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FEATURES
THE GEOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS OF MORMONDOM, 1965-95
JESUS LAUGHING
1994 Brooke & D. K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest Moonstone Award Winner
THE ORDEAL AND MEANING OF SUFFERING
THE PAINTINGS, THE PAINTER, AND THE POET
THE BEST IS HISTORY
THE MORAL IMAGINATION
BASH: A REMEMBRANCE OF HATRED AND LONGING

POETRY
[I WANT TO SAY GOOD-BYE . . .]
REPORT ON THE ROCHESTER MISSION ENTERPRISE
THE COIN OF DESTINY
REPENTANCE
MAKING TEA
SUNDAY IN ST. AUGUSTINE
HOW MUCH?
GREAT SALT DESERT

COLUMNS
OF GOOD REPORT
On the Backwardness of Prophets
FROM THE EDITOR: Potluck
TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .
Teaching Confessions to Saints: A Non-LDS Professor and Her LDS Students
CORNUCOPIA
Writing Emma
PECULIAR PEOPLE: LDS Less Likely to Divorce
The Writing on the Wall
Articles of Faithful Publication
Saints in America
AN OLIVE LEAF: Mormons: An Eternal Quest

REVIEWS
BOOKNOTES
Hidden Cities: The Discovery and Loss of Ancient North American Civilization by Roger G. Kennedy
The Dragon's Tapestry and Prism Moon by Martine Bates
Where are the Good Guys? The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power by D. Michael Quinn
Paradigm Lost: The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power by D. Michael Quinn

NEWS
DESPITE "REMARKABLE GROWTH," CHURCH COULD SEE LOWEST MEMBERSHIP GAINS
SINCE 1940s
OBEY THE LAW OF THE LAND, ELDER FAUST SAYS

Cover Brad Teare
REFERENCE WAS MADE to the October 1843 conference in which Church members sustained Sidney Rigdon as counselor to the Prophet Joseph despite Joseph's heavy criticism of him ("Dilemmas of Feminists and Intellectuals in the Contemporary Church") by D. Michael Quinn, SUNSTONE, June 1994; ("Die Hard Tales") by Samuel W. Taylor, SUNSTONE, Apr. 1993). I'd like to add a bit, and though it may seem pedantic.

Sam Taylor cites Wilford Woodruff as a source of information about the event, but at the time of the conference, Wilford was on a trip to the East lasting about four months, doing missionary work and visiting relatives.

Richard Van Wagoner's biography Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess quotes the same report in the Times and Seasons that Samuel Taylor refers to, but continues on with something about Sidney that is much less positive than the part Sam quoted:

He [Joseph] expressed entire willingness to have Sidney Rigdon retain his station, provided he would magnify his office, and walk and conduct himself in all honesty, righteousness, and integrity; but signified his lack of confidence in his integrity and steadfastness, judging from their past intercourse. (324)

Van Wagoner notes that Joseph's statement that he had thrown Sidney off his shoulders was not in the original minutes of the meeting. The official Church history itself is remembered in a self-serving way to reinstate him no longer-I now throw him from my shoulders. If my brother Joseph said he had carried him until he could carry him no longer-I now throw him from my shoulders.

Although Rigdon posits that the words are based on someone's later memory of what was said, remembered in a self-serving way to reinforce the Twelve's position in light of their later confrontation with President Rigdon.

That may be so, but the reminiscences of several witnesses are consistent. The historical documents that are now so readily available in the Infobase LDS Library give six autobiographical writings that refer to the "trial" of Sidney Rigdon for his place in the presidency. All are reminiscences after the Twelve's success in the succession crisis, but they are strikingly alike:

William Watkins: "[Sidney] has been sustained as Joseph's counselor by the people, although contrary to the Prophet's wish for some time past."

Joseph Fielding: "Joseph had not looked upon Rigdon as his counselor for a long time, yet as the Church with Brother Hyrum seemed willing to continue with him in that office, he was not openly dismissed therefrom. Joseph said he had carried him until he was [sic] of it."

Mosiah Hancock: "I had seen the Prophet proclaim..." I have carried Sidney Rigdon long enough-I now throw him from my shoulders. If my brother Hyrum wishes to pick him up and carry him, he may—carry him no longer."

William Hyde: "[O]n one occasion I heard Joseph Smith say that he had carried Elder Rigdon on his back long enough and then turning to the Twelve he said that if they did not help him at that time in shaking him off, the time would come when they would have to do it, and that without his, Joseph's assistance."

George Lamb: "Joseph told us he did not want him for his counselor anymore. That is if the people put him there they might, but he said I will shake him off and shook hands on them words with Rigdon. And so the voice of the people put him in again through the mercy plea by Brother Hyrum Smith... [He] declared he would have him no more for his counselor. If the people wants him there they may put him there but I will not have him any more. I will shake him off. And after Rigdon had made a few more remarks he said, if President Smith will have me no longer for his spokesman I will give him the parting hand of friendship and he went upon which President Smith arose up immediately and gave him the parting hand, thus he shook him off from that time as I was present on that day. But the people having mercy upon him after Hyrum Smith plead for mercy for him and the voice of the people was in his favor..."

Wandle Mace: "Joseph Smith arose and said he was dissatisfied with Elder Sidney Rigdon as a counselor... Joseph stated that... he did not wish to retain him in that station unless those difficulties could be removed, but desired his salvation, and expressed his willingness that he (Sidney) should retain a place among the saints... Hyrum and others used their influence to have Sidney retain his position... Joseph said he was willing Elder Sidney Rigdon should retain his station, provided... he would magnify his office, and conduct himself in all honesty, righteousness, and integrity; but said he, 'I have no confidence in him judging from the past, and if you do not cast him off now; the time will come when you will wish you had done it.'"
Joseph talked thus plainly about the future, a motion was made by Elder William Marks, and seconded by Hyrum to retain Sidney as a counsellor to the First Presidency, and the conference sanctioned it by their vote.

Fielding wrote his account while in Nauvoo, only a few months after the incident. Only Mace shows reliance on other sources than memory. He has obviously gone back to the reports of the conference for his quotes.

Of course, Quinn's point was that the congregation overrode the prophet's wishes while Taylor suggests they only took him at his word when he said he would accept Sidney if "these difficulties could be removed."

It appears that the people were persuaded by Hyrum and others to give Sidney another chance, and Joseph did leave them a loophole by making his rejection conditional and not flatly refusing to have Sidney. His strongest negative statement may have been made emotionally after the vote was cast.

In any event, Quinn's general point seems true; there was a much greater feeling of independence in congregational voting in that day. Some disagreements not acceptable today might well have been possible in the time of Joseph Smith. But one should also bear in mind that many excommunications from that era would likely not happen today.

EDWARD L. KIMBALL
PROVO, UT

PICTURING THE PROPHET

THANK YOU for noting our efforts to authenticate a possible photographic image of Joseph Smith Jr. ("RLDS Archivist May Have Found Joseph Smith Photo," SUNSTONE, Apr. 1995). The Associated Press wire story you cited originated from a presentation at Brigham Young University, which, despite several significant factual errors, was a fair news effort. To provide RLDS members more detailed information, we prepared an article for the SAINT'S HERALD (Dec. 1994).

Unfortunately, your notice incorporated substantive errors from the AP story, even though the Herald article, which you also used, is quite clear on these points. The AP incorrectly stated that I am 85-90 percent sure that the photo is of Smith. What I did do was reference a report we commissioned by Kent Dixon, a forensic photographic comparison expert. Comparing known images from the death mask of Joseph Smith Jr. with the questioned image, Dixon found a number of points of high correspondence. Dixon concludes, "the individual in the photograph (the questioned daguerreotype) is probably that of Joseph Smith Jr. (known death mask images) to a certitude of 85-90 percent."

You also perpetuated the curious AP inference that the RLDS church plans to somehow use Joseph's actual skull in the identification process. The BYU presentation referred to the use of information from photographs of Joseph's skull taken by C. Ed Miller during reinterment in 1928. Joseph's skull and remains are indeed in possession of the RLDS church, but securely buried in the Smith Family Cemetery in Nauvoo, Illinois, where they have been since 1928.

Authentication efforts have been greatly facilitated through the cooperation of the scholarly community and access to historical resources. We have tried not to encourage hope until we possess persuasive and reliable evidence. A significant part of our study remains unfinished; we await the results of a sophisticated computer comparison by Lewis L. Sadler, biomedical visualization department head at the University of Illinois in Chicago. Through the cooperative assistance of the LDS Church Historical Department, Sadler will compare the image from the daguerreotype with known images of Joseph Smith, including his death mask, thought to be among the best documentable sources of information about Joseph's actual appearance. Sadler's computer can compare anthropometric ratios produced by the angles between lines drawn through known anatomical locations within each image. Though Sadler's system may not guarantee an absolute match, it can establish the presence of a high-level relationship. It can also demon-
strate when there is no possibility of a facial match.

When we know more, we will share the information with the scholarly community.

RONALD D. ROMIG
Church Archivist

SWITCHED-ON MORONI

A MEN" to Paul C. Pollett's "The Decline of Music in Mormon Culture" (SUNSTONE, Sept. 1992). As ward choir director for over twenty years, I'd like to add a few facets.

Concerning pipe organs, in all of Austria with its rich musical heritage, a visitor could find only one in an LDS meetinghouse (Vienna's stake center). When our Vienna Third Ward was planning for our building, we were informed by European Church headquarters in Frankfurt, Germany, that the pipe organ we desired was not allowed, even if the ward paid 100 percent for it, which we had volunteered to do. Ironically, the electronic organ favored by Frankfurt has an integrated rhythm and percussion section with drums, congas, etc.—instruments not permitted in the chapel. I remember the bewilderment of the congregation and the inexperienced organist's puzzled look one Sunday morning when the sacrament meeting's prelude started off with "um-cha um-cha-cha." It takes a skilled organist to find some "reverence inspiring" registers, since many of them just squeal and squeak like mice or pigs.

This putting electronic imitation over the original (which we also find in department stores; the rendering of, say, Beethoven or Mozart) reflects the Church's lack of real interest in the arts, and one in an easy-to-handle, but "spiritually uplifting" surrogate.

A Mormon congregation is not at all allowed to follow the psalmist's admonition to praise the Lord with trumpets and cymbals. Should the Angel Moroni decide to visit any sacrament meeting, he would be well advised to switch to a flute.

THEO P. AAR
Vienna, Austria
SPEAKING FOR GOD

I GO ON RECORD with Janice Allred in saying that I, too, cannot find any evidence in the scriptures to support the kind of confidence in the Brethren and the organization of the Church that we are encouraged to have ("Mormon Feminist Disciplined," SUNSTONE, Apr. 1995). I did find some interesting passages to the contrary. President Gordon B. Hinckley tells us that God will see to it that the Church will never be led astray. This notion does not fit with passages such as Ezekiel 14:1–11, Ezekiel 34 (a chapter specifically describing the latter days), JST Mark 9, D&C 84:54–57, and others.

About a year ago, Howard W. Hunter said, "The only infallible beacon for safety on the shore is Jesus Christ." To focus ourselves or to center our trust anywhere else is to practice a form of idolatry. Brother Hinckley, in his choice of words, shifts our attention and trust from the Savior to the president of the Church. It may have been innocent, but he advocated this form of idolatry.

We are failing to "remember the new covenant" (D&C 84:57), explained in Jeremiah 31:31–34 where the Lord becomes our God and we become his people. When Moses plainly taught and diligently sought to bring the children of Israel to behold the face of God and become his people, they were fearful and hardened their hearts. They essentially said, "Oh no, Moses, we don't want to see the face of God. You go. You talk to him. Then come back, and tell us what he says." This, we are told, provoked the Lord to anger, and in his wrath he swore that under these circumstances they would not enter into his rest and receive of his fullness.

Is this reaction of ancient Israel significantly different from the response of modern Israel when we hang on every utterance of the Brethren rather than seek to hear the "words of Christ that tell us all things what we should do?" (2 Ne. 32). If placing a prophet between us and God was an offense to God in Moses' day, is it any less of one today?

LYDIA BROMFIELD
Rexburg, ID

WHEAT AND TARES

THE EXCOMMUNICATIONS, culminating in Janice Allred's, have brought to mind the parable of the wheat and the tares (Matt. 13:24–30, 36–43). This parable, located in a chapter of parables dealing with the kingdom of heaven (the early Church), details how the leaders of the Church were to handle those who differed from them in beliefs, customs, and culture. For Matthew's community of mixed Jews and Gentiles (Greeks), this was particularly important since diverse theological beliefs existed. For this reason, Jesus cautioned the early Church leaders through this parable against judging others, admonishing them instead to let matters rest in the hands of Christ, the Judge.

Two dangers existed then, as now, in "gathering up" those perceived as being offending members. First, Church leaders might excommunicate a member that they perceive to be embracing and teaching false doctrine, but who in fact was espousing the truth. Thus, leaders, in their ignorance, might expel a believing Saint based on false perceptions and prejudices (Luke 6:37–39). The second danger lay in destroying the faith of those members closely rooted to the offending member, resulting in the destruction not only of the offending members, but also those sympathetic to their cause. This would result in contention and offense, feelings diametrically opposed to the spirit of Christ's gospel. Membership in Christ's church was based, therefore, not on acceptance of a theological dogma established by the governing apostles, but rather on a belief in Jesus (Mark 16:15–18). Jesus rebuked his disciples for judging others. "Forbid him not: . . . for he that is not against us is on our part." (Mark 9:39–40).

Leaders in today's Church, on all levels, would do well to learn the lessons of the ancient Church and accept the teachings of Christ's parables: "Let them both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into the barn" (Matt. 13:30). Rather than excommunicating faithful, believing members, let's work on tolerance and love towards our brothers and sisters in the faith of Christ.

BRIAN H. STUY
Woodland Hills, UT

THE PAINFUL TRUTH

I HAVE ALWAYS had a hard time with Paul's preaching. For example: "And through thy knowledge shall the weak brother perish for whom Christ died? But when ye sin so against the brethren, and wound their weak conscience, ye sin against Christ." (1 Cor. 8:11–12.) I would hold my peace and let things slide, but I never really understood the why behind holding back what I thought was the truth. How could the truth hurt anyone or be improper? I never connected for me. That is, until I read Kathleen Flake's essay ("Rendering to the Corporation: A Personal Ecclesiology," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1994). It well
counter-balanced the article in the preceding issue about the Brandeis scholar getting into trouble for telling his ideas about the Book of Mormon ("The David P. Wright Excommunication Documents," SUNSTONE, Sept. 1994). FIRST, a story with the theme "But how could I be harming anyone?" followed by an essay explaining it.

Reading Flake's essay, I was caught with a profound sense of why we serve the adversary when we engage in contention and when we insist on publishing and promulgating insights given from God to us for our own needs and understanding. I reconsidered Alma 12:9: "It is given unto many to know the mysteries of God; nevertheless they are laid under a strict command that they shall not impart only according to the portion of his word which he doth grant unto the children of men."

STEPHEN R. MARSH
Wichita Falls, TX

A GIFT HORSE

HAVE YOU EVER spent hours searching for the perfect gift, and when the recipient opens the package, he or she says, "Oh, thank you. Well, it's not my color. If you were really sensitive, you would have noticed. In fact, you got it so wrong that this gift is really an insult." Usually, even when our gifts are given to ungrateful friends or family, the response isn't quite that bad. But in the debate over women and the priesthood, it is often close to that from women. After complaining that men are selfishly keeping the priesthood to themselves, when some men say, "Have it," some women complain that the priesthood is too "male" in its function, its hierarchy, its ideology, in everything, and it is an insult to expect women to share in it. (See the three Give and Take articles on female ordination in the Aug. 1995 SUNSTONE)

This puts men in a "damned if you do and damned if you don't" position and puts on everyone else the entire responsibility to change customs and values. This rather petulant attitude tries men from even wanting to try. If nothing they do is ever good enough to satisfy women, they'll leave it entirely up to the women to make what they want. Thus everyone expects someone else to do the work. Everyone complains that no one is doing it.

To use another awkard analogy, it makes me think of someone eating a piece of cake. Another person nearby looks hungrily on, and the first offers some of the cake. Then the second one says, "This is chocolate. I want coconut." The first guy is not really in a position to take a whole new cake right on the spot. Likewise, men have the priesthood. Women want priesthood. Men (some) offer women the priesthood. Women (some) complain that it isn't the right flavor.

If the refreshments or even the main course at a host's dinner does not consist of our favorite foods, we graciously make do and appreciate the company and their desire to share with us. If a gift isn't exactly what we've been hoping for, we can (ex)change it quietly after receiving it, rather than insulting the giver for not being able to read minds or perform magic tricks on the spot. Christ accepted the widow's mite because it was all she had to offer. Men can only give what they have; to ridicule them in the attempt leaves a very bad taste in my mouth, not my flavor.

JOHNNY LOWNSEND
New Orleans, LA

A QUOTABLE THEOLOGY

I APPRECIATED Elbert Peck's editorial on the religious classes taught at BYU ("What's a University For?" SUNSTONE, Aug. 1995). As a student, I loved my religion classes. I was given a C- because my professor said it didn't have original thinking. He told me to cut down the quote collecting and to beef up my analytical thinking. It was then that I began to realize that the critical thinking demanded by other disciplines is not desired by the religion department.

MICHAEL HENSON
South Beach, FL

C. S. LEWIS SAYS IT ALL

PERMIT US to share the following passage from C. S. Lewis's The Great Divorce:

"Do you really think there are no sins of intellect?"

"There are indeed, Dick. There is hidebound prejudice, and intellectual dishonesty, and timidity, and stagnation. But honest opinions fearlessly
followed—they are not sins.”

“I know we used to talk that way. I did it too until the end of my life when I became what you call narrow. It all turns on what are honest opinions.”

Mine certainly were. They were not only honest but heroic. I asserted them fearlessly. When the doctrine of the Resurrection ceased to commend itself to the critical faculties which God had given me, I openly rejected it. I preached my famous sermon. I defied the whole chapter. I took every risk.”

“What risk? What was at all likely to come of it except what actually came—popularity, sales for your books, invitations, and finally a bishopric?”

“Dick, this is unworthy of you. What are you suggesting?”

“Friend, I am not suggesting anything at all. You see, I know now. Let us be frank. Our opinions were not honestly come by. We simply found ourselves in contact with a certain current of ideas and plunged in because it seemed modern and successful. At College, you know, we just started automatically writing the kind of essays that got good marks and saying the kind of things that won applause. When, in our whole lives, did we honestly face, in solitude, the one question on which it all turned: whether after all the Supernatural might not in fact occur? When did we put up a moment’s resistance to the loss of our faith?”

“Having allowed oneself to drift, unresisting, unpraying, accepting every half-conscious solicitation from our desires, we reached a point where we no longer believed in Faith. Just in the same way, a jealous man, drifting and unresisting, reaches a point at which he believes lies about his best friend: a drunkard reaches a point at which (for the moment) he actually believes that another glass will do him no harm. The beliefs are sincere in the sense that they do occur as psychological events in the man’s mind. If that’s what you mean by sincerity they are sincere, and so were ours. But errors which are sincere in that sense are not innocent.”

MAURICE H. & ALICIA A. MCBRID
Oakton, VA

KILL THEM WITH SPIRIT

I AM amazed by a common reaction to Eugene England’s stand on pacifism as a viable Mormon response to warfare. Many people seem to believe that “praise God and pass the ammunition” is the only truly inspired response to the violence and chaos of the latter days and that pacifism is nothing more than a quaint ideal held by starry-eyed dreamers. They have missed the point, given the following scriptural principles:

1. While it is true that the Lord occasionally calls inspired military leaders to defend his people, many of the righteous perish in such conflicts—if you live by the sword, you tend to die by the sword, even if you are righteous.

2. The only time Church members are truly safe is when they become sanctified as a people and found Zion. When this happens, pacifism is not only a viable but a preferable alternative, because conventional weapons become superfluous and obsolete—through the powers of the priesthood, believers use the forces of nature to fight their battles, raising up or leveling mountains, diverting rivers, causing earthquakes, etc. These powers are so overwhelming that the unrighteous become terrified and leave.

3. Zion cannot be regarded as a mere ideal; the Lord will not protect us in our sins. As evidenced by early LDS history, the Lord’s promises of universal protection will not be honored by him if we do not fulfill our part of the bargain and become sanctified. If we become content with our current level of spiritual development and stop progressing, the Lord will allow all manner of persecution and tribulation to afflict his people, no matter how well armed and prepared they presume themselves to be.

If your spirituality does not entitle you to the protection of the Lord, you are not safe, no matter how well armed you consider yourself to be, because this world is full of destructive forces, and without God’s protection, you are subject to them.

I am not a pacifist. I would not hesitate to physically disable or kill with whatever weapons were available someone who attacked me or my family. However, the fact that I can physically defend myself gives me little comfort, and I am working towards the day when I will have the faith to handle threatening situations simply by raising my arm to the square and summoning the powers of God to fight my battles, if so inspired.

ROB PAGE
Provo, UT

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.
A FRIEND RECENTLY told me that a prophet is someone who has everything backwards.

That observation is correct in terms of dissenting prophets. Traditionally, they are people like Jeremiah, who assert old values and oppose the order of the day. Their prophetic voice says to us, “You have it backwards.” We, of course, believe that the prophet has it backwards and continue in our errant ways.

There are, however, some modern prophets who present a contrast. While they were people who had it backwards, they went beyound their prophecy and led people in revolutions that reordered the world. They not only had it backwards, they also reversed the order. Two modern examples are Thomas Jefferson and Ghandi. Each had it backwards in the traditional prophetic sense. But each also led a revolution to reverse the order—to get things straight. While these two were unusual prophets in that they acted as well as predicted, they were unique because after their revolutions, they still had it backwards.

After the American Revolution, . . . Jefferson was convinced that our new society most needed the opportunity to overthrow itself. He still had it backwards. Gandhi led the Indian people into the independence of the modern world and then urged them to use the ancient hand spinning wheel as the ultimate expression of capacity and freedom. He still had it backwards.

In traditional terms, Jesus was a prophet who had it backwards. He said that the poor, not the rich, will inherit the Kingdom. He said it was the hungry who would be satisfied. He said those who weep will be those who laugh. While He had it backwards in the traditional sense, would He, like Jefferson and Gandhi, still have it backwards after the Christian revolution?

The traditional summation of Christ's reversal of the given order has been defined by Christians as the imperative to be a servant—not a lord. The highest vision of the Christian purpose is to reverse the order, to fulfill a mission of service. We serve Christ by following His example in washing the feet of the disciples. We are Christians, people who have it backwards, as we serve rather than rule—as servants rather than lords.

There is a problem, however, with our dedication to service as the ultimate Christian ideal. After all, the Crusaders thought they were servants of Christ. We doubt it today. The conquistadors thought they were servants of Christ. We doubt it today. The missionaries who went to Africa and Asia thought they were servants of Christ. But many doubt even that today.

It is clear, then, that many people called Christian servants did not reverse the order. They didn't really have it backwards. Instead, they used the idea of servanthood to conquer, rule, and dominate others in Christ's name. They had Christ backwards. It is not enough, therefore, to ask whether someone says he or she is serving Christ. There are bad servants and good servants. The critical issue may be understanding the difference. A good servant must really have it backwards. She can't use the Christian imperative of mission and service to dominate and control.

Today it seems much easier to distinguish the good servants from the bad. Because of McCarthyism, Vietnam, and Watergate, we know that modern Crusaders, conquistadors, and missionaries can be bad servants.

Our current good servants seem clearly to help, care, and cure rather than conquer, exploit, and control. Our good servants are doctors, teachers, psychologists, social workers, professors, lawyers, counselors—the professionals who serve. Our society has even made these good servants, the helping professionals, the economic base of the nation. In GNP terms, nearly two-thirds of our employed people now produce services. We have become an economy of servants. Instead of a nation of conquistadors, we are a nation of servers.

As Christians we could celebrate the institutionalization of the good servant. Ours is finally a society of caring, helping, curing servanthood. We laud the value of professional servanthood and pay for it generously.

In our society of servants, it is interesting to consider what Christ might see with all His tendency toward getting things backwards. Would He, like Jefferson and Gandhi, still have it backwards? Would He even reject a society of good servants?

The answer is, probably not, unless He saw good servants becoming lords. Probably not, unless He saw help becoming control, care becoming commercialized, and cure becoming immobilizing. On the other hand, if He found servants involved in commercialized, immobilizing systems of control, He would certainly insist that we still have it backwards—that our servanthood had become lordship.

The question, then, is whether we are a nation of good servants or the lords of commercialized, immobilizing systems of service that actually control. Consider modern universities as institutions serving students. We might ask whether they have become commercial gatekeepers whose grades select the elites who will control the future. Are professors people who convince eighteen-year-olds, and the rest of society, that young people are incompetent beings in need of technical infusions that will enable their deficient selves to be effective agents in serving systems? Are professors servants who depend upon deficieny and control rather than competence and community?

If faculty members are gatekeepers of commerce depending upon deficiency and control, they are surely bad servants—modem conquistadors. Their servanthood would then be lordship and they would have inverted Christ's mandate to serve. Once again, He would certainly have it backwards, and insist that they have made the servant the lord.

I wonder whether the human reality is always to make servanthood into lordship. It may be that there is no way to define service so that we will not get it backwards and make it a system of control. With all our Christian devotion to the idea of service, could service be an inadequate ideal—a value system so easily corrupted that we should question its usefulness?

At the Last Supper, Christ was telling the disciples those things of greatest importance . . . the central values of the faith. . . . Christ said, "No longer do I call you servants, for the servant does not know what the master is doing. I call you friends for all that I have heard from my Father, I have made known to you."

Finally, Christ said you are not servants. You know. You are friends. Perhaps beyond the revolution of Christian service is the final revolution, the possibility of being friends. Friends are people who know, care, respect, struggle, love justice, and have a commitment to each other through time. Friends are people who understand that it is not servants—the professors, lawyers, doctors, and teachers—who make God's world. Rather, friends are people who understand that it is through their mutual action that they become Christians.

Christ's mandate to be friends is a revolutionary idea in our serving society. Here we are, a nation of professionalized servers, following Christ's mandate to serve. And here He is, . . . getting it backwards once again. The final message is not to serve. Rather, He directs us to be friends.

Why friends rather than servants? Perhaps it is because He knew that servants could always become lords but that friends could not. Servants are people who know the mysteries that can control those to whom they give "help." Friends are people who know each other. They are free to give and receive help.

In our time, professionalized servants are people who are limited by the unknowing friendlessness of their help. Friends, on the other hand, are people liberated by the possibilities of knowing how to help each other.


SUNSTONE welcomes submissions of interesting quotations.
FROM THE EDITOR

POTLUCK

By Elbert Eugene Peck

One hundred philosophical and nit-picky lessons
I've learned during my ten years as editor and publisher.

I HAVE JUST reviewed each of the previous ninety-nine issues of SUNSTONE. Its rich and diverse smorgasbord of appetizers, main courses, and desserts made my mouth water; the familiar aromas brought back fond memories of past repasts. I stopped to sample too many of the offerings; I am stuffed with insights and reflections.

Unlike most magazines, which I discard after reading, old SUNSTONEs are like good books: they keep their relevance with age. Take an evening to peruse your back issues. (Complete sets: $1000; Sunstone on Disk: $25.) You'll be surprised.

The dated, one-of-a-kind news isn't stale, the long-forgotten features that died (news of other religions, movie reviews, photo essays) did not die of old age, but of new things. The sun and stone; the gap between expenses and subscription revenues. Like all small, non-profit intellectual magazines, SUNSTONE requires help from individuals who believe that the existence of the institution is more important than its ability to survive solely in the free-market. (This is also true for big institutions such as universities.) That's the way things always were, the way they critically are, and the way they will eternally be.

While we continue to streamline our operations—computers have allowed us to reduce our staff size but increase our inventory of edited, typeset, ready-to-publish articles—production costs continue to rise. For example, between mid-1994 and fall 1995, paper prices rose 60 percent and have caused countless commercial American periodicals to fold. In 1996, they'll rise another 20 percent. This year, too, the Postal Service dramatically increased non-profit, bulk-mail rates. Please include SUNSTONE in your year-end charity donations and in your prayers.

Another way to help is by giving subscriptions. Recruiting new subscribers costs a lot of money. In fact, many magazines dedicate the entire revenue from new subscriptions to the costs of promotional mailings and premiums; they make money only on renewals. Sign up your non-subscribing friends with the great, Christmas-gift-subscription deal on the back cover (and renew at a bargain rate, too). Every subscriber a missionary!

While browsing the issues, I jotted down impressions, lessons, and maxims and etched them into these 100 points (of light?). Some wax philosophical; others are a little nit-picky, reflecting the sublime and mundane both of being editor and publisher for nearly a decade and of the dual, heaven-and-earth metaphors of sun and stone. Each one has at least one story behind it; corner me at a symposium for the details.

Guiding lights.

1. All ideas have a context. Just as the art in SUNSTONE can be identified and placed in the context of its time, say the late '70s, so can a SUNSTONE article be placed in its time.
2. Perceptions die hard. Despite years of practice to the opposite, scholars persist in thinking that we don't run footnotes, and readers still label us for one specific agenda. It only advocates a process—the open, honest, and independent Christian intellectual.
3. SUNSTONE strives to be a host for wide-ranging discussions, not an advocate of a specific agenda. It only advocates a process—the open, honest, and independent Christian intellectual.
4. Successful, faith-filled editorials can help readers separate the more interesting from the less interesting in Mormonism.
5. SUNSTONE's blending of the academic and the amateur reflects Mormonism's democratic, enlivening, fusion of laity and clergy.
6. After reading a faith-affirming article, I often think, "Where else in Mormonism could even this blessed piece be published?"
7. SUNSTONE is a reflective forum, the times determine many trends in its content—writing faithful history, Book of Mormon historicity, dissent, excommunication.
8. Those features that died (news of other religions, movie reviews, photo essays) did because their prime mover moved on; they will be resurrected when a messiah returns.
9. Volunteers who give regular, predictable help make a difference.
10. Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought is an academic journal; SUNSTONE is an intellectual magazine with illustrations, shorter pieces, news, and attractive callouts designed to entice casual readers into it.
11. We need to establish a Mormon news

DECEMBER 1995
Adversarial journalistic methods, when applied to our Church, appear (and occasionally are) hostile and intentionally destructive to our community. As reporters and readers, we must learn “to speak [and hear] the truth in love” (Eph. 4:15).

12. The very few letters (private or for publication) we get have considerable impact. We discuss, weigh, and act on them.

13. "Average" Latter-day Saints are often more open-minded in areas that don’t threaten core orthodoxy than are liberal or conservative Mormon intellectuals.

14. When talking to the media, speak briefly and meld faithful and critical thinking into the same sentence; otherwise, only your critical comments will be quoted.

15. At present, we need fewer articles about the individual and the institution and more that explore the implications of being Mormon in the modern world.

16. Quit defending the role and right of the independent discussion of Mormon issues—just simply, and responsibly, do it.

17. The very existence of SUNSTONE makes possible the existence of other LDS forums, including those who justify their being because they’re “not SUNSTONE.”

18. Documenting controversial events is not the same thing as creating them.

19. SUNSTONE isn’t on e-mail because I fear it will consume scarce staff time. After all, we’re hardly a breaking daily!

Author! Author!

20. Every author needs editing; shorter usually means more effective, and more people will read the piece.

21. Squeaky authors do get the grease.

22. Good ideas are cheap and plentiful as Cheerios in a meetinghouse; competent, volunteer authors are as rare as short, high councilor talks. Since we don’t pay for articles, it’s hard to “commission” them; authors write about what they are interested in.

23. One ironic result of SUNSTONE’s liberal bias: mediocre conservative authors have a better chance of being published than do many competent liberals.

24. As authors age, they write longer and won’t cut.

25. Too few LDS authors speak on their own authority and experience. They use a passive voice and reference outside authority.

26. Eschew pseudonyms. Writing under your own name makes you a more careful writer.

27. SUNSTONE’s editorial wheels grind exceedingly slow, but most things eventually get published.

28. The early issues contained few women-authored articles. Today’s feature many more, but only a small number of them are on non-women subjects.

29. Emeritus SUNSTONE authors I wish we could reactivate: Orson Scott Card, Marie Cornwall, Davis Bitton, Francine Benyon, William Slaughter, Robert A. Rees, Daniel Peterson, Melodee Moench Charles, Michael Hicks, Carol Cornwall Madsen, Gordon Irving, and P. Q. Gump.

Important but overlooked articles.

30. “The Mormon Polygamy Cases” (SUNSTONE, Sept. 1987), by Randall Guynn and Gene Schaerr (two former Supreme Court clerks), looks at the Court’s first ruling on the First Amendment’s establishment clause.

31. “James E. Talmage and the Tradition of the Victorian Lives of Jesus” (SUNSTONE, Jan. 1988), by Malcolm Thorp, showed that, in contrast to Mormon myth, the insights in Jesus the Christ reflected (and “borrowed” from) the biblical scholarship of his day.

32. “The Developmental Process of Mormon Women” (SUNSTONE, June 1990), by Debbi Christensen, explains that it is unrealistic to expect an organization to celebrate and reward the individualization from it that is essential to personal growth.

Caution: careful readers.

33. Readers diligently read between the lines of even the most “objective,” scholarly article to determine the author’s beliefs.

34. Authors often ask, “What has been the response to my piece?” The answer usually is, “Nothing.” Only a handful of readers share their (rarely critical) opinions.

35. Most people read the magazine in this order (and in dramatically decreasing percentages): cartoons, letters, news, columns, feature articles, reviews, fiction, poetry.

36. Most Mormon intellectuals are parochial and will choose Mormon pulp over the best non-Mormon scholars’ work.

37. It’s impossible to predict who will hate or love—or get—a particular cartoon.

38. Too many readers are lazy intellectuals who want to be entertained; they avoid (or condemn) articles that require only the concentrated attention of a college freshman.

39. Tone is as important as content, but some whine is perception, prejudiced by the politicized times.

40. We are flippin’ sensitive about religious articles. In secular publications we primarily read for information and casually dismiss pieces we disagree with, but with our own religious publications we also read to validate our personal theology and easily get defensive, outraged, and judgmental.
24. As authors age, they write longer and won't cut.
74. Don't run cartoons of Jesus! (Even as a baby.)
89. Never promise a specific production schedule (especially monthly!).

41. People praise us for publishing Mormon drama, but who reads it?

Famous quotes and coined phrases.
42. "I refuse to be held responsible for anything I wrote more than three years ago."—Hugh Nibley ("The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Response," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1979).
44. "The Church is as true as the Gospel"—Eugene England ("The Church is as True as the Gospel," SUNSTONE, 10:10).

Time-tested editorial dos and don'ts.
46. Balance discussion on controversial topics within the same issue. Readers forget, or miss, subsequent countering articles.
47. One typo ruins the entire poem.
48. Don't publish a general authority's talk without his permission.
49. Disclaimers do more harm than good.
50. It's symposiums—never symposia.
51. Treat interviews as a written form, not as a transcription of an oral one. Rewrite responses to best express the subject's views.
52. Don't give Grondahl or Bagley cartoon suggestions.
53. Great symposium panels usually make poor articles. Cassette recordings preserve their magic and expand their audience.
54. Always use a G.A.'s title—it's "President Faust said," never "Faust said."
55. Humor pieces must be earnestly cultivated. We are a darned sober people!

Articles that changed my life.
56. Art Bassett's "Knowing, Doing, Being" (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1979) called me to a spiritual life beyond doctrine and obedience.
57. Ron Walker's "Crisis in Zion: Heber J. Grant and the Panic of 1893" (SUNSTONE, Jan.–Feb. 1980) helped me see general authorities as very human beings in very difficult jobs trying very hard to understand and do God's work.
58. Tom Alexander's "The Evolution of Mormon Doctrine" (SUNSTONE, July–Aug. 1980) dashed my quest to systematize all G.A. statements and scripture and allowed me to understand people in their context.
60. Gene England's "Can Nations Love Their Enemies" (SUNSTONE, Nov.–Dec. 1982), which contrasted almost-always-pacifist First Presidency statements with the more militaristic ones by individual general authorities and other Mormon opinion leaders, changed my heart about peacemaking.
61. Martin Marty's interview ("It Finally All Depends upon God," SUNSTONE, Mar. 1987) counseled that "the most satisfying approach to understanding the implications of your beliefs is to confront the revelation that confronts you."
63. Hugh Nibley's "What is Zion?: A Distant View" (SUNSTONE, Apr. 1989) sent me haunting the BYU campus, mourning my Babylonian soul.
64. Lowell Bennion's "Faith and Knowledge" (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1991) explained that he has faith in Jesus' untestable teachings (Christ's atonement, individual immortality) because he has found the testable teachings to be true (justice and mercy).

To please the eye—art and design.
65. A cartoon idea is made great or mediocre by the illustrator.
66. Nominate the magazine for awards yourself; few others will.
67. Mormon illustrators are often as literal-minded as are Mormon intellectuals.

Oh my heck! Just in time for Xmas!

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Just because it's made up, doesn't mean it isn't true!
68. Serif type is better for the magazine's body text than **sans serif type**.

69. Don't run cartoons about disgraced general authorities.

70. The best design for a perceived radical periodical is a staid, conservative one.

71. Run controversial articles as straight text—no illustrations, no callouts, no cover blurbs—let those who have eyes, read.

72. Callouts—those large-type, excerpted quotes—really do get more readers.

73. Caption every illustration. Eyes first look at the page's drawing, then read its caption, then read the subheadings.

74. Don't run cartoons of Jesus! (Even as a baby)

75. Gustave Doré's public domain, nineteenth-century etchings fill many a last-minute illustration window.

76. Print on pages that can be copied—avoid orange paper, dark screens, superimposed photographs, and reverse text.

77. Few illustrators can capture facial expressions.

78. If in doubt, require rough drafts.

79. There are more ways to creatively exploit the necessarily economical one- and two-color covers than one might think.

80. Blending two colors sometimes gives a full-color look; other times it creates mud.

81. Steal a good design from GQ rather than honestly create a poor one yourself.

82. Give established, proven artists free reign—they illustrate for the cause or for unfettered creativity; describe in detail the picture you want to portfolio-building art students or unproven illustrators.

83. Pudding numerous article titles on the cover diminishes the clean look but dramatically increases newsstand sales.

84. Never credit the Church for the historical photographs in our files.

85. Keep alert for, and clip, any Mormon/Christian/Judaic graphic images—sun, moon, star, earth, all-seeing eye, clasped hands, compass and square, big dipper, beehive, handcart, cornucopia, ark, fish, doves, bread and wine, grove, tablets, apple…

The *publishing business*.

86. Don't try to finance one magazine by producing a second one.

87. Those who have fewer resources often donate more money and time than those who are in a position to give more.

88. If you didn't change your address in advance, it is your fault you didn't get an issue. We don't owe you another copy. (We will send a replacement and deduct one issue from your remaining subscription).

89. Never promise a specific production schedule (especially monthly!).

90. We know we'll get more subscribers if we publish more regularly.

91. Don't tell donors "things are just fine"—to me, it means the landlord isn't evicting; to them, "No need to give now."

92. Do run advertisements, even tacky ones—we're willing for the shilling.

93. Conservative Saints will pay $22 just to get a "free" issue about an excommunicated general authority and not care one whit about the accompanying subscription.

94. Never run personal ads that advertise "Male Ascetic, 31, 5'3", who is willing to relinquish his vows for the right spiritually Maturated Maiden."

