colorado. For more information, contact Susan Howe, Department of English, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah 84602.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MORMON COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS has received a \$3500 donation for research on missionary mental health. To submit a research proposal, contact AMCAP Missionary Research, 2500 E. 1700 South, Salt Lake City, Utah 84108. Submission deadline is **1 June 1994**.

THE ASSOCIATION OF MORMON COUNSELORS AND PSYCHOTHERAPISTS will hold its Fall Convention, "Peace Amid Calamity: Building on the Rock," **29-30 September 1994** in Salt Lake.

THE BROOKIE & 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 1994**. A total of three entries per person is permitted. Contact: Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, Utah 84101 (801/355-5926).

CANADIAN MORMON STUDIES ASSOCIATION, John Whitmer Historical Association, and Mormon History Association will hold a joint meeting in Kingston, Ontario, Canada **20-24 June 1995**. Please submit paper abstracts by 1 October 1994 to Jessie Embry, Charles Redd Center, 4069 HBLL, BYU, Provo, UT 84602.

EVERGREEN INTERNATIONAL will hold its annual conference, "Grace and Works: Confronting Homosexuality through Practical Strategies and Alliance with Christ," **12-13 August 1994** at Utah Valley State College, 800 W. 1200 South, Orem, Utah. Call Evergreen for more information (801/535-1658).

THE JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION annual meeting is in Nauvoo, Illinois, **23-25 September 1994**. Call Lee Pement for more information (816/833-1000, ext. 2338).

MORMON WOMEN'S FORUM is sponsoring the second annual Counterpoint Conference, **4-5 November 1994**, at the University Park Hotel. Call Lynne Whitesides for more information

(801/521-6252).

THE MUSEUM OF CHURCH HISTORY AND ART is hosting the third worldwide International Art Competition. The exhibit, which runs until **5 September 1994**, comprises 150 religious art works from twenty-two nations and fifteen U.S. states.

THE SOCIETY FOR UTOPIAN STUDIES will hold its 19th conference in Toronto, Canada, **13-19 October 1994**. Send abstracts by **14 May 1994** to Kenneth Roemer, English Department, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington, Texas 76019-0035 or call 817/273-2692.

SUNSTONE CONFERENCES

1994 SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held on **17-20 August 1994** at the Salt Lake Hilton Hotel. Proposals for papers and panels are now being accepted; featured topics include the growth of the international LDS church and reflections on the 20-year history of the Sunstone Foundation. Contact the Sunstone Foundation, 331 Rio Grande Street, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, UT 84101 (801/355-5926; fax 801/355-4043).



CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

21-22 October 1994

Marriott Courtyard, State & Hubbard

Ann Stone, 2705 Thayer, Evanston, IL 60201 (708/475-2583)

Colleen Thomas, 2103 Park St., Rolling Meadows, IL 60008
(708/253-3594)

PACIFIC NORTHWEST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

CALL FOR PAPERS

28-29 October 1994

Mountaineers Bldg., Seattle, WA

Molly Bennion
1150 22nd Ave., East
Seattle, WA 98112-3517 (206/325-6868)

cial policies." Jennings also says the statement will have an impact on the lives of homosexuals in Utah: "It's probably going to lead to more gay bashing and more lies."

PIONEER THEATER MAY LOSE CHURCH SUPPORT



The Pioneer Memorial Theater in Salt Lake City.

STRONG LANGUAGE during a Pioneer Memorial Theater performance of *Conversations with My Father* prompted President Gordon B. Hinckley to write a letter threatening discontinuance of the Church's annual \$15,000 grant. The letter was intended to be private correspondence, but word of it was leaked to the press.

When the *Salt Lake Tribune* contacted Pioneer Theater Company artistic director Charles Morey, he said the Church has every right to base its financial support on whatever criteria it establishes. "I don't think this should be seen as a censorship issue," he said.

Morey and theater managing director Chris Lino maintain that the content of the Theater's productions will not be altered and expect foundation support will be dropped. "We are committed to serve the entire community by producing a broad repertoire of theater. . . . We believe that our work falls well within community standards and as evidence of that we would point to the fact that we are currently having the most successful season in the history of the theater," Morey told the *Tribune*.

75 GATHER IN "CIRCLE OF LOVE" OUTSIDE CHURCH OFFICES

AS THOUSANDS assembled on temple square for the 164th annual general conference, about seventy-five people gathered outside Church offices to protest recent excommunications and plead for inclusion and tolerance from Church leaders.

The demonstrators had selected twelve different contact people across the country, hoping to encourage hundreds to make the trip to link hands in a "circle of love" around church headquarters. Though the numbers did not materialize, many sent in donations to pay for the flowers.

