

**MORMON  
EXPERIENCE  
SCHOLARSHIP  
ISSUES & ART**

# SUNSTONE

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HYPOCRITICAL  
EX-MISSIONARY**

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THEIR OWN**

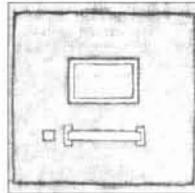
**WARDS?** by  
**Peggy Fletcher  
Stack**

Mar.-Apr. 1998 — \$5.95



# SUNSTONE MERCANTILE

## Do you have ears to hear? Check out these LDS compact discs and videos!



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by Reid Nibley and Clayne W. Robison, CD ~~\$15.00~~ **\$13.50**

The culmination of a remarkable thirty-year collaboration between the distinguished pianist Reid Nibley and baritone Clayne W. Robison. Sabbath Song "[binds] sacred texts and soaring melodies with heartfelt religious conviction" and emanates a quiet passion that will draw the listener back again and again. (Tantara)

### Come the Seasons

by Mark Jardine, CD ~~\$20.00~~ **\$18.00**

Mark Jardine, of the Deseret Quartet fame, is a master of early American, Irish, and British folk music. In *Come the Seasons*, he combines jigs, polkas, and reels with his own early-style original songs that celebrate the changing seasons of life. (Honeybee Recordings)

### Hymns, Songs, and Fiddle Tunes of the Utah Pioneers

by The Beehive Band, CD ~~\$20.00~~ **\$18.00**

This authentic and moving double CD includes such gems as the old shape-note hymn "All Is Well" that inspired "Come, Come, Ye Saints," and renditions of "The Spirit of God like a Fire Is Burning" and "O My Father" with their original tunes. A must for anyone interested in the history of Mormon hymns. (Honeybee Recordings)

### Hauling Home

by Yankee Clipper, CD ~~\$20.00~~ **\$18.00**

Guaranteed to get your toes tapping and put a smile on your face within the first few bars of "Lady Anne Montgomery's Reel." Hauling Home, by Mark Jardine's four-man group Yankee Clipper, takes the listener on a musical jaunt over land and sea through American, Irish, and British Isles folk music traditions. (Honeybee Recordings)

### Legacy West: Songs from the Mormon Trail

arranged and performed by Lisa Arrington, CD ~~\$15.00~~ **\$13.50**

This CD is a sublime joy. Includes renditions of "Lord of the Dance," "Come Thou Font of Every Blessing," and "I'm Just a Little Handcart." Arrington has performed at byu Education Week and Sunstone symposiums. (KEB Enterprises)

### The Archivist

music by Christian Asplund, text by Lara Candland; a production of Seattle

EXperimental Opera, CD ~~\$15.00~~ **\$13.50**  
Asplund's previous operatic work, *The Open Curtain*, was inspired by the "ecstatic terror of Joseph Smith's martyrdom" and debuted as a one-man work-in-progress at the 1995 Sunstone Symposium. In *The Archivist*, Asplund again pushes operatic boundaries with the tale of an archivist who works deep underground in Provo Canyon examining mysterious documents with the aid of an angel. Intrigued? Take a chance on this experimental lds work. (Un-labeled Records)

### Plan 10 from Outer Space

starring Stefene Russell and Karen Black, written and directed by Trent Harris, video ~~\$25.00~~ **\$22.50**

"Rocky Horror meets the Mormons." "Fellini on an Ed Wood budget." Plan 10 from Outer Space is a hilarious, campy, light-hearted romp through the land of Mormon cultural kitsch. From the opening credits subtitled in the Deseret alphabet to the flannel board explanation of Mormon history to alien invaders from Kolob, Plan 10 is saturated with Mormon insider humor. Clearly not for everyone. Harris's 1995 Sundance Film Festival entry is destined to become a Utah cult classic. From the director of Ruben and Ed. (Plan 10 Productions)

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starring Dan Urness, directed by Rocco DeVilliers, video ~~\$16.95~~ **\$15.25**