95. There is no psychological difference between a cover price of $4.50 and $4.95.

96. Never mail an item without "Address Correction Requested" on it (although each correction costs fifty cents).

97. A subscription has its privileges. Non-subscribers do not have a "right" to receive symposium mailings.

98. If we offered a freebie to lure a subscriber, we must to offer another one to get their renewal.

99. Unless you tell us otherwise, we will sell your name to bona fide vendors. (No, the Strengthening the Members Committee doesn't have access to our list.)

100. God blesses donors who write, "Don't send me a premium," or, "Bill my credit card $25 the first of each month."

**Well, that's 100 potluck reflections. It's not all-inclusive; on another day, I'd generate a very different 100. I hope SUNSTONE sustains these broad accomplishments for the next 100 issues. Additionally, I would like to feature full-color, inside spreads on Mormon artists; more everyday Mormon and Christian living, humanitarianism and community involvement; some investigative reporting; more making sense of the world through Mormon concepts (and vice versa); and simple, practical theology. I get excited and hopeful when I think of the future.

I also get tired. The task of being editor and publisher has been intoxicatingly fun, yet from juggling too many balls—especially the financial ones—I am weary. I have wondered whether it's time for me to leave the SUNSTONE roller coaster for a calmer ride. Perhaps I will, someday, but in doing this review, I have remembered how much I love facilitating this discussion of Mormonism. I love the challenging topics, the idiosyncratic authors, and the demanding subscribers. Many are now good friends.

I don't love the current, acrimonious, hyper-charged, Mormon intellectual environment, which sours honest intellectual inquiry and sullies all combatants. Because of it, I fight not just physical burnout, but despair and cynicism. Yet I still believe that with calm, loving, engaged persistence, Mormon intellectual discourse will eventually emerge seasoned and stronger, more charitable and rigorous. After some reflection, I am glad to report that I feel that the Thomas Jefferson quote I cited in my first editorial still describes me, my approach to Mormonism and its intellectuals, and my expectations for SUNSTONE's future: "My temperament is sanguine. I steer my bark with hope in the future: "My temperament is sanguine. I steer my bark with hope in the future; I have remembered how much I love facili-

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TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Linda Rugg

TEACHING CONFESSIONS TO SAINTS:
A NON-LDS PROFESSOR AND HER LDS STUDENTS

As a visiting non-Mormon BYU professor, I had not reckoned the impact of postmodern concepts of selfhood and autobiographical authorship in a community where testimony is of central importance.

During the 1993-1994 academic year, I was a visiting professor in Scandinavian language and literature at Brigham Young University. The position was a godsend for me because I very much needed a year away from Ohio State University, my home institution, to finish the book required for my tenure there. BYU, for its part, needed someone for a year to cover the duties of a permanent faculty member who had taken a position elsewhere.

Of course I knew empirically that Brigham Young University was a Mormon institution, but I had the idea that the most distinctive feature of the religion had something to do with not drinking alcohol or coffee. I knew that Utah was conservative, and I also understood that feminism was not encouraged. Shortly before I was to come out to Utah, one of my colleagues at Ohio State put a copy of the Chronicle of Higher Education in my box, with an article about Cecilia Konchar Farr's case highlighted in yellow. The story was not encouraging, but, I told myself, I would be there only for a year. I left for BYU with a copy of the Book of Mormon in my suitcase, a gift from an LDS colleague at OSU. I did not take the time to read it, and I had only a dim understanding of what exactly the book was.

I suppose there are people who are dismayed at the idea of a professor teaching at BYU with such poor credentials in LDS theology. In retrospect, I feel a little shocked about it myself. But it was precisely my ignorance, coupled with a desire to become less ignorant, that created a unique learning and teaching situation.

During the winter semester, I gave a class in the admittedly esoteric topic of Scandinavian autobiography. The class had only nine students, but they impressed me with their ability and interest. Autobiography has been the central focus of my research for more than ten years, during which time I have taught several courses dealing with autobiographical literature and theory. The object of this course was to introduce students to the Scandinavian tradition of autobiographical literature, but I also meant to explore with them some essential questions: What is autobiography? How does it differ from fiction? If autobiography is self-writing, what is selfhood? How is a "self" formed? Is it first formed in the autobiographical text? Do autobiographies refer to a real world beyond the text? If so, how does a reader learn about that real world through a text? What is an author? How do we know that the author and the person described in the autobiography are the same person?

These questions, which may seem at first glance fanciful or unnecessarily tortured, represent some of the central issues in literary study today, because they explore the relationship between literature and the world, between literature and history. I assigned the class an essay by Michel Foucault, a theorist who claims that the author exists only in his or her texts, that an "author" is not a human being at all, but a function. For...
example, when we speak of Shakespeare, we really mean the body of works written by something we identify with the name "Shakespeare." (This is evident in phrases such as, "In all of Shakespeare, we find a concern with the fate of kings.") If we were to discover a new cache of texts signed with the name "Shakespeare," or discover that Macbeth et al. had actually been written by a "Ben Jonson," the entity understood to be "Shakespeare" would be transformed. In this perspective, the individual born in Stratford-upon-Avon has existence only through his texts. To give you an idea of the extremity of this theory, Foucault distinguishes between the living corpus of texts (the body of works) and the dead corpse of the biographical author.

In another assigned essay, Paul de Man argues that no true distinction exists between autobiography and fiction, because the self formulated in the autobiography is a fictional construct. Since autobiography is fiction, it is unimportant whether there is any truth value in what the autobiographer writes; the text need not be factual, in other words. Philippe Lejeune, on the other hand, hoping to establish a link between the real world and the autobiographical text, insists that a "true" autobiography can be recognized if the name on the title page is the same as that of the narrator and of the protagonist of the tale. He calls his rule the autobiographical pact, because it implies a kind of contract of faith between the reader and the writer, both of whom exist in a world in which signatures guarantee responsibility.

The idea that an apparently historical text might actually be fiction masquerading as history, and that a signed contract would be necessary to ensure a text's validity, is unsettling to most people at first brush. I had worked through these various essays with students before, and they had always posed philosophical and sometimes political problems. But I had not reckoned the impact of such ideas in a community where testimony is of central importance. If I had bothered to take a closer look at the Book of Mormon before entering the classroom, I would have seen the signatures attesting to the existence of the golden plates and the appearance of the angel, and I might have had a better idea of how my Mormon students might read these essays.

What fascinated and excited me as a teacher was the stake my students had in these ideas. It was not simply an academic question, as it had been in classes I had taught at OSU, of understanding difficult theories. The BYU students were quick to understand precisely because they had to take a position regarding testimony, selfhood, and authorship. What if, one of my students asked, we say that Joseph Smith is an author? Because Joseph Smith is understood to be a prophet, an individual chosen by God to reveal truth, is it not important that we understand his texts as written by his hand? Would it make a difference if we discovered that some of the texts ascribed to Joseph Smith were produced by another person, not a prophet? Are the texts received as prophetic because a prophet writes or speaks them, or is an individual prophetic on the basis of his or her texts? What about the issue of truth value? Suddenly we were working with a theory that mattered, not an abstraction or a game.

Of course, I had always felt a personal stake in discussing ideas of selfhood and authorship; otherwise I would not have devoted such a large part of my life to the study of autobiography. But the nature of academic writing, which tends (interestingly enough) to efface the academic writer, did not force me or even allow me to come to grips with the source of my concern. In the BYU classroom, the students wanted to know about my testimony. What did I think about the ramifications of some of these theories? If we were to follow the theory to its logical conclusion, where would it lead us? I was incited for the first time to go beyond throwing out ideas in the classroom. These discussions with my students helped me to clarify my own position—arguing for an author who creates a text, rather than a text that creates an author. This clarification has made a difference in my scholarly work. Of course, I still understand the poststructuralist side of the debate—that an autobiographical text creates a new self with an incalculable relationship to the writing self. But our classroom exploration of the problems surrounding autobiography affirmed for me that belief in selfhood and authorship is, if not precisely religious, at least a matter of faith. Philippe Lejeune, who somewhat sheepishly acknowledges his desire to continue believing in a subject outside language, writes: "It's better to get on with the confessions: yes, I have been fooled. I believe that we can promise to tell the truth... . I believe in the Holy Ghost of the first person."

Another discovery further moved me to examine my method and presence in the classroom. I had chosen a group of autobiographies characterized by a certain irreverence, and a penchant for experimentation. Particularly Nietzsche's and August Strindberg's texts were written to challenge the boundaries of autobiography and conventions of selfhood. While the students were reading these often radical autobiographies and the radical essays in theory, they were to be thinking about how they would...
write their own autobiographies.

It has become something of a cliche for courses in autobiography to require students to write autobiographical texts. I have found it a useful exercise, because when students are engaged in making choices about how to frame their own narratives, they become most aware of the nature of those choices: Whom to address? What tone to adopt? What to include, and perhaps more important, what to leave out? What order to follow? All of these matters acquire greater importance when one considers them in his or her own case. My tactic was to ask the students to write a very short, one- to two-page sketch during the first week of class. I then required them to revise and lengthen the sketch as a final project and to append a five-page analysis of their own autobiographical technique. Here, once again, my ignorance of Mormon culture brought me up short.

Once the first sketches had been handed in, several of my students approached me. They were concerned that their sketches had been too formulaic—and indeed, I had noticed striking similarities between them. Almost all of the writers focused on their religious experience as the central motif in their lives. Further, that religious experience was defined in much the same terms from student to student: childhood instruction in religion from parents and family, missionary experience (which often denoted a kind of conversion to true, personally held faith), and the foundation (or the planned foundation) of a family within the Church. In our opening discussions of the history and evolution of autobiography, I had told them that Rousseau's Confessions, the first book on our list, represented a break with religious confession and the beginning of a new secular era in autobiographical writing. Religious confession, according to this model, was strictly retrograde. Further, the books I had listed on the syllabus distinguished themselves precisely in their experimental nature: challenging generic tradition received high marks in my syllabus, while clinging to old models of sellhood consigned authors to the hell of the unread. My students were bright—my selection pattern did not go unnoticed. But they were also committed to a peculiar autobiographical form, of which I knew nothing.

As Mormons well know, and as I am now aware, Mormonism depends on personal testimony. Members are encouraged to write personal histories of faith, which cannot be said to be strictly autobiographical, because they are usually also accounts of family history rather than an isolated individual's history (if there is such a thing, in fact). My students had come to class with the experience of keeping journals and bearing witness—these foundational elements formed the basis for their autobiographies. They were St. Augustines, while I was looking for Nietzsche's. Or at least that was how the matter at first seemed.

Here we must keep in mind what often is forgotten in situations outside the classroom. Within the classroom, one individual gets to determine the value system; the classroom is, essentially, a dictatorship, and not always a benevolent one. The instructor maps out not only what is required, but what is desirable, what is correct, and what is inappropriate. Despite the anti-authoritarian tendencies tenderly nurtured during my childhood in the sixties, I have learned that when the semester is over, I still must fill in the little bubble on the data sheet under A, B, C, and so on. It is my ethical responsibility to make sure that the system for filling in those bubbles is as clear as possible. In this class, my system was dealt a serious blow. My practice of assigning points, whether consciously or unconsciously, for a particular kind of originality or irrevocable was brought into question. I decided to explore this matter with my students, who were understandably uneasy about the application of my standard of judgment to their traditional autobiographical practice. In fact, they were caught between two structures of authority, one from the classroom, and one from a higher source, either institutional or spiritual.

We talked about Mormon autobiographical practice in relation to postmodern concepts of sellhood and autobiographical authorship. These discussions led to a surpris-ingly diverse array of confessional approaches among the students, even though the central focus of religious experience was still the defining factor. Two students submitted journals, one of which contained the child's fantasies about the adult he might become, complete with a drawing closely resembling a comic book superhero. The other journal charted a young woman's conversion to the Church, and the sometimes painful process of growing into the community. She wrote, in her commentary, on the immediacy and intimacy of journal writing as opposed to the analytical distance of autobiography. A third student submitted poems and a short piece of fiction written during her mission. She reflected on the factual distortions that occurred in the transformation of life experi-

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The author spent the most part of twenty years researching theories which took him by dugout canoe into the remote jungles of central America, only to find that the land he was searching for was in his own backyard, here in the United States of America.

Seminars by reservation in Salt Lake area 531-8996
ence into fiction and poetry, and pondered whether deviations from "fact" actually entailed distortions of "truth." A fourth student put together a film made from video clips from his childhood and overvoice commentary. He wrote an analysis of the split that naturally occurs when the older self talks about the younger self, and commented on the relationship between the two selves, the feelings of distance and alienation brought about by self-analysis, but also the sense of continuity and evolution in a life.

One student revisited the abuse he had suffered in high school because of his insistence on adhering to his faith. His analysis studied the possibility of creating a healing autobiographical narrative. One of his classmates turned in a rather startling, very short, third person account of a single morning, from which the reader could glean the desperation of life in a small town under the control of demanding parents.

Finally, I permitted one of my students to submit an autobiographical text originally written for a class in genealogy the previous year. His text was the most conservative in terms of its approach, and his analysis was among the most interesting in the class. With the distance of a year between the writing of the autobiography and the commentary, he was able to examine his motivations and methodology quite critically. He recognized that his autobiography presented an idealized self, in part because of its intended audience: his descendants. He had omitted discussions of sexuality; he had rearranged the chronology to create the kind of evolution he wanted to present; he had sometimes made a "hero" of himself in situations where he had originally felt far from heroic. His analysis represented a true confrontation with his self-image, and it was often brutally honest. But it was, in fact, the conjunction of the autobiographical text and its critical analysis that made the final paragraph of his autobiography ring true. This paragraph began, "And now in conclusion, I would just like to hear my testimony."

Of course, I understand now that the gesture of bearing testimony is a formulaic one—perhaps all of the students in his genealogy class wrote essentially the same closing paragraph. But in the context of what we had discussed together in class and what he had written as a result in his self-analysis, I felt that the act of testimony had achieved a greater resonance. From the comments of the other students, I understand that this was the case for most of them. The act of calling into question or deconstructing the form in which testimony takes place more firmly anchored the authors' faith and allowed them to experiment with new forms. It had not been my intention as a teacher to use a critical approach to autobiography in order to encourage more difficult and searching forms of confession in my students. I did not know that they were in the habit of making confessions. I simply presented them with models from a secular world, and they confronted those models with their own. This, I feel, would not have taken place in quite the same way in a classroom where the professor and the students were both thoroughly rooted in the same tradition. This brings me to my final point.

BYU'S POLICY ON NON-LDS FACULTY

The presence of non-Mormons at BYU helps guard against developing a prejudice against outsiders.

WHILE I was at BYU, it seemed that a shift in policy occurred. I say that "seemed" so because one heard variant reports of whether a real change was taking place, what the form of that change might be, what its implications were, and so on. However, because I was peripherally involved in discussions regarding a couple of faculty appointments, I was able to see that a definitive change in attitude and actual policy had indeed taken place. While in the past BYU's hiring policy had stated a preference for members of the LDS church, with the result that only a very small percentage of faculty are not members, now it had been decided that no new tenure-track appointments of nonmembers would be made (with very few exceptions). I am not here to argue that a university staffed entirely by excellent Mormon scholars would be impossible; clearly it would be possible. I have two questions to which I will make tentative answers, and I invite you to take them up for yourselves. First, what is the origin of such a policy? And second, is such a policy desirable?

My impression is that the decision to enact a definitively exclusionary policy must have arisen from a sense that the BYU community is threatened by inimical, foreign forces. In this view, secular visions of the world, such as those I presented to my class, threaten the protective barrier erected by the institution for its students. However, those few faculty members who do not belong to the Church make an explicit agreement upon being hired to sublimate their difference, and because they are not part of the Church community, they do not, in any case, speak to the students with an authoritative, theological voice. Observations from nonmembers on any issue that touches on the fringes of theology or doctrine will be taken by students as external, possibly uninformed, and certainly not definitive. My experience with BYU students indicates that the great majority of them are so firmly grounded in their faith that the threat actually runs in the other direction; nonmembers will find themselves examining and defending their own beliefs. I would argue that the threat the institution feels actually arises from challenges issued from within the membership of the Church. This seems substantiated by the recent excommunications and dismissals. The issue of difference and diversity among Latter-day Saints, which the Church will, of course, confront more and more in the next century of its growth, needs to be addressed within the community and not projected as a danger emanating from nonmembers. During my year at BYU, I was consistently impressed with the varieties of faith within the community, and by the intense intellectual engagement with religious ideas among many of my colleagues. A denial or effacement of diversity among members would, in my opinion, impoverish the university.

My second question involves the implications of the new policy. As I have tried to demonstrate in my discussion of our course in Scandinavian autobiography, cultural difference treated with respect can create a good kind of tension in the classroom. Mormons are a minority in the greater American culture (and an often misunderstood minority at that). BYU, in maintaining an overwhelming majority of LDS faculty and students, produces an environment in which the minority culture becomes dominant. Students develop
a sense of their identity as part of a world-wide community, and they can reenter the secular (or non-Mormon) world with an increased sense of security and purpose. At the same time, however, I think that all of us are aware of the pitfalls of belonging to a dominant culture. It is possible in such a situation for a false sense of intellectual security or superiority to develop, and even in an institution devoted to the teachings of Jesus Christ, it is possible for prejudice against outsiders to develop.

The presence of nonmembers who at the same time are an integral part of the BYU community offers a guard against such developments. In my presence, my students spoke carefully of their own traditions and beliefs, and respectfully of mine, because they cared about me. They were forced to hold up their assumptions for comparison, and they were given the opportunity to teach the teacher, a reversal that provided much enjoyment and entertainment. For my part, I found that while my students were diligent workers, well-prepared for university study, they sometimes lacked knowledge of other religious traditions. Many of my students had no notion of what Lent is; many others did not know that Muslims believe in the God of Abraham from the Old Testament, and one student, who had served a mission in Sweden, asked me whether Luthers professed to be Christians. (Whether this question was meant to be sincere or provocative, it indicated either ignorance or a lack of sensitivity.) My presence in the classroom as a non-Mormon seemed to spur them to ask questions about other faiths, even faiths about which I myself know very little. The presence of nonmembers who at the same time are an integral part of the community offers a guard against such developments. In my presence, my students spoke carefully of their own traditions and beliefs, and respectfully of mine, because they cared about me. They were forced to hold up their assumptions for comparison, and they were given the opportunity to teach the teacher, a reversal that provided much enjoyment and entertainment.

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In our relationship with one another, we constantly defined ourselves. This had the productive effect of forcing us into self-inspection. What do I believe? How can I explain myself to this person without giving offense or sacrificing my own position? How do I form a community with this person who is different from me in an essential way? I think that this exercise was important for my students. I know it was for me. One might argue that since this situation occurred during a visiting professorship, it might be more desirable to appoint visiting or temporary nonmembers to the faculty. But I would argue that the thing lacking in my relationship with my students was a sense of my permanence in the community; it would have added something to the good tension of our discussions if I were a permanent member of the community who would remain always an outsider, but always also on the inside of BYU with them.

In closing, let me offer my testimony. I have rarely felt as appreciated and loved in my work as I was at BYU. The word "love" does not often enter into discussions of academic life, but here it is not misplaced. Naturally, there were moments when I felt uncomfortable and there were things I did not like about the institution. Occasionally I would run across a person who did not strike me as the most sincere practitioner of his or her faith. I did not convert to Mormonism as a result of my stay, but I did undergo a kind of conversion, if we take the word in its original sense of "turning." I turned into someone who is actively interested in and cares about the welfare of the community at BYU and the Mormon community generally. If the doors of the university are closed to the idea of nonmembers as permanent residents, it will be more difficult for such conversions to take place. I can already feel that it must be difficult for those nonmembers who have made their careers at the university to come to terms with the new policy. I am aware that from my position on the outside, it would be presumptuous to try to dictate to or judge a community that is ultimately not mine. I am grateful to BYU for my year there, and I would like to thank my colleagues and students at Brigham Young for the time we spent together.

NOTES

I want to say goodbye.
Behind me, in the slow-motion of years
the forest has retreated,
ferns and vines curled back and crisp
so that there is a path of sorts, a swath—
defile might be the word—like Sherman's march
to the sea. In less than my lifetime
it will close around itself, join roots
like grass around a gravestone, and I could stand here,
still, my nose to the wind, ears catching whispers,
eyes blinking at sunlight and ghosts.
Naming would undo it, the spell unravel
like sand castles at high tide, a few birds
picking among the ruins, until morning
saw it smooth—the stuff of wizards,
maybe, since I can't speak the words,
having known them all my life. You never know
with whale song; are they occasional, crescendoed,
weaving oceans together in time, or like catechisms
and prayer, only the same song
further on? But then it's all like shouting in a dream:
neither world hears a sound. I'll move now
slightly stage left, while the camera pans away;
the credits roll as I nod and wave,
perhaps to the old woman in the back row
who has stayed till the end, mouthing the word
she knows by heart.

—C. WADE BENTLEY
I don’t keep this book out of duty. I keep it because I want to remember that when I took Emma to the Met in her backpack, she clutched my braid like reins.

WRITING EMMA

It’s sunny this February noon, so I’ve taken Emma out to our backyard. That is, I’ve slid back the steel accordion gate, and we’ve crawled out on the fire escape, seven floors above Manhattan. At ten months my daughter is the consummate mimic. I point to the scenes I see—the low taxi coming up our street, the recycling truck that beeps as it backs up to the curb, the kids playing tag on the roof across the street. Emma listens solemnly and mimics, pointing and jabbering nonsense. She reaches to touch the double-parked cars, reminding me that she still has no depth perception. She finds the screws that hold the bars together and focuses, probing them with pudgy fingers. And I remember this moment because of Emma’s book. It’s a commercial green journal, generic Mormon wares by its look, but in it are glimpses of Emma’s life.

I bought the journal in the BYU bookstore last year, the week I found out I was pregnant. It’s no organized baby book with uniform dates or neat entries—I’m no good at remembering the traditional events like first smiles. But it is the best record I know how to keep. The entries are short. There are nine similar paragraphs, for example, written on consecutive nights at 2 A.M. when I was up with third-trimester heartburn, eating antacid and watching cooking shows. There are pictures drawn by Emma’s three-year-old cousin, with earnest, dictated captions: “Emma is little and her has foots but her can’t walk.” There are many entries jotted down in less than a minute: “Can’t crawl forward but can back under the couch and cry.” And “At Riverside Park I put Em in the toddler swing. She was so utterly delighted—she squealed at the top of her lungs. Swinging was absolute, uninhibited joy.”

And there are long passages of advice, written by great grandparents who may not be around by the time Emma can

Peculiar People

LDS LESS LIKELY TO DIVORCE

LIFETIME MEMBERS OF the LDS church are less likely to be divorced than residents of the United States in general. Disaffiliates report higher levels of divorce than converts, and both of these groups fall in between lifetime members and the national population.

Results were obtained by combining many national probability surveys of adults taken by the National Opinion Research Center between 1970 and 1991. Respondents were classified on the basis of religious affiliation at age 16 and at the time of the survey. “Lifers” reported being LDS at both times. “Converts” were not LDS at 16 but had joined by the survey date. “Disaffiliates” said they were LDS at age 16 but no longer are. Everyone else was classified as non-LDS.
York, and how I missed late nights chattering from a
nothing else was pressing, and they remind me now of pump-
read. Those entries were written on holiday afternoons when
nothing else was pressing, and they remind me now of pumpkin pie spice and wassail and Lion House crescent rolls.

I don't keep this book out of duty. I keep it because I want
very much to remember that when I took Emma to the Met in
her backpack last fall, she clutched my braid like reins. I want
to know about the freedom I felt our first months in New
York, and how I missed late nights chattering from a barstool
in my mother's Provo kitchen.

I worry that Emma might feel ambivalent about me twenty
years from now. I write because I want her to know that I
adored her with complete abandon, loved her more than I
have ever loved anything, from long before she was born.

I think sometimes of Omri, and after him of Amaron,
Chemish, and Abinadom. These Nephite record keepers have
nothing but eleven verses to sum up their lives, and much of
that is spent apologizing for not writing sooner. I think of
Sarah. How did she feel as she packed up the camels? Did she
feel homesick for Jerusalem once they had left? Which did she
miss more, the fountain in the garden or the herbs she tended
there for treating illness? And what about Nephi's wife and the
other silent women of the Book of Mormon? How did they feel
about their daughters? What did they do on sunny winter days?

I have no illusions that Emma's book will be in any way
more complete than the gaps in the Book of Mormon, or even
that I will keep it up past her first year. I just want to note
things in it for now. Then I'm going to put it away and save it
for a special occasion—college graduation, or marriage,
maybe just a time of need. I'm sure the time will come for me
to give it to her. And when she needs it, I want her to hear her
mother's voice from now.

—LUANA ULUAVE

**Book of Mormon Musings**

**THE WRITING ON THE WALL**

I am Amulek; I am the son of Giddonah, who was the
son of Ishmael, who was a descendant of Aminadib; and it was that same Aminadib who interpreted the writing which was upon the wall of the temple, which was written by the finger of God. (Alma 10:2.)

Whatever I read this statement about
the writing on the wall of a temple, I think of
Daniel 5:5–6, which reports a similar event:
In the same hour came forth fingers of a man's hand,
and wrote over against the candlestick upon the plas-
ter of the wall of the king's palace: and the king
[Belshazzar] saw the part of the hand that wrote.
Then the king's countenance was changed, and his
thoughts troubled him, so that the joints of his loins
were loosed, and his knees smote one against another.
I wonder if this similar incident about Aminadib was recorded
in the lost 116 manuscript pages of the Book of Mormon tran-
scribed from the large plates of Nephi? Or is this just another
incidental story—like the story of Abish and her curious con-
version caused by a vision of her father (was it her vision or
her father's?)—left in for our curious delight in discovery? In
every event, apparently it was a rather famous story in the locale
of Ammonihah since Amulek uses it as a reference point in his
introduction. While I believe there are indeed parallels be-
tween the story nearly related by Amulek and the story of
Belshazzar in the book of Daniel, I often wonder if perhaps
there are many points of difference as well.

One thing that isn't clear is whether any Nephite actually
saw a hand floating in the air writing mysterious inscriptions
on the temple wall, or whose temple it was. And we don't
know what the writing meant. Maybe Aminadib interpreted the
writing, but no one wrote down the interpretation. It does
seem clear that at least the writing was felt to have been divine
in nature, being "written by the finger of God," but we don't
really know whose opinion of the divine nature of the writing
is reported by Amulek. For all we know, Aminadib gave an in-
spired interpretation of an ancient Jaredite temple inscription.
I, for one, hope that at the very least, someone's knees smote
together when the writing was discovered or when Aminadib
spoke.

I anticipate that many may become impatient with my med-
itations on this story. Some might believe it nearly irrelevant.
My only point is that sometimes stories are passed around to
the point that there really is no more reliable substance to them
than can be gathered about Amulek's unfinished story
concerning Aminadib. I really have no reason to doubt Amulek's
version, told or untold, of Aminadib and the writing on the wall.
That the story appears in the Book of Mormon should
give one assurance that, subject to the faults of men, it is true.
However, I do have reason to doubt from time to time the sto-
ries I hear and am tempted to pass on without verification of
their sources. I am not talking about gossip either; I am talking
about so-called "faith-promoting-rumors." What can be so bad
about these stories so long as they confirm our faith? I imagine

Sometimes stories are passed around to the point that
there really is no more reliable substance to them.
that if Amulek's story about Aminadi had been discovered to have been embellished in its many tellings, it would definitely have been used against him and his otherwise truthful and important message at Ammonihah.

—EDGAR C. SNOW JR.

Twenty Years Ago

ARTICLES OF FAITHFUL PUBLICATION

THE FOLLOWING LETTER FROM EUGENE ENGLAND appeared in SUNSTONE's first issue: "It was a great thrill for me to learn of your plans to publish an independent journal of arts and letters for young Latter-day Saints. ... Perhaps I could venture one suggestion, the fruit of ... twenty years of personal struggle. You are taking hold of sacred things when you presume to publish—to give them indelible and widespread existence—ideas and expressions about what is in fact the Kingdom of the Lord, and you are venturing out on extremely risky ground when you presume to do that without the direct guidance of the Lord's Priesthood leaders. I believe it is worth the risk, because there are important things you can do with an open forum to build the Kingdom (not better, but other things) that the Church's official publications cannot do. That's of course why the Lord told us to be anxiously engaged in the work and do many things of our own free will, because "the power is in [us]." But my suggestion is that you remember in all you do that it is the Lord's work, that to succeed in any meaningful sense you must have his help and must seek it in prayer as you work alone and together and must take that help when it comes—even when it comes in the form of inspiration from him or counsel from his servant that requires you to put your loyalty to his work of saving souls above everything, above your own prestige and ambitions, your academic standards and esthetic values, even the journal's very existence, if it comes to that. Such painful choices will be very few, I believe, fewer than we faced with Dialogue's pioneering effort, but if you are not prepared to make them, even better perhaps than we did, you will not succeed—and you should not.

"Those of us in the Church who need and value such things as SUNSTONE—because of our nature, our special intellectual gifts the Lord has given us to complement the equally valuable gifts he has given others in the Kingdom—tend to value highly and quote often the last part of the Thirteenth Article of Faith: 'If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.' We need to remind ourselves that there are twelve and a half Articles of Faith which precede that stirring capstone declaration, and unless we are struggling to understand and live by all of those others (for instance, 'We believe in the gift of tongues, prophecy, revelation ...') we have no right to adopt that motto for our intellectual and artistic endeavors—and little good will come of those efforts."

SAINTS IN AMERICA

ONE EVENING, SEVERAL months ago, after long hours exploring New York's traffic-choked streets, a friend and I relaxed on the rim of Central Park's Bethesda Fountain, cartons of lemon chicken and copies of the Village Voice in hand. Practically reenacting the parting scene in the second Angels in America play, Perestroika, our conversation turned to Tony Kushner's Mormons. Does Kushner really understand Mormons, or were they merely an easy framework to explore what happens when conflicted sexuality and any conservative religious tradition collide? In the middle of our discussion, my friend stumbled across an ad, buried at the bottom of an inside Voice page, announcing that the Pulitzer Prize-winning Kushner was speaking right then at a local Jewish community center. Still deconstructing the gay-themed play, we bolted for a taxi.

We found seats in an oval-shaped auditorium that was flanked with racks of the Torah and ceremonial robes. A charismatic and engaging Kushner spoke to the standing-room-only crowd on Jewish identity and then took a few questions; the first one gave us some insight. Kushner said his research on Mormonism was basically limited to two books: Fawn Brodie's landmark, if flawed, No Man Knows My History and Wallace Stegner's even-handed Gathering to Zion. He said he tried to read the Book of Mormon but found it to be, as did Mark Twain, "chloroform in print." Kushner added that his Mormons were mainly informed by his associations with various Saints in Utah—most of them disaffected and angry, even antagonistic toward the Church, much like the disenfranchised Catholics he knows. Clearly, Kushner doesn't know Mormons.

The only time the seemingly unflappable Kushner appeared frustrated was when an older, orthodox Jewish woman told Kushner, who hadn't been to synagogue for years, that she did not see him as Jewish. "It really hurts when people tell me that," he said. "I deeply cherish my religious tradition." That was the first time I suspected Kushner, at least partially, understands Angel's core offense to some Mormons: as theater critic Michael Evenden puts it, Kushner accepts Mormons so long as they agree to leave their religion behind. While Perestroika ends with all the play's Mormon characters either crazy, rejected and out of the picture, or decidedly New Yorker secular, perhaps Kushner's had a change of heart: rumor has it that Joe Pitt, the Mormon lawyer who leaves his wife for a gay man in Angels, part I, remains sane, on the scene, and Mormon in the forthcoming part III.

—BRIAN KAGEL
Surprisingly, Mormonism remains not only a largely American religion in terms of numbers, but in some respects, is still a regional faith concentrated in the U.S. West and centered in Utah.

THE GEOGRAPHIC DYNAMICS OF MORMONDOM, 1965–95

By Lowell C. "Ben" Bennion

Many Americans equate geography with the game Trivial Pursuit. They expect geographers to know the name and location of almost every place on earth. Imagine the humiliation we geographers feel whenever we miss a question while playing that game, or when we can't identify, at a social reception, the location of Bali, the capital of Mali, or the population of Cali.

Geographers may at times rattle off place names the way some people drop the names of prominent acquaintances. This tendency stems from travel to or armchair study of all kinds of places and regions. Our abiding passions, however, lie not in locating toponyms but in portraying places, in mapping the phenomena we study, and in interpreting the patterns we find. Almost anything mappable sooner or later attracts the attention of a geographer. Knowing the names of, say, all the state capitals interests us far less than locating them relative to political boundaries or the sizes of other cities. Mapping U.S. capitals in this manner reveals that a majority of them lie near their state's geographic center but do not rank as the largest city. More often than not, a St. Louis dominates the state economically, while a smaller Jefferson City governs as the capital.

Mormonism, given its ever-changing geography, likewise lends itself to map analysis. To map, for example, the distribution of LDS temples might seem like another exercise in Trivial Pursuit, but by locating them relative to the Church's membership, we see patterns that raise questions that, in turn, may lead to new insights. Why, for instance, does Europe, with less than five percent of the world's Mormons, rate more than ten percent of its LDS temples?

Two recent invitations inspired me to draft four maps that depict the distribution of Mormons as of 1990–92. The first request involved reassessing D. W. Meinig's classic treatment of "The Mormon Culture Region" (MCR), published thirty years ago. The second asked me to comment on a paper Jan Shipps presented in 1993 on the profound ways Mormonism has changed since 1945. Together, these two tasks led me to map the Saints of the Western states by county as a percentage of the 1990 population and to update Meinig's well-known MCR map. Once I had mapped the Western Saints, my spatial curiosity got the better of me, and I asked a former student of mine, Nancy Sessions Rohde, to prepare two cartograms, one making the size of each U.S. state proportional to its LDS population, and the second doing the same for the world's countries (sans the U.S.) as of 1 January 1992. Having prepared similar maps twenty years ago, we wanted to see how the distribution of Mormons had changed since then. This invitation from SUNSTONE affords an opportunity to integrate all four maps into a single paper and to reflect on the dynamic yet static distribution of Latter-day Saints on the eve of the next century. SUNSTONE's large format proves ideal for making graphic the variegated nature of Mormondom. In recent decades, Church membership has grown at a rapid rate in some areas of the world while changing little in others. And the world's most populous realms remain virtually untouched by Mormonism.

One convenient way to regionalize the worldwide Church is to group the twenty-two areas used to administer it into six macro-regions listed by descending size of their LDS population. A North "Amer/Can" region—comprising eight areas, two for Utah alone—still dominates the world with more than half of the total membership, but it displays the lowest growth rate. The smaller and weaker "half" of the Mormon world breaks down into five disparate realms (compare figures 1 and 2). A Latin America region—with six areas, three for Middle America and three for South America—is largest, with 30 per-
The regions the Church has penetrated most effectively are the same ones most receptive to Protestant proselytizing. Nowhere, save in Africa and Asia, do Mormons occupy such a marginal numerical position as they do in Europe; in Oceania, Mormons in Samoa and Tonga make up 25 to 33 percent of the population, and in Tahiti, 7 percent—the only area (except for two South American countries) where the relative population size exceeds that of the U.S. (1.7 percent).
cent of all LDS and the highest growth rate of any region. A vast and populous Asia, where Mormons live mainly along the eastern rim, contains three areas but merely 6 percent of the Church’s members. A European region that takes in North Africa and the Middle East, as well as Russia, embraces three broad areas but only 4 percent of the members. Each of the two remaining regions has a single but extensive area with a small number of Mormons: the Pacific Area includes Australia and New Zealand, as well as the South Pacific islands (except for Micronesia, which is part of Asia), and holds another 4 percent; the Africa Area—south of the Sahara—numbered less than 1 percent of the world’s eight million LDS at the start of 1992. A full appreciation of how unevenly the Latter-day Saints and their temples (both completed and projected as of 1 January 1995) are distributed around the world, and what that means for an aspiring universal church, requires closer examination of the two cartograms. As already implied, the absolute and relative concentrations of LDS vary greatly within each macro-region, and these configurations keep changing with the wide range in growth rates. Only by mapping and fathoming such patterns can the Church recognize, and perhaps resolve, the imbalances of its expanding but increasingly diverse membership.

CHURCH GROWTH IN NON U.S. AREAS OF THE WORLD

I will discuss the last region first and the first region last in surveying the six global groupings outlined above. 

Africa. The small size of sub-Saharan Africa’s LDS population will not surprise anyone familiar with the Church’s history of denying men of African heritage the priesthood until 1978. The area has its headquarters (and only temple) in Johannesburg, South Africa, the state which still has the largest number of the area’s members and roughly one-third of Africa’s total. Only a dozen of the area’s many countries have even a small Mormon presence, and in only three of them—South Africa, Nigeria and Ghana—has the Church generated enough growth to form wards and stakes. That growth reflects, in part, a backlog of West African interest in the Church that dates back to the 1960s but had to await a change in priesthood policy before missionaries were allowed to enter. The Church’s gains have strained its relations with the government of Ghana, the first African state to shake off colonial rule in this century and one that is still wary of any outside influence. Ethnic strains, coupled with the increasing instability—if not anarchy—of many African states may limit the Church’s efforts to spread its influence in this heretofore neglected area.

Pacific Area. Mormon missionaries reached the Pacific Area even earlier than they reached South Africa, and the Church eventually proved far more successful among Polynesians than among white Boers and Britons. Five temples may seem like an excessive number for an LDS population of fewer than 300,000, growing at a rate even slower than Europe’s (29 vs. 37 percent for 1986–91). New Zealand, with as many Mormons as Australia but less than one-fifth the total population, had the only temple in all of Oceania for twenty-five years (1958–83), but a decade ago, the Church built temples in Samoa, Tonga, Tahiti, and Sydney, Australia, to minimize the need for long-distance travel.

Perhaps of greater import, three of these temples symbolize the prominence of Mormons among Polynesians—25 to 33 percent of the total populations of Samoa and Tonga, and 7 percent of Tahiti’s—figures that, if valid, match those of Idaho and Arizona, respectively. Even New Zealand’s LDS minority (2.25 percent), with a sizable Polynesian (Maori) element, exceeds that of the U.S. (1.7 percent), a claim only two countries outside of Oceania (both in South America) can make. Lanier Britsch attributes the Church’s power in these island societies to effective diplomacy (capped by an apostolic blessing upon Tonga’s king in 1988), mature local leadership, and the impact of Church schools. According to an anthropologist, “the Mormon Church is one of the largest employers in Tonga outside of the Government, and has by far the highest education budget of any Tongan church.”

Europe. Nowhere, save in Africa and Asia, do Mormons occupy such a marginal numerical position as they do in Europe. Emigration to Zion drained so many converts away from Protestant countries that Europe numbered fewer than 30,000 LDS in 1950, 40 percent of them in the two Germanies. A more than ten-fold increase since then has led to a “second flowering of the Church”—at least in the United Kingdom, which now claims over 40 percent of all European Mormons. Germany now ranks a distant second, and only the combined membership of mainland Europe’s states (sans Scandinavia) can match that of the U.K. Significantly, the Roman/Catholic countries have had the highest growth rates in recent years, topped by Portugal, half of whose converts are retornados (former residents of the country’s African colonies).

Throughout Europe, immigrants have comprised at least half of all converts since 1985. Their presence has given con-
What accounts for U.S. Mormons' strong preference for the West?