The group met at the state Capitol to pray and sing hymns. Carrying bouquets of colored carnations symbolizing diversity, they marched two blocks where they held hands and sang outside the office entrance.

"Because as human beings we are sinners, we believe that our church should be a refuge for those who stand in need of healing, encouragement, and love," said Marion Smith, author of *Paper Dolls*, a book about child sex abuse in the Church.

Jay Turnbull, a former Mormon bishop from North Platte, Nebraska, who traveled to Salt Lake with his wife and children, told the *Associated Press*, "Things are not right in the church. The leadership . . . is more interested in self-fulfillment than in its members."

John Fox was one of a handful of cynical onlookers. "These people are pathetic," he said. "They claim to love the church, but they form organizations and stand for things that destroy it. It's a strange dichotomy."

HINCKLEY SPEAKS ON VIETNAM, SEPTEMBER SIX

DURING A BYU fireside in March, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced that the Church had received official recognition in Cambodia and was hoping to expand service efforts in Vietnam. "Although we are not yet in a position to do regular missionary work in Vietnam, the area is opening up to us," he said.

President Hinckley commented on sensationalized news reports of the September excommunications. "The way these few cases were covered, you would think the whole church was coming undone," he said, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. President Hinckley contrasted the excommunications with the more than 5,000 baptisms in Utah during that same time saying, "That is a pretty good ratio," the *Tribune* reported.

In his remarks, President Hinckley gave a health report on President Ezra Taft Benson: "He has difficulty speaking, he has difficulty walking, but he is still the Lord's prophet."



President Gordon B. Hinckley

HINCKLEY: SOCIETY SLIPPING BACK INTO THE JUNGLE?

AFTER RECEIVING a public service award by the BYU Management Society of Washington, D.C., President Gordon B. Hinckley warned diplomats and politicians—but mostly parents—that the world was headed for moral catastrophe unless they started taking time to teach and learn with their children, to work, read, and pray together as families. "A troubled home leads to a generation of troubled children," President Hinckley said. He added that he fears society is "slipping back into the jungle" by ignoring traditional values.

The *Deseret News* reported that President Hinckley said families must take the lead because other sources have "largely abandoned the teaching of values"—especially public schools. He said the Church can be a help "and can do wonders if the government will leave it unfettered."

E.A.R.M.S./SIGNATURE FEUD CONTINUES WITH ATTACK ON METCALFE

MUDSLINGING, NAME-CALLING and "shoddy scholarship" have become commonplace accusations from both sides of the long-standing conflict between the Foundation for Ancient Research and



Brent Metcalfe

Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) and Salt Lake-based Signature Books. Two years ago, rumors even circulated that legal action could be forthcoming. But many see a recent episode concerning Brent Metcalfe's *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon* as the feud's new low-point.

According to an Associated Press article, F.A.R.M.S.'s most recent edition of *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*—over 500 pages devoted to a critique of Metcalfe's book—not only contained familiar epithets such as

"pseudo-pious" and "distorted," but it originally contained, encrypted in its text, the phrase "Metcalfe is butthead." The phrase was made up of the first letter of each paragraph in an essay by BYU historian William Hamblin.

According to sources close to F.A.R.M.S., the *Review* had already gone to press with the secret message before its editors became aware that news of the hidden "butthead" had already been made public. In an eleventh-hour excision, the phrase was altered, leaving the letters "MET—FE I— BUT—HEA—" as evidence of the message's existence.

The AP article included Metcalfe's reaction: "This is pathetic," he said. "They attack us with gossip and innuendo. I guess they believe that personal assaults, misrepresentation, and manipulation of evidence make up for their paucity of good arguments."

In a few cases, however, F.A.R.M.S. credits *New Approaches'* essayists for good scholarship. The AP reported that BYU political scientist Louis Midgely, for example, calls *New Approaches* an "important event" and "the most sophisticated attack on the truth of the Book of Mormon currently available" from sectarian sources "or from the fringes of Mormon culture and intellectual life."

LATTER-DAY FAITHFUL ATTACK SCHINDLER'S LIST

FEW COULD have anticipated the obstacle businessman James R. Greenbaum Jr. would face in trying to teach Utah teens about the Holocaust. After seeing *Schindler's List*, the Academy Award-winning true story of a German industrialist who saved 1,100 Jews by employing them during World War II, Greenbaum offered free tickets to all Utah high school seniors. Some parents were outraged that the district would consider championing an R-rated film, causing most Utah schools to turn down Greenbaum's offer.