These two remarkable films on one video—made by actual missionaries and banned by Deseret Book (after selling a thousand copies)—are full of gangsters, Rambo-elders, chase-scenes . . . and faith-promoting, rule-keeping humor! Originally made as zone conference training films for the Charlotte North Carolina Mission, they explore the zany consequences of not staying with your companion at all times and of not stopping P-day at 5:00 p.m. (Done Do Productions)



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# SUNSTONE

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Cover Kent Christensen

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YEA, YEA  NAY, NAY



## INSIDE THE COVER

I AM DEEPLY OFFENDED by the cover of the last issue (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1997). How could you ridicule the Church membership, President Gordon Hinckley, and the ordinance of baptism? And what is wrong with Church growth? I think I have a sense of humor, and I laugh at most of Sunstone's cartoons, but this one went way over the line. I've been a long-time subscriber, but I don't think I will renew my subscription next time.

A LONG-TIME READER  
North Carolina

### Editors' response:

Several readers accused us of mean-spiritedness about that cover. We were shocked. Our intentions were as follows: A long-time subscriber to the *New Yorker*, SUNSTONE editor Elbert Peck envies its custom of featuring a whimsical drawing on its covers that usually has no relationship to an inside article; in contrast, we, and most magazines, illustrate an article on the cover. This time, when we considered what article to spotlight, we discussed how the magazine's cartoons are just like articles in that they stand alone and don't illustrate something else—why not run a cartoon? Eventually, we decided to run a stand-alone humorous drawing. We chose a current, widely known topic—LDS church membership reaching ten million.

In discussing this demographic benchmark, we thought of how a McDonald's might welcome its millionth customer. It seemed a light-hearted match to the joyous

feelings Mormons had about their ten millionth member, so we had Mark Pett make everybody happy and welcoming, in a Mormon party mood (the red punch), including the proudest of all Mormons, President Hinckley. Humor juxtaposes two usually incongruous things, and, for us, this idea worked, but we meant to build on the joy of the event, not to criticize it. We then added another incongruity: the joy of the many versus the disorientation of the one being baptized, for whom water in the nose and eyes and the wet hair not infrequently make the ritual better in memory than in actuality.

No mean-spiritedness, no heavy message: all light whimsy, fun in a situation that would never happen, just as a recent *New Yorker* cover had Fidel Castro and Pope John Paul II sitting in beach chairs, smoking cigars, and reflecting together as long-time friends as the sun set over the Caribbean. It's never going to happen; all you are expected to do is smile at the impossibility as you open the magazine.

Perhaps some readers had trouble interpreting the cover because this kind of stand-alone cover drawing had no precedent in SUNSTONE. Also, since Mormon cartooning grew out of the works of Calvin Grondahl and Pat Bagley, both political cartoonists whose craft is to make a sharper point, understandably some may have expected, looked for, and found a negative message never intended. And of course, some may assume (falsely) that the message in SUNSTONE would have to be cynical. Well, this is a different form of humor—less pointed, more whimsical, and captionless, visual.

Mormonism has a strong verbal tradition, and the cartoons our culture has produced reflect that by having much of the joke be in the caption's words. We are expanding the tradition. Consider the cover drawing on this issue by New York artist Kent Christensen, a Mormon. The drawing is an homage to the well-known Manhattan drawing by the late artist Alan E. Cober. The slight humor is simply in modifying the Manhattan skyline to resemble the Salt Lake Temple. It could be a metaphor of the Church putting temples everywhere, or it could be a celebration of the recently created New York New York Stake, or it could just be a Mormon respect to a famous artist. Smile, and turn the page.