Today, almost 80 percent of all U.S. Mormons live in the thirteen Western states. Except for Texas, Florida, and Virginia, no Eastern state has as many Saints as New Mexico or Hawaii (around 50,000). Even in the West, nearly 70 percent live in the eight intermountain states—Utah has almost twice as many Mormons as does California.

gregations a younger and more cosmopolitan makeup than previous generations knew. But even with this sizable influx of uprooted individuals into the Church, Europe's growth rates generally lag well behind East Asia's and Latin America's. One BYU professor blames the low conversion levels on the region's "pervasive secularization" and "unadulterated prosperity." Yet he anticipates that the Mormons' growing maturity in Western Europe will make it easier to establish congregations in Eastern Europe and Russia, which in 1994 had only about 6,000 members, despite high expectations held by the Church since the collapse of the Soviet Union and its empire. Europe's disproportionate number of temples (seven) reflects, to some extent, the region's multinational makeup. Five of them favor the German- and English-speaking groups that dominate the European membership. The large number of temples per LDS capita may also result from the intermountain west Mormons' strong ancestral and mission ties to the Church's primary source of converts from 1840 to 1960.

Asia. Given its relatively recent penetration of Asia, the Church looks as strong as a tiger there, at least on paper, as long as one ignores the virtual absence of Mormons in the mainland Chinese and Indian realms, which hold fully two-fifths of the world's population. Not surprisingly, LDS missionaries have fared best in the Philippines, the only Christian nation in East or Southeast Asia, and probably the one most influenced by American society. Filipinos make up more than half of Asia's Mormons, followed by Japanese, Koreans, and Chinese (mainly from Hong Kong and Taiwan rather than Singapore). Each of these four populations now has a temple (the Chinese have two), reflective of their growing numbers.

Apart from Mexico, however, Asia also has the lowest member retention rates in the Church (as measured in 1980 by the percentage of adult males who had received the Melchizedek Priesthood). That means missionaries in, say, Japan spend much of their time trying to reactivate so-called "less actives." One couple who returned from Quezon City in the Philippines in 1993 reported that only 30 percent of their mission's members were active, and 90 percent of the active members were females. (They also told the story of one less active man who had been baptized several times over a period of many years. When asked why, he smiled and replied, "Because it makes the elders so happy!")
Latin America. The six Church areas with the highest growth rates in recent years all belong to the Latin America region. (Before boasting about the rising numbers there, Mormons should realize that the Assemblies of God in Latin America outnumber them by five to one.) The nine LDS temples now completed or planned represent the countries with the largest numbers of Saints within their respective areas. Mexicans alone make up more than one-fourth of the total (albeit with only one temple), due at least in part to the Church’s long headstart there. The Church’s schools have worked to its advantage, not only in Mexico but throughout Latin America. Even so, a majority of Mexican members have dropped out of activity, prompting local leaders to insist on more careful screening of prospective members and more fellowshipping of converts.

Chile, which had only 25,000 LDS in 1976, now numbers more than 300,000. This gives it not only the highest Mormon percentage of population (2.4) in Latin America, but also the leading growth rate among all churches. The visibility of the LDS church’s missionaries and chapels makes them easy targets for terrorists, who tend to view any kind of American influence as imperialism. The Church’s very first mission to Chile (1851-52) failed. But its leader, Apostle Parley P. Pratt, composed a hymn entitled “Imperial Zion,” a Mormon version of the American creed of Manifest Destiny, which sometimes triggers violent reactions like those that have accompanied the Church’s rapid expansion in Latin America. As one BYU sociologist concluded, “In the end, the nature of Mormonism dictates either a continuation of marginal status with low retention and frequent public strain with host societies or some fundamental changes within the [LDS] tradition. Which course will be taken remains to be seen.”

Such a statement makes the Church’s position outside of North America seem rather precarious and its chances for further expansion problematic. Clearly the regions it has penetrated most effectively thus far are the same ones that have proved most receptive to the proselytizing of Protestant churches and to the Protestant ethic. But numerical success does not necessarily translate into a strong spiritual presence, especially when competing with other evangelistic churches. Sometimes the First Presidency has to remind its leaders and missionaries that “missionary work is about people, not numbers and not reports.”

In 1972, the same year that he dedicated the new Church Office Building, President Harold B. Lee declared:

No longer might this church be thought of as the “Utah church,” or as an “American church,” but the Church is now distributed over the earth in 78 countries, teaching the gospel in 17 different languages at the present time.

This greatly expanded church population is today our most challenging problem, and while we have cause for much rejoicing in such a widespread expansion, it does pose some great challenges to the leadership of the Church to keep pace with the many problems.

The current LDS president, Gordon B. Hinckley, could easily make the same statement, merely changing the numbers of countries and languages in which Mormon missionaries teach the restored gospel to 149 and 28, respectively. The higher numbers clearly signify an increasingly international church. The late President Howard W. Hunter did, in fact, declare that the Church “is now a world religion, not simply because its members are now found throughout the world, but chiefly because it has a comprehensive and inclusive message based upon the acceptance of all truth, restored to meet the needs of all mankind.” However, all of the Americas combined—North, Middle, and South—account for over 85 percent of the world’s Mormons, making the worldwide Church more broadly American than ever before.

CHURCH GROWTH IN THE UNITED STATES

Despite Mormonism’s international presence and inclusive message, when examined closely in a broader context, the U.S. cartogram (fig. 2) indicates that Mormonism remains not only a largely American religion, but a regional faith concentrated in the West and centered in Utah. Furthermore, the general pattern of LDS distribution within the United States has changed remarkably little during the past two decades compared to the explosive expansion of the Church globally. Such a contrast makes the American pattern seem almost static, even though subtle but significant changes have occurred within it.

West vs. East. One such change, often overlooked, reflects both the worldwide spread of Mormonism and the continuing magnetism of America. A map by Jessie L. Embry in the Historical Atlas of Mormonism displays by state/province the distribution of some 300 branches/wards organized by the Church for five broad groups of ethnic Amer/Can’s Spanish

Until the Church can bridge the gap between its diverse peripheries and its controlling center, Mormonism seems likely to remain a largely American or an Intermountain West faith.
FIGURE 3

CONCENTRATION OF SAINTS, WESTERN UNITED STATES, 1990

Percent of Mormon population, by county

Data source: Martin B. Bradley, Churches and Church Membership in the United States 1990

BYU Geography Dept.
speakers form the largest single group, followed by Asians, Polynesians, Europeans, and others. More than 70 percent of the units function within the West (excluding Texas), with California dwarfing all other states—even Utah. What the map does not reveal is whether these “ethnic” Mormons joined the Church in the U.S. or Canada or in their homelands.

Almost 80 percent of all U.S. Mormons reside within the thirteen Western states (including Alaska and Hawaii). Except for Texas, Florida, and Virginia (tied to Washington, D.C.), no Eastern state has as many LDS as does New Mexico or Hawaii (each with about 50,000). These three Eastern anomalies—which include more than half of the South’s Saints—are high-growth states where many Western Mormons have found employment (or sought retirement). In addition, the South has produced more than its share of LDS converts in recent years. The two factors combined give the South more than twice as many LDS as the religiously “depressed” North, which has fewer Saints than Arizona alone (with 200,000). All but two (Arkansas and West Virginia) of the 15 states with three or fewer stakes lie in the North. The North, of course, contains the four hearths that gave birth to Mormonism, yet the faith has only recently regained a foothold in the New York, Ohio, Missouri, and Illinois areas that ousted it a century and a half ago. The North even has almost as many temples as the South (four vs. five), counting Toronto’s and assigning the Washington, D.C., temple to the South. Why, then, does the Mormon diaspora remain relatively weak within the East, and especially the North?

Pining for Zion. Even within the American West, nearly 70 percent of all Western LDS live within the eight Intermountain states centered on Utah, another pattern that has changed little since 1972 (fig. 3). In 1990, Utah counted almost twice as many Mormons as did California; and Arizona, Idaho, and Nevada together nearly matched California’s number, despite having only one-fifth as many people. To restate the question just raised, how can one explain American Mormons’ strong preference for the West, particularly the Great Basin-Rocky Mountain region?

Any attempt to answer this question fully would require mapping such basic variables as fertility/mortality rates, migration patterns, and conversion/dropout ratios. Only the Church’s research department has such data, and without access to them, scholars can only speculate on the basis of impressionistic information. Based on my limited network of contacts, I sense a strong “Pine for Zion” syndrome among Eastern, Western, and even international LDS, whether converts (CONS) or born-in-church members (BICS). Many Intermountain Mormons who have gone to the Pacific Coast or to Eastern states for school or work eventually return, often as retirees and/or equity migrants. Converts from almost everywhere often join them, seeking a safer and more Mormon environment than the metropolitan areas they usually abandon. If Utah’s burgeoning Wasatch Front repels them, they seek refuge in its more rural hinterlands. This continuing influx of returnees and newcomers, coupled with the MCR’s relatively high rates of natural increase and convert baptisms, offsets, to a great extent, the out-migration from “Zion” and the new members converted by missionaries elsewhere in the West and East. Thus, while Utah’s four new temples (Figures 4, 6) have greatly altered the 1930s aerial view that Heinig used in his article to highlight the city’s Mormon-Gentile split and the federal government’s presence (fig. 6). At the northern or Mormon end of the Central Business District (CBD) stands the most famous of the Saints’ temples. Now dwarfed by new high-rises, Temple Square attracts more than five million visitors annually. Ironically, the tallest structure on the Salt Lake skyline, located directly east of the temple, serves as the primary Church Office Building (COB). Some of the older buildings on the same block—notably the former Hotel Utah, re-
Changes in the Mormon Population of the U.S. West.

Figure 4 is D. W. Meinig's classic 1965 map of the Mormon Culture Region (MCR), and figure 5 is an updated version based on figure 3, which appears in the Historical Atlas of Mormonism. In the thirty years since 1965, the core of the MCR (basically the Wasatch Front) has declined in its percentage of U.S. Mormons from 40 to 28 percent, but the core's share of MCR Mormons has increased to over 50 percent.
MORMON CULTURE REGION
1990

FIGURE 5

Core (see inset map)
Domain
Sphere
Temple

SUGAR LANDSCAPE
ently renovated and renamed the Joseph Smith Memorial Building—also contain Church offices, suggesting “COB Square” as a possible nickname for the block.

To the west of Temple Square are the new Museum of Church History and Art and the Family History Library. Still farther west stand the Church’s Broadcast House (home of KSL-TV and radio and the Bonneville International Corporation) and the Delta Center, home of the Utah Jazz basketball team. The southern and traditionally non-Mormon end of the CBD has also undergone extensive redevelopment, centered on the Gallivan Utah Center Plaza. Fort Douglas, the long-time symbol of federal supremacy on Salt Lake’s east bench, has been abandoned by the U.S. Army and engulfed by the state’s University of Utah, archival of the Church’s BYU. In sum, Mormon-Gentile divisions, even though they have subsided, are still visible in the townscape centered on “the crossroads of the [Intermountain] West.”

The “Domain”—the rural Mormon majority. If we define the domain of the MCR, exclusive of the core, as those counties with a Mormon majority, a slightly different region emerges from the one mapped by Meinig. Many rural counties of Utah (and some in Idaho) have a population whose LDS percentage exceeds the Beehive State’s average of 72. But in Summit County (just east of Salt Lake), Mormons barely make up a majority (53 percent) because the gentrified mining town of Park City—now Utah’s wealthiest area per capita—has attracted droves of artists, skiers, and others from outside the state. We have deleted both San Juan (40 percent LDS) and Grand counties (31 percent) from the domain. There, Mormons and non-Mormons have struggled over land and water rights since 1880. The Church has tried in vain to “capture” the southeast corner of Utah from ranchers, farmers, Navajos, and—more recently—artists and recreationists lured to this section of the Colorado Plateau.

Mormons have had more success over the border in both Nevada’s and Wyoming’s Lincoln County and, of course, in neighboring southeast Idaho. But even there, two counties centered on the transportation hub of Pocatello fall short of a Mormon majority.

As Meinig noted in 1965, “In a numerical and narrow sense, this [rural domain] is the most thoroughly Mormon area.”22 This still holds, even though the domain’s share of the nation’s LDS has dropped from 28 to 11 percent (and to 21 percent of the MCR’s). One Utah historian, rooted in rural Arizona, disagrees with Meinig’s claim that the Wasatch Front displays the most characteristic features of Mormon culture. For Charles S. Peterson, the national intrusions into Meinig’s core long ago diluted the LDS influence, the largest area of the MCR, which now has more Mormons than the domain—with 15 percent of America’s Saints (and 28 percent of the MCR’s). The exact extent of the sphere depends on just how one decides to define the Saints as a conspicuous, cohesive minority in areas where, in Meinig’s eyes, they “are mostly scattered, rather than strongly clustered . . . .”24 One geographer, who also served as cartographic editor for the Atlas of Utah (1981), included all areas where Mormons comprised 5 to 50 percent of the population. I have raised his lower limit to 10 percent, thereby shrinking his sphere considerably but extending Meinig’s, to reflect continuing outward expansion since 1965. Either way (and fig. 3 shows both versions), in an area whose population often professes no formal religious affiliation, the Latter-day Saints make up the largest or next largest denomination. In response to the sphere’s growth, the Church has constructed temples in Boise and Las Vegas, giving that area a total of five (counting Cardston, Alberta, and Laie, Hawaii). The odd juxtaposition of a Mormon temple and gambling casinos in Las Vegas symbolizes the continuing strains between the lifestyles of the “two peoples” within the Great Basin (or between the Angel and the Beehive, to use Armand Mauss’s metaphors25).

POLICY IMPLICATIONS OF CHURCH GROWTH

JUST as the United States still records at least half of the Church’s membership, so the Mormon Culture Region still numbers at least half of the American Saints. Moreover, of all the six macro-regions into which I have divided Mormonism, North America has the highest retention of members, and Utah, the highest of all the states/provinces. The higher levels of activity among Amer/Can and especially MCR (or birthright or ethnic) Mormons strongly reinforce this region’s global pre-eminence. In a sense, they also recreate the same kind of geopolitical and socio-economic imbalance that characterizes the world as a whole, with its growing North-South division between “haves” and “have-nots.” At the April 1994 general conference, one apostle implied as much when he said he told “a meeting of Church leaders in a country outside of North America” that “the Lord was grieved that only a small fraction of the members in their nations relied on the Lord’s promises and paid a full tithing.”26 At the same session, a colleague made the more general observation that “One major concern of the General Authorities is the lack of retention in full fellowship of some new converts and those who are less active in the Church.”27 He likely had in mind the fastest-growing areas where retention and activity rates are low.
The makeup of the general authorities also mirrors the preponderance of Intermountain West Americans in the operation of the global Church. All fifteen members of the highest echelon of the LDS hierarchy are either products of the Mormon Culture Region or, in two cases, have close family ties to it as part of the Mormon American diaspora. Of the sixty-six Seventies who presently preside over the Church's twenty-two areas, only sixteen are not North Americans (and only four of them serve as presidents).\(^{28}\) Europe and Asia both have four representatives, and Latin America has eight, but Oceania and Africa have none. Judging by a recent comment by President Hunter, the Church senses the imbalance that has resulted in part simply from its rapid growth and the lack of experienced leadership. He predicts "increasing responsibility for stake and ward leaders and the rise of more people from various cultures to the ranks of general authorities."\(^{29}\) But until that happens, and the Church can bridge the gap between its diverse peripheries and its controlling center, Mormonism seems likely to remain a largely American or an Intermountain West faith, even as North America's share of the membership shrinks. If that conclusion disturbs those impatient to make their vision of a worldwide church a reality, let me make three modest suggestions for lessening the imbalance between the two unequal halves of the Church. First, if growth is the Church's primary problem, then why not take steps to grow more slowly but, in the long run, more strongly?\(^{30}\)

Second, perhaps the Church could expand its humanitarian projects by devoting more missionary time, if not funds, to them as a means of improving the living conditions of both members and non-members. If "there are doubts in the minds of many Brazilian [and other non-Amer/Can] members that Americans are truly concerned for the poor," such projects would surely help dispel them.\(^{31}\)

Finally, the Church could create sister-stake alliances to link the stronger wards of North America with the weaker ones throughout the world (and even within the United States and
Canada). The apparent success of the nondenominational Ouelessebougou-Utah Alliance in Mali, West Africa (now headed by general authority emeritus Marion D. Hanks), might serve as a model for a series of projects connecting Amer/Can Mormons with members of other societies in personal ways that would enrich the lives of all involved.

After all, as early as 1832, Joseph Smith received a revelation commanding members of the infant LDS church to acquire sufficient knowledge and understanding of the world’s countries and cultures that they would be well-prepared to magnify their callings as missionaries. (See, for instance, Doctrine & Covenants 88:77–80.) Part of that preparation for the present generation might require many MCR and other well-off members to become both more cosmopolitan and more concerned about the welfare of the growing numbers of Saints in Latin America, East Asia, and Africa. The global fate of the Mormon faith in the coming century may well hinge on the Church’s ability to forge closer relations among its diverse and distant members.

NOTES


4. To construct the cartograms, we used data published in the Deseret News 1993–94 Church Almanac (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1992).


21. With the recent announcement of a temple for Nashville, Tennessee, North Americans residing outside the MCR homeland can claim almost as many temples as those inside (fifteen vs. sixteen). The rest of the world still lags a bit behind North America with a total of twenty-nine temples completed or planned, including the two most recent (and not mapped) temples for Cochabamba, Bolivia, and Recife, Brazil.


24. Meinig, 216.


30. I probably shouldn’t even raise the question, given the prevailing attitude among the ‘Brethren’ best expressed by now President Gordon B. Hinckley: ‘What a wonderful, wonderful problem it is to have the problem of growth.” See ‘A Time to Remember, Honor, Respect,” LDS Church News, 2 July 1994, 10.

MY BROTHER PAUL RETURNED THIS AFTERNOON FROM THE DEAD. SAM, MY LOVER, SAID, "FOR HE Sake," WHEN HE OPENED THE DOOR AND SAW PAUL THERE, THOUGH HE GENERALLY TRIES NOT TO SWEAR IN FRONT OF MY DAUGHTER TESSA. FOR THREE YEARS ALL WE HAVE KNOWN OF PAUL IS A NEWSPAPER HEADLINE SAYING MISSIONARY DISAPPEARS AND A MAP OF CENTRAL AMERICA INSET WITH PHOTOGRAPHS OF BOMBED-OUT CHURCH BUILDINGS—HARMLy MORE THAN CROOKED SLATS AND YELLOWED SHEETING IN THE WINDOWS—WITH CAPTIONS ABOUT POLITICAL UPHAVAL. NOW PAUL TAKES UP THE WHOLE COUCH UNDER THE PAINTING OF THE LAUGHING CHRIST, HE AND THE SMALL LATINa HE SHOWED UP WITH THIS AFTERNOON. SHE WEARS A T-SHIRT THAT SAYS "CONFERENCE ON EAST ASIAN RELIGIONS JAKARTA 1987," BUT SHE IS TURNT IN TOWARD HIM SO WE CAN SEE ONLY HER BACK. THEY ARE SLEEPING LIKE THE DEAD. TESSA STARES LONGINGLY AT THE THICK BLACK BRAID THIS LATINa WEARS. SHE SEEMS TO BE LONGING TO TOUCH HER, BUT I STAND IN THE WAY TO WARN HER.

PAUL IS THE MODEL FOR THE LAUGHING JESUS. SAM ENLARGED AN OLD PHOTOGRAPH OF HIM WITH HIS HEAD THROWN BACK IN A FIT OF PLEASURE, THEN PAINTED IN THE BACKGROUND LIKE A DESERT IN THE EAST. HE DID IT TO MAKE ME HAPPY, IN REMEMBRANCE OF PAUL, BUT HE WAS ONLY MODERATELY SUCCESSFUL. THE FIRST THING PAUL SAID WHEN HE WALKED IN THE DOOR WAS, "THAT PAINTING—IT'S OBSCENE." BEFORE I COULD CRY OUT IN AMAZEMENT AT HIS UNEXPECTED APPEARANCE, HE STEPPED FORWARD WITH HIS ARMS OUTFLUNG AND MADE THIS LONG STRANGE SPEECH:

"JESUS DOESN'T LAUGH. NO, GABRIELLE, IN MY EXPERIENCE, WHICH AS YOU KNOW IS QUITE WIDE, THERE HAVE BEEN TWO KINDS OF JESUS TO IDENTIFY WITH, AND NEITHER ONE IS LAUGHING. JESUS THE FISHERMAN DRAGS IN INNOCENT FISH AND DISCIPLES. THE OTHER JESUS KNOCKS DOWN TABLES IN THE TEMPLE AND WHIPS HYPOCRITES INTO SHAPE. THIS SECOND ONE LETS JUDAS KISS HIM, BUT IN HIS DEPTHS HE'S ANGRY. I LIKE THIS ONE THE BEST. I'M TELLING YOU, I KNOW: HE COMES AGAIN IN GLORY, BUT LAUGHING ISN'T HOW."

HIS LATINa HUDDLED UP AGAINST HIM, CONVINCED HE TOLD THE TRUTH. I STEPPED BACK, GESTURED TOWARD THE COUCH, MEANING "PLEASE SIT DOWN," AND HE AND HIS LATINa COLLAPSED INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS BEFORE I COULD SAY, "OR SLEEP, IF YOU LIKE." IT WAS CLEAR TO ME THEY'D BEEN TAKING SOMETHING, AND WOULD BE AGAIN.

JULIE NICHOLS IS A WRITER WHO LIVES IN PROVO, UTAH.
"Jesus the fisherman drags in innocent fish and disciples. The other Jesus knocks down tables in the temple and whips hypocrites into shape. This second one lets Judas kiss him, but in his depths he's angry. I like this one the best."

Of the two of us, I was the unknown one. As long as my dresses were the proper length and my hair looked reasonably like everyone else's, I believed I wasn't too far from what our mother wanted, worthy to be invited to youth group socials and as good a candidate for the clean-cut young men at the high school to take to the prom as anyone else. But Paul was the junior high genius, the one with the vocabulary and the memory for movie plots that made him popular at parties. He gave the nod to all things. I wasn't the only one who looked to him for verity; no one knew so much. He extended his approval like a hand of confirmation. Shoulders straightened, shirts were tucked in, hair was pulled back from oversized eyes when he walked by.

I had a vision when I was in eighth grade, he in the ninth. It was a humble vision: in a rainbow I saw an angel, who smiled at me. That was it, but it gave me great peace. A week or so before, our father had left our mother's cupboardless kitchen for good, muttering, "Dust off my feet! Dust off my feet!" He meant to shake it off, to show he would have nothing more to do with the household. It was something missionaries did in Jesus' time when a city refused their message. It wasn't usually reserved for their own families. Paul was stoic, but my mother and I panicked.

The angel let me know, winglessly, that I wasn't to blame, that I wouldn't be held accountable for my mother's daily scramble through the help wanteds, her desperate grabs for the phone and the mail, her lethargic collapses immediately after, when they held no redemptive missive from Our Father the Disappeared. Nor would I be held responsible for her refusal of the ladies' Relief Society's attempts at compassion ("A casseroles!" she spat. "What earthly good can a casserole do?"), or for Paul's hunger when no dinner was provided by any other means.

The angel, a translucent gold personage through whom the rainbow shone, persuaded me God not only absolved me but loved me kindly, constantly, as my father never could. It was a strange and fleeting experience but I held the comfort to me, and it calmed my damaged heart.

When I told Paul, he said from his space above me in our loft, "That's great, Gaby, I believe you and I love it and I know it's true. But be careful. Don't tell anybody but me. That's not the kind of thing you spread abroad. They'll take you away for sure, and then you'll really be alone." So I kept quiet.

Paul also said, "Don't worry, I won't leave you, Gaby," and I
was stricken dumb with gratitude. He was the sophomore class wonder, better than Jesus, smarter than God. For a while in those days, Paul had control of everything: my social life, the length of my hair, the number of pounds I weighed. This is the truth; when he said, "You'll never have a lover. You're too fat," I was shocked, but I went to the free diet clinic at the hospital and lost fifteen pounds. I needed him—though we no longer shared a room—even when, and even after, I saw the caption underneath his picture in the East High yearbook that year. "Most spiritual," it said, and when I asked one of his girlfriends why, she said, "He had a vision after your father left, a being in a rainbow. Didn't you know?"

Years later I found a lover who was broader and taller and wiser than all our valley. This was after I had married and had a daughter and been left behind for someone else. Once I met Sam I thought, "Thank God, I am free." "Tell me everything you know," Sam said, his arms around my waist, his chest tight against mine. "I need to hear everything you've ever seen in your life." With Sam it seemed I could do without even Paul, though of course we were still connected by the dark red power of blood.

Tessa listens to Sam's version, whichever version Sam tells of Paul, with her mouth open, believing. It's good for her to trust Sam, but I go further back with Paul and I know a few more facts. In the three years since his disappearance, I've been trying to make some changes that will leave his marks behind forever. I have lost weight (again) and bought a new wardrobe, and my hair is as long as it was when I was in high school and anybody-here-seen-my-old-friend Joan Baez was the lady to imitate. I spend a lot of money on combs and clips and ribbons for myself and Tessa. She loves to brush my hair. It occurs to me that for her long dark hair, Tessa may adopt this Latina of Paul's for a sister. In fact, I am mortally sure of it. I take Tessa in my arms and remember: it's me she loves, me.

And the story's only half told.

At nineteen, Paul wrote a definitive piece on the mystical origins of the Book of Mormon. The basis of this was a vision—he was dead sober when it happened, fasting, so he swore—a vision of palm leaves and a resurrected god without nail marks but with breasts. The manuscript was nearly a hundred pages. He carried this revelation, this record of truth, in the backpack he carried with him while he biked in central Europe that summer, the summer he was nineteen, broadening himself, going far beyond our valley. (I lived at home with our mother, attended aerobics classes, made myself desirable for the man who would be my husband in another little while.) In Luxembourg one rainy July weekend, he laid the manuscript on the floor of our bedroom and lost fifteen pounds. I needed him—though we no longer shared a room—even when, and even after, I saw the caption underneath his picture in the East High yearbook that year. "Most spiritual," it said, and when I asked one of his girlfriends why, she said, "He had a vision after your father left, a being in a rainbow. Didn't you know?"

He called me in a panic. (I was home, on break between workouts.) I told him to say a fast prayer and look for help, if that's what he wanted—didn't he always get what he wanted? For an hour he fed coins (what are they in Luxembourg? shillings? denare? drachme?) into the phone box, babbling a story in which he followed a wrinkled, ancient woman in an orange robe who showed him the path of his nemesis, the thief of his treatise. She led him into the red-light district, the Bowery of Luxembourg, the North Beach of my brother's young life. Down an alley they went, into the most sordid sex market I could imagine (he made sure of it), and after seeing behind screens the suggestions of sights I ought not to have known, dirty and deformed legs and arms in positions and gestures I could scarcely comprehend, the story had a happy ending: the woman pointed a crooked finger into a dung-filled corner, where, beneath a heap of stinking rags, he found the backpack with his manuscript. He scooped it up and turned to reward his silent guide, but she was gone. There were only fat pimps and squalid security men with sallow skin, muttering after him in unfamiliar languages. He knew he was lucky to have his life.

That's amazing, I say, because he expects it; that's an astonishing story, a testimony to—to something.

Yes, he says. And you watch, there will be a reason for this. The truth must come to light. Perhaps I am a prophet. Perhaps I am the christ.

It was a possibility. However, the definitive treatise never saw print. Paul came home and lived with our mother after I married, breaking her heart daily as I never did, shocking her with what he knew and what he didn't know, throttling his boyfriends and demanding that they declare their intentions, religiously as well as in regard to my mother. Late in his twenties he went off to the jungle on a mission, not, I think, having anyplace else to go with all of that knowledge, all of that lack. Our mother paid $350 a month to keep him there. I couldn't imagine where in the world he was putting that money, or what in the world he thought he could say that the jungle natives hadn't already figured out for themselves.

Now— I gesture at him and the woman, and the vision of effort against convention they reveal to me in their sleep—now, this.
but he wasn't looking up.

"Up!" I said, grabbing his arm. He's told me a million times not to grab his arm while he's driving. Still he said he couldn't see it. It was beautiful, floating up there; I knew how Wendy felt when Peter came in Hook's vessel, though this one was smaller—just a mainsail and a jib, an ordinary enough Catalina in the sky. We drove under it and I had to face behind to see it but it was still there, heeling in the sky, with a proud navigator holding the rudder, looking down.

Suddenly something happened. Maybe people who hang-glide can understand this—downdrafts, thermals, other mysteries of the air. All I know is, the boat fell. It spiralled straight down very fast. I knew it was going to be a disaster and I yelled the way you do when you see one coming and wish it wouldn't. The boat cracked the water and the sailor inside fell out backward. His belt had a buckle of brass.

Everyone came at once. I heard people saying, "Who is he?" and "Get some help," and I knew that if I saw a broken bone sticking out of his side it would make me sick. I didn't look. I told Sam to get us home fast, out of the range of lights and sirens, far away from the corpse. "He isn't dead," he said, "he's sleeping. Wake Tessa up and we'll get something at the Dairy Queen, shall we?" We drove home.

No newspaper clippings corroborate me on this event. Sam and I discuss it only in our most private moments, and when I thought of telling Paul, just as part of the monthly letter to the family missionary, I remembered he was dead. Now that he's not, I will never mention it. On my own I've determined that it never made the news because a sailboat in the sky requires too much hope for the press to give it the authority of space. Like the thought of a Jesus who laughs: nobody wants to hear it, not in this valley, anyway.

I WASN'T surprised when the phone rang at 2:47 one morning and on the other end of the line was a Church spokesperson telling me that Paul had disappeared. Divorced and loverless, banished again from my mother's house while she entertained yet another potential mate, at first I had no formula for comfort. The hole in my life seemed bottomless. But after a while, I knew enough to think Paul probably just couldn't stand the work. I was sure he didn't disappear by accident. It even occurred to me that he may have committed suicide. But I made up my mind not to be surprised if he called me next week, next month, or if his face showed up in a photograph of guerrilla action in Colombia next spring. Whatever happened, I would be able to say I knew it all along. "If he wakes up with that Latina from under that laughing Christ and tells us he wants to stay here," I whisper on the futon to Tessa, who nods soberly, "I think we will have to deny him."

"Thrice," Sam hisses fiercely I watch in wonder—I didn't know he was listening— with his bare strength, all alone, he hooks his arms beneath my brother Paul's head and knees and lifts him. He gestures to me to open the door, through which he carries the sleeping Paul, who is certainly drugged; he never stirs. Sam returns in a moment, and in just the same way, gently, with great concentration, he lifts the little Latina and disappears also through the door with her. When he returns, arms empty, he shuts the door firmly behind him. He brushes his hands together, laughing a little in a way I've never seen. "It is finished," he says. He puts one arm around my shoulders and the other around Tessa's. I don't ask what he's done with those people. The deadbolt on the door glistens in front of my eyes, a rainbow of brass and silver.

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REPORT ON THE ROCHESTER MISSION

The organizational meeting was held in a well-to-do house.

As we sat in our hopeful circle, the little son of the family played with his war toys.

Following optimistic prayer, our leader looked to the future, citing figures from Money magazine on how the city was likely to grow (failing to factor in downsizing, upward mobility, and leaving out the Gulf War entirely).

Transferred elsewhere, the family of the future packed their computers, their aircraft carriers, and the dog (I failed to mention) and left for Atlanta.

An image I still carry from that meeting is of the priest who offered benefaction—a modest man subsequently silenced for being openly gay. Words that would have moved angels, as we sat in our hopeful circle.

—ROSEMARY KLEIN
In the order of this world, we suffer; that is a fact of the human condition. The question is not how we solve the problem of suffering, but how we respond to an experience that both reveals and threatens who we are.

THE ORDEAL AND MEANING OF SUFFERING

By Courtney S. Campbell

OUR ORDEALS OF SUFFERING CREATE A paradox requiring interpretation. Two remarks illustrate this point. The first comes from a conversation with my mother: “Your grandmother just died of a sudden heart attack,” she managed through the tears. A few more tears, and then, “The only good thing about Mom’s death was that she didn’t suffer.” A second comment comes from my death and dying class at Oregon State University. In our introductory session, I have my students respond to the following question: “What are you doing when you feel most fully alive?”

One can imagine the kinds of replies college students will have to this question, but I have been struck by how frequently the response is “when I am suffering” or “when I feel pain.”

How is it that suffering can be both an experience we want to avoid (my mother’s reaction) and one that can provide full self-awareness (my students’ reaction)? The experience of suffering is central to spirituality and the self-understanding of most religious communities. In expressing a perspective on suffering that shaped Christian understanding over the centuries, for example, the author of Hebrews portrayed suffering as necessary for perfection (Heb. 5:7-9). The spiritual significance of suffering has been recognized even by critics of religion, such as Karl Marx, who acknowledged the validity of the experience of suffering even while rejecting a religious solution to it: “Religious suffering is at the same time an expression of real suffering and a protest against real suffering. Religion is the sigh of the oppressed creature, the sentiment of a heartless world, and the soul of soulless conditions. It is the opium of the people.”

Yet, suffering is not an experience to be sought; given a choice we would prefer to avoid these bitter cups of life.

Both the spirituality and the ambivalence of suffering in religious thought are increasingly difficult to sustain in our society. We live in a medical and moral culture that seeks to banish the experience of suffering from the human condition. I am continually reminded by my physician friends that the overriding professional imperative of medicine to relieve suffering renders a theology of suffering akin to Trivial Pursuit.

Suffering, in the ideology of contemporary medicine, is an evil, a fate worse than death; and it is perhaps an unmitigated evil, whose presence in human experience is a symbol of failure, and thus is not to be tolerated but conquered through technology. I attribute this spirit of intolerance toward suffering to an immediacy of experience among caregivers. Their perspective of proximity is captured well in the French existentialist Albert Camus’s critique of traditional religious justifications for the presence of suffering (or “theodicy”), voiced by his character Dr. Rieux: “[The local priest] is a man of learning, a scholar. He hasn’t come in contact with death. That’s why he can speak with such assurance of the truth—with a capital T. But [all] who have heard a man gasping for his breath on his deathbed think as I do. He’d try to relieve human suffering before trying to point out its excellence.”

Camus is right to suggest that there is a human imperative to relieve suffering and that religious communities and traditions have, at times, seen suffering as an intrinsic good. However, strong currents in our medical, political, and philosophical culture deny that suffering has any significance, and some may (unlike Marx) also deny its reality. If the temptation of religion is to resolve the paradox of suffering on the side of spiritual purposes and self-awareness, the cultural temptation is to resolve it on the side of denial and/or the meaninglessness of suffering. I suggest that the paradox should not be solved but lived with. This requires a focus on four aspects of suffering:
The cultural image of the autonomous self runs contrary to some fundamental convictions implicit in the biblical monotheist commitment that the self is formed as an image of God and is called to the imitation of the divine presence in the world.

The medical, political, and philosophical ideologies that render suffering morally meaningless.

The relationship between suffering's reality and our cultural image of the self.

An account of the ordeal of suffering—how suffering is experienced.

The religious quest for meaning and purpose through suffering.

The denial of suffering

Medicine attempts to eradicate suffering by reducing it to treatably physical pain, but the radical, subjective nature of suffering makes it incorrigible to outside, "objective" methods to understand it, let alone respond to it.

Within medicine, there is a pronounced tendency toward the medicalization of suffering, expressed in the common coupling of alleviating "suffering" with "pain" as the vocation of medical care. This medical ideology sees suffering as but part of a continuum of pain, albeit severe pain, that patients may experience in the course of disease and illness. Since medicine can, or at least arguably ought to be able to control pain, it will be just a matter of time until we have reached the end of the pain continuum. Then suffering, too, will fall under the domain of medical control and be rendered unnecessary. The medicalization process de-spiritualizes suffering and means that it ought to be just as susceptible to medical intervention and cure as disease and pain. For a metaphysical problem, then, this approach offers a medical and technological solution.

This reductionism of suffering to a form of pain is not compelling, however. We can experience pain without suffering (my grandmother's heart attack), but it is no less the case that we can undergo suffering without experiencing pain (my mother's response). And we refer to "long-suffering" Red Sox or Cub fans whose mental state of personal anguish over the (mis)fortunes of their team cannot be reduced to some physiological pathology.

If suffering proves intractable to the forces of medicalization, our medical culture proposes another strategy for its eradication—denial of its objective reality. The experience of suffering is irreducibly subjective; the sufferer knows he or she is suffering even when others do not. But this subjectivity makes suffering conceptually problematic, given the scientific, "objective" presuppositions of contemporary biomedicine. This quest for objectivity is displayed in the daily ice-breaker between professional and patient: "So, on a scale of one to ten, how do you feel today?" Yet, as physician Eric Cassell has perceptively observed, even though the relief of suffering is the enduring test of medicine's success, "the central assumptions on which twentieth-century medicine is founded [objectivity, quantification, the body as a mechanism] provide no basis for an understanding of suffering." If true, medicine has a serious problem on its hands, for it cannot comprehend what it is committed to relieve. Cassell observes, "The dominance and success of science in our time has led to the widely held and crippling prejudice that no knowledge is real unless it is scientific—objective and measurable. From this perspective, suffering and its dominion in the sick person are themselves unreal."4

The difficulty suffering poses for contemporary medicine spills over into the politics of our liberal pluralistic culture. In the last four years, citizen initiatives on physician aid-in-dying—which includes physician-assisted suicide and/or active euthanasia—have been considered by voters in Washington, California, and Oregon. The rhetorical aspiration of each of these initiatives is to ensure a "death with dignity" for a terminally ill patient. The "dignified" death is a death in which a terminally ill person can express self-determination regarding the concluding act of his or her life. The popular de-
mand for control over the power to end life, through a prescription of Seconal or a reading of the bestseller Final Exit, clearly aims at providing deliverance from the suffering that would accompany a life lived to its natural end.6

The aid-in-dying initiatives provide for medicine a solution for suffering that cannot be achieved by the strategies of reductionism or denial. Medical professionals can ultimately solve the problem of suffering by painlessly and quickly ending the life of the sufferer. Even suffering can be defeated, then, though at a cost of making some persons victims of a morality that is intolerant of suffering.

A second feature of liberal pluralist ideology is that it severs the concept of dignity from the experience of suffering. It simply allows no place for a conception of dignified suffering. Rather, the clear implications of liberalism are that there exists a direct and necessary connection between the preservation of human dignity (i.e., choice and control over the powers of life and death), and the absence of suffering and dependency. Conversely, the presence of suffering diminishes dignity because it deprives a person of control.

In Oregon, the LDS church has assumed an institutional presence in the debate over the right to die, opposing the November 1994 assisted suicide initiative in Church meetings and through an alliance with the Coalition for Compassionate Care, a political action committee.7 Yet, the grounds for LDS opposition have not been adequately articulated. The 1989 edition of the General Handbook of Instructions permits members to forgo life-prolonging medical treatment when the means are “unreasonable” and prohibits euthanasia as a “violation of the commandments of God.”8 Assisted suicide, however, falls under neither of these categories. An ecclesiastical evaluation of assisted suicide would not be difficult to infer from LDS teaching on suicide, however, which has evolved to a current stance of condemning the act while reserving judgment of the actor to God alone.9 This presupposes, however, that the person who commits suicide is either acting involuntarily or under psychological duress such that it is not a rational choice. However, all the aid-in-dying initiatives propose measures that ensure the decision-making capability of the terminally ill patient. Thus, rules about the prohibition of killing or suicide are not an adequate institutional response to assisted suicide. In contrast, the stance affirmed by Roman Catholic teaching is grounded in a theology of sacramental suffering: “...suffering, especially suffering during the last moments of life, has a special place in God’s saving plan; it is in fact a sharing in Christ’s passion...”10

Philosophical traditions do no better than medicine or the politics of pluralism do in making meaningful sense of suffering. The posture of classical utilitarianism is illustrative. On one hand, the capacity for suffering—“sentence”—gives an entity moral standing. According to the founder of utilitarianism, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), the threshold for standing in a moral community resides not in the capacity for language, or the ability to reason, but rather in the capability for suffering. Both Bentham and his most prominent successor, John Stuart Mill (1806-1873), insisted that this criterion applied not only to human beings, but to “all of sentient creation.”11

At the same time, utilitarianism joins the cultures of medicine and liberal pluralism in its ambition to eradicate suffering. For Mill, suffering is an evil worse than pain. He envisioned in ongoing scientific progress, good public health, and programs of moral education, powerful resources to minimize and eventually banish suffering from the human condition. “All the grand sources... of human suffering are in a great degree, many of them almost entirely, conquerable by human care and effort”—though Mill did acknowledge that several generations might pass before the conquest is completed.12

There is a peculiar contradiction at the core of the utilitarian posture, not unlike the one we discovered in medical culture. Medicine has a moral imperative to relieve what it does not understand. Utilitarianism is morally devoted to the demise of the very same phenomenon, suffering, that provides a basis for moral standing.