Schindler's producer, Jerry Molen, an active Latter-day Saint, was surprised by the reaction and found himself defending the film in interviews and public appearances. "If you put the Bible on the screen, it would be R-rated," he said. After watching *Schindler's List*, "people will leave the theater with a stronger moral sense than they took in. It shows the good one person can do."

Eventually Greenbaum reached a compromise by paying for transportation to the movie for Park City schools—the only district to accept the offer—and providing free tickets at the box office for any Utah high school student with a driver's license and a signed parental permission form.

As it turns out, Greenbaum may not have been the only one to have this kind of problem. A friend recently wrote SUNSTONE about an LDS woman in Kirtland, OH, who waged a public anti-*Schindler's List* campaign when the local district proposed a school-sponsored showing.

LEE SEEKS NAVAJO PRESIDENCY

FORMER FIRST QUORUM of the Seventy member George P. Lee is running for the Navajo Nation presidency. This is his second bid to lead the country's largest tribe. In 1990, his running mate, Tribal Chair Peter MacDonald Sr., was forced to withdraw from the race following a federal indictment on corruption charges. Lee subsequently organized a write-in campaign that earned him 23 percent of the votes.

Lee's campaign will likely be disrupted in June when he goes to trial for a first-degree felony child sex abuse charge. In August 1993, Lee was charged with the 1989 sexual abuse of a twelve-year-old girl ("George P. Lee Indicted," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1993).

FORMER INMATES SUE JAIL OVER GARMENTS

DAVID MIGUEL GEDO and James Lewis Gedo were arrested in May and held for two days for possession of an illegal machine gun. While in jail, they were not allowed to wear their garments and are now suing Salt Lake County Jail officials with the help of The Rutherford Institute, a religious-rights organization based in Charlottesville, Va. Captain David Glad, jail commander, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that prisoners are not allowed personal clothing "so no contraband can be sneaked in." Prison spokesman Jack Ford explained that most Mormon prisoners are excommunicated when they're convicted of a felony, voiding the issue of wearing the garment.

TRANSFERRED

- ERIC B. SHUMWAY will be replacing Alton L. Wade as president of the BYU-Hawaii campus.
- DAVID L. PAULSEN has been awarded the first of BYU's new professorships under the Richard L. Evans Chair of Religious Understanding.
- BRAD W. FARNSWORTH will be replacing Dee F. Andersen as BYU administrative vice president.
- ALTON L. WADE will be replacing R. J. Snow as BYU student life vice president.

1994 ANNUAL GENERAL CONFERENCE

- ELDER ROBERT D. HALES was sustained to the Council of the Twelve Apostles.
- ELDER CREE-L. KOFFORD was sustained to the First Quorum of the Seventy.
- ELDER CLAUDIO ROBERTO MENDES COSTA was sustained to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.
- ELDER W. DON LADD was sustained to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.
- ELDER JAMES O. MASON was sustained to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.
- ELDER DIETER F. UCHTDORF was sustained to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.
- ELDER LANCE B. WICKMAN was sustained to the Second Quorum of the Seventy.
- BISHOP MERRILL J. BATEMAN was sustained as Presiding Bishop.

SUN  SPOTS

“JELL-O BELT” SUSPICIONS CONFIRMED



THE AGE-OLD piece of folk-wisdom connecting Saints with lime gelatin was recently supported by hard facts. While the “Jell-O Belt” as a whole may run from Shelley, Idaho, to Snowflake, Arizona, a Jell-O product manager at Kraft Foods recently located the heart of that belt in Salt Lake City. “Salt Lake City keeps popping up as one of the biggest [Jell-O] markets per capita,” the gelatin exec told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, “and the lime thing is even a little more bizarre.” Marketing surveys indicate that 4 million boxes of Jell-O are consumed by 1 million Utahns annually—that’s four times the national average.

LOCK YER DOORS, IT’S “MORMOGEDDON!”

NOSE MAGAZINE recently ran a blood-splattered, inch-high headline declaring: “Mormogeddon! Latter-Day Psychos on a Mission of Murder!” The introduction to the glossy five-page spread reads: “In the last 20 years, Mormonism has spawned an unprecedented number of violent religious cults and freelance Holy Avengers who have launched a veritable Holy War. Armed as they are with guns, bombs and the Book of Mormon, no one is safe from this new breed of Latter-Day Saint.” Among other Mormon history highlights, *Nose* cites Brigham Young’s teachings, blood atonement references in the Book of Mormon, and Mountain Meadows Massacre as precursors to modern-day Mormon murderers. Ervil LeBaron, the Lafferty brothers, the Longo family, Richard Worthington, and Jeffrey Lundgren are a few of the Mormon loony-aries featured.



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