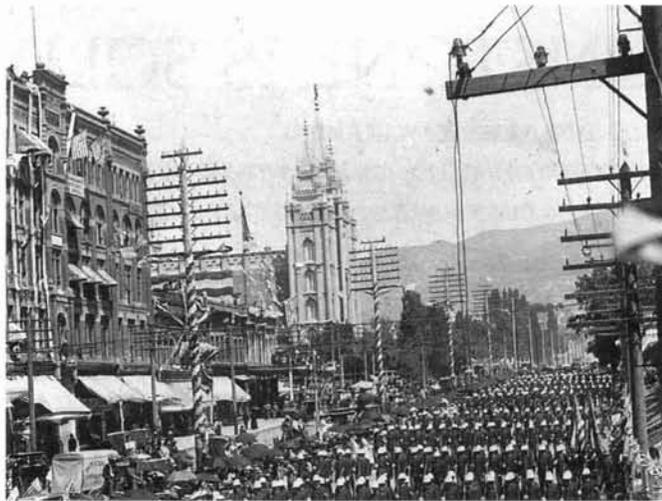
The point of this long discourse: SUNSTONE will periodically feature these kinds of covers. We're excited about developing a new sub-genre of Mormon humor—the visual, humorous drawing. Enjoy.

## EARS TO HEAR

I FOUND the criticism in a recent letter to the editor of Apostle Russell M. Nelson's talk at BYU unfortunate both as to substance and tone ("Walkman on the Tower," by Troy D. Williams, *SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1997). When Elder Nelson used an earpiece to deliver without notes a text he had prerecorded, the letter imputes to him a trick, an intent to deceive, a "show" of manufactured fluency to impress people.

Why assume the discreditable motivation? It seems to me a good deal more likely that Elder Nelson wanted to make a good, effective presentation and simply used a new technological means to do so. Although the letter writer did not notice him insert the earpiece, an acquaintance did. For me that runs counter to the idea that trickery was involved.

EDWARD L. KIMBALL  
Provo, Utah



Up," *SUNSTONE*, Dec. 1997), this photograph, taken during the July 1896 Statehood Mid-summer Carnival parade, shows the flag decorating the temple. The flag is said to have been displayed on the Salt Lake Temple for a number of years during Pioneer Day celebrations. The photograph Cahoon refers to was quite possibly taken during one of those years. However, photographs taken during the 1897 Pioneer Jubilee do not show any display of the statehood flag.

JAMES LAKE  
Salt Lake City

## TEMPLE CITES

CONTRARY TO Doug Cahoon's contention that the large, Utah statehood flag was first placed on the Salt Lake Temple in 1897 for the Pioneer Jubilee ("All Hung

## OOPS

WHEN I saw the recent *SUNSTONE* cover that featured the temple spires framing the Utah State Capitol Building, it



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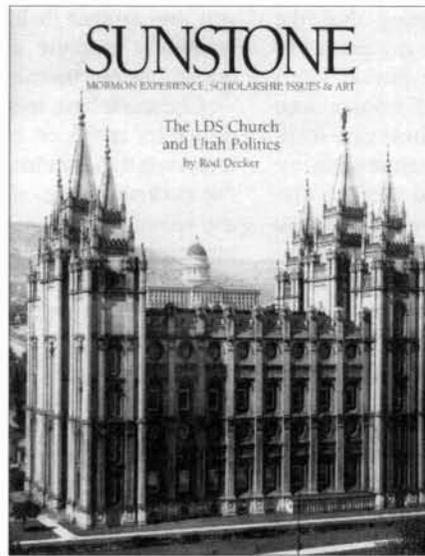
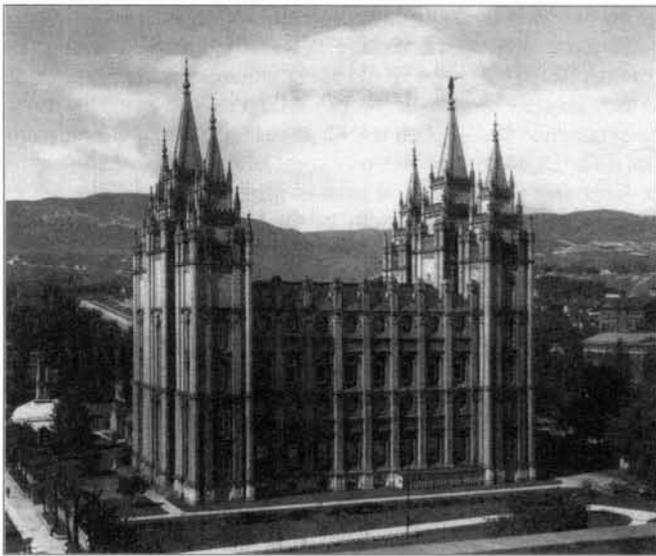
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looked familiar. After flipping through recent Mormon publications, sure enough, in a 1997 issue of *BYU Studies* (36:2, 202), I saw the same photograph. Well, almost the same photograph—the State Capitol was missing, which seems strange since *BYU Studies* dates the photograph as “about 1917,” one year after the Capitol was dedicated, and, therefore, it should be in the picture. A careful examination of the *BYU Studies* version clearly shows that, for whatever reasons, the Capitol has been removed. If they didn’t want the Capitol in the picture, why didn’t they just use a different photograph?