If utilitarian philosophy at least acknowledges the reality of suffering, and then seeks to eradicate it through both education and science, the traditions of philosophical skepticism join with the forms of denial present in medical culture to contest the existence of suffering. The radical subjectivity of suffering makes it very problematic to understand, much less respond to, a person’s cry of suffering. The skeptical tradition claims that we cannot ever really know whether another is suffering because the experience of suffering cannot be shared or communicated. Thus, the status of suffering is vacuous.

Yet other selves, and thus their suffering, are not wholly impenetrable to us. Any account that claims either to understand suffering, or to deny it, must first take us to an inquiry about the self.

THE SUFFERING SELF

A self made in the image of the liberal culture of rights and self-determination is threatened by suffering’s prospects of self-dissolution and powerlessness; but an interconnected God-image of self gives suffering its due place.

Despite our best attempts at medicalization, technological gratification, or philosophical rationalization, suffering persists as a reality in our lives. “Suffering” is an actual or perceived threat of dissolution to the integrity and identity of the self. Suffering calls into question the continuity of the “I” by which we refer to ourselves. This threat is very particularized and private—suffering challenges my identity, my loyalties, and my sense of self. The sufferer commonly describes this threat as a sense of loss of control or feeling of powerlessness in the face of forces beyond her or his control.

The occasion for suffering as the threat of dissolution may certainly be affliction with disease and pain, but it arises no less when we experience the death of another13 or through divorce, aging, or other experiences in which the self may be diminished. This sense of the dissolution of self-identity is no less embedded in popular culture, for the “long-suffering" sports fan is one whose identity, in part, is bound up with the
The person who suffers is rightly skeptical about a claim to personal, intimate knowledge; moreover, the “I know how you feel” comment denies the sufferer a chance to give voice to his or her real feelings, and thereby only perpetuates the feeling of powerlessness.

success and eventual failure of his or her favorite team. Suffering raises not so much a medical, political, or philosophical problem to be solved as a condition we inevitably experience in the brokenness of human life. To be human is to suffer, or to rephrase the words of the philosopher Descartes, I suffer, therefore I am.

The threat to the self posed by suffering helps explain why our culture has so much difficulty in understanding suffering. The self made in the image of liberal culture is characterized by its freedom, its “rights,” and its capacity for decisions and choices. Contemporary ethics affirms the primacy of enhanced opportunities for self-determination, from decisions about life’s beginning to life’s end. However, suffering raises the prospect of self-dissolution and powerlessness, not enhanced self-determination and increased control; it therefore is contrary to the dominant cultural self-image.

To give suffering its due place requires a fuller account of who we are. The cultural image of the autonomous self runs contrary to some fundamental convictions implicit in the biblical monotheist commitment that the self is formed as an image of God (imago Dei) and is called to the imitation of the divine presence in the world (imitatio Dei). This religious image of the self is embedded in a spatial and temporal matrix of relationships, sociality, and connectedness to history; in short, it is self-deceptive to claim “freedom” from persons or from the past. Our responsibility-constituting relationships include the transcendent, other persons, and the natural world and environment. This self acknowledges its interdependence and attaches no stigma to the experience of dependency, a marked contrast to the dominating and independent self of modern culture. Likewise, this religious self is a self with a history; its identity, integrity, and intactness are shaped over a temporal process in which, to be sure, certain choices are identity-defining and identity-expressing. Suffering can be perceived as a threat only when our self-identity is fairly stable and continuous over a process of time that encompasses past, present, and the possibility of threat in the future.

The image Dei is also displayed in our capacities for creativity and communication, including symbolic communication. Creativity and communication are expressed in the ways that we shape and construct our natural and social worlds. Yet, our autonomy is always coupled with accountability and answerability for actions; it is this that grounds an ethic of responsible stewardship, rather than individual immunity from morality. The self as steward sees the world as a gift and trust that is correlated with a disposition of humility. It is perhaps the meek who inherit the earth because only they recognize that they are of the earth, a reminder we can discern through the common root of the term “humus” in our words “humility,” “earth,” and “human being.”

The religious image of self affirms the significance of embodiment. The body in liberal culture is not a sanctuary but “property.” That is, on the liberal account, the true self is disembodied. The two errors of the historical heresy of Gnosticism thus open themselves to us—indulge the body, or deny the body. LDS teaching offers a different perspective because it begins with a story that affirms the embodiment of God. It is the disembodiment so central to our cultural aspirations, rather than embodiment, that is a prison for the self. (See D&C 138:50.) Moreover, it is precisely the experience of diminishment from disease and illness that enables us to obtain a heightened awareness of the body and our intrinsic nature as embodied selves.

This is just an initial proposal of the kind of self minimally required for suffering to be an intelligible concept in cultural and religious discourse. A self that has already undergone dissolution by the combined trends of medical, political, and philosophical currents cannot easily accommodate the idea of self-dissolution through suffering. Suffering presupposes an expanded image of self for its threat of dissolution to be taken
THE ORDEAL OF SUFFERING

Suffering magnifies our self-awareness, estranges us from our body, shatters our ability to communicate, and shrinks our physical and social worlds.

The suffering undergone by the self has several distinctive characteristics. A first mark of suffering may be designated by the metaphor of “magnification.” Faced with the multitudinous losses entailed by threatened self-dissolution, the claims and interests of the self become more present to our consciousness. For the suffering self, threatened with the loss of integrity and identity, self-awareness is magnified to the point of becoming all-consuming.

Second, this magnification of self is also accompanied by “alienation” or “fragmentation.” The self may become estranged from its embodiment through the diminishment of disease; the body becomes a hostile Other that frustrates, not enhances, our life plans and aspirations. Or the self may experience an internal struggle over its identity and integrity, ensuing in radically incompatible actions. The sufferer experiences a loss of wholeness and harmony as the self splits and fragments in opposition. Or, the suffering self becomes a stranger to others, who for various reasons, find themselves repelled by suffering, rather than drawn together in a community of compassion.

If part of the Imago Dei is constituted by our capacities for communication, a third mark of the suffering self is a profound shattering of language and a diminishment in voice. What Elaine Scarry has written of the embodied experience of pain is no less true of embodied suffering. “Physical pain does not simply resist language but actively destroys it, bringing about an immediate reversion to a state anterior to language, to sounds and cries a human being makes before language is learned.”

Thus, the experience of suffering is a struggle to discover a voice that expresses one’s suffering, the initial phase of which Warren T. Reich has designated as “mute suffering.” The suffering self is “struck dumb” by the experience of suffering; as with pain, screams and moans, not silence, may be the medium of expression, but the general claim is that the sufferer is initially unable to communicate about his or her suffering. This has two important consequences for the suffering self. At least initially, there is an unsharability to suffering, which may in turn limit the prospects of compassionate caregiving and human presence. The cry of suffering may not be heard, not only because our philosophical or medical mindset is so oriented but also because the sufferer cannot name the experience as suffering. The second consequence is that, lacking conventional patterns of communication, the sufferer may experience a social death long before, or independent of, biological death.

A fourth mark of suffering may be identified as the “contraction” of the world, even as the self becomes an enlarged presence in what remains of that world. Contraction is constituted by a two-fold dimension, both of which are masterfully illustrated in Leo Tolstoy’s The Death of Ivan Ilyich. First, the phenomenal, physical world contracts or turns inward on the suffering self. Chronically and terminally ill individuals, for example, may see the world of their life shrink from a natural to an entirely social environment, and further, their home as “shut-in” or “home-bound,” and then within the home to the bedroom, and perhaps to confinement to their bed.

A second dimension is the existential contraction of the self, as it, too, turns inward. The fragmented self cannot but avoid asking questions of itself—Why is this happening? Why me? What is the point of this experience? And, as portrayed by Tolstoy’s protagonist Ilyich, the answer to these questions may be, “For no reason—they just are.”

Suffering leads me to concur with Camus that the first response to suffering is to seek its relief rather than to sing its spiritual praises. But I cannot agree with “death with dignity” advocates that if medicine cannot relieve suffering, suffering should be ended by taking the life of the sufferer. That provides a mere technological fix to an experiential paradox. There are, however, also religious resolutions of the paradox to avoid, approaches that border on praising suffering’s excellence rather than seeking its relief. These are the risks of the religious quest for purpose and meaning through suffering.

COMPASSION AND THE QUEST FOR MEANING

Compassion to sufferers is not to impose meaning on suffering but to be present and let sufferers express the experience in their voice. They recover a sense of wholeness and integrity.

Drawing on formative biblical narratives, such as the book of Job, or the passion of Jesus, or more modern accounts, such as Joseph Smith’s incarceration in Liberty Jail, the LDS tradition has sought to give suffering a purpose and meaning by situating it within some larger design for human beings. The experience of suffering may be seen as the working out of divine designs of punishment or retribution for sin, or the formation of character through education, (“all these things shall be for thy experience and thy good” [D&C 122:7]), or the refinement of the soul for salvation.

However intellectually compelling or personally consoling, the limitations of these theodicies are transparent. If God witnesses “needless suffering,” then it is highly presumptuous of us to impose our mortal purposes on the situation. Moreover, the suffering self may not find religious praise of suffering to be personally validating. A first problem here is the “medicalization of martyrdom” syndrome, which seems endemic to the LDS religious community. The syndrome consists in invoking biblical passages or religious narratives on suffering articulated in the context of religious persecution, and seeking through them to provide insight to suffering in the context of disease, diminishment, and death. It is important to distinguish natural suffering from suffering brought on by human agency, even if both ultimately raise questions about the character of God.

The latter causal agent of suffering is theoretically preventable, if not eliminable, while natural suffering is an uneliminable as-
We may, as with Job’s friends, be present but silent, and let the sufferer find her or his voice. We can say with integrity, “I don’t know how you feel, but I am here with you and here for you so that you may tell me of your suffering.” A suffering narrative is thus a profound act of religious community, providing a context for meaning through a shared story rather than imposing meaning from an alien story.
ment, and the invitation to participatory narrative as aspects of compassion suggest that suffering inevitably has a transformative influence on the self. Undoubtedly, suffering can open the way to a broken self, but it is also possible for the self to recover a sense of wholeness and integrity. I have obliquely alluded to this possibility of renewal by invoking the metaphor of contraction to partially describe the experience of suffering. “Contraction” is the name we give to that biological ordeal of labor by which newness is brought into the world—new life, innocence, and potentiality—and by which the world finds a means of sustenance, bonding, and regeneration. Similarly, the kind of existential contraction that occurs in suffering can precede a recovery of self, whose wholeness and integrity is not so much preserved intact as it is reconstituted and enlarged.

I anticipate the fulfillment of the biblically promised time of healing when “God shall wipe tears from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning nor pain any more, for the former things have passed away.” (Rev. 21:4 RSV.) But in the order of this world, we suffer; that is a fact of the human condition. The question is not how we solve the problem of suffering but how we respond to an experience that both reveals and threatens who we are.

NOTES

3. I owe this illustration to Dr. David J. Green, who commented on this essay at the 1994 Sunstone Symposium.
5. By “liberal” I refer to the cultural affirmation of the sovereignty of individual choice, as expressed in the discourse of “rights.” By “pluralism” I mean a cultural agonism towards matters of the ultimate human good and destiny for the sake of social peace.
8. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, General Handbook of Instructions, 1989, 11-5.
17. Neal A. Maxwell, Lord Increase Our Faith (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1994).

ENTERPRISE

This time I shall make a move,
I shall go away from the chronicles
of dust, dawns, and dusks.
Where shall I go? To Kualalumpur,
Calcutta, Karimganj or Jhingekhali?
Or to the abode of whales, sharks?
Somewhere within a storm rises
and makes me tremble like bamboo leaves
in a pre-monsoon cyclone.
What shall I do with the eyes
of plastic toys, the whiskers
of a cold tiger in a warm morn?
I don’t think I shall be free
from the voices of children, wailings
of widows in a jet-dark dawn;
from the beggars, lepers, girls being
raped to death; or even from
the lofty devil in me.

Everywhere a blindness would follow
me like my own shadow. Can I become
a sprig of grass? A silence
sleeping beneath the burial ground?
Hearts are no hospitals.
Whispers, no tabla recitals.
The drooping face of a silent
father is now a mirror.
It treasures my prattle, my alphabet book,
the green grammar of my bones.
In the shrunken corner of my mother’s
eyes, the flutter of tears. An inevitable hour
would push me from behind to
burn the womb that bore me with such
exquisite care!
My blue hills turn grey and gruesome.
The boat that ferried me is leaking now.
Where shall I go? Where can I go?
Wherever I go, I carry the seeds
of a home. I sow them on the fallow
fields of my dreams after me
so that I go nowhere. Like darkness
or light, I shall flutter here
amid the jasmine whiteness of smiles
of my ancestors.

—NIRANJAN MOHANTY
Why were the paintings left to me? I wonder. But then, I know:
To be a bridge between his world and mine. To be seen as
a vehicle for understanding—not only the paintings and
the Stations, their significance, but the painter and
his significance.

THE PAINTINGS, THE PAINTER,
AND THE POET

By Emma Lou Thayne

Pure resonance with suffering can recognize
that human beings of whatever culture are not
intrinsically different. Once experienced, it will
alter everything from then on.
—JOHN HOWARD GRIFFIN

WONDER. THAT'S WHAT HE DEALT IN. FROM
painting to cooking to running to being in touch
with the divine, wonder informed and moved
him. It held him together, taught him to love, and drove him
to an early death. It and loyalty made him magic as a friend.

I met Paul Fini, a painter from the Chicago Art Institute, in
April 1983 at the Virginia Center for the Creative Arts (VCCA).
I would soon discover the instinct that clothed Paul in the
mystical and would teach and intrigue me, although we dif-
fered in age, upbringing, and lifestyle. Somehow we were part
of a most unusual friendship in which I witnessed, and then
became custodian of, his most powerful and private creation.

That chilly first morning at VCCA while walking to my
studio, I came across Paul leaning
over the fence feeding his
apple core to Sugar Daddy:
“Are you freezing?” I asked, rubbing the gelding's nose,
and noticing Paul was wearing shorts that cold morning.

“No. Not really. I need to use my body when I paint.”

“And what are you painting that takes that kind of input?”

“The Fourteen Stations of the Cross,” he said, referring to
the events between Christ’s sentencing and his burial.
Paul added, “I have to
suffer. I promised to have them done
by Easter—for a friend in New York. He died last
November 1995 of AIDS.”

AIDS. In 1983 that was a new word to me, and I had not an
idea what it might mean. From Utah, a Mormon wife and
mother of five, I had come to VCCA to work on my peace
poems, living among fifteen other artists of all ages and demo-
graphic backgrounds.

On that first morning Paul and I talked about his Stations
paintings. I had just finished a book of poems and journal en-
tries, Once in Israel, in which I'd written about the Stations I'd
seen in Jerusalem.

That same day I was called home because of a daughter's ill-
ness. When I returned to Virginia, Paul met me at the door. He
said he'd found Once in Israel in the library, cried as he read it,
and could identify with every word.

“What about your paintings of the Stations?” I asked. “Can I
see them?” He had finished them and they had hung in the
gallery on Easter—only on Easter.

Before I even unpacked, he took me to his room, pulled
them one at a time from under his bed where, large as they
were—3 feet by 4 feet, almost life-size—they could lie flat. I
couldn't have imagined or anticipated them, they were so un-
like any depiction I had seen. I was overcome, following the
pure emotion on the canvas. Pain, torment, and radiance—
painted for his friend who had died of AIDS.

I asked if I could take Paul’s picture with any painting he
chose. He agreed, but with a half smile that I remembered two
weeks later when I called him in Chicago. “The photo didn’t
turn out,” I said. “The only shot on the whole roll that didn’t.”

Over the phone, I could feel that same smile. “I knew it
wouldn’t,” he said. Years later I would have professional slides
made of the paintings—twice I tried; they wouldn’t turn out
either.

I had glimpsed Paul's sense of the religious in the slides he
presented at VCCA, showing icons, miniatures, studies of El
Greco saints. We talked religion—his Catholicism, my
Mormonism. He particularly admired his friend, David, a
riverboat captain on the Mississippi, for being a thirty-second

EMMA LOU THAYNE is a poet and writer living in Salt Lake City.
Her books include Once in Israel (BYU Press, 1980) and Things
degree Mason. Also, Paul's master's thesis had developed through the studies and paintings he had done in Haiti. Religion for Paul was eclectic, not exclusive. Early in my stay, he asked to do a Tarot reading for me—another mystery. Other residents told me I was lucky, that Paul was selective in volunteering readings and very gifted. Only a November 1995 before, they said, Paul had joined an astrologer, a palmist, and a handwriting expert in performing a "human installation" (a work of art that is not painting or sculpture) at the Chicago Art Institute, where he'd received his Master of Fine Arts degree. Patrons had lined up for a block waiting, and Paul had given eighty readings in a day. Naturally I was curious.

Paul dealt the cards. I selected and asked the questions—and was dumbfounded by his answers. For example, when I asked about a daughter he said, "She's frantic. Call her at once." I protested that this daughter was particularly fine. But when the reading was over, I phoned, and her first words were, "Mother, I'm so glad you called. This has been the most frantic week of my life!"

I asked about my work and Paul told me my writing would begin to go well on the eighth day. I no more counted days than clouds, but on the eighth day my typewriter cluttered into action.

"On your way home be careful of an extremity," he warned. Carrying a heavy suitcase through the airport, I would feel my shoulder give. Pain. Emergency surgery would remove staples put in two years earlier following a ski accident.

P

AUL FINI. Unique? In every way. He was dark and handsome with a cropped beard and the bearing and slimmness of a runner. He smiled like a Pavarotti and laughed when he hiked with ten of us in the Blue Ridge Mountains on a Sunday afternoon, or when he engineered a chef's crew to fix fettuccini for dinner. He never was not interested in my husband and family, my life. And he painted incessantly, prolifically.

During the next four years we ended up in the same colony three more times. For two years, he had been part-time cook at Ragdale in Lake Forest, just outside Chicago, and he urged me to come for a November 1995 to the prairie to write. A city boy, he was enthralled with the prairie, tiny new frogs leaping out of our reflections as we lay on our stomachs drinking from a hidden spring that bubbled out of the bronze of fields in fall. "This is real," he told me. "Like what I base my life on—the rock—religion, God in all of it."

One day over lunch on the grass just outside my studio at VCCA, Paul had said, "I always thought that my work—painting—was the most important thing for me. But now I know that loving one person and having it two-way is by far the most significant thing in my life." He liked hearing about my husband of thirty-four years. He sometimes brought David to visit, knowing I would like him. We all became pals, and Paul became a first degree Mason.

Gradually, starting in 1984, I became increasingly aware of Paul's being not well. He continued to be optimistic, filling his time with painting and with David. He sent me postcards—one a golden Madonna with a manger scene in her crown, and on the back: "The heart is the toughest part of the body. Tenderness is in the hands." —Carolyn Forche.

In January 1985, a call came—not from Paul but from David. Paul had had surgery and been in intensive care for two days. He had lymphoma, well advanced. Only then did I learn how sick Paul had been.

I told my journal: "Since summer, stomach pains, diarrhea, bleeding, pale. Had been in the hospital all last week for tests. Couldn't be diagnosed without surgery. CT scan alarming—a mass. An aggressive tumor in the small intestine. He'll have to have chemo...."

Then on 25 March, "Paul is better! Called tonight, talked for much more than the scant three or so minutes last week. Even laughed. Fever down, still on strong antibiotics, but sounded so much stronger. Oh, am I glad. Whole evening changed."

The battle raged all year, and by October David was telling me how the cancer had filled Paul, bloating his insides, taking over his spine, obliterating his head and spirit. Yet never a word about AIDS. Every time I had talked to Paul, he said, "I'm going to be okay, Emma Lou." His last postcard to me ended with, "I hope to be back to Ragdale in the winter to paint."

Then on Sunday night my family knew I was worried. I had his card turned up on my Rolodex, ready to call the hospital. I was going to be in Chicago the next week, and I planned to surprise Paul with a visit. But David was on the line when I picked up the phone. "I was just going to call you," I said.

David told me, "Paul said, 'Emma Lou will call.'"

"I'm coming to Chicago on Thursday," I said. "Shall I come right now?"

"No, he won't know you. He's in a coma. But he wants you to have the paintings, the Stations of the Cross. He said that
over and over."

I knew He had told me before.

I missed Paul's memorial by one day, held in St. Sebastian's Church. He was thirty-four, the age of my oldest daughter. My sixty-first birthday was the day before, recalling his gift to me the year we met. The small ancient silver box embossed with a rose still sat on the dresser in our room at home; the white box he had inscribed: "Happy birthday 1983, Emma Lou, with mucho love, Paul."

On 26 October 1985: "David met my plane, took me to the big blue Victorian house. . . . Paul's studio spread with canvas over hard wood, four paintings, oils, brushes neat on a table, wonderful sight. Hard to see, but so glad I did. David's map of rivers on his wall. . . . David and I both had trouble when he handed me the printed program of the memorial I missed. . . ."

On one page, from poet Phillips Brooks, Episcopal bishop:

Do not pray for an easy life,
Pray to be a stronger person.
Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers,
Pray for powers equal to your tasks.
Then the doing of your work shall be no miracle,
But YOU shall be a miracle.

Also, David opened the Chicago Tribune from the Sunday before, when Paul was in the coma. A centerfold spread was headlined: "High-rise Artistry with an Italian Accent." And below, "Three large paintings by Chicago artist Paul Fini."

"I tried to tell him, to show him," David said. "It would have made him real happy."

He showed me where the Stations still lay under the bed. "I'll box them and ship them to you as soon as I can let them go," he said. "I'll have to keep most of this pretty much the same, at least for now."

David and I kept in touch. The summer of 1988, his bad news came. He had been diagnosed with pneumocystis carinii pneumonia, most often associated with AIDS. He tried to reassure himself and me in his letter. "Emma Lou, all I can say is, right now I look and feel the best that I have in a long time. . . . I am not frightened. . . . I think that I am going to be around for

The First Station

These paintings are an indentity with death and life. Paul Fini used the stations as a skeletal structure to help identify with his own pain.
a while yet. . . . My friends are being very supportive. I've joined a support group that works with healing and living (and not dying)."

In that group, he reported later, he asked himself, "What does the Lord want me to do?" His answer to himself: "Be encouraging to people who have AIDS." David not only sought spiritual strength in the gospel singing he loved, but had insurance, an attentive doctor, and aggressive medical treatment. Still, November 1995 by November 1995, his condition worsened.

As 1990 began, he wrote: "I'm not feeling as well as I once did. I have to do anything I have to do in the morning. I feel like being with people, but they don't come around any more. Everyone hates to see people deteriorate. . . . Six to twelve friends—not all close—have died. People now are afraid of me—even to drive me home. No one can ever talk about the real thing. . . ."

By May he called to say he had spent a November 1995 in Florida with his parents, felt good though still tired, and looked forward to trying a new medicine. He said he had muster ed the courage to send me the paintings. Only a few people had seen them.

The Stations arrived, rolled and mailed in a tall box. I unpacked them and looked at them one at a time spread out on our king-size bed. The same awe. What in the world would I do with them?

David's AIDS now took a deadly grip on him. His mother came to Chicago to care for him as his pain and confusion intensified. Paul's parents came to visit. On 14 October, David told me on the phone, "I feel okay, but I lost my mother a couple of days ago. She had not been sick but she fainted in the hall, and died before the paramedics got here—of a ruptured aorta. She's taken care of me and everything for the past six November 1995s."

He sounded empty. Emotion seemed to have deserted him like so much else. He would go to Florida with his father. He wanted to send me more of Paul's paintings, but didn't have the strength.

By Christmas David was in the hospital with pneumonia, delirious, thinking he was on the river. His brother closed down the Chicago apartment and sent Paul's paintings to a second-hand store. Finally, down to one hundred pounds, David died in a nursing home. No memorial for now, his father said. Later he might send "his remains" to Chicago to his mother's grave.

DAVID was gone. Paul's other paintings were gone. I ended a poem: "What blood must I let to tell my sunny world / the aching bleakness of my tears?"

Yet, standing beside my bed, rolled up in the tall box as David had sent them, fourteen paintings pulsed with blood and light. Somewhere they had to be hung and seen in sequence, all of them visible at once, their power incremental from one to the next.

Why left to me? I wonder. But then, I know: To be a bridge between his world and mine. To be seen as a vehicle for understanding—not only the paintings and the Stations, their significance, but the painter and his significance. The significance of the pain and the loss of a Paul or a David. And the impetus to contribute to what might have saved one or both.

As time passed, I recalled the most puzzling thing Paul Fini had predicted during that Tarot reading when we were hardly acquainted: "You and I are going to do something together, Emma Lou. Maybe you'll write words for my paintings."

And so, out of the night and in on the wonder that moved and compelled him, I have. And I wait to see where Paul and his paintings will find their way.

THE PROCESS, THE MAGIC, THE EVENT

Discovering the significance of the pain and the loss of a Paul or a David, and the impetus to contribute to what might have saved one or both.

LAST summer she called, Merline Learning, whom I knew best as a distinguished interior designer, someone I'd consulted for decades about furnishings that would outlast fads and the wear of a household of eight. Now she
said, "I want to take you to lunch with Gary Collins next week. I think you'd like each other."

Not knowing Merline’s skills of imagination in realms other than design, I was surprised but intrigued. Of course I’d like to meet Gary Collins, painter of repute, tennis player friend of my fifth son-in-law. His painting lightened the jacket of my most recent book of poems, Things Happen, Poems of Survival. Though the choice of his vibrance and color had been mine through my publisher, I’d barely met him. And Merline was right, as I learned she usually is. We all liked each other—a lot.

We talked art, our acquaintance with it, our histories, and the worlds we occupied. During dessert I found myself telling the story of Paul and his paintings. They were fascinated, wanted to see them. How about sometime after summer?

In September I called, left messages on their busy machines. Three weeks later we managed to meet on a Friday afternoon at 3:30, after their work. Merline and Gary came to our house as anything but strangers, interested in every picture and memento of thirty-six years of our eight people growing up and away from there. Wrapped in our talk, we took an hour to get to the bedroom where Paul’s paintings had lived for more than two years. The light was bad in the dusk that had taken over the windows and two frail lamps meant to soften, not illuminate. The paintings took care of the illumination. As did the viewers. Gary and Merline brought their practiced eyes to what I had seen and not seen before, exulted in what they saw.

Before they left, an hour late for other places to be, we were participants in some coming together that would take the paintings from our bedroom on a journey none of us could that night have anticipated, not even vaguely imagined. I gave them copies of the story I’d written about how the paintings came to me. They each said they wanted to think.

Another meeting. Now with Gary’s thoughts about framing and display and Merline bringing friends, experts to see and plan. Merline had me read them my story of the paintings.

Ray Kingston, renowned architect and recent member of the National Endowment for the Arts in Washington admitted later he had come expecting to see “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” He had seen too much emotion flung on a canvas, her specialties—blended with others.

Our newly convened group heard his feelings about the paintings, absorbed them, and him. His church just happened to have a hall adjoining it, where fourteen very large paintings could be seen. He’d talk to Father Davich.

The following week Greg called me to say that a cousin of his, part of a Catholic/Mormon family in Orem, had died of AIDS and that the family had opted to put the cause of death in his obituary—not a usual thing. From all over Utah County calls came thanking them for their courage. “We’ve lived with this secret”, “What a brave thing to do for all of us,” were typical responses. The young man who died was a great-great grandson of Wilford Woodruff, fourth president of the LDS church. Greg said that his extended family wanted to finance the framing of the paintings, all of them.

For our first meeting at St. Vincent’s, in her borrowed van, Sherrill Sandberg of the Utah Arts Council picked me up with the paintings, one of them now framed in Plexiglass under Gary’s and Merline’s direction and too big to fit in my car. We unrolled and spread the huge paintings out on the floor—all together for the first time since Easter ten years before at VCCA. Again awe. A whole new experience. But how to display them?

Ideas flowed. Ray, the architect, designed an easel from which a painting could be exhibited. Richard Fetzer, master cabinet maker, translated his drawing into a ten foot tall wooden cross fit together like a Chinese puzzle.

A teacher of art history and esteemed volunteer and creator of beauty, June Nebeker’s ideas for flowers, music, understatement—her specialties—blended together to create the framing of the paintings, all of them.

Kelly Chopis of the Utah AIDS Foundation brought her zest and agenda, the zest exactly right, the agenda an impossibility. Our group had come together by wondrous chance and individual choice and we were not to be rushed or fit into a schedule. Her director, Robert Austin, understood, and both were astounded when we told them the paintings and the easels would be donated to the AIDS Foundation to travel to other exhibits. She and Robert would try to arrange to have them go with part of the AIDS quilt.

From SOS Temporary Services came sensitive and efficient Wendy Adamson and Marcia Hooley, whose brother had died of AIDS and whose Pedroz family was sponsoring the framing. They offered to make flannel envelopes for the framed paintings to protect them when stored or traveling. Where would we find funding? It would come; no one doubted.

The weekend of 12 March 1993, during the biggest storm in East Coast history, I was away conducting a creativity workshop in the heart of the storm with my friend Colleen Makin West in Miami. She talked about differences between Western and Eastern philosophy in the arts. In Eastern philosophy, we tend to stop, survey the problem, try to think our way through it. In Western philosophy, when a problem arises, the mind becomes like water, flowing around the obstacle undeterred, leaving it behind, and continuing to flow. Wondering how we might
light the paintings in a huge vaulted hall with only fluorescent ceiling lights, I told this to our group. We laughed and became water. Lighting would come from candles on a shelf at the base of each painting hanging from its cross. No one’s suggestion or decision but everyone’s, the mystique of the paintings and the process was as flowing as the way we came together.

In the framing, now four inches beyond the paintings, Paul Fini’s penciled titles of the Stations were lost. Gary Collins, never without ideas and inspiration, would imitate Paul’s writing, enlarge it, and have it blown into the base of the frame to identify each painting. His son, John Collins, would design invitations, a hundred for each of us to send to our so different “constituencies.”

Kim Duffin, expert in exhibits, assistant director of the Salt Lake City Arts Council, began meeting with us. He masterminded the reproduction of the story of the paintings, to be mounted like the Stations, to acquaint visitors with how they came to be.

Advertising executive Skip Branch joined us, offered to handle media coverage and put out a brochure to send home with each viewer of the exhibit. Greg’s contemporary interpretations of the Stations created for Lent would be included. Newspapers, TV, radio, all became intrigued and sent reporters.

Finally, tongue-tied from trying to explain the paintings or the exhibition process to reporters, even in a written press release, I asked Ray Kingston to tell me why he had found in Paul’s Stations so much more than “The Emperor’s New Clothes.” He told me what would also be in the brochure, what I never could have verbalized myself:

These paintings are an identification with death and life, a progression toward complexity, intensity.

Ethereal, they are like sketches of Paul Fini’s mind, attitudes that may not be interpreted the same by any two people.

The act of his painting them is the important thing, his expression around a very painful experience. He uses the Stations as skeletal structure to what he was feeling, to coincide with something meaningful, significant, to help identify with his own pain.

The whole experience includes the story and transcends the paintings themselves. More than visual, it speaks privately to each of us and, if we allow it, moves us to a different place.

May that different place include understanding of one another and coming together. In the peace and harmony of traveling toward this event, I spent Easter in my Mormon church resounding with the truth that He is risen. The next night, I was elevated in a beautiful Catholic church by an overflow gathering of diversity and understanding, many segments of our Salt Lake Valley brought together. Surely this is what Christ intended when he said, “Love one another as I have loved you.” (John 13:34.)

To these people, the generosity of others and their offerings (the funds did come), and to this whole joyous process, I am beyond grateful.

Paul, I have been simply the messenger. Your paintings and you have found a home.

NOTES

AUTHOR’S NOTE: Greg Pedroza continued instrumental in our introducing the paintings in July 1994, at a conference of the National Catholic HIV/AIDS Ministry at Loyola University Lake Shore Campus in Chicago. There, nearly 400 health care and charities directors, care takers, clinicians, priests and nuns (only a few not in lay attire) gathered with AIDS patients to “feed the mind as well as soothe the weary spirit.” De Paul University will be next to offer the paintings to the same end. Paul and Chicago are together again.

In 1996 the paintings will accompany the world premiere of a High Mass commissioned by the Washington National Cathedral for the occasion of a visit from an archbishop. Award-winning choral composer Rich Smith has set the program notes of the Stations of the Cross to a musical score that can be performed either at worship services or as a concert.

With grateful acknowledgement to gifts of spirit, talent, and means from: Merline Learning, Gary Collins, Ray Kingston, Greg Pedroza, June Nebeker, Skip Branch, Kim Duffin, Sherrill Sandberg, Marcia Hooley, Wendy Adamson, Kelly Chopis, and Robert Austin.

1. The Stations are: (1) Pilate condemns Jesus to die. (2) Jesus accepts his cross. (3) Jesus falls the first time. (4) Jesus meets his mother. (5) Simon helps carry the cross. (6) Veronica wipes the face of Jesus. (7) Jesus falls the second time. (8) Jesus speaks to the women. (9) Jesus falls the third time. (10) Jesus is stripped of his garments. (11) Jesus is nailed to the cross. (12) Jesus dies on the cross. (13) Jesus is taken from the cross. (14) Jesus is laid in the tomb.

2. Emma Lou Thayne, Once in Israel (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University Press, 1980).


THE COIN OF DESTINY

You are more than a moth of thought
Flittering about my head or a bird far out to sea
That will never perch in my hand.
In the dark wet caverns of night
You are a coin of destiny
With the stamp of generations etched
Upon your forehead and palms.
Ghost of a girl's fervent dreams,
You raise your webbed hands to the night
And sleep to the sound of amniotic waters.
Does your father's voice reverberate like
Distant thunder flung across the sky?
You terrify me with a love rooted
In the word God spoke on the First Day.
My breasts ache with milk and longing.
Longing to see your face
And trace the lifeline
Across your smooth, fragile palms.

—CARA O’SULLIVAN
Among the pillars of my faith were my Mormon heritage, my personal relationship with God and intense experiences with the Divine, my conviction that God’s authority and divinely appointed leaders exist in the LDS church, my belief that God had a mission for me to perform among the Latter-day Saints, and my growing interest in Mormon history as an extension of my Mormon faith.

THE REST IS HISTORY

By D. Michael Quinn

For some people it may seem a contradiction for me to proclaim my Mormon faith since I was excommunicated eleven months ago. I want to begin with a statement of what I am not seeking to do.

First, I am not playing “word games.” When I say that I regard Joseph Smith as a prophet in the same way Moses was, I emphatically mean that both Joseph Smith and Moses talked with God face to face and received the words of God through “revelation.” When I say that I believe the gold plates of the Book of Mormon were as literal as the stone tablets of the Ten Commandments, I mean that both were physical objects that could be (and were) touched by human beings, despite the otherworldly dimensions of these two artifacts. My faith is more literal than some are willing to credit.

Second, I am not “trying to gather a following.” Aside from my hope to be regarded as sincere even by those who disagree with me, I don’t want followers. My hope is that people will follow the will of God for them individually, wherever that may take them.

Third, I am not seeking to “reform” The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, or to bring about changes in its policies. There are things about current LDS policies that I wish were different, but it’s possible that God doesn’t share my point of view. If there is a need for reform or change in the LDS Church, then it is the responsibility of God’s prophets, seers, and revelators to have the active faith to obtain his will, the compassion to see the pain and struggles of “the least” of God’s children, and the courage to make needed changes.

Fourth, I am not trying to portray myself as a “good guy,” while dismissing the leaders of the Church as “bad guys.” This includes the one or two who for years branded me as an “apostate” Mormon historian and sought to bring about my excommunication. I’ve disagreed with LDS leaders about certain matters, but I’ve always regarded them as better men than I’ve ever been.

Fifth, I have researched and publicly examined “problem areas” in the Mormon past, but not to embarrass the current LDS church or its leaders, or to disenchant believing Mormons. I’m not a “wolf” within “the flock,” despite public relations statements to the contrary. From my essay in the Ensign seventeen years ago on “Brigham Young and the Gifts of the Spirit” to the present, I’ve written about the silences in Mormon history. Whatever was responsible for those silences, I’ve felt they were worth exploring in order to end the silence.
about significant topics and developments. There is remarkable diversity in the Mormon experience that all people can benefit from knowing about. It is not spiritually damaging to understand the highs and lows in the experience of churches and religious communities.

However, few Mormons are interested in reading their own history or in hearing academic presentations about Mormonism—except when they learn about efforts to suppress such inquiries and presentations. LDS leaders and members alike should remember that news of a book being banned in Boston was a virtual guarantee that the book would become a best-seller. The “forbidden” is one thing the apathetic cannot resist.

WHEN I think of “the pillars of my faith,” I remember childhood and youthful experiences which defined the contours of what Mormons call a “testimony.” For me, faith is not a statement; it is an experience. But faith is also a divine gift. I don’t know why I’ve had the gift of faith since childhood, while I have known earnest, young missionaries who prayed unsuccessfully for the ability to say they “know” there is a God or that they “know” Joseph Smith was a prophet. But I’m sure it is not a measure of personal righteousness or of God’s love for a person.

Among the pillars of my faith were my Mormon heritage, my personal relationship with God and intense experiences with the Divine, my conviction that God’s authority and divinely appointed leaders exist in the LDS church, my belief that God had a mission for me to perform among the Latter-day Saints, and my growing interest in Mormon history as an extension of my Mormon faith.

I was born to a Catholic father of Mexican parentage and a Mormon mother of Anglo-Swiss heritage. The Prophet Joseph Smith’s manuscript diary even mentioned her pioneer ancestor. My parents divorced when I was about five, and I learned later that their religious differences were part of the problem.

Shortly after the divorce, I contracted polio. As my family rushed me to the hospital, I asked that they first take me to Brother Jackman, an elderly high priest in our LDS ward. I wanted him to heal me with a priesthood blessing. Brother Jackman promised that I would recover fully from the disease and leave the hospital shortly. Although I was diagnosed with a fatal form of polio, I left the hospital after a few weeks of spinal taps and hot compresses.

I remember very distinctly my LDS baptism at age eight. I felt “a burning within” me of what I knew was God’s presence. For me, partaking of the sacrament was always a celebration of my relationship with God and Christ.

When I was nine, I experienced what I regarded as divine protection when I became separated from a tour group inside the Oregon Caves. As I was trying to catch up with them, all the lights went out for a demonstration of total darkness. I continued walking in the dark until I heard a quiet voice say, “Stop.” I started to take another step, when the word was repeated with greater emphasis, and in a very different voice from the tour guide’s in the distance that I was trying to regain. I didn’t take another step. When the lights came back on, I found that I had been walking off the trail, and was on the edge of a sheer drop that disappeared into further darkness even when the trail lights were on. No one in the group seemed to notice my return.

Growing up in my California ward, I frequently said in monthly testimony meetings that God’s priesthood spared me from polio, and his voice saved me from falling to my death in the caves.

Perhaps because I was such a regular testimony bearer, I grew up hearing older Mormons say that God was preparing me for important service in his Church. My grandmother (who raised me) was more direct. “I wouldn’t be surprised,” she said, “if God makes you one of his apostles.”

It would have saved me a lot of unnecessary concern and aspiration if I’d realized then how common that sentiment is in Mormon culture. As a member of the Council of the Twelve Apostles, Marion G. Romney recounted his effort to motivate a full-time missionary who didn’t want to get up early in the morning, didn’t want to tract door-to-door, didn’t want to stay on his mission. Elder Romney asked, “Isn’t there anything that you want?” The missionary replied, “Yes, Brother Romney, I want to be an apostle.”

As far back as I can remember, I knew what it was to feel the presence of God within me, and I felt close to him as my father, comforter, and strength. But I hadn’t thought much about the LDS church itself, even though I was a seventh-generation Mormon who attended Church every week. At the age of eleven, I tried reading the Book of Mormon, but found it boring and confusing. Finally, I just asked God if the Book of Mormon was true, and experienced the warm sensation within me that it was. Then with the same results, I asked if the LDS church and its prophet were true. I felt God wanted me to show my love for him by giving service to his Church and his people.

By fifteen I had read most of the standard works of LDS scripture. I began a several-year project to re-read them and make my own card-index of Mormon-oriented passages from the Old Testament, New Testament, Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and Pearl of Great Price. I loved these sacred texts and used them as my only source for every talk I gave in Church.

By age seventeen I was also reading LDS histories published by Deseret Book Company but was confronted by three different challenges that year concerning Mormon history. One of my friends gave me an anti-Mormon pamphlet about changes in the Book of Mormon text. A girlfriend also gave me Samuel W. Taylor’s Family Kingdom, a book about his apostle-father’s experience with plural marriage after the Church’s 1890 Manifesto supposedly ended it. Also, during a visit of our group of LDS friends to a nearby chapel of the Reorganized Church, the RLDS pastor gave us evidence (which I at first denied “in the name of Jesus Christ”) that Brigham Young taught that Adam was God. As a result, I read the first volume of the Journal of Discourses and found many doctrinal surprises in the
teachings of President Young and the other prophets, seers, and revelators of the early LDS church.¹⁰

In the midst of my historical inquiries that same year, LDS President David O. McKay dedicated our stake meetinghouse in California, and I witnessed his virtual reenactment of a New Testament miracle. As he and Sister McKay left the building, I followed only a step or two behind, hoping to get his autograph in my Bible. When they neared their limousine, hundreds of people were crowding around the McKays and even pushing up against them. I immediately behind me, amid the noise of this jostling crowd, I heard a woman whisper, “If I can only touch him.” She reached her arm past me and her fingertips barely touched the back of President McKay’s suit while he was pressed by people on all sides. Instantly, he straightened to his full height, turned around, looked at the woman behind me and extended his arms to her. She came forward, tears streaming down her face, able only to say: “My prophet, my prophet.” He said, “God bless you,” held her hands for a moment, kissed her forehead, and turned back to help Sister McKay enter the car. I knew nothing further about this woman or the incident, except that I had read a remarkably similar story in the Book of Luke.¹¹

(See Luke 8:45–48.)

In December of that year, Apostle LeGrand Richards came to our ward to visit his daughter and son-in-law, our bishop. I asked Elder Richards about Brigham Young’s teaching of the Adam-God doctrine. He said Brigham Young was a prophet, but that as an apostle he [LeGrand Richards] just “put on the shell” some of Brigham Young’s teachings that seemed difficult to understand. That seemed like an honest and sensible approach to me. Apostle Richards thought pride was the basic problem with those who continued to practice polygamy after the Church officially abandoned it in 1890. I knew enough of my own pride that I could accept this as a reason for what he described as spiritual error. Satisfied with the explanations of Apostle Richards, I no longer felt concern about the Manifesto or Brigham Young’s “one” Adam-God statement, both of which had bothered me for months.

At age eighteen, I started researching other “problem” areas of the Mormon past and typed up my own explanations within a faithfully factual context. I wrote Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith, who was then LDS Church Historian, about changes in the Book of Mormon text since 1830, and got back a cantankerous reply that questioned my testimony. I should have seen the handwriting on the wall then, I suppose, but I just shrugged off his reaction as a personality quirk.¹² I continued trying to understand Mormon controversies so that I could help defend the Church.

A year later, I entered the Los Angeles Temple to receive the endowment. I regarded the ceremony as both inspiring and intriguing,¹³ and I attended the temple weekly during the months before I began a full-time mission. While I was a zone leader in England, the temple president there asked me to serve as an ordinance worker whenever I could come to the temple.¹⁴ With my mission president’s permission, I went there with my companion whenever it was convenient. The London Temple was the first of several in which I officiated as an ordinance worker in ceremonies whose words I still remember and find inspiring.

Early in this mission, I had my first experience in speaking what I regard as revelatory words to another person. I was in the middle of routinely setting apart a woman for a position in a small branch of the Church. Suddenly the words “You are accepted of the Lord” came into my mind with overwhelming power. At the same instant I felt at the center of my being the burning sensation I have always known as the Spirit of God.

I’ve written in SUNSTONE of the crisis of faith I also experienced as a young missionary while I excommunicated boys who had been deceptively baptized as part of the Church’s Baseball Baptism Program.¹⁵ The one positive aspect of that experience was that for the first time in my life I could understand those who are unbelievers or atheists. Otherwise, the mission field was a spiritual feast to me.

Part way through my mission, I also experienced the fulfillment of prophetic words expressed by Apostle Ezra Taft Benson.¹⁶ In Salt Lake City, Elder Benson had set me apart along with several others for missionary service in England. In setting apart two of us, he said the words: “I set you apart as a missionary in the British Mission and any other mission to which you may be called.” We two were also the only ones of these ten or twelve missionaries who eventually served in more than one mission during our two-year service.

In returning to Brigham Young University following that mission, I had an experience of personal revelation that would be repeated at other times in similar situations. The newly appointed BYU bishop, Richard L. Anderson of the religion department, told me that all positions in the ward had already been filled, but it might be possible in a few months to call me as a substitute teacher in a class. As I left our initial meeting, the words came into my mind, “You will be a counselor in the elders quorum presidency next Sunday.” I have no idea why I would have that thought, or why (as I believe) God would bother to reveal it to me. In any case, the next Sunday I attended. Bishop Anderson asked me to be a counselor in the elders quorum.¹⁷

While in that position, I participated in the most remarkable healing experience I ever witnessed. A diabetic student in
the ward suddenly began losing his sight, and within days was blind in one eye and had almost no vision in the other. I was asked to join with the stake presidency, bishopric, and elders quorum presidency in giving the young man a blessing before he left campus. When I entered the room where the others were already assembled, I was overwhelmed by the burning of the Spirit within me. In the priesthood administration, Stake President Harold Goodman promised the young man he would regain his sight and return the next semester to study at BYU. Both promises were fulfilled.

A few months later, I had the unusual experience of a non-Mormon and non-Christian asking me for a Mormon priesthood blessing. A Muslim graduate student at BYU fell on the ice, hit his head, and began experiencing what seemed to be symptoms of brain concussion. I offered to take him to the hospital, but he replied, “No, I want you to give me a blessing to heal me, like those of your religion can receive.” This request startled me, but I thought to myself: “Why not?” I regarded his faith as more important than LDS procedures, so I closed my priesthood administration to him in the name of Allah, rather than Jesus Christ. I checked on him half an hour later, and found that he had stopped vomiting and was free of head pain. This Muslim had no further difficulty from his head injury, and I attributed that to his faith in the God of Abraham.

During my first semester back at Brigham Young University, a faithful Mormon student also shook my confidence in traditional Mormon history. One afternoon Stephen E. Robinson (a religiously devout freshman) confronted me in the BYU dorm with the accusation that his religion professor had willfully lied to the class that morning by claiming that anyone who married in polygamy after the Manifesto was an adulterer. “My grandfather was a mission president who married two plural wives in Salt Lake City ten years after the Manifesto,” he said and added that his family had a recommend (signed by LDS President Joseph F. Smith) for one of the marriages.

I was deeply disturbed by what Steve Robinson told me about his grandfather’s post-Manifesto polygamous marriages. This did not fit the explanation that Apostle Richards had given me as a teenager, and it contradicted traditional histories by B. H. Roberts and Joseph Fielding Smith. At first I couldn’t believe it, and asked for his grandfather’s name to check out the story. The next weekend I took the bus to the LDS Genealogical Society, where I found that the man married two plural wives in 1901, and remained mission president for almost twenty years, during which time he fathered children by all his wives.66

This BYU student sent me on a quest to understand post-Manifesto polygamy and every other historical claim about the LDS church made by anti-Mormons. In the process, I found that traditional Mormon historians were denying the existence of things (or remaining silent about events) that anti-Mormons could demonstrate from Mormon sources. Among these were Brigham Young’s Adam-God teachings for thirty years, not just in a brief reference of one sermon.69 I felt that the average Mormon was vulnerable to this contrast between historical evidence and official LDS history. I was determined to get to the bottom of every historical claim made by anti-Mormons and do what traditional historians had not been doing—acknowledge all the evidence and still come up with an explanation that was both honest and reassuring for believing Mormons.

During my next three years as a BYU undergraduate, I was a teaching assistant for Book of Mormon classes in the religion department, was a temple ordinance worker, and served as a guide at Salt Lake Temple Square.69 Each was a great experience of service. All during this time I was also reading anti-Mormon publications that used Mormon history as a weapon, and I checked every quote and citation for accuracy and context. I prayed for the Lord to guide me by his Spirit to learn the truth of these matters and to know how to present them in a faithful way.

While in the military during 1970, I had my first run-in with a Church officer about Mormon history. At the suggestion of the full-time missionaries in Munich, I agreed to give them a presentation about the history of plural marriage from Joseph Smith to post-Manifesto polygamy. A few days later, the mission president invited me to his office and said that it wasn’t always good to tell the truth about Church history. President Orville Gunther said: “On more than one occasion I’ve met with members of the Utah legislature, and have showed them a letter from the First Presidency indicating a wish that the legislature vote a particular way on certain bills.” He explained that he had “Church authorization” to do this, but showed such letters only to men he knew were loyal to the Church and would know how to vote after seeing a letter of this kind.

“What I have told you is true,” President Gunther said, “but if you told anyone else I said this to you, I’d deny I ever told you such a ridiculous story, and I’d deny it ever happened.”21 Up until this point, I had understood his line of argument about not volunteering information about Mormon history to investigators or new members that could injure their faith, but I was amazed that he used this story as an illustration.22 Nevertheless, this mission president’s advice had its impact on me. I decided that I would not impose my understanding of Mormon history on Church members. In all the years afterward, I did not speak about Mormon history in sermons or Sunday School lessons unless the ward bishop specifically asked me to. It was a decade before I would even talk about
Mormon history during firesides at private homes, and again only when asked to do so by the host. Otherwise, my texts and topics came from the scriptures alone.

During my three-year service in the U.S. military, I also made the transition from planning on a career in English literature to wanting to be a professionally trained historian of the Mormon past. While in the military, I read and prepared my own indexes of the six-volume *Comprehensive History of the Church*, the twenty-six volume *Journal of Discourses*, and also the four published volumes of testimony in the U.S. Senate's investigation from 1904 to 1907 of the LDS church and post-Manifesto polygamy. My former bishop, Richard L. Anderson, had arranged for BYU's library to send these volumes to me in Germany. In our frequent correspondence of 1969-70, Professor Anderson wrote that his research in early Mormonism did not have any controversies like my research in post-Manifesto polygamy. Years later, I think we both saw the irony, when I published *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View.*

I prayed almost daily for God to give me hidden knowledge of Mormonism when I got out of the military. I specifically prayed for access to the documents of the LDS church that would give understanding of the internal operations of the Mormon hierarchy, and particularly about the activities of the general authorities regarding polygamy. Amazingly, that's what happened when I started graduate study in history.

In 1971, I began researching manuscripts of the LDS Archives. A month after my return to Salt Lake City from Germany to begin studying history at the University of Utah, my graduate adviser, Davis Bitton, employed me to research hundreds of diaries in the LDS Church Historian's Office. As newly appointed Church Historian, Apostle Howard W. Hunter had opened up the LDS Archives to researchers, and I sat next to non-Mormons who were examining files of the First Presidency. I was sure that God was providing the way for me to understand the "deep things" of the Mormon past, and that this was somehow part of my mission to his Church. During this time, I was also a Sunday School teacher, a temple worker, and a guide on Temple Square.

From 1972 onward, Leonard Arrington (then the official Church Historian) encouraged me to publish Mormon history and become a professional. My acceptance to Yale University in 1973 was beyond any of my youthful dreams.

However, that year I wanted to be free of an aspiration that had dogged me since childhood. At the April 1973 general priesthood meeting, I laughed spontaneously at President Romney's story about the lazy missionary who wanted to be an apostle, but I was embarrassed at how closely it applied to me. I thought if anything or anyone could release me from my oppressive sense of mission, it would be for the president of the Council of the Twelve to solemnly tell me that I was completely wrong to think of becoming a Mormon apostle.

A couple of months later, I managed to get an appointment with Spencer W. Kimball. I explained to him my lifelong delusion of becoming an apostle, how the words and blessings of others had encouraged it, and how I felt I could not be free of this obsession until he simply told me that I was wrong.

President Kimball asked if I would like to have a blessing. As he laid his hands upon my head, I expected him to give me the comfort and strength to overcome my aspirations for Church office. Instead, Spencer W. Kimball promised me that one day God would call me as an apostle. After the blessing, President Kimball told me not to work for the office or try "to curry favor" with Church leaders, but just to live as I felt the Lord desired for me. There was no way I could logically explain that experience, then or now. Within two months, I went to Yale, where I also served as a bishopric counselor and LDS institute teacher. In 1976, I wrote a Ph.D. dissertation about the Mormon hierarchy.

Years later, I spent four Saturdays in a row with Spencer W. Kimball and his wife Camilla in their home, while I read his personal diaries and took notes. I never reminded him of the blessing he had given me six months before he became Church president. After asking about my family background, he said: "I married a Mexican, too. Sister Kimball was born in the [Mormon] colonies there." He always introduced me to others as "my Mexican"--the same words President Kimball whispered to me as he repeatedly kissed me the last time we were together before he was physically incapacitated.

Shortly after G. Homer Durham's appointment as managing director of the LDS Historical Department in 1977, I also developed a curious working relationship with this general authority. He began restricting and impeding research for others in LDS Archives almost immediately, and yet he seemed to respect my dogged determination to keep asking for sensitive materials. Once as I sat waiting to see the Church Archivist with some request slips in my hand for restricted documents, Elder Durham walked by, smiled and gave me the clenched-fist salute of the sixties radicals. I wrote him a twelve-page, single-spaced memo summarizing my knowledge of post-Manifesto polygamy and my intention to one day publish that information. At the same time I sent similar letters to the First Presidency, and later explained my knowledge of post-Manifesto polygamy during a private meeting with Counselor Gordon B. Hinckley in his home. President Hinckley told me "It is up to you," when I asked whether I should publish my
findings. Nevertheless, for six years after my letter to Elder Durham and our own conversation about it, he continued to authorize me to research restricted documents regarding polygamy. Just days before his death, Elder Durham gave me access again to First Presidency files, which I had explained were necessary to finalize a Dialogue article on post-Manifesto polygamy. Mike Quinn has helped us explain other problem areas." Elder Durham told the young Church Archivist, Glenn Rowe, "I hope he can help us here, because this is a tough one." The article I published was simply a long version of what I had written Elder Durham six years earlier.

Whether by design or as one of life's little jokes, Apostle Boyd K. Packer was the general authority who interviewed me for joining BYU's history department. He lectured me for forty-five minutes, the highlights of which were these statements: "I have a hard time with historians," Elder Packer said, "because they idealize the truth. The truth is not uplifting; it destroys.... Historians should tell only that part of the truth that is inspiring and uplifting." I spoke of balance, perspective, context. He just shook his head, and said, "You'll learn," I did.

And, as the saying goes, "The rest is history."

13. Important in my own preparation for a positive experience in receiving the LDS endowment was a 1941 talk by David O. McKay, "The Temple Ceremony," transcript copies in Special Collections, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University; in Special Collections, J. Williard Marriott Library, University of Utah; and in Joseph C. Muren, ed., The Temple and Its Significance (Ogden, Utah: by the author, 1973).

14. The temple president was George Eugene England Sr., whose son Eugene cofounded Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought six months after I returned to BYU from my missionary-temple service in Britain. The excitement on campus by LDS liberals, moderates, and conservatives at the news of Dialogue's establishment in 1966 was repeated at the appointment of professional historian Leonard J. Arrington as official Church Historian in 1972, and at Sunstone's first Mormon Theological Symposium in 1979. Subsequent criticism by LDS leaders, polarization, intimidation of subscribers and attenders, punishment of the outspoken, and the retreat of moderates have given a melancholy, Camelot-like quality to those earlier events.


17. Before the next Sunday's service, I accepted an invitation to stay over the weekend with relatives in Salt Lake Valley. As I attended their ward's services, I was convinced that the elder's quorum of my BYU ward was being organized without me that day. I'm not sure if I was trying to test the inward impression by not showing up on the Sunday I was supposed to go. In any event, two Sundays after my initial meeting with Bishop Anderson, I attended his ward and received the calling as second counselor in the elder's quorum.


20. I assisted Daniel H. Ludlow, an original member of the 1960s Church Correlation Committee, who became the chief editor of the 1992 Encyclopedia of Mormonism. One of my responsibilities from 1965 to 1968 was to teach weekly discussion groups for students in Professor Ludlow's large-enrollment classes on the Book of Mormon. I owe my opportunity for several years of service as a Salt Lake Temple Square guide to two people: the first, Marion D. Hanks, who recommended me to the second, Viola Clawson, then director of the Temple Square Museum–Visitor Center and tour guides. In my first meeting with her in 1966, Sister Clawson explained that there was a long waiting list of returned missionaries, former mission presidents, and others for the next vacancy as a Temple Square guide, yet she assigned me that day as a guide.

21. According to Wayne Stout (History of Utah, 3 vols. [Salt Lake City: by the author, 1967–1971], 3: 523, 569, 608), Orville Gunther was a Republican member of the Utah House, representing Utah County from 1953 to 1957. But I experienced a related irony with Orville Gunther while he was president of the Provo Temple (1976–1980). While I was a member of the high council of the Salt Lake Endowment Stake, our stake presidency, high council, bishoprics and their wives attended an endowment session in Provo, after which President Gunther gave our group a special lecture, by prior arrangement. His previously unreported topic was a detailed presentation of the differences between the current endowment ceremony and the Nauvoo Temple ceremony of 1845–1846, which he said he had read in the archival vault of the Salt Lake Temple. This material was that I already knew from other sources, but I learned afterward that temple president Gunther's sudden dose of historical truth had "shaken" the testimonies of several of our stake's leaders and their wives. For historical perspective, see David John Buerger, "The Development of the Mormon Temple and Priestly Ceremonies," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 20 (winter 1987): 33–76; Heber C. Kimball diary (kept by William Clayton), 11 December 1845 to 7 January 1846, in George D. Smith, ed., An Intimate Chronicle: The Journals of William Clayton (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, in association with Smith Research Associates, 1991), 204–38; and David John Buerger, The Mysteries of Godliness: A History of Mormon Temple Worship (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1994).


23. Quinn, Early Mormonism and the Magic World View. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987). For my other work contributing to Davis Bitton, Guide to Mormon Diaries and Autobiographies (Provo, Utah: Brigham Young University Press, 1977), which sometimes identified me by name as the researcher of the diary-abstracts for general authorities like Heber J. Grant and of diary-minutes of the First Presidency.


a half-tuition fellowship because of an hour-long telephone conversation between Leonard Arrington and the dean of Yale's graduate school.


26. D. Michael Quinn to G. Homer Durham on 17 January 1979; to Spencer W Kimball on 9 March, 30 March 1979; to First Presidency on 19 June 1979, 20 May 1980; in-person conversation with Gordon B. Hinckley on Sunday, 22 November 1981, with letters to him on 17 February, 15 April, and 2 June 1982, the last in response to a telephone conversation in which President Hinckley told me that "it is up to you" to decide whether to publish an article about post-Manifesto polygamy. I included copies of all the above correspondence and summaries of my conversations with President Hinckley in my letter to Apostle Dallin H. Oaks on 10 May 1985. Although his secretary confirmed by telephone a month later that Elder Oaks had received my letter with its enclosures, I have been informed since then that Dallin H. Oaks has told various people that he allegedl misguided G. Homer Durham, the staff of LDS Archives, and the First Presidency about my research interests in post-Manifesto polygamy.

For the record: Not only did Elder Durham and the First Presidency know of my research into post-Manifesto polygamy as of 1979, but staff members in the LDS Archives Research Room had known of my research interests for years and were the ones who suggested to Elder Durham that I write him this memo. In January 1983, I specifically explained to official Church Archivist Glenn N. Rowe that I was requesting access to First Presidency files at LDS Archives because I intended to use them to finalize an upcoming article about post-Manifesto polygamy in Dialogue (which I identified by name in my verbal request). Rowe relayed that information to G. Homer Durham, who signed the request slips for me to examine those First Presidency files for that purpose. On that occasion, Elder Durham also personally initialed the request slips to allow me to re-examine and take more complete notes from the records of polygamous marriages performed in the St. George Temple from 1877 to 1888, in the Logan Temple from 1884 to 1903, and in the Manti Temple from 1888 to 1889. Rowe's predecessor as archivist, Donald T. Schmidt, had also authorized me to examine (for my own research) and take notes from all polygamous sealing records in his custody as he repossessed them in the LDS Archives vault. Church Archives Schmidt also gave me access to records specifically identified as involving post-Manifesto polygamous marriages. In July 1973, I prepared my first memo about post-Manifesto polygamy; at the request of Church Historian Leonard J. Arrington, who also knew that I was researching the role of the general authorities in post-Manifesto polygamy, and, as indicated earlier in this presentation, before I began independent research at LDS Archives in 1974, I had informed BYU religion professor Richard L. Anderson that I was conducting extensive research about post-Manifesto polygamy. During the next decade, Anderson occasionally asked me questions about polygamy when we happened to meet at Church Archives. By my own choice, during fifteen years of research at LDS Archives, I informed appropriate personnel of the LDS Archives, as well as the First Presidency, about my research into sensitive and controversial matters of Mormon history.

There is no merit or foundation in fact to the self-serving claim by certain individuals that I abused my privileges at LDS Archives or concealed the controversial nature of my research or my intentions to publish the findings of my research. In fact, I was publishing my controversial findings while I continued research at LDS Archives. I gave copies of my 1973 master's thesis and 1976 Ph.D. dissertation to the Historical Department of the Church (HDC). Before I joined the BD faculty that year, one HDC employee informed me that he had delivered photocopies of my dissertation to the offices of Apostles Ezra Taft Benson, Mark E. Petersen, and Boyd K. Packer. From 1978 until I resigned from BD, I sent copies of every one of my "controversial" and "sensitive" publications to the Church Library of the Historical Department. In 1977, dean of BYU's college of social sciences, Martin B. Hickman, informed me that the First Presidency was aware of the sources, findings, and interpretations of my Yale dissertation, and had expressed no criticism. Late in 1978, I published an article on the temple prayer circle (which article quoted sensitive documents I had researched at LDS archives), and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley mentioned this article to me as we talked together on the stand of the Federal Heights Ward during a sacrament meeting where he presided and I spoke to the congregation as stake high councilor. In 1980, I published an article on the theocratic Council of Fifty (which article quoted from the minutes of the Fifty, the minutes of the Quorum of Twelve Apostles, as well as other sensitive and restricted documents), and I sent a copy of that article to Francis M. Gibbons, secretary to the First Presidency. His letter of acknowledgement indicated he had read my article, and he expressed cautious praise for my research. If certain individuals continue to circulate the claims that I allegedly misled the LDS Archives and allegedly concealed the nature of my research there, they do so in willful disregard of the facts to the contrary.

27. Statement to me by Glenn N. Rowe, 8 January 1985. Contrast with the reaction of other general authorities to this April 1985 polygamy article which I had summarized in its pre-publication form for Elder Durham in 1979. See Quinn, "On Being a Mormon Historian (And Its Aftermath)," 91-92.


RESEARCH REQUEST

Motherhood anthology, With Child, to be published by Signature books, is seeking further submissions. Poetry, narratives, fiction, essays, and visual art dealing with the experience of motherhood welcome. The deadline is 15 December. Please send submissions to: Marni Asplund-Campbell

6193 NE Radford Dr.

Seattle, WA 98115
The stories we claim as a society are a powerful force in creating the metaphors that help us construct our lives. Considering our social conditions, it seems a moral imperative that those characters who are potentially subject to violence should be imagined wholly in our stories.

THE MORAL IMAGINATION

By Susan Elizabeth Howe

THOUGH IT MAY SEEM STRANGE, I AM GOING to begin this address to the Association for Mormon Letters by referring to the Holocaust. What is the possible relevance of that European horror of the 1930s and ‘40s to the practice of literature in contemporary Mormon culture? Or even to Mormon life? It is all too easy, considering our distance in time and space from World War II Europe, to deny any similarity between our late-twentieth-century-Wasatch-Front-Mormon selves and either the Jewish victims of the Holocaust, the Nazis and other Europeans who carried it out, or the thousands of respectable citizens who made it possible by not naming it evil and standing against it.

And yet our own religion should remind us that we are not so different; the Jews, Germans, Nazis, French, Italians, and Dutch are, indeed, our brothers and sisters. Only by denying this reality can we separate ourselves from them. We are like them in our bodies and in our spirits. What they have suffered, it is plausible that we might suffer; what they have done, it is plausible that we might do. Given the historical fact of the Holocaust, we human beings who have not experienced such atrocities owe it to those who have to learn something from their torture and destruction. It behooves us to consider any ways in which our cultural conditions might replicate those that enabled a highly educated Christian society to deliberately kill millions of people with so little sense of responsibility or remorse. And then we must fight those tendencies in ourselves and our culture.

For example, I think we should have learned from the Nazis that it is morally wrong to incite prejudice and persecution by labeling people as bad or inferior not on the basis of anything they’ve done but merely because of their membership in a certain group. Such actions justify otherwise decent people in degrading and damaging individuals without ever actually seeing or knowing them; it is almost impossible to brutalize someone you recognize as a human being with qualities of goodness, dignity, and worth. It is wrong to so label any group of people—Jews, Native Americans, Hispanics, Blacks, rednecks, housewives, the homeless, conservative Mormons, liberal Mormons, gays, lesbians, feminists, or intellectuals.

And it seems to me a serious cultural weakness and absolute anathema to the gospel of Jesus Christ that so many Mormons, like so many 1930s Germans, are willing to turn over their powers of moral reasoning to their leaders. I cringe every time I hear someone say, “I’m so grateful that the general authorities have spoken on that matter and now I can just do what they say” Isn’t the lack of agency—choice and responsibility for choice—the reason that Satan’s plan would not work in developing in us godlike capacities for learning principles of truth? And isn’t that the reason Satan’s plan was rejected? God has said, I will give unto the children of men line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little and there a little; and blessed are those who hearken unto my precepts, and lend an ear unto my counsel, for they shall learn wisdom; for unto him that receiveth I will give more; and from them that shall say, We have enough, from them shall be taken away even that which they have. (2 Ne. 28:30.)

If we let someone else think for us, aren’t we saying, in effect, “I’ll use someone else’s wisdom; personally don’t want any more”? Doesn’t the above scripture make clear that by abdicating personal responsibility for moral choice, one begins to lose the wisdom he or she already has? Are we not always responsible for working with the principles of truth presented to us by our leaders, for wrestling with them until we make them our own? It seems to me that one can only become godlike by acquiring the attributes of God, and one of those attributes is the ability to distinguish for oneself between good and evil. In a society in which the responsibility for individual moral choice is emphasized and valued, it is far less likely that wholesale evil will be carried out by a large number of people who excuse themselves for their actions or their complicity by claiming that it is a greater good to follow a leader than to refuse to destroy human life.

SUSAN ELIZABETH HOWE is a poet and writer living in Provo, Utah. A version of this paper was presented as the presidential address at the 1995 annual meeting of the Association for Mormon Letters.
Some of our most gifted writers
claim a moral purpose in using violence,
but some naive readers who share
some of the assumptions of the
brutal characters may use the text to
justify their own brutality.

A few years ago Howard Ziff reviewed two books that asked how it was possible that “American reaction to the Holocaust was so slow and so ineffective.” “Why was there no universal outrage?” Ziff asks. “Why was an heroic rescue effort not mounted? Why were the Jews abandoned?” Ziff claims that both books he reviewed offer, in one way or another, the same answer:

...the abandonment of the Jews was a failure of the moral imagination. It was a failure to act, of course, but...what documents tell by their very failure to tell, is the lack of a public rhetoric to comprehend, in the non-metaphorical sense of the word, what was happening... For the larger, gentile community,... the picture [the books paint] is not one of immobilized horror, but more often of dumb incomprehension, again in the literal sense, an inability to hold the Holocaust steadily in mind and imagination.2

Ziff says that this failure is not a matter of ignorance but “of an imaginative poverty that carries with it a moral impoverishment.” Those individuals in the American press and the United States State Department who received information about the atrocities of the concentration camps, by reason of “their education, cultural background, religious sensibilities, social status, in short, their life worlds,” did not have the moral imagination to conceive of those who were being destroyed as actual human beings, like themselves, with tastes and feelings and joys and aversions. With whole, authentic lives.

The notion of a moral imagination intrigues me. How might one define a moral imagination, and how might the concept be useful in the development of Mormon literature?

Ziff’s review suggests that a moral imagination is the mental and spiritual capacity to conceive of those outside one’s own group as fully human and therefore deserving of full human rights and identity. In scriptural terms, a moral imagination might be the capacity to love one’s neighbor as oneself. I think that there may be many other ways to consider a moral imagination that might also lead writers to better work, but right now I would like to discuss the topic as a corrective for an alarming trend I see in some contemporary American and Mormon literature.

I have been particularly distressed over the past few years at the brutality and violence in the work of some of our most gifted writers, including David Veloz, who wrote the screenplay of Natural Born Killers; Neal Labute, whose plays have been produced in Utah and the Midwest (and published in this issue of SUNSTONE); and Brian Evenson, author of Allmann’s Tongue. But in criticizing the writing of these individuals, I am not questioning their character; in fact, I know two of these three individuals and have found them to be kind, generous, highly moral men and faithful Latter-day Saints. Furthermore, I find it ill-advised, if not morally repugnant, to attempt to force a writer to change his subject matter by threatening, for example, his employment. A writer can only write what is imaginatively alive for him, and only the writer can determine that. Attempting to censor a writer not only takes away his moral agency; it also gives the writer no room to maneuver and to change. Such an action also destroys the processes of discourse that bring about real learning and should always be allowed to operate in a genuine academic setting. These authors claim a moral purpose in using such violence; after all, readers learn in recoil as well as in identification. They trust the morality of their readers; they expect the readers to bring to their engagement with the text the moral response that is excluded from the work, and rather than to copy the text’s brutality, to back away from it.

I grant these writers their intended moral purpose. If their work is read by an audience trained to recognize irony and to look below the surface for meaning, the violence the work presents will be perceived as repugnant, and the audience will reject it. But a text is a cultural artifact as well as an aesthetic construct. As a text enters a culture, it may be appropriated by naive readers who share some of the assumptions of the brutal characters and use the text to justify their own brutality. Deconstruction teaches us that a text says several things at the same time. So even as a text presents a character and demon-
strates to the reader that that character is depraved and repugnant, it also creates a fictional world that many readers see as corresponding to the conditions of the real world. If, in that fictional world, the only choices are to be a victim or a victimizer, most readers would rather be the aggressor. I found myself adopting this attitude as I read Brian Evenson's short story "The Munich Window." As I "entered the story, I wanted to kill the narrator, a truly evil man who had sexually abused his daughter when she was a child and who, in the course of the story, murders the daughter's psychiatrist—also a woman—and brings about the daughter's death in the same way he had caused his wife to jump from a window with their second child eighteen years earlier. I wonder if my reading experience was morally useful to me: I wanted to see enacted on this man the violence he enacted on the other characters. Only by intellectualizing my actual reading experience did I distance myself sufficiently from the story to evaluate the author's intention in writing it. And I am trained, at least to some degree, in sophisticated reading theories. As naive readers are confronted by such material, they often see it as representative of the conditions of the real world and therefore as justification for their own violence. And unfortunately, the majority of readers, it seems to me, are naive.

Furthermore, in many of these stories, dramas, and screenplays, the characters who are brutalized are women, children, minorities, gays—the very individuals who in real life are most at risk in our violent society. These characters are seldom, if ever, centered in the texts. Because the writers have not imagined these characters fully, readers don't know them and don't identify with them. The characters finally don't matter; in consequence, their suffering doesn't matter either. Such literature promotes the conditions of imaginative poverty that kept Americans from comprehending the experiences of the Jews in the concentration camps, that kept the Americans from acting to stop the atrocities. Considering the social conditions in which we live, it seems a moral imperative that those characters who are actually, in their real lives, potentially subject to violence should be imagined wholly in our texts.

Once in a fit of anger, I wrote a poem that describes what I mean. It is an offensive poem, for which I apologize:

TO THE VIOLENT LITERATI

This ten-year-old on the swing
has her own problems—a bully
ripped the tongue from her soccer shoe.
Leave her alone. Don't claim her
for your story where she winds up
knifed in the park, her tongue cut out
because a teen-aged boy didn't like her talk.

This mother at the breadboard, cutting
meat for stew while her husband watches
the Super Bowl, knows she is dumpy,
dull, and couldn't make a decent
buck. Why do you need to rip her

from her home, where she'll probably
get beaten anyway, and put her in the path
of your crazed psychotic, so he can
demonstrate his dementia in the literary plot?

If you must have a child to die brutally,
bones broken, freezing at the bottom
of a well, let him be your own.
Make the pattern of the sleepers
you put him in each night,
then foul them with excrement and mud;
leave wisps of his hair—its very color—
on the limb they used to beat him,
stiff in tufts with scalp and blood.

Rape your own lover, your wife.
If she agrees, go to bed with her,
write the smell of her skin,
the shape of belly, breasts,
then gouge the eyes from her head
and let her write while you read her
this story of herself.

Or better yet, if you must have victims,
sacrifice yourself. Yes you,
young professor, sure of your philosophic
posture and academic rights;
let the natural born killers find you
at the convenience store, put the barrel
of the real shotgun in your mouth
and spatter your brains across the Coke cups.

Or later in your career—university provost
now—advancement based on awards
for your astonishing brutality
(fictional, of course)—have the terrorists
kidnap you from your plush,
high office, torture you in detail
till the institution sends the cash,
then castrate you anyway
and let you bleed to death.

Write your own torture often
enough—the rapist's fist, the knife
slicing your face—and you might feel
what it is always to walk
through the world in a body
that looks like the bodies of victims.

I wouldn't submit this poem to be published (as a poem), but
it was instructive for me to write it. Although it makes its
point, it perpetuates the very violence I am protesting. It shows
no moral imagination but responds to a perceived brutality in
literature (to women and children) by returning—and thus
perpetuating—that brutality on the authors of that violence.
Let it stand for the very type of literature I think we need to
Would it not be more challenging
to create images of people responding to conflict
without becoming victims or resorting
to violence? The moral imperative of our time
is to transform our violence into
another method of solving conflict.

Another reason I protest violent literature is that we already have so many examples of extreme violence in our actual lives. Locally, we have the eighteen-year-old woman who was recently kidnapped in Salt Lake City, held at gunpoint, and raped by six young men. We have the kid who dressed up like the Woody Harrelson character in *Natural Born Killers* and murdered his step-mother and his sister. We have death over a disagreement at a pay phone. We have drive-by shootings at the Delta Center and in many Salt Lake neighborhoods. We have gangs. On the national scene, we have the stabbings of Nicole Brown Simpson and Ronald Goldman. We have Ted Bundy and Jeffrey Dahmer. A man who opened fire on the New York subway, and another who shot up the family planning and abortion clinics in Boston. The bombing of the World Trade Center. And then, internationally, we have Chechnya, Sarajevo, the West Bank, Somalia, Iraq, and Kuwait. In 1993, Maxine Hong Kingston wrote, "At this moment, we human beings are fighting 36 wars, which I can't keep up with, name, be informed about, let alone stop."6

Images of this actual violence come into our homes daily, thanks to the miracle of television. And then we have television entertainment itself. An American child from a middle-class home, by the time he or she is eighteen, will have watched 200,000 acts of violence on television. Violence is redundant. To create violence in literature, when there is so much of it in our lives, is no a stretch of imagination. It is a very easy choice, not worthy of the best Mormon minds writing in the last days of the twentieth century. I think the extremely gifted individuals who are writing such literature could make far more important contributions.

The moral, spiritual, and intellectual imperative of our time and generation is to transform our violence into some other method of solving conflict. Such a dramatic change can come about only from a general shift in the thinking of a whole people. The stories we claim as a society are a powerful, even an unconscious, force in creating the metaphors that help us construct our lives. Would it not be a more challenging and essential project to create artistic images of people responding to conflict without either becoming victims or resorting to the violence that makes others victims? Do we have the moral imagination even to conceive of such possibilities in works of literature?

CHRIST is the best example I know of someone whose stories make use of a moral imagination. Take the parable of the Good Samaritan, for example (Luke 10:25-37). The occasion is this: a lawyer, trying to trap Christ, asks what he should do to inherit eternal life. Christ answers with a question—what is written in the law? What do you think? The man responds well—to love God with all one's heart, soul, and strength, and to love one's neighbor as oneself—and Christ praises his answer. Then the lawyer asks, "Who is my neighbor?" Christ answers with this story, which I have rewritten into our own cultural situation so that we will hear it:

A certain man traveling from Salt Lake to Lehi on Redwood Road, when his car broke down in the middle of the night, ran into a gang, who stripped him, shot him in the neck, and ran off, leaving him half dead.

And by chance, a certain stake president came down the road, and when he saw the injured man in the headlights, moved quickly into the inside lane of traffic and passed by.

And likewise a bishop came walking down the sidewalk, looked at the victim, then quickly crossed to the other side of the street and walked past.

But a certain Native American, Catholic by religion, as he drove by, passed the wounded man, and when he saw him, he had compassion on him, and went to him, administered what first aid he could, then got him quickly into his car, drove him to the emergency room, and took care of him.

And before the Native American left, he got out his checkbook, paid the emergency room bills, and said...
to the accounting department, "Take care of him. If he doesn't have insurance, I'll be responsible for the bill."

Which of these three do you think was the neighbor of the man who was attacked by the gang? The startling, disruptive power of this story is much clearer when the characters are contemporary. And don't you see Christ's moral imagination at work? His way of stimulating the/# moral imagination of his audience? The story begins with an act of violence, but its focus is on the response of several individuals to that violence. Each person who comes upon the victim is presented with the moral choice of either helping or ignoring the wounded man. In the original parable, Christ broke down cultural assumptions that led the Jews to judge a priest or a Levite or a Samaritan by his social or ecclesiastical position rather than by his actions. Christ also created responsibility in his audience—the lawyer who asked "Who is my neighbor?"—by leaving the attorney to figure out for himself that his neighbor is anyone who comes before him with a need.

When we read this parable from the context of our own society, it also becomes clear why Christ so disturbed the Jewish leaders. To use as characters a priest and a Levite (or a stake president and a bishop) and then to place them in a moral dilemma in which they fail to act with courage and love is to acknowledge that in real life such, leaders might similarly fail, and that no one should consider himself above sin, above the need for repentance.

A moral imagination is an intriguing personal capacity to try to develop and use in the writing of literature. A moral imagination would not deny life's genuine difficulties and perplexities or the actual conditions of violence in our world. The artist would certainly include those realities in his work. But a moral imagination should spur an author to get beyond the limited number of responses to those difficulties offered by her conscious mind, a mind that has been limited by her culture. My moral imagination should tell me, "Come on, Susan, engage. There are many more possibilities for presenting and then dealing with a particular conflict than the usual ones. Use your language. Use your imagination."

Another of Christ's imaginative, incredible teachings in the Sermon on the Mount addresses the problems of violence:

Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whatsoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.

And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also.

And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain.

Give to him that asketh thee, and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away. (Matt. 5:38-42.)

All of these directions offer imaginative ways to respond to being hurt without returning violence. And all of Christ's suggested responses are moral, creative acts. To take an eye in restitution for an eye that has been lost is not a creative act; it destroys another eye. Christ recommends, instead of this course, to "resist not evil," to turn away from evil, and instead of trying to destroy what is evil, to act in creating what is good. By the ancient Roman law under which the Jews lived, any Roman citizen could compel a Jew to give up his coat or to accompany him for one mile. Those were not creative acts; they were involuntary servitude. But to see the Roman citizen as a human being, and to give him one's cloak as well as one's coat, or to offer to accompany him a second mile, was to offer a voluntary act of goodness, an individual creative gift. Christ asks us to create rather than to destroy, to do good rather than to do evil. That is the only way to stop one violent act from becoming a cycle of revenge, the kinds of cycles we see being carried out all over the world in incidents between nations, ethnic groups, gangs, and even religious communities.

It requires a considerable imagination to return good for evil. When the vet gives my dog a shot, my dog always tries to bite the vet. Unfortunately, human beings respond the same way. When someone hurts us, our immediate reaction is to hurt back or to direct our anger at those we can hurt. Violence begets violence; abuse begets abuse. Would it not be useful to have powerful stories to teach us other possibilities?

It seems an impossible ideal to suggest that our imaginations might create stories to help us transform our tendency to violence into something else. But in every religious culture that I know of, there are stories of salvation as well as stories of destruction. I feel that imagination may be, though it is not necessarily, connected to the power of God. My experience of imagination is in every way connected with my understanding of the processes of creation. Like the Gods, we have the possibility to bring into being, from unorganized matter, that which did not exist before. And these creations can be beautiful, can expand our understanding of our lives, can teach us what we do not know.

NOTES


2. Ziff, 98.

3. Ziff, 98.


REPENTANCE

Put on this mask and pray for grace
That what you wear become a face.

—WAYNE JORGENSEN
A disturbing play about Mormon men, gender relations, and homophobia.

BASH
A REMEMBRANCE OF HATRED AND LONGING

By Neil LaBute

AUTHOR'S NOTE

I WISH THIS PLAY WEREN'T TRUE. I WISH I COULD say that Theatre is only "pretend" and nothing bad can happen to us if we simply try harder. It would be wonderful to settle your nerves and soothe you with a calming, "Don't worry, it can't happen here..." and be done with it. But I can't. When I wrote Bash while a graduate student at Brigham Young University, its events were simply generated by a curiosity to explore "What if?" (as most playwrights do) in the context of horrific events precipitated by (and not "on") members of the Church visiting New York City. Nothing more. Since that time, however, a story of shocking similarity was brought to my attention by a young returned missionary; his companion, in a fit of guilt, had revealed that an event of this magnitude existed in his own past, never before spoken of. And so it goes—an imitating life, life imitating an, in an endless cyclical pattern. And where there is one story...

Bash is not meant to be indicative of the typical LDS lifestyle, but neither does it suggest that these events couldn't happen. Moreover, our Mormon authors must continue to examine their society, holding themselves and those around them up to the brightness of scrutiny, if we are to flourish and grow as a people. This doesn't mean, however, that we always want to believe what they discover, or even see it acted out in the "harmless" confines of the theatre. Indeed, a professor at BYU, while allowing the play to be performed, asked me privately if I couldn't just make the three youths "Catholic boys instead." Hate crimes come in all shapes and sizes...

Drama has always examined the particular to meditate on the general. Medea and Hamlet are specific to their tales, but we continue to hold modern human behavior up to their actions as litmus tests of our own times. Arthur Miller's Willy Loman resonates to theatre patrons in mainland China today as strongly as he did nearly fifty years ago to Broadway's elite. There are lessons to be learned in that strange place called a theatre, where we go to do that thing that is foreign to so much of our daily life: pay money to gather with (mostly) strangers and sit in the dark listening to people lie to us, that is, to "pretend" they are someone or something they aren't while telling us a story that, even if based on "real events," is dramatically slanted. And yet this ritual thrills us, moves us and, I hope, teaches us. I honestly believe it is and always will be the duty of playwrights not to answer questions, but to ask them. Ask them loudly and clearly, over and over again, even when they've been raised a dozen times before. Audiences may not want to hear that, but I'm afraid it's the truth.

In a review of Bash in the Chicago Reader, Josefa Smith (I kid you not!) stated, "The scariest part of LaBute's indictment is that no one is innocent." I thank her for those warm words, but not for their praise; I thank her because she's dead-on right.
This play has been presented at Brigham Young University, the University of Utah, Purdue University, and in Los Angeles and London, as well as at Sunstone symposiums in Salt Lake City and Chicago. Bush is the first installment in a trilogy of later-day plays entitled A Gaggle of Saints. A cassette audiotape of the 1992 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium performance of Bush is available from SUNSTONE (tape #S192-193).

CHARACTERS
(One man, one woman)

The original BYU cast was:

John .............................................. Neil LaBute
Sue .................................................. Kym Luke

The Chicago cast was:

John .............................................. Mark Rector
Sue .................................................. Elyse Mirto

SILENCE. DARKNESS.

A young, attractive couple sitting apart from one another: they are dressed in the popular evening fashion of the day. (When they speak, although they appear side by side on the stage, it is obvious neither is hearing what the other says.)

JOHN: . . . so, okay, so there was this big bash . . .

SUE: a party . . .

JOHN: party, bash, whatever, in the city that's what we came down for. The thing, this church get-together is why we did it in the first place . . .

SUE: it's our old ward, second ward. I got a flyer in the mail . . .

JOHN: couple wards together, I think, mixed, and all meeting in the city. Ballroom over at the plaza . . .

SUE: which really sounded nice, you know . . .

JOHN: it's expensive.

SUE: I mean, elegant . . .

JOHN: but that's cool, Manhattan, right? always have a good time there . . .

SUE: people from high school were going . . .

JOHN: 'cause we're juniors up in Boston, so, like, there's still lots of guys from our class . . .

SUE: seniors now, mostly . . .

JOHN: all these seniors, guys like that, who we're still in touch with. friends, you know . . .

SUE: this was just after mid-terms . . .

JOHN: sue's a year ahead. almost. Two semesters. We're juniors, but nearly a year . . . (beat) both going to B.C.

SUE: Boston college. You know, we almost didn't get in. I mean, both of us . . .

JOHN: my GPA, but we decided. I mean, early—like my senior year, back at G reely, maybe—that we'd do college together.

SUE: and Boston seemed about right, you know, four hours from home . . .

JOHN: it's a little over three, if you push it. I don't like to go crazy with my v.w, but it's only about three hours if you're really moving. three, three-and-a-half . . .

SUE: it's beautiful up around there. I mean, in New England. all that's just gorgeous this time of year. Leaves turning . . .

JOHN: it just sounds really great. weekend back in New York. stop in, maybe say "hi" to the folks . . . be good to go down for a couple days.

SUE: so I contacted the three people going to school with us . . . you know, from our stake. three members going to B.C. as well . . .

JOHN: one guy's even in my house, David's his name . . . didn't really hang out with him at home or anything, different ward. but he's cool, plays lacrosse . . .

SUE: he's nice. Nice guy . . .

JOHN: ended up, we talked two other couples into going back with us . . . guy from the house, this David guy.

SUE: we took his car down . . .

JOHN: . . . and a friend of mine, Tim, brother Freeman, whatever . . . from Chappaqua. Year behind me, but studying at B.C., same time . . .

SUE: it's a beautiful red truck he had (pause) Jeep or something . . .

JOHN: 'cause I've got this old v.w. I said that, right? it's great, '73. with the metal bumpers and all that . . . but needs a tune-up and I'm not gonna drive four hours with all these guys . . .

SUE: we all thought we could go down together. One car. Everybody wanted to, gonna be in the city at this hotel, live band and everything . . .

JOHN: and so six of us, a girl that's going out with this David from my fraternity, Karen's her name, I think . . . she was coming too. She's a nonmember, but coming 'cause she knew the city pretty well, grew up just off the park and they were getting along good . . . so it's six altogether now, six for the ride and the v.w's definitely out of the question.

SUE: David said he'd drive if we wanted.

JOHN: it's got one of those isuzu troopers. roomy. big.

SUE: and we're all picked up at four in the afternoon, Saturday.

JOHN: same weekend as homecoming up at school . . . but we hadn't planned on going, you know, so then Sue gets the flyer and all of a sudden, I'm rushing around, fighting for tuxedos, ten minutes to six, Friday afternoon! (beat) I ended up buying one, finally. Perry Ellis. A size big, but I got one . . . looks okay, doesn't it?

SUE: it looked good on him . . . I had to put a safety pin in the pants, in the back of them, but it was really nice when he had it on . . .

JOHN: we left 'em in the bags, the three of us guys, hanging in the trooper for the ride. I mean, no sense getting 'em messed up for no reason, right?

SUE: I had this dress I'd been saving . . . all taffeta. I'd been saving it for something like this . . . did I mention that? (beat) I needed to find some shoes, but I thought the dress was perfect . . .

JOHN: we missed the game, conference game, too—didn't have tickets, but we could've watched it at our place with a bunch of guys, they always order in pizza and everything—but we said "no," jump in with all these people . . . road trip.

SUE: Tim's girlfriend, Patrice, I've known for years . . .

JOHN: with about a dozen overnight bags, tuxedos hanging from all corners of Dave's isuzu . . . (beat) the girls decided to wear their outfits . . .

SUE: it was my black dress.

JOHN: Sue's got this knockout thing, kind of a cutaway in the front, what's it called?

SUE: black taffeta . . .

JOHN: Rayon, I think . . . with this, I don't know, "scalloped" neckline in the front, you know, over her chest and hardly any back to it at all, not any sleeves. Just very little on top. But chic, too, right? Classic lines. See, it's a dinner dress, dress you'd wear out to dinner, dining, not something a girl would pick out. Junior prom, with ruffles all clotting it up . . . (beat) she looked great.

PAGE 64 DECEMBER 1995
proud to be with her . . .

sue: i knew it’d get wrinkled, a little . . . i did. taffeta’s terrible for that, but i thought it sounded wonderful, you know, getting out at some amoco, middle of connecticut, in this wave of taffeta . . . and buying, i don’t know, a milky way, or a can of soda, and the attendant’s mouth just hanging open at the sight of us . . .

john: i’m putting gas in, one time we stopped, and look up . . . i see nothing but chiffon and silk and whatnot, miles of it, going down the snack aisle. that killed me! . . .

sue: i was carrying my shoes—i did find a pair, even had time to dye them to match—but i took ’em off in the car, and i was just holding them in the store. so, i’m standing there, in my stockings, carrying these shoes . . .

john: i’ll always remember that. her smiling at me, through the glass there. little bit of chocolate on her lips . . . and holding her shoes.

sue: this was going to be a great party . . . (pause) . . . i could feel it.

john: the ward usually threw a pretty good bash, i mean, times we’d go into the city . . . had my farewell there.

sue: it was our anniversary . . .

john: last minute, got her a corsage. not the wrist kind, hate those . . . but this was beautiful. white blossoms. don’t know what kind, but they were white. i remember that . . .

sue: i loved it! the softest pink, it was . . . john thought it was white, but it was really just the lightest shade of pink; the last shade of pink it could be, before turning into something else . . . (beat) and you know? he pricked his finger, john did. as he pinned it on me, pricked his index finger . . .

john: stupid pin! . . .

sue: and then . . . a spot of blood, just a drop, but he ended up with this touch of blood on his shirt . . .

john: couldn’t even see it if i buttoned the jacket . . .

sue: but see, in a weird way, though, it excited me. the blood. is that stupid to say? . . . probably, but it did. (beat) i mean, it was stunning to look at, you know? all that white on him, the bright of his shirt . . . and then this splash of . . .

john: red . . .

sue: . . . blood on his chest.

john: didn’t get any on her dress, however. nothing. felt good about that . . . wouldn’t want to ruin her anniversary dress.

sue: six years . . .

john: huh? believe that? six . . . well, since summer of my third year in high school. wow . . .

sue: i saw him on the track one day. lived six blocks away all my life, in seminary together, but i never really saw him until he was jogging one time . . .

john: i like to keep in shape . . .

sue: he’d always kept his hair short, trimmed up . . .

john: my dad cut it. believe that?! sixteen years old and my father drags me into the kitchen, every other sunday—he was bishop at the time, and i asked him if this wasn’t considered “work.”

haircutting, but he just said i had a big mouth—anyway, could always count on the standard “sears portrait” cut. (beat) i was always a little worried about my ears. stick out a bit . . .

sue: but i see him running, really running, blistering by people who are just jogging or walking and i don’t know this guy. he’s cute. nice body and i don’t know him . . . (beat) kind of long hair . . .

john: my dad was away for the summer . . . setting up this computer network over in london or some type of thing . . . i didn’t really know or care. i could let my hair grow, that’s what i saw coming out of the whole deal. my mom didn’t mind at all . . .

sue: so i put down my softball glove, and my purse and all that, and i start running, too. i mean, i can’t keep up with him but i go a little slower or a little faster every so often so that he’s catching me more quickly on every lap.

john: i knew who she was. she was dating a guy i knew . . .

sue: that was over. we broke up, like, two weeks before. he was this, i don’t know, he’d kind of left the church, and there’s this completely bad scene at a party. the screaming. and he’s sort of . . .

john: i’d heard this. i mean, you hear everything at some time in your life, right, and this was a thing you keep up on in high school. girls you secretly like but can’t get at ‘cause they’re dating somebody, maybe a friend, and you file ’em away and hope the guy joins the army or gets a mission call to laos or something . . . held back in school, even, and you and she end up on the same floor, some dorm in florida. (beat) the best would be, like, a major football moment, touchdown to take the state championship, something majestic like that, but anything . . . camp counselors even, would do. she was that kind of girl . . .

sue: and we’re running together now, he’s pretending he’s winded and needs to slow down and i’m just trying to keep up and around we go. sun going down, we’re not speaking at all, and we just keep going in circles . . .

john: then he shows up . . .

sue: we really had stopped dating, but he was going to give me a

T

he two actors in Bash face the audience with a small dinner table in between. Although their lines overlap, it is clear each is telling their story privately to the audience; they do not know what the other is saying.

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sue: we really had stopped dating, but he was going to give me a
ride home, just friendly, because the track and the softball fields and everything are, like, three miles from my house.

**john:** he pulls his car right on the track, into the lanes. nice new lexus, all black, that he got as a graduation gift from his dad. he was a year or so older... didn't go on a mission.

**sue:** i slowed down a little.

**john:** and i can see what's coming because i know him and we've had some laughs together: not friends, exactly, but friends of friends, that's what we are... but i don't want to leave.

**john:** this is how we first got together. it's kind of a funny story...

**sue:** so he chases me down on the track, because we just jog by him, right around his car for a couple laps, and keep going...

**john:** why am i gonna stop? he's not my boyfriend...

**sue:** we weren't really dating, you couldn't call it that, anymore...

**john:** see, and he grabs me. turns me around, after grabbing me, he turns me and says, "hey!" and he's holding onto me, about my size, and one of his nails is digging into my nipple, holding my chest like he is. he's got these, like, long nails on one hand...

**sue:** he plays guitar. he's very good.

**john:** and this hurts and i'm standing there thinking, "this doesn't need to be happening..." and i turn on him. never spoke to him the whole time, just turned on him and flipped him over, onto the ground and started pounding on his head. it's a surface track so he's not getting too banged up but i'm hitting him pretty good and sue's just standing there... watching.

**sue:** i'd never seen this happen before...

**john:** finally he stops squirming around and i hit him one more time—you know high schoolers, right, you go a bit overboard in a fight—and then i walk over and grab her stuff and give it to her and we take off. lexus still sitting there, people having to jog around it, sun dancing off the hood of the sun, we walked all the way home.

**sue:** noticed my reflection in it as we go by bloody nose! him and... (speaks in a low voice). "i'm doing it for the best-looking girl i've ever seen. i'm just completely in love. i'm serious.

**sue:**: makeup. try putting makeup on in some hotel bathroom and you'll understand the meaning of devotion. sinks in those places, even the plaza, are impossibly small, postage stamp of a mirror where you can see what's coming because you can't get any better than this! (beat) i bought a new lipstick in the lobby they had a counter there... it was vivid. crimson...

**john:** she steps into the sitting room of this hotel suite, city full of models and actresses... the beautiful people... and i can't see anything else. i like we're thrown back to the garden, the two of us, watching one another across this great endless meadow, my side still hurting from the missing rib and all, but she's revealed to me, golden hair and a face like fresh snow and i'm thinking... hey, you know, here's why he rested on the seventh day. it's how we first got together. it's a funny story.

**sue:**: sometimes we fight, we do, like anybody else, or break up... whatever. john dated someone for a week or so, freshman year; me, i was in biology class, john was on his mission. didn't mean, you know, here's why he rested on the seventh day. it's how we first got together. it's a funny story.

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sue: it was just two men, walking along... no big deal.

sue: they'd done the whole place. i mean, when we finally got inside, it was like, the woman... she's got some sort of... anyway, off they went, arms linked together. we never said anything. no big deal.

sue: i haven't danced like that in a long time...

sue: it was, like, the beginning of a magical evening... everything was so soothing, and we just kept dancing, the two of us. danced for hours... round and round.

sue: i was a touch bored. you know, we got inside. it was like, there were two guys, middle-aged guys,熟练地... i mean, we were just having a good time. and then, something happened. i don't know, i just don't know what to think about it. i mean, we had this whole plan, and then... but i don't know... i just... i mean, we were going to this party, all dressed up, and... i don't know what to think about it. i can't get that picture, the image of it, out of my head. those smiles. i can't do it... (beat) but the party is great. it really is...

sue: sometimes we fight, we do, like, maybe, one-thirty... whatever. i'm not sure what time it was... john: i was a touch bored. you know, it was warm, and lots of people we didn't recognize... so i suggested a walk. "let's head over to the park." about six, seven guys all together. it was still nice out...

sue: i thought i looked up at two, or two-fifteen... but kissing, two men, grown men, standing in this park, public place, in the middle of the city. in the middle of town. it was like, maybe, one-thirty...

sue: said they wanted to take a quick nap, just a half-hour, whatever, then we'd go get a bite. this was, like, maybe, one-thirty...

sue: it was a king-size bed. a gold comforter on it...

john: so, we hung out downstairs a while, talked to some guys from home... i mean, it happened. you get together, doing stuff, no big deal. just got back to the bash. but us three, tim, david, and me... no hurry we just kind of wandered. hanging out. after a while, we shoot over into central park, the 59th street entrance... looking around, talking. it's really dark in there. only lights coming from the buildings. way off. kind of exciting...

sue: sometimes we fight, we do, like, maybe, one-thirty... whatever. i'm not sure. "cause i kept sleeping...

john: and then i saw 'em. both of them. those guys...

sue: i was so tired...

john: they were saying 'goodnight'... well, not saying it exactly, but kissing. two men, grown men, standing in this park, public place, in the middle of the city. in the middle of town. it was like, maybe, one-thirty...

sue: i wasn't so tired...

john: ahh, he was okay. (beat) had a good hand going. reggae...

sue: i'd never been to the plaza before, i mean, past it, shopping and whatever, with my mom, but never to it. it was tremendous! so much glass, high white walls. it was like... a cake, some kind of wedding cake, left on the corner there. downtown. that's what it reminded me of... (beat) the whole thing, though... the trip, dance and all... made me sleepy.

sue: we went upstairs to our room. i mean, we're going to this party, all dressed up, and... i mean, it happened. you get together, doing stuff, no big deal. just got back to the bash. but us three, tim, david, and me... no hurry we just kind of wandered. hanging out. after a while, we shoot over into central park, the 59th street entrance... looking around, talking. it's really dark in there. only lights coming from the buildings. way off. kind of exciting...

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sue: sometimes we fight, we do, like, maybe, one-thirty... whatever. i'm not sure. "cause i kept sleeping...
headed for the west side. he's gone.
the other, one like my father,
glances around, taking in the night,
i guess, big smile up at the moon . . .
and he kind of casually strolls
over to this "men's room" fifty yards
off. concrete building, with the
steps down into it. whistling while
he goes . . . he was whistling. i
don't even stop to think this
through, but motion the guys to
follow me.

sue: i thought about getting out of my
dress, but i couldn't move. all of us,
we were sleeping so peacefully . . .
(beat) did you know patrice snores?
she does . . . a little.

john: as we're moving down the
landing into the restroom, i glance
at tim . . . 's got that look, and i see
what he's thinking. i mean, i
recognize that look anywhere, and
he's starting to smile . . .
sue: i don't think i even dreamed that
night . . .

john: before going in i tell the guys to
hold off, wait out here for me til
they got my signal . . . and that's the
plan. wait for me to flush him out,
made sure no one wanders by.
when i get inside, it's like another
world . . . walls are exploding with
graffiti. place stinks. two bulbs burnt out. some old dude curled up, asleep in the corner. our friends legs, i spot, patiently
sitting in a stall, waiting, and not a care in the world.

sue: the phone woke me up.

john: tim pulls me aside . . . wants to
know why i touched the guy, let him
kiss me . . . but i didn't know, didn't
have an answer. isn't that strange?
. . . and you know, he never asked me
again.

Mormon Male-Male Relationships

john: tim pulls me aside . . . wants to
know why i touched the guy, let him
kiss me . . . but i didn't know, didn't
have an answer. isn't that strange?
. . . and you know, he never asked me
again.

sue: it was so quiet in the lobby as we were leaving. i started tip-toeing out. isn't that funny?
sue: we all met in front of the hotel, and i saw john's face: aahh! all cut up like it was ... see, he'd fallen down, racing along the fountain out front, balancing on it, and slipped. scraped himself up and blood on everything. (beat) so much blood ...  
john: had a great meal ... you know, you can't get those german sausages for breakfast, the big, fat ones, anywhere but manhattan. you can't ...  
sue: and i was eating my french toast, just eating along and i noticed this glint in my water glass. a spark of light. (beat) john'd slipped a ring in it! a beautiful gold thing ... i loved him so much at that moment.  
john: "happy anniversary," i said ...  
sue: it was a little big, but fit pretty well. had this wonderful leaf pattern, all the way around ...  
john: looked nice on her. i liked it ...  
sue: i kissed him there, in front of everybody, and he blushed a bit, we all laughed. i can't tell you what a wonderful weekend we had ...  
john: we did end up taking the amtrak back up ... just sue and myself. dave dropped us at grand central and, you know, lots of "thank you" and "see you monday!" (beat) tim even gave me a hug. first time he's ever done that ...  
sue: it was my idea ... the train.  
john: and we saw our parents, stopped in sunday and even made it to our meetings at the ward ... that was really nice.  
sue: i like relief society at home so much better ...  
john: had dinner with the folks, then the late train up to boston.  
sue: you know, on the way back—it's funny, i shouldn't even bring this up—a light broke out. well, not really a fight, but this argument between a man and his girlfriend. a lot of yelling, and she stood up, and starts pulling on her coat and this guy, i mean, middle of a crowded compartment, just backhands her. he did ...  
john: knocked her up against the window. really hard ...  
sue: everybody got quiet. i could feel john tense up, getting all tense, but the couple was, i don't know, kind of dirty—which and they seemed like, you know, those kind of people—they don't know what i mean by that, exactly, but they were—so i asked john, whispered to him, to "let it go." (beat) and you know what? he didn't so much as bat an eyelash. just kept holding my hand. holding it and playing with the ring on my finger. that made me so happy ...  
john: i could see he'd given her a bloody nose ...  
sue: and they pretty much quieted down right after that. it was no big deal ...  
john: anyway ...  
sue: anyway, we are getting engaged this summer. for sure. did i tell you that? (pause)  
john: and finally, as we tumbled along toward massachusetts, nearly midnight ... i could feel sue fall asleep against my shoulder. all warm, protected.  
sue: i hope it's a fall wedding, you know? i always think they're the most beautiful ...  
john: but not me ... i couldn't drift off. just couldn't do it. so i sat up, watching the lights dance by, the moon grinning down. and you know, i started whistling to myself. i did ...  
sue: i was sleeping, asleep there on john's arm, but i'd swear i could hear music ...  
john: not loud, i mean, don't even recall the tune. but i was whistling, i was. that much i remember ...  
sue: ... this beautiful music as i was sleeping. like the sound of angels calling us home ... they sit together in silence for a moment, finally, they rise and embrace, waiting for their picture to be taken. they kiss and smile broadly.  
silence. darkness.  
harsh blast of a camera's flashbulb.

MAKING TEA

Some things, you know they won't turn out but still you think, "What the hell, I'll use it over anyway," like tea bags. Throw something away and you admit defeat; repeat it and you find meaning in life: the line "So wonderfully wonderfully wonderfully perfectly," the way all my boyfriends like zen.

Some things, you know they're just gone: I asked my mom why she never makes fresh bread anymore and i know she likes it, likes the kneading, likes the rising, likes the smell, likes eating fresh bread with honey and peaches. Some things, you know they aren't generous, aren't nice, and still, they're the kind of thing you ask yourself when you're watching water in a saucepan not boiling, but about to: could i kill a postman? Not worrying who'd bring you letters tomorrow, or after.

—HOLLY WELKER
Bash takes me to dark places in myself I do not like to visit.
There is in such a work, "no place that does not see you."

SABBATH SCHOOL BASH

By Neal Chandler

The Greeks placed the drama at the center of religious experience. Not because it was faithful history. Certainly not to make Oedipus or Medea role models, nor because such figures embodied familiar Greek virtues. It was the very uncharacteristic extremity of both their aspiration and transgression that riveted audiences in what Aristotle calls catharsis, and which not everyone will shrink from calling spiritual experience.

It is good to see Neil LaBute's Bash in print. Yet on the page, this alien rendering of an elite, upscale church party provokes question, analysis, defensive reflection. Well performed, it is—like all really powerful theater—as intense and ephemeral as great sex or terrible pain, and as resistant to retrieval or dissection. When I first encountered Bash with my wife and oldest daughter at a performance in Chicago, I was stunned. I recognized the characters, these two attractive children of impressive parents. They possessed the precise jargon and careful boundary awareness of my own suburban Mormonism, laced with the rising generational sophistication that in some form confronts every parent. They were young, still vain, still unaccommodated by disappointment, but I did not want to see in them any horrifying capacity for evil. Mormons are not like that.

Mormons are, however, grimly like most other people in their propensity for missed connection. Just last night, my wife read to me statistics from a study in Sunstone suggesting that even in solid and committed Mormon marriages there is a widespread sense of emotional isolation. Bash shows us the roots of such failures, even spectacular failures, in our very idealism about love. The initial stage directions tell us that though the protagonists, Sue and John, appear side by side, "it is obvious neither is hearing what the other says." This is, in fact, not altogether obvious. They have been together for six years, and like long-established couples, they pace and play off one another with familiar ease, responding, amending, elaborating. They do not argue. They are, to be sure, not quite yet engaged, and hence still bound by the etiquette and insecurities of romantic love, but they have also established rigid boundaries of discourse that separate their shared account into two discrete and necessary and mutually exclusive stories.

Sue's is, in some ways, the more terrifying story, precisely for its studied superficiality. Her plot references are generic: dating, the party, an anniversary, a pending engagement and planned fall wedding. Everything else devolves to setting: Boston College and New England as setting; Manhattan, the Plaza Hotel, and the "silver" and "gold" and "shimmering" ballroom as setting. Even John is, in Sue's telling, principally scenic: "cute, nice body, ... kind of long hair," looking "really nice" in his tux. Nor can she see herself in different terms: Taffeta dress, shoes dyed to match. New lipstick. Crimson. She knows her perceived value, wants "to look nice for him," imagines herself walking barefoot in a "wave of taffeta" into the Amoco, imagines the attendant's mouth hanging open at the sight. What she cannot recount or accommodate are the issues of character, the self-revelations that constitute the counter-story John is telling, and that, if accommodated or recounted, would ruin everything. She lets the savage act of acquisition that began their relationship pass with almost no comment: "I'd never seen this happen before ..."; she trivializes the breakup with her former boyfriend, trivializes every difficult relationship—John's with his father ("I thought it was funny"); her own with John ("Sometimes we fight, we do, like anybody else, or break up ... whatever"), and passes over the threat or unpleasant implication in virtually every other confrontation. Not only that she fails to question John's violence, but that, classically, she finds it exciting; not merely that she dismisses the two "middle-aged guys" in the park as "no big deal," but that she fails to recognize John's over-alertness, his deep preoccupation with such men; not just that she morally disengages from the incident of violent abuse they encounter on a train, but that she sees John's subsequent disengagement as positive, as hopeful. One thinks of good girls, good sisters advised by well-meaning counselors to marry or to continue with someone despite or even because of certain dark, unaccommodatable things, things it then becomes their duty to cover over with a mantel of love and forgiveness. By classical standards,
Sue is a very, very good girl, a trophy woman, a candle-lit virgin, who has learned her place and what is needful—that is, if she is to be married to somebody with John's deeply rooted conflicts and dangerous propensity for self-revelation. A certain vacuousness is her comforter, her shield. After all, only those with ears need hear.

And John, whose story the play both recounts and resists, has all the threatening internal complexities to which Sue's impermeable surface is a kind of epidermal block. No statement has face value. Though we accept his pride at showing up with "a girl like that" on his arm, his protestations of love, poetic and oft repeated, soon begin to ring like too much protest. We begin to wonder what buried absence in this young man is compensated by pride in the girl on his arm. His violence, appalling as it is, refuses to be merely that. His openness is not bragging. This is no redneck fag-basher. Nor, however, is this confession, not in any remotely repentant sense. Ineluctably, we come to wonder if the victim whom John has brutalized and left for dead on the filthy floor of a public toilet is not, in fact, also himself. And if he is both perpetrator and victim, where then should he look for retribution? Where find remorse? When his friend asks why he touched the deviate before he hit him—let himself, in fact, be kissed and fondled by him—John has no answer. How does one formulate such an answer? Does anyone suppose, even for a moment, that Sue, with her taffeta dress and her wedding plea, institutional version of grace. made skin in my household crawl. I knew that. But I also knew you that our anticipation, if less articulate, was no less certain rods and went after a rat that somehow had eluded the traps and poison set out in our basement. It had lost a leg to toxic bonding, but she also made sure we disposed of those with ears need hear.

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The deep silence lodged resolutely between the stories John and Sue tells in such companionable counterpoint is, as it turns out, a sort of crippled, institutional version of grace.

About me. It was about a few fictional characters. Somehow, however, I felt directly involved in it. Sitting in the audience, I felt a kind of blood on my own hands. I left the play a different and far less comfortable person.

In the most famous line of a famous poem, Rainer Maria Rilke gives an operational definition to powerful art. There is, in such work, "no place that does not see you. You must change your life." If you can leave a performance of Bash such as the one we witnessed in Chicago without needing to change, however inchoate and shrouded your repentance, I suspect that either your calling and election has already been made sure, or you are beyond redemption.

NOTES

Sermon

Isaiah condemns those overzealous in their faith more sternly than those consumed with doubt. Faith without doubt is not faith at all, but a pretended knowledge that leads to self-righteousness.

THE NEXUS OF FAITH & DOUBT

By Dean L. May

I speak not as a student of biblical texts, nor as one trained at theological school in the art of preparing sermons. I have, however, listened during the course of my fifty-five years of mortality to a good many exhortations at Sunday meetings. In fact, allowing a year off for various illnesses and occasional obstinate absences, I have been at least physically present during some 5,687 sermons, including 653 by members of stake high councils. So I would not consider myself inexperienced or at least unexposed to sermonizing. And my character contains, I fear, a tediously didactic streak, perhaps a genetic defect, which prompts me to draw object lessons from almost everything that happens in my life, and thus makes me adept at some aspects of the sermonizing process.

It may be my experience with all those sermons, including my own ad hoc ones, that makes me feel their efficacy is overrated. My life has been buffeted and changed for good or ill by lots of experiences, but rarely by sermons. Moreover, I am a Latter-day Saint—a believing and practicing member of a faith that has always specialized in offering humankind more a practicum than a lecture course in right living. The sermons in my faith provide a setting and forum for getting together and interacting as people trying to understand and do God's will, but the sermons are not the principal agents of either that understanding or those deeds. I find this skeptical view of the value of sermons liberating, for what I may say will, I suspect, little change either the views or conduct of anyone in an appreciable or lasting way. Still, hope springs eternal, and I cannot quite get it out of my head that Lincoln committed perhaps his worst error of judgment when he said, in the Gettysburg Address, "The world will little note nor long remember what we say here."

DEAN L. MAY is a professor of history at the University of Utah. This article was originally given as a sermon at the 1993 Sunstone Symposium in Salt Lake City.

ISAIAH'S CONDEMNATION OF ISRAEL

Two classes of sinners: the doubt-driven and the self-righteous.

My text is from Isaiah 5, which I read as a prophecy pertinent to our time. The chapter begins with Jehovah, the Lord of Hosts, expressing his love towards Israel: "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved touching his vineyard." Yet the tone changes abruptly in verse 8 to a litany of maledictions against the Israelites. They overdevelop the land: "Woe unto them that join house to house, that lay field to field, till there be no place, that they may be placed alone in the midst of the earth!" They indulge in revelry: "Woe unto them that rise up early in the morning, that they may follow strong drink. . . . They regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." (v. 11-12.) Their errors become so great that hell opens itself to receive them.

Then Jehovah is enthroned in power and righteousness and the text returns briefly to themes of renewal and solace. "Young rams shall feed where fat bullocks once pastured, and kids shall graze broad acres where cattle grew fat." There follows a new set of indictments.

Woe unto them that draw iniquity with cords of vanity, and sin as it were with a cart rope: That say, Let him make speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it! Woe unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness; that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter! Woe unto them that are wise in their own eyes, and prudent in their own sight! (v. 18-21.)

This class of sinners also have their reward, perhaps worse than being drawn into hell. "Therefore as the fire devoureth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be
as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust." (v. 24.) Yet, in spite of his wrath and anger, the Lord holds up an ensign, expedites the gathering of the faithful unto it, from whence they look back upon a world of suffering and gloom: "if one look unto the land, behold darkness and sorrow, and the light is darkened in the heavens thereof." (v. 30.)

The prophecy applies to our time and distinguishes between two classes of sinners. Who are the sinners of the first order? Those who build lavish houses that fill the land, who revel from morning to night with wine and music; those who "regard not the work of the Lord, neither consider the operation of his hands." They are, simply put, persons whose doubts have driven them from the vineyard of the Lord into pride and self-sufficiency.

Who is there among us that might merit such an indictment? I suspect we all know a few, and many of us might find the finger pointing in our direction. Some have simply turned from spiritual matters to the unalloyed pursuit of material and physical pleasure. A friend, a wealthy attorney, told me of the joy he had found in his new faith. His pastor was not judgmental, and the choir, paid and trained professionals, sang Bach and Beethoven far better than our admittedly rustic and sporadically active ward organization.

Others have naively chosen to build upon the understanding offered by scholars—sociologists, political scientists, psychologists, poststructuralists, even historians—and to put their trust in human reason and understanding. I say "naively" because the most superficial reading into the history of these and other academic persuasions makes it clear that they are always in flux, that a fair part of today's sure answers will be tomorrow's heresies. To build upon such foundations is surely to court disaster when the storms come. This brew of excessive spiritual doubt and overweening human pride is seductive and potent. It is hard to resist, and readily inflames those who drink deeply of it.

And what is their reward? Isaiah says they are to be humbled—to be bereft of their possessions and comforts, brought down to witness and finally acknowledge the triumph of the Lord. "Hell hath enlarged herself, and opened her mouth without measure: and their glory, and their multitude, and their pomp... shall descend into it." (v. 14.) Their is certainly an uncomfortable fate, but not an absolute one. Indeed, their humiliation and God's triumph are followed by the pastoral image of lambs and kids grazing in broad pastures.

Who are the second class of sinners? Their vice is quite the opposite from those of the first group. They say, "Let him make evil good, and good evil; speed, and hasten his work, that we may see it: and let the counsel of the Holy One of Israel draw nigh and come, that we may know it!" (v. 19.) In their imagined righteousness and spiritual understanding they urge the Lord to hasten his work. They are, of the two groups of sinners, most prone to confuse good and evil, to be wise in their own eyes and prudent in their own sight! It is they who tolerate wickedness if it serves their purpose and deny the righteousness of good people.

Such people don't have problems with excessive doubt; it is their faith that is excessive, leading them to self-righteousness, intolerance of others, and to a naive expectation that they alone will survive the day of the Lord. Hence, they urge his coming and beg his counsel.
without exercising their own understanding or judgment. We all know a few of these as well.

A couple I know persisted against all counsel in having more and more children when clearly the mother’s life was increasingly endangered by each pregnancy. That was, of course, their decision, though I might have thought they were confusing good and evil. Another brother told me one time that God was preparing the world for the Second Coming spiritually through the gospel and temporally through Amway—again, to my mind, an example of calling evil good and good evil. There are others who seem prone to such weaknesses, some exercising power and authority in the Church and in the world, and yet showing little compassion for those along the roadside who have fallen among thieves.

THE CONNECTEDNESS OF DOUBT & FAITH

Faith without doubt is dead.

ISAIAH, in short, condemns those overzealous in their faith more sternly than those consumed by doubt. To the latter he offers, after humbling, reconciliation and broad pastures; to the former he offers a consuming fire.

Both are condemned partly because of their excessive zeal. But there may also be another grievous fault in them. Each group imagines themselves whole without the other. They fail to understand that there is a necessary nexus between faith and doubt. As every Latter-day Saint knows, to have faith is to believe in things that are not seen. The fact that they cannot be seen, that is, cannot be verified through some empirical means, is the very condition that transforms them from mere knowledge into a principle of action, into faith. Faith without doubt is dead. It is not faith at all, but a pretended knowledge that leads naturally to the conceit of self-righteousness and the whole chain of evils that follow, as described by Isaiah. I quail when I hear people say that they “know beyond a shadow of a doubt” that the gospel is true. Mere knowledge, as the world understands it, seems a frail foundation upon which to build a humane and compassionate life. I know a good many highly knowledgeable people who seem almost devoid of ethical values.

Their lives evidence that doubt without faith is no more wholesome than faith without doubt. Isaiah quite rightly associates such people with pride and self-indulgence. We of the intellectual bent must ever be on guard to temper our doubt with the humbling admission that we do not have all the answers. And we of faith must ever be alert to the danger of imagining our faith to be certain knowledge and thus compromising its power as faith, and arrogating to ourselves a moral superiority we do not possess. There is much power in the plea of the man who desperately hoped Jesus could cast out the evil spirit from his son. “Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief.” (Mark 9:24.) Let us flee the doubting arrogance of regarding not the work of the Lord, or not considering the operation of his hands; but let us also flee the spiritual pride that makes us wise in our own eyes and prudent in our own sight. Only when doubt is joined to faith will we come with speed swiftly to the ensign of the Lord.

NOTE

1. Isa. 5:17. This text is from the New English Bible and seems to me clearer (and more supportive of my exegesis) than that of the King James Bible, which I cite elsewhere in this sermon.

SUNDAY IN ST. AUGUSTINE

... for if the generous ideas of youth are too often overclouded by the sordid views of afterlife, that scarcely proves them to be false.

—Anne Bronte, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

Spirals of gulls float down on me
and swing sharply across
the listless Matanzas River
which dumps here its mussel-shoaled scars,
its gathered density.

My back scrapes a rib
of el Castillo de San Marcos
that hugs the old turn of water.

I concentrate on thinness,
reflecting moments
of sun penetrating sea currents,
winter breathing;

each novel page accrues
wedgelike, when pressed tightly.

Clouds amass accusing gray:
what clusters in a moment must dissolve.

Two squat hills away,
tuxedoed men
swat croquet into gusts that lift their tails,
exploding scarlet underneath like a scandal.

A black-clad woman stands her ground,
voile and fur draped on a statue
but for her sure step
which means for me all confidence:
one of the foppish pair will kiss her
and I root for her, for that moment, until
I grow cold
and unimaginative, and hungry,
so I decide: I can’t see her face—what if she’s old?

—KARL ROSENQUIST
BOOKNOTES

HIDDEN CITIES: THE DISCOVERY AND LOSS OF ANCIENT NORTH AMERICAN CIVILIZATION
by Roger G. Kennedy
The Free Press, 1994
372 pages, $24.95

HIDDEN CITIES is the most poorly proofread, worst-written, worst-organized, most verbose, stylistically dense and old-fashioned, most interesting and important book for LDS readers to come out of the secular market in years! You will be amazed, I assure you.

The message is that there is abundant, well-documented evidence that vast parts of the Mississippi Valley were inhabited for as much as 6,000 years before the coming of Europeans to the North American continent. Those inhabitants were native Americans, whatever that means. At least they certainly were not Europeans coming from the East, and they were the ancestors of those we call "Native Americans" or "Indians" today. These peoples were diverse and culturally well organized, so much so that they could produce architectural monuments on the scale of the pyramids of Egypt—and about contemporaneous with those pyramids. Those monuments are scattered from Florida to Wisconsin, with important centers in Louisiana, Tennessee, Missouri, and Ohio. Being built largely of earth, they have been thoughtlessly destroyed by farmers, developers, roadbuilders, and others. But hundreds were thoroughly documented before they were destroyed. And those many that remain provide ample evidence for the nature of those no longer available for study.

These people had become an agriculturally-based society, concentrated mostly along rivers with major flood plains, where they produced their crops—long before corn became a staple. They had complex religious beliefs, and they numbered in the hundreds of thousands. In addition to their monuments, they also had complex fortifications. In other words, these people were millennia from being "simple bands of hunter-gatherers."

The author, Roger Kennedy, is no tyro, nor does he have any particular philosophical axe to grind. He's the current director of the National Park Service and past director of the Museum of American History at the Smithsonian Institution, giving him tremendous access to resources and documents. His book contains scores of pages of references, many of which are not available to casual students of these matters.

One of Kennedy's main points is that our vision of wise Native American bands "lying lightly on the land" is simply not supported by the facts. There were repeated near-total collapses of the societies, for reasons not well known. Sickness played a part in that, for sure. The most deadly was the introduction of European diseases in the early 1500s, which produced the "Great Dying." Major fractions of the population—and their traditions—were lost to living memory. But this had happened before. And it appears that perhaps environmental disasters, including the exhaustion of the land's ability to support the accumulated large populations, also took place. Certainly that is well documented in the Southwest, where evidently drought took its silent toll around A.D. 1200-1300.

All of this simply raises the credibility of the Book of Mormon tales of large numbers of people and of death and destruction. The peoples documented by Kennedy were not Lamanites or Nephiites or Jaredites—necessarily. But the presence of large numbers of "civilized" peoples on this continent for thousands of years certainly makes it easier to accept the Hill Cumorah being a long way from Central America. Who really knows if the Book of Mormon's history is centered on Central or South America anyway? (Except that they never do talk about snow, do they?) But these undeniable real people got around, intermixed, waxed and waned, as did the Lamanites.

"Hidden Cities" is an important contribution to LDS understanding of the larger context for the Book of Mormon.

—DONALD L. GIBBON

THE DRAGON'S TAPESTRY
by Martine Bates
Red Deer College Press, 1993
165 pages, $8.95 U.S./$9.95 Canada

PRISM MOON
by Martine Bates
Red Deer College Press, 1992
183 pages, $8.95 U.S./$9.95 Canada

ALL THE ESSENTIAL ingredients of good fantasy are present in Martine Bates's new trilogy—of which I have read the first two: The Dragon's Tapestry and Prism Moon. The third book by this Canadian Mormon author, I'm sure, will be just as well written.

Bates's lyrical and poetic style underscores her love of the expressive language of fantasy. It's no wonder she uses poetry several times to express herself more intensely than mere prose permits, which also helps convey the aura of epic tale.

The ethos, mythology, and vast cultural heritage of her characters create a believable fantasy world that invites the reader to step in and live with the characters.

As in all fantasy, the underlying theme is magic and how the characters deal with it. Magic is a part of nature, as well as a violation of nature, so its employment always has cosmic effects. Marwen, the primary character, is gifted but also careless and arrogant about the consequences of her actions. Magic simply is, and always was, and to harness it you must believe and make sacrifices. Marwen makes the sacrifices through physical duress and imprisonment, and she learns that magic is not used without cost and consequence.

I hope this is the beginning of a lengthy body of work by a gifted lyricist and thoughtful author.

—ELIZABETH H. BOYER

HOW MUCH?

No need telling now the love I owe you.
Its fragrance, the only assurance.
Neither the naughty summer wind nor the eyes of an obstinate sun can eye it.
The sky-bearing cranes shy away from it, as your name frolics with my unclayed allegiance.

—NIRANJAN MOHANTY
WHERE ARE THE GOOD GUYS?

Reviewed by Marvin Hill

By any professional standards among those popularly called New Mormon Historians, Michael Quinn’s work has been outstanding. His studies of the succession question after Joseph Smith’s death, his account of the ambiguous attitudes of certain Mormon leaders toward polygamy, and his volume on Mormonism and magic are major works, substantially influencing the thinking of a generation of Mormon historians. His new study, The Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power, is no less important, if for no other reason than that it constitutes the only major work on the subject. With two hundred pages of footnotes covering a controversial subject, Quinn has seemingly sought to bury any criticism almost before it can be expressed.

Although I am an admirer of Quinn’s productivity and his generally temperate treatment of difficult issues, my reaction to The Mormon Hierarchy is not so affirmative. While quibbling objections have been voiced to an error here and there in a footnote, these do not constitute in my mind any kind of significant criticism of a work based on enormous research and thousands of accurately quoted sources. Rather, it is with the organization and conceptualization of the work that I have concern, and also with its tone. Almost from the very beginning of Mormonism, writers have taken on the Mormon hierarchy to find fault. Somewhat surprisingly, Michael Quinn has apparently joined this procession of detractors, having virtually nothing good to say about any Mormon leader from 1830 to 1846.

Some difficulty in organization seems to be the result of haste, perhaps from excessive pressure to get out another book. A lot of the material, especially regarding the lives of significant members of the hierarchy, is shoved into an appendix rather than being integrated into the story. The role these men played in the acquisition and use of power is not spelled out, their relationship with Joseph Smith in these respects being left unsaid. The volume actually focuses upon Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and those claimants to succession after the prophet’s death. Thus there is a very narrow, selective treatment of the hierarchy. Quinn makes no general statement as to routes to power (although he implies some), and he says nothing about the duties and privileges acquired through its acquisition.

It seems that Quinn is too concerned with correcting traditional views of Church organization and government and does not scrutinize closely the nature of the system and how it works. Mormon Hierarchy could benefit from an introductory chapter that characterizes Mormon theocratic values. Then something could be said about how the hierarchy expresses and employs those values. Instead, Quinn begins with a chapter on the evolution of authority, using an argument that seems tenuous—that authority in the Church was charismatic and personal in nature until 1835.

Quinn analyzes changes made in revelations during the first few years to contend for an absence of any early hierarchy. He seems to imply that Joseph Smith’s alterations of scripture are devious and perhaps a means to enhance his power, although this is implied rather than clearly stated. It seems, however, that Joseph Smith might have risked a loss of credibility by changing revelations, thus threatening his power. Why he did not thereby weaken his authority is a question Quinn might have logically addressed. What, for example, did the scriptures mean to the Saints in this period? Their attitude was certainly not that of the Hebrews, who held their scriptures to be inviolable. Among the Mormons, few complaints were ever lodged. The changes were done openly and the results published so that comparisons could easily be made.

The Saints wanted a living oracle at the head, who would give them scriptures that were timely. To a considerable extent, they saw their scriptures as how-to books that would meet everyday needs. Accordingly, the prophet changed his revelations when they no longer seemed relevant to existing institutional needs. Since, by his own admission, the prophet was not omniscient, he had no choice but to alter revelations on Church government as the Church grew and administrative adjustments became necessary. Quinn maintains that before 1835, “claims for authority in the church were made largely on the basis of religious experience and charisma rather than priestly power through lineage and angelic ministration.”

This is contradicted by some of the evidence he cites and some he does not. There was a very early belief among the Saints that authority was transmitted from on high and that ordination by those with authority was necessary for the ministry. Quinn slights the Book of Mormon in this regard. It is inconceivable that the elders who awaited its publication before embarking upon their missions would have ignored key passages on Church government in the new scripture.

In Alma 6, the prophet ordained priests and elders by the laying on of hands. The disciples also ordained priests and teachers by the same means. (See Moro. 3.) Furthermore,
Jesus bestowed upon his disciples the power to baptize and give the Holy Ghost. (See 3 Ne. 12, 18.) Quinn says that in the beginning, only Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery spoke about having authority given directly from heaven. But this is contradicted by E. D. Howe, who says that in 1831, when the elders first came to Kirtland, "friends and advocates of the wonderful book [the Book of Mormon] state that Mr. Cowdery has his commission directly from heaven." Thus it was not Cowdery alone who spoke in these terms.

Mormon Hierarchy discounts Joseph Smith's clear statement, in his first written history (1832), that his authority came via angelic visitations. Joseph said that he had received "the ministration of angels... and the reception of the holy Priesthood by the ministration of angels." Quinn dismisses this statement lamely by saying that it was not widely known, but Frederick G. Williams, Joseph's scribe, certainly knew about it, and there is no reason to think he would have been quiet about it.

Quinn also fails to give adequate attention to Joseph Smith's conflict with Hyrum Page, who received revelations with a stone and claimed they were for the whole church. Joseph countered with a revelation of his own, in September 1830, that said all revelations for the Church must be received through him, marking the end of charismatic authority. By 1833, Joseph Smith was designated President of the High Priesthood, and by 1834, there was a High Council at Kirtland. These events came well before 1835, the year that Quinn claims brought the end of charismatic-based authority.

Quinn is correct that determining the time of the restoration of the Melchizedek Priesthood is difficult. It appears in the Book of Mormon, of course, so it does not seem to be an afterthought by Joseph Smith. When Quinn says that accounts of the restoration of a second priesthood do not appear until 1834, he is once again discounting Joseph Smith's 1832 history, in which Smith says he received a "confirmation and reception of the high Priesthood after the holy order of the son of the living God." Quinn argues that the restoration came in the summer of 1830, and he cites in support a passage from the Doctrine and Covenants, dated August 1830, in which Peter, James, and John had already confirmed Joseph Smith to be an apostle. But Quinn shows that at this time in the Church, apostles were special witnesses, not members of the Twelve. Hence, this passage may not refer to the restoration of the Melchizedek priesthood at all.

The most clear statement regarding the restoration of the higher priesthood comes from Brigham Young, who said that in 1831 Joseph moved to Kirtland, sometime in May, and there received a revelation and ordained High Priests. When he received the Melchizedek Priesthood he had another revelation. Peter, James and John came to him... When he received this revelation in Kirtland the Lord revealed to him he should begin and ordain High Priests.

Quinn says that the history of the Church indicates nothing about the time of this restoration, but in light of Brigham Young's statement, I am not so sure. In his 1839 unpublished history, the Prophet recorded that in June of 1831 in Kirtland, "the authority of the Melchizedek [priesthood] was manifested and conferred for the first time upon the elders." Several of those who received it said this was the time of its restoration.

Quinn handles the question of Melchizedek restoration as though it were some great flaw in Church tradition. But neither Brigham Young nor others thought so. Actually, Joseph Smith functioned as prophet before the Melchizedek Priesthood's restoration, even if it did come in June of 1829. By that time, he had received the First Vision, been visited several times by Moroni, and received written revelations, as well as having translated part of the Book of Mormon. If the restoration came in the summer of 1830, then he organized the Church before its recognition. If it came in 1831, he had already been named first elder and had begun governing the new church. Obviously, he did not consider that either of these acts were done without authority.

When we examine the early Church records, it does not take long to realize that things were not always done in an order that seems logical to us. They were done in a way that Joseph Smith could understand in light of his experience. We could avoid much of the trauma regarding Church history if we recognized that revelation is given to men, and that they are the weak link in the process. As the Apostle Paul said, "we see through a glass, darkly." (1 Cor. 13:12.)

I cannot understand why Quinn gives so much attention to the Danites. Does he believe that Danite membership was a main conduit to Church leadership? If it was, Brigham Young, John Taylor, Wilford Woodruff, Lorenzo Snow, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Hyde, Oliver Cowdery, and David Whitmer, as well as Orson Pratt, Sidney Rigdon, and the brothers Lule and Lyman Johnson never belonged, but still became Church authorities. It would be more crucial to discuss how much loyalty to Joseph Smith...
counted toward accession to the hierarchy. The Danites claimed strong loyalty to Joseph, but Quinn presents no evidence that it gained them anything.

I am surprised that Quinn did not spend more time talking about tribalism—familial ties to Joseph as a road to leadership. Some members of the Smith family claimed succession, of course, but what about individuals who were sealed in Nauvoo to key priesthood leaders as an avenue to Church influence? Also, Quinn might have expanded the subject's treatment if he had discussed how, under the law of consecration, certain leaders gained monopolistic control of key businesses in Kirtland and Nauvoo. More will perhaps be said about this in volume two of *The Mormon Hierarchy*, but the subject might at least have been introduced here.

Instead of clarifying aspects of Church government, Quinn seems focused at times on excessive muckraking. The book dwells too much on the dark side of Mormon history, such as the occasions of whistling and whittling, or the smearing of dissenters with excrement to drive them from Nauvoo. The ethics of the kingdom were nationalistic in nature, and at times when the kingdom was imperiled and individual lives, too, were threatened, anything seemed justifiable. But are we to conclude that secret plotting and violence were really the essential means by which Church leaders kept their power?

Quinn seems to suggest that Brigham Young secured his access to the presidency only by chicanery, bribery, and political stratagem. Quinn also ignores the gradual rise of the Twelve to Church leadership after their amazing missionary success in England at a time when the Churc was integrating in Kirtland. Although Quinn now seems to think that the claims of the Twelve to succession were inferior to those of William Marks, it may be that what was written in the scriptures regarding succession, ambivalent at best, was not as important as what was written in the hearts of the Saints. Brigham Young had proved his loyalty to Joseph and emphasized that he would carry out the prophet's program. The Saints recognized Brigham as the strongest man and chose him accordingly.

The accusation that Hosea Stout murdered Samuel Smith is absurd. Brigham Young worshipped the Smiths and fully expected that one day one of them would preside over the Church in his stead. Had Stout murdered Samuel, Brigham would have dealt with him. I doubt that by 30 July 1844, when Samuel died, Brigham's ideas as to the Twelve's right to succession had fully matured, so there would have been no reason to dispose of the prophet's brother. Actually, it would require forensic evidence to establish that Samuel Smith was murdered; no such evidence now exists. If Smith had been murdered, it is far more likely that some of Thomas C. Sharp's friends did it, for they had sworn by oath that they would kill everyone of the Smith brothers except William, whom they considered no threat.

We need to know something about the nature of Mormon leadership. Do these men actually lead, or are they representative men who gain and keep their power by personifying Mormon ideals? Do they shape Mormonism, or are they largely shaped by it? Rather than a dark lust for power, which Quinn depicts, had they no religious values and feelings? Were there no Christians, no good guys? Was there no brotherhood or love among them?

Someday someone should write a truly fresh history of the Mormon hierarchy from the perspective of the leaders themselves—who they are, how they work, what problems they face, and how Mormon institutions affect and limit their possible responses. Loyalty to the kingdom demands that leaders present a solid front to the world, and individuality is often thereby smothered. Someone needs to tackle the question of what tensions exist between individual conscience and group loyalty in such a theocracy. Also, we need to know more about the enormous demands on time and talent; administrative challenges; demands for knowledge encompassing politics, social issues, and law; scholastics at the Church university; and conditions at home and abroad in a worldwide church. What effect does Church members' belief in the virtual omniscience of Church leaders have upon these brethren? Do they really resolve all their problems by relying on the Spirit, or do they often rely upon more conventional sources of knowledge? Someday the story needs to be told, and I believe it should be a scholarly, candid study, not a Church apologetic. If the overly negative image of the LDS hierarchy drawn by too many historians can ever be fairly offset, such an open, honest, but sympathetic study is needed. As of now, there is no definitive study of the Mormon hierarchy.

NOTES


PARADIGM LOST

Reviewed by Gregory A. Prince

SINCE THE COMPLETION of his doctoral dissertation in 1976, D. Michael Quinn has been a major contributor to modern Mormon historiography. He has consistently approached his research with prodigious energy which, when coupled with the unprecedented access to LDS archival material given him while researching the life of J. Reuben Clark Jr., has yielded a steady stream of detailed, highly documented articles and books which have placed him in the first echelon of current scholars of Mormonism.

Although Quinn has been fascinated in recent years with topics tending towards sensationalism (post-Manifesto polygamy, "baseball baptisms," nineteenth-century Mormon homosexuality, magic, and the extremist politics of Ezra Taft Benson, for example), he has returned to the topic of his doctoral dissertation for the first of two volumes of what will become his magnum opus in *Mormon Hierarchy: Origins of Power* (Signature Books, 1994). Quinn traces the development of the Mormon hierarchy from the founding events of the Latter-day Saint
movement through the reorganization of the hierarchy following the assassination of Joseph Smith. A companion volume, scheduled to be published later this year, will continue the history of the hierarchy through the present time.

Quinn informs us that the research culminating in the book has been in progress for thirty years—more than a decade prior to the completion of his dissertation. So broad and deep are his source materials, there are few historians of Mormonism who equal him, and none who surpass him, in carefully and exhaustively documenting our past. Indeed, two-thirds of his nearly 700-page book is devoted to endnotes and appendices. One need only compare Hierarchy with Quinn's dissertation to appreciate the amount of additional research since 1976. (Besides his dissertation, Quinn employed two previously published articles to form the nuclei of two of the book's six chapters.)

I found myself comparing Hierarchy to Fawn Brodie's landmark biography of Joseph Smith, No Man Knows My History.2 Both scholars distinguished themselves for the depth and breadth of their research, often going where others had not gone before, and thus creating standard texts against which all subsequent works on the same topics will be compared. Although both authors were careful researchers, Brodie was the better writer; Quinn's prose is stiff, and I had difficulty maintaining interest at times, particularly in his middle chapters.

The most striking similarity between Hierarchy and No Man was that, despite the prodigious amount of effort expended by the authors, there were fundamental flaws in each. Brodie tainted her message by insisting that Smith was a fraud, and marshalled her data to support that conclusion, rather than taking a more dispassionate and scholarly view and letting her sources speak in their own voices. (She softened her tone in the second edition.)

In Hierarchy, Quinn elegantly describes the functioning of the hierarchy (chapters two through six), yet grossly misinterprets the foundation upon which that hierarchy was built (chapter one). Furthermore, he insists, in the face of substantial evidence to the contrary, that "in 1843 [Joseph] Smith extended the Melchizedek priesthood to LDS women through an 'endowment ceremony'" (36).

This review will primarily examine that first chapter. There is a strong tendency within Mormonism to view what now is universally termed "priesthood" in simplistic terms, and to describe its "restoration" in terms of events occurring either in 1829 (according to official LDS accounts) or from 1829 through 1831 (according to Quinn). Either view is too narrow and has a tendency to overemphasize those events at the expense of other events and processes that both preceded and followed them. I have dealt with this subject at length elsewhere and limit my remarks here to the following summary.

The issue of authority in Joseph Smith's ministry began informally and implicitly as a result of his dealings with the angel who was the guardian of the gold plates. His family and friends, and those who later were converted to the message of the "Restoration," understood his special status as God's spokesman because of that angel (later identified as Moroni). His "First Vision," now a cornerstone of Latter-day Saint theology, was initially seen by Smith as personal, conferring forgiveness of his own sins without implying a ministry or bestowing authority to enable one. (Quinn follows the lead of others in erroneously stating that the earliest First Vision account was 1832 [619]. A comparison of that narrative with D&C 20:5-6 will show that the latter is, in fact, an account of the First Vision, which was first published in the Painesville Telegraph on 19 April 1831, and which probably was written prior to the formal organization of the Church in April 1830.)

THE PRIORITY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON

Quinn missed how much the Book of Mormon structured early Mormon hierarchy.

Informal, implied authority was sufficient for Smith as long as there were no "formal" acts to be performed. His consciousness of the need for such acts was raised when he dictated to Oliver Cowdery, his new scribe, Book of Mormon passages describing baptism and the need for divine authority on the part of the baptist. Those passages led him to request and receive such authority. Quinn correctly points out (as have others) that several years elapsed before John the Baptist was linked by either Smith or Cowdery to this event. Perhaps this was because it was Moroni who had authorized Smith to begin a ministry, and because it was the Book of Mormon which spoke of the necessity of baptism, mandated the divine authority necessary to perform it, prescriptions the manner in which it was to be performed, and supplied the text of the baptismal prayer. Neither Quinn nor other commentators appear to appreciate the priority of the Book of Mormon and its caretaker during the formative years of Mormonism, against which backdrop the formal restoration of authority to baptize was but a footnote. In the initial months after its publication, the Book of Mormon defined not only the ordinance of baptism, but a dual-tiered authority structure within the "New Testament" period of its narrative (3 Ne. on), which served as the model for the earliest form of Mormon hierarchy, and which Quinn ignores. As described primarily in Moroni 2 and 3, the Nephite church was organized with three offices: elders, priests and teachers. The elders (also called disciples, 3:1), however, were empowered to do something which neither the priests nor the teachers could do, namely to "give the Holy Ghost" (2:2). Unlike the priest and teacher, their authority came directly
While it is instructive to examine the areas in which women came to function in a manner analogous to male priesthood officers, it is also essential to emphasize that most activities associated with priesthood were never extended nor promised to women during Smith's lifetime.

from the resurrected Christ (2:1–2).

By August 1829, the hierarchy of the Restoration consisted of the same three offices mentioned in Moroni—elders, priests, and teachers. As in the Book of Mormon, the office of elder was unique in bestowing the authority to confer the Holy Ghost. Quinn erroneously states that all three offices were "at first associated with what would come to be known as the lesser (or Aaronic) priesthood" (27). According to David Whitmer, who was the Restoration's third elder, Smith and Cowdery had received the lesser authority and baptized each other in his father's farm to Pennsylvania in May 1829, prior to Whitmer's going there to take them back to his father's farm to finish their work on the Book of Mormon. However, neither they nor he were ordained elders until shortly after the three return to New York in June. By the time they had been in New York for two weeks, Cowdery and Whitmer were "called even with that same calling" as "Paul mine apostle" (D&C 18:9), and were authorized to choose twelve disciples analogous to the Nephite twelve disciples. Later the same year, Cowdery made explicit what in D&C 18 may have seemed only inferential when he wrote, "I am Oliver I am an Apostle of Jesus Christ."

The duality of titles associated with the higher level of authority has been confusing to most commentators, as has the meaning of "disciple" and "apostle." The Book of Mormon reserves the term "apostle" to refer to the Twelve in Jerusalem and uses the term "disciple" when referring to the Nephite Twelve. It is clear, however, that the roles of the two groups of men were the same. In referring to the Nephite Twelve, the Book of Mormon states that the "disciples . . . were called the elders of the church." (Moro. 3:1). This dual nomenclature was carried over to the Restoration. Although initially the Book of Mormon term "disciple" was used (D&C 18:27), within the same year, Cowdery shifted to the biblical "apostle." By 1830, Cowdery and Smith were each referred to as "an Apostle of Jesus Christ an Elder of this Church of Christ." A revelation accompanying the organization of the Church appeared to clarify the relationship of the two terms by saying, "an apostle is an elder" (D&C 20:38). William McLellin, correctly quoted by Quinn, later commented on this, saying that the term "apostle" was not an administrative one. Rather, its early use was consistent with the generic New Testament term "apostle"—being a commissioned messenger or ambassador. To act in an administrative capacity required the office of elder. Apostles were elders (and are still called such within the LDS tradition), but by late 1830, not all elders were apostles. In 1835, as Quinn correctly describes, "apostle" took on a new meaning and became an ordained office.

THE BIBLICAL MODEL OF CHURCH STRUCTURE

Quinn doggedly insists that the highest authority was not conferred in 1829 and that, indeed, "men were first ordained to the higher priesthood over a year after the church's founding [i.e. 1831]" (15), because he misunderstands the nature of "high priesthood and its relationship to angelic conferral of authority. To understand it is to gain appreciation for the role of Sidney Rigdon in shaping the Restoration and in turning Smith's attention to a biblical model of church structure at the expense of a Book of Mormon model.

The four missionaries (including Cowdery) who traveled through Kirtland, Ohio, in the autumn of 1830 converted and baptized Rigdon. Rigdon believed their message and recognized their authority as divinely bestowed, but as the men spent time together, he became troubled by what he perceived to be a lack of supernatural power on the part of the missionaries. Rigdon traveled east to New York where, within days of his arrival, he became Smith's new scribe and recorded a revelation (D&C 38) directing the Saints to move to Ohio where the missionaries would be "endowed with power from on high." This revelation focused on an important, yet often overlooked, principle within the New Testament. The mortal Jesus had chosen and ordained his disciples/apostles, yet, when the resurrected Christ appeared to the eleven, he told them to tarry at Jerusalem until they were "endued with power from on high." (Luke 24:48.) They had received "authority" from the mortal Jesus, but they would not be able to perform their missionary ministry until they had also received an additional layer of "power from on high."

The Latter-day Saint elders considered themselves the exact counterparts of their New Testament predecessors. If the ancient apostles had required both formal authorization through ordination and pentecostal bestowal of special power over physical objects and phenomena, then so would they. Thus, to the 1829 concept of two levels of formal authority was added the 1831 concept of "power." During the five months following the revelation (D&C 38), the nature of the promised endowment gradually emerged. Smith's February redaction of Genesis 14 (with Rigdon as his scribe) added sixteen new verses to the King James text that described an ancient order to which Melchizedek had belonged, which had conferred upon its members supernatural power over physical phenomena and objects (see the Joseph Smith Translation of the King James Bible). In May 1831, a revelation directed to Ezra Thayre stated that he would be ordained to this "power from on high" at a conference to be held the next month. In June 1831, a general conference was held. What happened at that conference has confused scholars (among them Quinn) for over a century and a half. Several of the elders were "endowed with power from on high" by being ordained to the "high priesthood" or "Order of Melchizedek." Their ordination was accompanied by a veritable Pentecost, thereby validating their perceived continuity with their ancient counterparts the Jerusalem apostles who were empowered on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2). It is easy to be confused by the meaning of the June 1831 conference if one is not critical in reading the many accounts of it. Without a single exception, all accounts of the conference written prior to 1835 (as well as many written thereafter) maintain the contemporaneous terminology of "high priesthood" or "Order of Melchizedek," and equate these with the "endowment" of "power from on high" promised in D&C 38. In 1831, none of the offices of the church was referred to as "priesthood." What the 1831 conference accomplished was to add a layer of supernatural power to the office of several of the elders (and only the elders, thus reinforcing the con-
cept of their having had a higher level of authority than the priest and teacher). Contrary to Quinn’s assertion (29), this conference did not mark the beginning of a new office of High Priest (which evolved several months thereafter); nor was it associated with angelic confrerral of authority; nor did it mark the restorations of the Melchizedek Priesthood, for that title did not arise until 1835, at which time it meant something quite different than the ordination of the Melchizedek Priesthood. It is because scholars, including Quinn, have failed to note the anachronistic terminology of the later accounts that they have become confused and, in turn, have confused their readers.

To summarize: There were two angelic restorations of authority, one in May 1829 in Pennsylvania, of authority to baptize, and the other in June 1829 in New York, of the higher authority of elder/disciple. Neither level of authority nor any of the three offices was called “priesthood” prior to June 1831; in fact, use of the term “priesthood” to refer to a collection of more than one ordained office did not begin until 1832. In June 1831, a pentecostal endowment of “power from on high” conferred upon several of the elders special powers over here-and-now types of phenomena (such as those described in Smith’s redaction of Genesis 14), but represented neither a new office nor a blanket term encompassing other offices. It was, to the office of elder, analogous to what Jesus is to the office of Roman Catholic priest. Termed both “high priesthood” and the “Order of Melchizedek,” it was not equivalent to Melchizedek priesthood, a concept and term which did not arise until four years later.

OTHER important events occurred between 1831 and 1836, including the addition of offices (deacon, bishop, patriarch, apostle, and seventy) and grouping of offices within blanket terms (1832 and 1835), but none was associated with visionary experiences except the 1834 vision authorizing the calling of the Twelve Apostles and the Seventy (Quinn, as have other commentators, overlooks the 1878 published account of Joseph Young describing a meeting with himself, his brother Brigham, and Joseph Smith, where Smith described a vision, incident to the march of Zion’s Camp, in which he saw the Twelve and the Seventy.)

The process of priesthood development continued throughout Smith’s life, a fact minimized by Quinn. Perhaps the most important development in Latter-day Saint priesthood theology, and certainly the most overlooked, was the 1836 vision of Elijah (see D&c 110) and the subsequent meteoric rise of Elijah in Latter-day Saint priesthood theology, to which Quinn devotes less than one page. However, the virtual disappearance from Joseph Smith’s discourses and writings, by 1840, of John the Baptist and of Peter, James, and John in association with priesthood is paralleled by the corresponding development of Elijah theology, underscoring again the importance of viewing the emergence of Latter-day Saint “priesthood” as a gradual, uneven process, rather than two distinct events whose details can be known with certainty.

M Y final criticism of Hierarchy concerns Quinn’s persistent assertion that women were given the priesthood in 1843. He states, “in 1843 Smith ex-
tended Melchizedek priesthood to LDS women through an 'endowment ceremony.' " (36). In an earlier article, he stated that "every endowed Mormon woman has received the Melchizedek priesthood from 1843 to the present." This sweeping conclusion, which by his own account cost him his Church membership, simply is not consistent with the data relating to Smith's ministry. It is clear that the concept and structure of priesthood continued to develop throughout Smith's ministry and that gradual inclusion of women in some aspects of priesthood function occurred. Beginning in the mid-1830s, women were encouraged (by some men, at least) to lay hands on the sick or distressed and give them blessings, a function hitherto associated with priesthood. A second area of activity in which women functioned in a manner similar to that of men who had been ordained to the priesthood—i.e., performed an ordinance previously associated solely with priesthood—occurred in 1843, when women were first included in the endowment. A preparatory ordinance to the endowment was the washing and anointing of the entire body in a literal, not merely symbolic, fashion. Modesty dictated that women be called upon to administer this ordinance to other women.

While it is instructive to examine the areas in which women came to function in a manner analogous to that of male priesthood officers, it is also essential to emphasize that most activities associated with priesthood were never extended nor promised to women during Smith's lifetime. For example, there is no evidence that, during that period, they performed any of the following ordinances or other functions: ordination; baptism; confirmation; administration of the sacrament; blessing of babies; cursing; casting out of evil spirits; endowment; raising the dead (or attempting to do so); sealing, either of people to eternal life, or of one person to another; marriage; second anointing; missionary ministry.

Thus, if one examines the historical record, it becomes apparent that from a functional point of view, there was a gradual trend towards inclusion of women in activities associated with priesthood and previously denied to women; yet the trend was weak, never including more than a small minority of priesthood activities and never promising the rest. There is no record that Smith ever stated or even implied that women would eventually be ordained to the same priesthood as men; neither, however, did he indicate that such ordination was not possible. Data exist to bolster the claims that women should be ordained, yet equally firm data exist to support the claims that women should not be ordained. An honest reading of the historical record from Smith's ministry leaves open the question of women and priesthood, and argues against the radical conclusion which Quinn continues to expend in unqualified terms and at great cost.

GREAT SALT DESERT

This is the place where I met Kurt, who said there are two ways of covering your ass in Utah: get religion down good (white shirt, black tie, bicycle) or be a little boy who hasn't yet understood his very friend indeed. Red rocks, red clay under my fingernails after scaling mushroomed pinnacles, arms caked with cave sweat and dirt and exhaustion, I thirsted compulsively. Bats spun daytime laurels around my head, dizzy tribute to finding holiness in an out-of-the-way place. That is what it was; there is no higher standard, just an opposite, an iron rod laid out to test the breeze of salt flats. Mormon crickets clamor insatiably, doomed to survive. I've heard the male of the species chooses his mates carefully. Kurt seeks a foothold to win the view above us, before I get there. He grabs my hand to pull me up, and we are brothers of a kind, we know this, at least. Pinched by clouds of insects, force-fed fields grow weak, insensible to what we call desire. I need violence, something to unseal the notion that the physical being-ness of earth images the just to come. Provo needs a picture of insects, force-fed fields grow weak, insensible to what we call desire. I need violence, something to unseal the notion that the physical being-ness of earth images the just to come. Provo needs a picture and we are smiling and clean-cut, arm-in-arm. Looking so

—Karl Rosenquist
IN HIS INAUGURAL news conference last March, Church President Gordon B. Hinckley described growth as a "wonderful problem" for the Church to have. But recent statistics actually portray a much slower growth rate than the Church is accustomed to. What do these trends mean for the Church as it heads into the twenty-first century?

From 1830, when the LDS church was founded, to the 1940s, when proselytizing efforts were hampered by World War II, the Church experienced sustained growth, never dropping below a 28 percent increase in membership per decade. Then, in the 1950s, the Church entered an era of phenomenal expansion, and growth rates did not dip below 52 percent per decade. Nevertheless, his long-term projections of Church membership in the year 2080 are still highly uncertain, given that a single decade of nongrowth would significantly undercut his final projections. For example, a world war in the 2070s that cut the decade's growth rate to 20 percent would reduce the total significantly.

The End of an Era? That trend, however, could soon end. Using data from the Deseret News 1905-96 Church Almanac, some analysts say that Church growth in the '90s—while still robust—could drop to levels below those of the 1950s.

In 1993, with 8.689 million members, the LDS church had grown nearly 12 percent, or by more than 900,000 members, since the beginning of the decade. If that same growth rate continues throughout the '90s, the decade's overall gain will be nearly 46 percent—which, while solid, would also be the lowest percentage of growth for any decade since the 1940s and a 27 point drop from 1980s. Also, while the drop in growth rate since 1990 is certainly noteworthy, it is the decline's breadth that is potentially alarming—this drop cuts across all regions of the Church (see figure 1).

What Does the Future Hold? From 1950 to 1990, Church membership increased from 1.111 million members to 7.761 million members (see figure 3). Rodney Stark, a professor of sociology and religious studies at the University of Washington, has published the most widely cited projections of LDS growth in the future. He concluded that, based on data from 1830 to 1980, future growth in the LDS church would likely fall somewhere between 30 and 50 percent per decade, resulting in a Church membership of 265 million by 2080.

In hindsight, Stark's projections for growth are quite conservative with respect to the 1980s and are likely to be highly feasible for the 1990s, even if Church growth continues to slow. Nevertheless, the '90s decline in growth rates raises interesting and important questions. For example, has Church growth slowed because of changes in...
Church policies like that of encouraging full-time missionaries to dedicate hours to community service? Or have decades of extremely high growth sufficiently taxed the administrative structure of the Church so that it has intentionally, but quietly, slowed its growth. Is such a decline in growth rate inevitable, even healthy, as the Church seeks to develop new management strategies? Or is the decline merely a pause, like the 1970s were after the large growth in the '60s, to be followed by another phenomenal surge?

Whatever the explanations, interested observers will anxiously await the next set of Church Almanac statistics to see whether today's lower growth rates are a short-term aberration or part of a long-term trend.

NOTES


Figure 3: Based on data from various Desert News Church Almanacs. 1900 figures based on average of data from 1899 and 1991.

OBEY THE LAW OF THE LAND, ELDER FAUST SAYS

OBEY THE law of the land. That was the central message of First Presidency Counselor James E. Faust's Freedom Festival speech delivered 2 July in Provo.

"I admit some laws seem irrational, but they are the law, and should be changed by orderly process," he said.

Elder Faust linked civil disobedience with violent acts and warned that utilizing such methods could lead to anarchy.

"An oppressive government is preferable to a state of lawlessness," Elder Faust said, quoting from a 1994 speech by Apostle Dallin H. Oaks.

Elder Faust reassured the audience that even with its problems and challenges, the United States was "still the greatest haven of opportunity in the world."

"It has at its very heart the concept of a government 'instituted of God for the benefit of man.' As such, Elder Faust continued, "he that keepeth the laws of God hath no need to break the laws of the land."

(D&C 134:1; 58:21).

Morality of War. Elder Faust questioned the morality of war, but affirmed the morality of "duty to country."

He recounted the story of his father who served as a U.S. machine gunner in World War I. Elder Faust told the audience that his father was duty-bound to shoot at soldiers in the German army, even though it was possible he was shooting at some of his own German relatives.

Elder Faust commended the men on both sides of the battle lines for fulfilling their civil duty above all else.

Distrust of Government. Elder Faust expressed concern at America's growing sense of cynicism and distrust of government.

He pointed to the unpopular Vietnam War and the Watergate scandal as possible causes. "I personally have never known of any popular wars," he said.

Elder Faust suggested recasting the Vietnam War as a test of faith and character for those who answered the call to serve their country. He spoke of Watergate as a remarkable example of how constitutional processes can remove a head of state peacefully, without bloodshed.

Governmental Regulation and "Pollution." Elder Faust defended the value of governmental regulation and cited as examples the maintenance of clean air and water.

He went on to suggest that the national government should also address the "pollution of the air waves, movie theaters, and the print media."

Civil Disobedience and Abortion. "Even when causes are meritorious, if civil disobedience were to be practiced by everyone with a cause, our democracy would be destroyed," Elder Faust warned.

He extended his caution to anti-abortion activists, saying that despite the "moral wrongness" of laws protecting abortion, civil disobedience and violence were unacceptable responses.

"When we disagree with a law ... we are obliged to exercise our right to seek its repeal by peaceful and lawful means."

Personal Responsibility. Elder Faust encouraged personal responsibility and grassroots involvement in safeguarding Constitutional rights and curing any ills of government.

"In a democracy, if we are not involved in our duty as citizens, we have the kind of government we deserve."

National Values. Elder Faust discussed the issue of national values calling them "everybody's values," and enumerating "honesty, integrity, decency and civility, marriage, independence, industry, thrift, self-reliance, respect for law and order, and hard work."

Although Elder Faust acknowledged the widespread feeling that such values may be eroding, he preferred to leave the Freedom Festival audience with a "voice of confidence and hope"—and obedience.

"The desirability of this country will persist so long as its citizenry are a God-fearing people with the integrity to obey the law of the land," he said.
MORMON FEMINIST EXCOMMUNICATED

JANICE ALLRED, a Provo mother of nine, feminist, theologian, and author, was excommunicated May 10 after refusing to comply with the terms of a previous Church disciplinary action. Allred was placed on ecclesiastical probation early in October 1994 after publishing a speculative essay on Mother in Heaven and after publicly speaking against the popular LDS belief that God will never allow the Church hierarchy to lead the membership astray (see "Mormon Feminist Disciplined," SUNSTONE, April, 1995).

In Church meetings, or hold a Church position. Her bishop, Robert Hammond, also told her to stay in regular contact with him and not to publish nor speak in opposition to scripture, official Church statements, or Church leaders, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. Shortly after her first "disciplinary council," Allred said she could not accept the probation's terms. "They attempt to obligate me to restrict my freedom of speech by allowing the bishop to supervise and censor my work," she said. Allred added that none of her work opposes the Church or its leaders and that she will use her "right to disagree with ideas and dissent from policies and practices."

Allred’s second hearing focused on several recent speeches and articles that have appeared in independent Mormon publications since October as well as her earlier writings. She was also questioned about her media appearances and statements to the press. She told the Associated Press that her response to the charges was that calling attention to problems is not the same thing as tearing down the Church. "I feel sorrow at the loss of my membership," Allred told the Tribune after the five-hour court. "I am sad that Church leaders are unwilling to recognize the need for tolerance and the discussion of ideas without fear of punishment."

Allred is the eighth high-profile Mormon intellectual to be excommunicated since September 1993 for "apostasy" or "conduct unbecoming" of a Latter-day Saint; she is also the first to be disciplined since President Gordon B. Hinckley became Church president in March. Allred says she plans to appeal the decision.

NEW CENTER FOR MORMON ARTISTS DEDICATED

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY dedicated the new Tuacahn Center for the Arts in St. George, Utah, on Saturday 8 April. According to the Salt Lake Tribune, the center will be the future home of a program for the performing and visual arts.

BULLETIN BOARD

LDS Senator Helps Change Idaho Child Abuse/Clergy Law. During the first regular session of 1995, the Idaho Legislature changed a law that previously required clergy members to report child abuse to authorities. Senator Grant Ipson, LDS church Regional Health Services Director and a regional representative, sponsored the bill, which had unanimous support from LDS senators and representatives.

U of U Endows Widtsoe Chair. The John A. Widtsoe Presidential Endowed Chair was recently established by the University of Utah; chemistry professor C. Dale Poulter will be its first honoree. The fully endowed $1.25 million chair honors Elder Widtsoe, a member of the Council of the Twelve, until his death in 1952, and former U of U president.

President Faust Tells Ricks Graduates to Join “New Spiritual Aristocracy.” Church-owned Ricks College in Rexburg, Idaho, set a graduation record in April by awarding 2,599 degrees. Keynote speaker President James E. Faust, second counselor in the First Presidency, charged the graduates to join a "new spiritual aristocracy" and battle the "steady, creeping moral dry rot" that is destroying America and many other countries. The Associated Press reported that he also urged male graduates to marry and provide for their families. Women, he said, may study. Some may even work out of necessity. But women’s true calling is to have children and run an “eternal household.”

First Stake Created in Ireland. This spring, Irish Saints celebrated the creation of the country’s first stake. The organization of the Dublin Ireland Stake, which will serve about 1,700 Church members, comes nearly 155 years after John Taylor (later a Church president)—who was among the country’s earliest missionaries—baptized Ireland’s first member, Thomas Tate.

Firm Sues Church Over “Damaging” Conference Talk. Claiming their self-esteem enhancing firm was damaged by a talk given during the 1994 general conference in April, owners William and Jannette Bireley are suing the Church for $189 million. In the “offending” talk, Apostle M. Russell Ballard told Church leaders and members not to become involved with groups that "purport to increase self-awareness, raise self-esteem, and enhance individual agency." Even though Elder Ballard never mentioned the Bireley’s firm, or any other such group, their suit demands compensation for injurious falsehood, defamation, intentional interference with prospective economic relations, and intentional infliction of emotional distress.

LDS Dating Service Manager Charged with Forgery, Theft. Utah County prosecutors recently charged a former LDS dating service manager with two second degree felonies for allegedly bilking clients and investors out of about $100,000. The Provo office of the 1000-plus member dating service, Latter Day Ideals, has been run by Laddille G. Poyurs since 1993. According
of an annual art festival showcasing Mormon artists. The two-week celebrations will include plays, oratorios, gallery showings, and workshops. In his dedicatory prayer, President Hinckley said that "Millions of people in years to come will be touched in their hearts by Tuacahn . . . where history becomes entertainment and truth becomes beauty."

Novelist Orson Scott Card was among those giving workshops at the symposium preceding the dedication ceremony. He told the Tribune that Mormon artists "measure [their] success morally, not aesthetically or financially" and that they should be supportive of each other, not competitive. Card emphasized the fact that Tuacahn will be a place for artists to "write and think freely" without worrying about censorship or criticism.

CHURCH TO STOP BAPTIZING HOLOCAUST VICTIMS

ON 3 MAY, the Church signed an agreement stating it would stop posthumous temple baptisms for Jewish victims of the Holocaust. The agreement was reached after nearly a year of amicable negotiations between the Church and the American Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors. Ernest Michel, a founding member of the American Gathering, said he got involved when he discovered that his parents, who had been killed at Auschwitz, were listed in the Church's giant computerized International Genealogical Index (IGI)—as baptized members of the LDS church. As it turns out, Michel's parents were just two of some 380,000 Holocaust victims who had been baptized by proxy.

As part of the agreement, the Church will remove from the next issue of IGI the names of all known Jewish Holocaust victims who are not ancestors of living members of the Church. It will also issue a directive to all officials and members of the Church to discontinue any baptisms of deceased Jews, including Holocaust victims, unless they are direct ancestors of living members of the Church or unless the Church has the written approval of all living members of their immediate families.

Church spokesperson Don LeFevre told the Associated Press that the names of the Jewish Holocaust victims had been submitted for temple work by nine Church members who had visited either a Holocaust museum or concentration camp in Europe and had been "in each case moved with the tragedy of that event." The Church
to court documents, Poyurs shortly thereafter gained control over the company's Salt Lake, Ogden, Orem, and Idaho Falls offices in a "hostile takeover," pocketing company funds and writing bad checks.

Downtown Salt Lake Park Honors Brigham Young. In the mid-1800s, land at the northern edge of downtown Salt Lake was part of Brigham Young's farm. Then it was a parking lot. And now it is the Brigham Young Historic Park, a one-acre plot that is bordered by 2nd Avenue on the north and State Street on the west. The park honoring President Young, the Mormon prophet who led the Saints to Utah, features a water wheel, a pond, and a series of sculptures depicting early pioneer scenes.

Nebraska Mormon Trail Center Announced. The Church announced in July plans to build The Mormon Trail Center in Omaha, Nebraska. The 7,000-square-foot visitor center will be located across the street from the Mormon Pioneer Cemetery in the area known historically as Winter Quarters and will be completed in time for the Church's 1997 sesquicentennial celebration of the Pioneers' arrival in Utah.

Provo Mayor Closes Public Pool on Sundays. Non-Mormon religious leaders and several members of the Provo City Council are disputing Provo Mayor George Stewart's decision to close the community's swimming pool on Sundays. According to the Salt Lake Tribune, Stewart believes the community standard in Provo does not include swimming in a public pool on "the Lord's day." Shari Holweg is one of the council members who is an opponent of the decision. At the request of Holweg and several other council members, council attorney Mike Thornton drafted an ordinance that could take away the Mayor's power to regulate the pool's hours. The ordinance is still under negotiation.

Business as Usual at LDS College. As the church-owned LDS Business College enters its 110th year, it continues to strive to be nothing but a "business college in a spiritual environment." Over time, the college has evolved from a secretarial/typing school to a full-service junior college offering one-year certificates and two-year degrees in sixteen business-related areas, the Deseret News reported. While the college is near capacity this year with about 900 enrolled, each class averages only about eighteen students.

Women Church Leaders Ask FCC to Clean Up TV. All nine Church presidency members from the three women's auxiliaries recently signed a letter encouraging the Federal Communications Commission to provide stricter programming guidelines and establish high-quality television shows for children. "The desensitizing effect of such programming [violence, profanity, crudeness, and immorality] . . . undermines in subtle and powerful ways the most important foundations of our society," the letter reads. "Ridicule of family relationships, schools, and religions should not be tolerated."

Historic Lehi Chapel Razed. The old Mormon 5th Ward chapel in Lehi, Utah, was torn down in July despite an eleven-hour effort by a local historical preservation group. Historians were given permission to remove tile and ornate pieces from the basement fireplace before the demolition, and comb the rubble for other relics afterwards.
members submitted the names for temple ordinances out of compassion and hope, even though the act was insensitive to the families of the Jewish Holocaust victims, he said.

LeFevre told the AP that the Church has a "95-year rule" which forbids the baptizing of anyone born less than 95 years ago unless family permission has been obtained. Elder Monte J. Brough of the Church's Presidency of the Seventy added at a press conference, "The purpose of genealogical record-gathering in the Church...is to provide a process to unite family members in an eternal bond." "Submitting names of deceased individuals who are not ancestors of members of the Church is not consistent with Church policy," Elder Brough added.

A situation like this, however, becomes nearly inescapable in a rapidly expanding Church of 9 million members. In 1958, there were only ten temples; today, there are nearly five times that. Keeping up with the growth has been hard. In 1975, Church members provided just 26 percent of the names used in temple ordinances; the Church's extraction program provided the rest. By 1990, it was nearly the opposite: members supply about 70 percent of the names. These temples are "like this massive sponge that requires an unending supply of names," historian D. Michael Quinn told the AP.

Such growth led to proxy baptisms like those of the Jewish Holocaust victims. "Frankly, we as Church leaders just get busy doing other things, and we've allowed a little slack in this," Elder Brough told the AP. "There's some tightening up that we have to do."

This is not the first time the

**TRANSFERS**

- Maureen Urenbach Beecher, a professor of English and a research historian at the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute, has been appointed to the Advisory Board of Editors at the Utah Historical Quarterly. She replaces Weber State University dean of social sciences Richard W. Sadler.
- Susan Easton Black, a religion professor, has been named associate dean of BYU General Education and Honors. She replaces Juliana Boerio-Goats, who returned to full-time teaching in the chemistry department.
- Rondo Fehlberg, a former BYU All-American wrestler and current Pennzoll executive, has been named BYU's men's athletic director. He replaces Clayne Jensen, who has retired.
- Elder Jack H. Goaslind and Elder Harold G. Hillam have been appointed to the Presidency of the Seventy, replacing Elder Rex D. Pinegar and Elder Charles Didier, who have been reassigned as area supervisors.
- Brent Harker, associate director of Public Communications, has been named director of BYU Public Communications. He replaces Margaret Smoot, who left the university to pursue private business interests.
- Tom Hart, former Marriott Corporation executive and special assistant to President Richard M. Nixon, has been named president of BYU's Alumni Association.
- Carri P. Jenkins, former associate editor of Brigham Young Magazine, has been named assistant director of BYU's Public Communications Department.
- Ellen Larsen, among the first women's sports publicists in collegiate athletics, retired in August from her BYU position.
- Marie Osmond has given up touring with the Sound of Music for the ABC sitcom, Maybe This Time. In it, she plays a divorced mother of one who, to make ends meet, pushes cappuccino at the Coffee Dog Cafe.
- Glen Tuckett retired from his position as BYU athletic director only to become the temporary athletic director for Alabama's embattled program.
- Lu Wallace, former BYU women's athletic director, retired in August after 23 years. She was replaced by Elaine Michaelis, former woman's volleyball coach.
- Lawrence Young, BYU sociology professor, became president of the Mormon Social Science Association in October. Gary Shepherd, professor of sociology at Oakland University in Rochester, Michigan, is president-elect.

**AWARDS**

- Brigham Young University's racquetball team recently won the World Collegiate Tournament in Nashville, Tennessee, despite forfeiting nine matches by refusing to play on Sunday.
- Brigham Young University has been nominated for the 1995 Computerworld Smithsonian Award for its electronic imaging of admission records.
- Brigham Young University's 64-delegate Model U.N. team placed in the top five among the more than 174 colleges and universities that attended the New York conference in May.
- The Church's "Homefront" series of radio and television spots recently won an award as part of National Parents Day. The series has won many other awards over the years, including three Emmys and eighteen Clio.
- President James E. Faust, second counselor in the First Presidency, was recently awarded the Distinguished Lawyer Emeritus Award by the Utah State Bar.
- John Gee and Gaye Strathern recently received awards from the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies' Hugh W. Nibley Fellowship. The newly created fellowship will be used to support advanced-degree-seeking students "whose work promises to contribute to our understanding of ancient scripture."
- Elder Jack H. Goaslind, member of the Seventy, received the Silver Buffalo, the Boys Scouts of America's highest honor, in May.
- Allen Hall, a BYU alumnus and visual effects artist, was one of three designers to receive an Academy Award for the film Forrest Gump.
Church has reaffirmed its proxy baptism policy. In 1990, the Church discovered that names entered from German, Dutch, French, and Israeli rosters of Holocaust victims had been baptized by mistake and ordered that such baptisms cease, Elder Brough said. He added that should it be discovered that other large groups were baptized posthumously, their names would also be removed.

Helen Radkey, a self-described spiritual healer, was the next person to step forward to criticize the Church's posthumous baptism practices. In July, she launched a single-handed campaign to alert Catholics that the LDS church has baptized famous Catholics including St. Ignatius Loyola, St. Augustine, St. Francis of Assisi, and St. Joan of Arc, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. "The Catholic Church should not condone or promote religious practices that attempt to belittle its saints," Radkey, who is a former Catholic and former Mormon, wrote in a letter to Utah's Catholic Bishop George H. Niederauer. "I ask you to insist that the Mormon church remove the names of all Catholic saints from its temple records." It appears that Catholic leaders don't share Radkey's concern. Neither Bishop Niederauer nor church leaders in Rome, whom Radkey visited last spring, indicated that they intend to ask the LDS church to stop baptizing the saints.

MORMON ALLIANCE
DECONSTRUCTS CONFERENCE

OVER 200 people gathered at the Salt Lake City Public Library 3 April for "Play by Play: A Spirited Critique of April General Conference," a semi-annual meeting sponsored by the Mormon Alliance which featured panelists Janice Allied, Lavina Fielding Andersen, Arden Watts, and Vonne and Richard Williams. Panelists as well as audience members discussed topics ranging from the impact of the solemn assembly to the entertainment value of conference.

Although several panelists mentioned the confidence-inspiring

- Gordon B. Hinckley, president of the LDS church, honored in the spring by the National Conference of Christians and Jews for his contributions to interfaith relations. He was also recently awarded the highest honor given by BYU students, the Exemplary Manhood Award, for his "commitment to family, Church, community and our University . . . ."
- The LDS Public Affairs Department won the 1995 Wilbur Award from the Religious Public Relations Council for a series of 30-minute radio programs called "Times and Seasons." The Wilbur Award, the RPRC's top honor, goes to programming that "demonstrates excellence in the communication of religious issues, values, and theme.
- Amanda Moody and Tiffany Stoker, both BYU students, won preliminary rounds in this year's Miss America Pageant. Moody, Miss Utah, won the talent round for a piano work by Chopin; Stoker, Miss California, won the swimsuit preliminary.
- Hugh Nibley, emeritus professor of ancient studies at BYU, received in August the 1995 Frankie and John Kenneth Orton Award for LDS Literature for his Collected Works, Vols. 1–12.
- Daniel J. Pingree recently received an award from the Mormon History Student Association for the best BYU student paper, "And Your Name Will Be Remembered: The History of John Alexander Clark's Turkish Mission, 1894–1895."

DEATHS

- Wendell J. Ashton, former editor of the Church-owned Desert News and former head of the LDS Public Communications Department, died 31 August after suffering a series of strokes. He was 82.
- Carol Hinckley Cannon, former secretary of the Church Correlation Committee and sister of Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, died 27 August 1995. She was 93.
- Kresimir Cosic, BYU basketball Hall of Fame member, 1980 Olympic gold medalist, and Book of Mormon translator (into his native Croatian language), died 27 May 1995 of non-Hodgkins lymphoma cancer. He was 46.
- Oakley S. Evans, former president of both ZCMI department stores and the Mormon Tabernacle Choir, died 21 March 1995. He was 82.
- Mark B. Garff, former chairman of the LDS Church Building Committee and eighteen-year member of the Church Welfare Committee, died 29 May 1995, more than ten years after a stroke incapacitated him. He was 88.
- William Homer, former Quorum of the Twelve secretary and First Security Bank vice president, died 17 June 1995. He was 81.
- George W. Romney, former Michigan governor, U.S. cabinet officer, and long-time state patriarch and regional representative, died 26 July of natural causes. He was 88.
- Jeaneene Watkins Scott, wife of Elder Richard G. Scott of the Church's Quorum of the Twelve, and missionary in Mexico, Argentina, and the Northwestern States, died 15 May 1995 of lymphoma. She was 65.
- Robert Needham Sears, prominent businessman and community and LDS church leader, died 18 May 1995. He was 79.
- A. J. Simmonds, former historian at Utah State University's Merrill Library, died 18 June 1995 in a natural gas explosion at his home. Medical examiners later discovered traces of cyanide and suspect Simmonds killed himself. He was 52.

ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

- LDS Church Welfare Services recently donated 10,000 pounds of food and nearly 2,000 towels to the St. Vincent de Paul Center in San Diego, California.
- In Chosica, Peru, a group of members and nonmembers from the Moyapamba Ward area recently painted and refurbished the local school building. In other areas of Peru, more than a hundred young adults joined with municipal workers to clean neighborhood streets and plant trees and grass.
- In April, BYU's student service association, BYUSA, with the help of Mama's Cafe, King Henry Apartments, and Liberty Square Apartments, collected thousands of pounds of food and clothing for Provo's Food and Care Coalition.
- This spring, Church missionaries and members donated blood and food and used local LDS meetinghouses as temporary shelters in providing relief for those affected by the Oklahoma City bombing. Members also served as rescue workers, and LDS social services helped provide counseling for victims and their families. Among other monies donated, LDS Church Welfare Services gave $25,000 to the Episcopal Diocese of Oklahoma.
energy, vitality, and presentational skills of newly-called Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, Sister Aileen Clyde received the most accolades for her talk on Jesus Christ. Said President Gordon B. Hinckley, Sister Aileen Clyde received the most point of view, it was a good talk because it was not about women's roles but was directed toward all of us, as people, and our personal relationship with Jesus Christ." Yvonne Williams said, "I felt starved to hear the word of Christ. She gave it to us. I am grateful to her for that.

Panelists also shared their disappointments. Andersen critiqued Apostle Neal A. Maxwell's talk and its xenophobic overtones." The world is a scary place. You cannot make it without us," Andersen felt. "Leaders should teach us to come to Christ on our own,' he said. Andersen felt the Church's Presiding Bishopric directed ecclesiastical leaders to hear the word of Christ. She gave it to us. I am grateful to her for that.

The Associated Press obtained a copy of a May 10 internal memo in which the Church's Presiding Bishopric directed ecclesiastical leaders who become aware of abuse to consult with social services, legal and other specialists who can assist in answering questions and in formulating steps that should be taken. Counselors and attorneys interviewed by the AP unanimously praised the idea of a hotline, although some characterized it as belated and merely an attempt to avoid legal liability. Some said they believe the Church should insist its leaders immediately call the proper police or social agency as required in the child abuse laws of most states. BYU sociology professor Lawrence Young said the challenges in dealing with abuse in the Church are often magnified because leaders who often deal with it firsthand are those least prepared. "This is a challenge of lay leadership with no training in pastoral care," he told the AP. "Clearly this would be something you would expect to see." Church spokesperson Don LeFevre told the AP that the Church published a pamphlet ten years ago on how leaders should deal with abuse issues. The hotline was implemented as an additional resource, he said.

**CHURCH HIRES PR FIRM**

AFTER YEARS of controlling its public relations internally, employing independent firms only periodically, the LDS church has hired Edelman Public Relations Worldwide, according to the Salt Lake Tribune. Although Church PR has had successful campaigns, such as the popular "Home From" ad series, national media have been disappointed with their lack of access to anything but the positive side of Church issues, and misconceptions involving polygamy and African Americans in the priesthood are still widespread.

Bruce L. Olsen, managing director of Church public relations, met with a group of Mormon PR professionals in 1993 to discuss ways of improving the Church's image. This group recommended to Olsen that the Church hire a non-Mormon PR firm, because, as Newsweek religion writer Kenneth Woodward told the Tribune, "Mormons tend either to exaggerate hostility toward them, to see it where it isn't, or to think everyone loves them, which is even more remarkable." Professionals "who operate totally outside the Mormon orbit could be important because if they are doing their job right, they can tell Mormons how people are really seeing them," Woodward said.
**AWARDS**

Awarded at the joint meeting of the Mormon History Association and the John Whitmer Association in Kingston, Ontario, 22 June 1995

**MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION AWARDS**

Best Book Award

**DEAN MAY**

Three Frontiers: Family, Land, and Society in the American West (Cambridge)

Ella Larsen Turner Award for Excellence in Biography

**RICHARD VAN WAGONER**

Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess (Signature)

Steven F. Christensen Award for Excellence in Documentary/Bibliography

**JAN SHIPPS and JOHN WELCH**

The Journals of William E. McLellin (co-published, BYU Studies and Illinois)

Francis M. and Emily S. Chipman Award for Excellence in a First Book

**ARMAND MAUSS**

The Angel and the Beehive (Illinois)

BYU Women's Research Institute Award for Excellence in Women's Studies

**MARTHA SONNTAG BRADLEY and MARY BROWN FIRMAGE**

"Plurality, Patriarchy and the Priestess: Zina D. H. Young's Nauvoo Marriages," (Journal of Mormon History)

Special Citation

**KENT POWELL**

for editing the Utah History Encyclopedia (University of Utah)

T. Edgar Lyon Best Article Award

**LANCE S. OWENS**

"Joseph Smith and Ka'Balaha: The Occult Connection" (Dialogue)

T. Edgar Lyon Award for Excellence in Mormon History

**JAN SHIPPS, DEAN L. and CHERYL MAY**

"Sugar House Ward: A Latter-day Saint Congregation" (American Congregations; Chicago)

T. Edgar Lyon Award for Excellence in Mormon History

**MICHAEL W. HOMER**

"Similarity of Priesthood in Masonry: The Relationship Between Freemasonry and Mormonism" (Dialogue)

T. Edgar Lyon Award for Excellence in Mormon History

**JAMES B. ALLEN**


**JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION AWARDS**

Best Book Award

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Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess (Signature)

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**LOLA VAN WAGENEN**

"Sister-Wives and Suffragists: Polygamy and the Politics of Women Suffrage, 1870-1890" (New York University)

**OTHER AWARDS**

Gracie Farrington Award for Historical Excellence

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**MORMON MEDIA IMAGE**

SAY "CHEESE"—THE OSMONDS ARE WATCHING

FIRST IT was the Brady Bunch. Then disco. And, after several tries, bell bottoms came back, too. Now, with an appearance in Details magazine's fifth annual music issue, another hallmark of the seventies has returned: the Osmonds, Mormonism's first entry in the arena of worldwide fame. While the Osmonds are currently on stage from off-Broadway to Branson, Missouri, the Details article spends much of its time chronicling the earlier Osmond phenomenon, following the thread of Mormon influence through the Osmonds' careers. There was their 1973 LP, The Plan, for example. And their characteristically Mormon family motto, "We don't care who's in front as long as it's an Osmond." (Other statements you will hear "with varying degrees of conviction" from most Osmonds: "Family comes first." "We believe in free agency." Or the somewhat puzzling, "I'm just a rock 'n' roller at heart.") Olive Osmond, in her regular family newsletter, Memo from Mother, once sought to defuse some strong family tension by writing, in typical Mormon fashion, "Brigham Young said feeling should be stifled.... These so-called psychiatrists [who recommended the 'get it out of your system' theory] may have a point, but remember, Brigham Young was a prophet..." Jimmy bemoans the waning of his career after becoming a huge star at face—when he was the first Osmond to have a gold record—by invoking an old Mormon substitute, or, at least, euphemism, for pleasure: "It's hard not to want to go back to chocolate once you've tasted it." Wayne Osmond takes the Mormon family motto, "We don't care who's in front as long as it's an Osmond." (Other statements you will hear "with varying degrees of conviction" from most Osmonds: "Family comes first." "We believe in free agency." Or the somewhat puzzling, "I'm just a rock 'n' roller at heart.").

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AUTHOR OF VIOLENT STORIES LEAVES FOR OSU

BRIAN EVENSON, an associate professor of English and author of a violent, critically acclaimed collection of short stories, is on leave from BYU and has accepted a position at Oklahoma State University (see "BYU Professor Under Fire For Violent Book," SUNSTONE, Aug. 1995). The author of Altmann's Tongue told BYU's Daily Universe that there are many things that make him want to stay, "but the freedom to write difficult literature will always be denied here." Evenson made the decision to leave once it became apparent that if he published his next, equally difficult book, Dark Property, he would lose his job. "There is certainly no triumph in his leaving," BYU spokesperson Brent Harker told the Associated Press. "The university's sense of mission and Brian's sense of mission were quite divergent... We wish him well." While the appointment is for only one year, Evenson says it will likely become a tenure-track position.

ADMINISTRATORS DEAL WITH COMPUTER PORN PROBLEM

WORRIED ABOUT the growing numbers of students accessing online computer pornography, BYU officials have launched a campaign to inform students that it is "offensive to the spirit and letter" of the school's Honor Code. BYU spokesperson Brent Harker told the Deseret News that nineteen students were disciplined over cyberporn last year (there were only four or five the year before), ten of whom were either suspended or left the university on their own. Miles Ogden, an Honor Code office counselor, told the Daily Universe that most of the disciplined students were married.

The Honor Code Office says the computer science department helps it to identify and report abusers. Both Harker and Ogden stressed that the university is disturbed with the overall problem as well as with the few individuals involved. "Aside from a violation of policy, the impacts on a person's life are far-reaching and very destructive," Ogden told the Universe. "Our concern is what happens in a person's life.

SCIENTISTS DOUBT DINO DNA DISCOVERY

NOT LONG after BYU announced that one of its scientists had recovered dinosaur DNA samples, skeptics started to line up. In four statements published in the May issue of Science, critics concluded that the DNA BYU geneticist Scott Woodward had extracted from fossilized bone fragments more closely resembles sequences from mammals than from birds—supposedly the nearest modern relative of dinosaurs. Most of the scientists who take issue with Woodward's claim believe the sample was inadvertently contaminated by people in the laboratory, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. In the same issue of Science, Woodward defended his lab work, explaining that the samples are closer to whales and other species than to humans. "This argues for a source other than human contamination," he wrote. Woodward also contends that the bones from which the samples came are too big to be anything but from a dinosaur.

UNIVERSITY, FARMS DEFINE RELATIONSHIP

THE FOUNDATION for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS) and BYU have defined their relationship through a protocol agreement, the LDS Church News reported in September. FARMS president Noel B. Reynolds said the agreement, which was approved by BYU's board of trustees, makes it easier for BYU scholars to participate in FARMS-related research. It also stipulates that FARMS receives no funding from BYU nor the Church and doesn't answer to any other organization.

The two-page document outlines, among other things, how BYU professors may pursue religious research with FARMS's support. "Teaching religion classes is the sole responsibility of the religious ed-

Ground Broken for New Hunter Law Library. Ground was broken for the Howard W. Hunter Law Library in May, culminating more than six years of planning and fundraising. Construction is now underway for the $11 million, three-story building, which is scheduled to be completed by fall 1996. Half of the needed funds were donated by Utah industrialist Jon Huntsman and his wife, Karen.

Tuition to Jump for Students Who Dawdle. As part of a larger plan pushing the four-year BYU bachelor degree, starting fall 1998, tuition prices will increase by 25 percent a semester for students who stay longer than ten semesters. After fourteen semesters, the tuition increase caps off at 100 percent, or double the normal $1,170 per semester rate. University officials say only full-time fall and winter semester enrollment counts towards the ten-semester limit.

Most Reported Campus Crimes Drop in 1994. BYU's annual Campus Security Report was released in September, and, with the exception of forcible sex offenses, which rose from zero in 1993 to four in 1994, and larceny, which rose from 463 in 1993 to 469 in 1994, all other crimes were reported less frequently than during the previous year. Also reported were thirty-three non-forcible sex offenses, one drug abuse violation, thirteen burglaries, five motor vehicle thefts, and ten liquor law violations. There were no reports of arrests for weapons possessions, murder, or robbery.

Edited "R" Movies Return to Campus. BYU's Board of Trustees decided in July that the university's Varsity Theater could again show edited, R-rated films. The announcement came on the heels of a pair of polls conducted during the summer by the Student Advisory Council in which 85 percent of the nearly 2,500 students queried said the edited films should return. BYU's decision to pull the movies came during winter semester after general authorities were sent a handful of letters complaining that even viewing edited R-rated movies should be a violation of the Honor Code. The usual news stories, heated letters to the editor, and opinion columns ap-
ucation department," Reynolds told the Church News. "But who is responsible for research on scriptural and religious topics? The answer . . . is that religion-related research . . . is appropriate for anyone on campus as long as it's approved through normal university channels," he said.

**ADMINISTRATION MAY FACE DECISION ON GAY, CELIBATE PROFESSOR**

IN ADDITION to this year's accreditation review and on-going academic freedom discussions, BYU may soon have to face the question of what to do about an openly homosexual professor who is celibate. In July, BYU officials asked Thomas Matthews, an assistant professor of Spanish, to discuss with them his homosexuality, the Salt Lake Tribune reported. Matthews learned that the request was prompted by an unidentified person's call to a general authority. So, on June 30, Matthews met with Todd Britsch, BYU's academic vice president, for what Matthews described as "a friendly, cordial discussion." Matthews said Britsch made no threats, but rather "was just trying to find out the situation and my feelings." Matthews has a current temple recommend and says he is celibate but increasingly public about being gay. "I started coming out in private conversations about a year ago," he told the Tribune, "I was tired of answering questions about why I am thirty-nine and not married." In addition to discussions with friends and attending Family Fellowship, a support group for LDS gays, Matthews marched in Utah's gay pride parade in June. He recently passed his third-year faculty review, and in another three years he will be eligible for continuing status, or tenure. BYU doesn't have a policy on celibate homosexuals and says it is more concerned with behavior than tendencies. Nonetheless, Matthews has started to look for another job. "I don't know if I am capable of committing to live the rest of my life alone," he told the Tribune.

**FIVE BYU FOOTBALL PLAYERS EXPELLED OVER HONOR CODE VIOLATION**

FIVE BYU football players were expelled in May after telling police they had consensual sex with a nineteen-year-old woman. The woman said she was raped, but the deputy Utah County attorney said there wasn't enough evidence to prosecute. BYU expelled James Heggins, Greg Steele, James Humes, Horace Tisdale, and Tony Hicks for violating the Honor Code. At least one of the players, who are all non-Mormon African Americans, indicated that the university is biased. "This was the first time I was in trouble with the Honor Code," Hicks told BYU's Daily Universe. "And I thought I would have been put on probation, not kicked out. Because I'm black and not LDS, I think that's why they kicked me out."

**APOSTLES PACKER, MAXWELL, AND PRES. JACK RELEASED FROM BOARD**

IN JUNE, Apostles Boyd K. Packer and Neal A. Maxwell and Relief Society General President Elaine Jack were released from BYU's Board of Trustees. In a speech to BYU faculty and staff in August, Elder Packer, who had been a trustee for thirty-four years, explained that now members of the Quorum of the Twelve will be rotated to positions on the board. "That is how it should be," he said, "for the Twelve, under the direction of the First Presidency, are responsible to watch over and 'set in order' the Church in all the world."

He told the crowd of about 4000 that with nearly 60 percent of the faculty retiring within the next decade, the administration has been charged with refining the hiring process to "ensure that those who come to replace you will be of the same worthiness, spirit, and professional competency as you were at the beginning of your careers." Elder Packer said professors must not limit students by focusing solely on intellectual and scientific ideologies, while disregarding religion and spirituality. "Is the teaching of religion given a pre-eminent place, and are those who teach religion full-time recognized for the vital contribution they make to every other discipline?" he asked.

The Church's financial commitment to education is considerable: Elder Packer said $300 a year in tithing funds are spent on each of the Church's 198,000 students in institute programs, more than $7,300 annually on each BYU student, and $12,000 on BYU Hawaii students. He also praised the faculty's scholarship, saying it is "unsurpassed." Your service and dedication are a miracle in itself. There is not now, nor has there ever been, anything that can compare with you," Elder Packer said. "Much of the future of the restored Church depends on you."

**Former Museum Employee Charged with Theft.** Peter L. Woodman, the former business manager of the BYU Museum of Art, was charged in April with embezzling about $20,000. The 28-year-old Orem resident had worked for about two years before a local businessman alerted the university to some "unusual practices" in museum's business office, the Associated Press reported.

**Foreign Language Speaking Students in Demand.** The BYU Career Placement Service says many of the employers who recruit on campus come for the graduates' language skills. The New York Times backs this up, reporting that BYU's language program "stands apart" from those of Yale University and the University of Wisconsin at Madison because of the fifty-four different languages taught on campus. Make that fifty-six. Since the article appeared, Swahili and Vietnamese have been added. Twenty-eight of the university's languages are taught only on demand.

**New Benson Building Dedicated.** The Ezra Taft Benson Science Building, which opened this fall, was dedicated 20 October.
SUNSPOTS
LIKE A BOX OF CHOCOLATES...

OUTGUMPING GUMP

IN A survey conducted by BYU's Daily Universe shortly after this year's Academy Awards, 10 percent of the students polled said they would not recommend the multiple-Oscar-winner *Forest Gump* to a friend, while over half would not recommend the Tom Hanks picture, which carries a PG-13 rating, to a general authority. Perhaps the project is slowly slipping into place (if there was only a publisher): A Guide to General-Authority-Viewable Movies (That Aren't Already Disqualified by Being Rated R). The only trouble is that in order to recommend (or, in most cases, not recommend) movies, one would have to actually go see them. (This is not a dilemma for U.S. presidential candidate Senator Bob Dole, apparently.)

DIG YOUR WAY TO THE HOLY LAND—GET OUT OF JAIL FREE

IF YOU'RE an inmate at the Utah State Prison intent on escape, go ahead and try all the traditional methods. Have someone bake you a cake with a file in it. Hide in the prison laundry truck. Make a gun out of soap and black shoe polish. Fake sick to get into the infirmary. But whatever you do, don't have someone send you a map of the Holy Land. Inmate Grant Smith can tell you from experience. The *LDS Church News* sent Smith a map tracing the life of Christ, but prison officials promptly returned the map, even though it had appeared in the Church publication, of which the prison receives 500 copies, in January. To keep prisoners from attempting escape, prison policy forbids maps (not already part of another publication) of any place in the world. The policy might intimidate you, but if you really, really need the map anyway, check around—rumor has it there's another Utah State Prison inmate who specializes in "putting together" religious documents.
WE LATTER-DAY SAINTS, LIKE OTHER GROUPS of people, have our slogans and catchwords, expressions that tersely and effectively state or suggest central thoughts in our philosophy of life. “The glory of God is intelligence,” “We believe in eternal progress,” “Mormonism embraces all truth,”—such collocations of words are as familiar to us as Ave Marias and Pater Nosters are to those who use the rosary.

But pithy and felicitous summaries of the basic ideas and ideals of a people are not benefits without alloy. The very ease with which they establish themselves in memory is not conducive to the study and meditation necessary to grasp the wisdom implicit in them. Through the easy acquisition of proverbs and verbal epitomes, even superficial people may seem to possess and carry with them the wisdom of the ages. They draw near to the truth with their lips though their minds may be far from it. There is accordingly danger that the first and underlying meaning of great utterances may be lost, though the original forms of expression endure. So it is that there is an ever recurring need that slogans and catchwords be revitalized.

It should, therefore, not be regarded as impertinence for one to ask occasionally what we Latter-day Saints actually mean when we assert that Mormonism embraces all truth, or, indeed, what we mean by Mormonism itself.

But to accept a transcendent ideal and to enlist oneself in a glorious quest are relatively easy accomplishments. To keep the ideal in mind and to carry on the quest are not so easy. It is easy for all of us to believe in the achievement of ultimate truths through eternal progress, but it is difficult for us to keep our minds open to progressive ideas and attitudes. It is easy to ask for an eternity in which to progress, but it is difficult to detect when our own progress ceases. It is easy to accept limitless time in which to learn, but it is difficult not to spend our days in futile repetitions of the little we already know. Inertia of mind and spirit is a disease that creeps upon its victims slowly and imperceptibly, and few of us are immune to it. Great ideals and great quests are meaningful only for ever-alert and openminded workers, and for workers of dedicated and unwavering minds and spirits.

It was with a consciousness of all of these things that Joseph Smith, in the formative days of the Church, explicitly and implicitly urged the need of the open, active, inquiring mind. He knew how readily religion ceases to be a courageous and inspiring quest for truth and beauty, and deteriorates into a benumbing ecclesiasticism, a sterile formalism, and a stifling literalism—three treacherous rocks upon which all religious barks are liable to founder. So, through revelation, he exhorted his followers to teach one another, to seek wisdom in good books, to acquire learning by earnest study. And when he gave to the world a brief summary of Mormon professions of faith he declared that, if there is anything virtuous, or lovely, or of good report, or praiseworthy, his followers seek after such things. They seek after such things. He did not say that they already possess all that is virtuous or lovely or of good report or praiseworthy, but only that they are in quest of such things.

And certainly Joseph Smith did not intend to limit the quest as to time, place, or persons. In his vivid consciousness of a gospel message for the world he was not unmindful of the message of humanity to his people. He recognized that humanity is old in the earth. He knew that in all ages and among all people God has been working silently, ceaselessly, and impartially to glorify Himself through the glorification of His children. He knew, therefore, that at all times and in all lands inquiring and inspired men have caught glimpses of the truly virtuous, lovely, and praiseworthy. He, therefore, enlisted his people in a search after these things. He sent them to books, time’s garner of the best fruits of the mind and spirit, that through them the philosophers, the scientists, the poets, the prophets, and seers of all ages might impart their visions of the true and the beautiful to his people to enrich and reinforce his own inspired teachings.

For Joseph Smith apparently had faith in men, in their capacity to find truth through their own unaided efforts. He apparently saw that such a faith in men is the best evidence of a worthy faith in God. He saw that the excellence of the creature is the measure of the excellence of the creator, and, therefore, that to belittle man is to belittle the God who made him. Joseph Smith, I believe, would have had little sympathy with that species of piety which makes a man a pitiful marionette in the leading strings of God, and which habitually disparages the findings of his mind and the promptings of his spirit. I like to think that it is of the essence of genuine piety and religious gratitude to believe that the glory of God is the intelligence with which He has endowed His children.

It seems to me, therefore, that Mormonism progressively embraces all truth only as we Latter-day Saints progressively find truth, and that we find truth only as we seek for it through revelation and through the diligent use of our own divine powers of mind and spirit. Mormonism is an eternal quest, our eternal quest for truth.
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