As to the photo’s actual date, neither *BYU Studies* or *SUNSTONE* has it correctly. In the larger, non-cropped original, you can see the Joseph F. Smith Memorial Building on the campus of the old LDS University, which was completed in 1918, and also the old Lafayette School Building, which burned down in 1922. So around 1920 is a more accurate date.

MATT LEWALLEN  
Burbank, Calif.

*BYU Studies’ response:*

Thanks for the sharp eye. A time crunch led to a production decision to adapt this photograph to fit the subject matter of the article it illustrated. We should have mentioned in our caption our modification of the photo, and we sent apologies a year ago to the Historical Society. Thanks also for clarifying the date of the image.

## MUGGING GOOD PEOPLE

THERE IS A big difference between President Gordon B. Hinckley’s approach to homosexuality in the *Los Angeles Times* (“Musings of the Main Mormon,” *SUNSTONE*, Sept. 1997) and Gary Watts’s (“Mugged by Reality,” *SUNSTONE*, Nov. 1997). President Hinckley seems to be genuinely compassionate in holding homosexuals, whom he calls “good people,” to the same standards the Church does all singles—“abstinence before marriage and total fidelity following marriage.” To most moderate LDS heterosexuals, that stance seems fair and reasonable. But be-

ing a Mormon gay means more than celibacy.

Perhaps President Hinckley hasn’t considered all the implications of his standard, for in his comments, as in those of most straights about gays, he focuses on what to do if gays become involved in “transgression,” by which I assume he means sexual intercourse. But if President Hinckley really drew the “line” at intercourse for gays, then, as with straights, he would have no problem with faithful, single-adult, active lesbians and gays dat-

ing, kissing, making out, falling in love, and courting. But I suspect he would, and does, have a problem with non-sexual, same-sex romance (while he encourages it for straights). So, orientation, not sex, is still the real issue, but celibacy-for-gays is a position that sounds much fairer than the earlier reparative therapy, which required gays to try to change their genetic coding.

But both President Hinckley and Apostle Dallin H. Oaks have basically said that for most gays, sexual identity (and therefore attraction) is not a thing that can be changed and is not a sin, whether it is caused genetically or in very early, pre-age-of-accountabil-

## THE REAL REASON MARTIN'S TERM AS THE PROPHET'S SCRIBE WAS BRIEF



ity childhood. And in accepting that, the Church then puts itself and its gay Saints in a dilemma when it draws the line at intercourse. By holding men and women who have no determination over these core inclinations to the standards of heterosexuals, we create a scenario where "good people" who have been courting eventually must choose between personal love and Church activity. (Really, we tell them that to be a member, they must not only be celibate as a single with no hope for marriage but that they must turn off their feelings. Something we don't tell to the oldest maid who still hopes for true love. So the standard isn't the same.) Essentially, gays are faced with the choice Adam had after Eve had eaten the fruit: the hard life of expulsion with relationship or a lonely Eden of Church activity. Like Adam, most choose love (and expulsion).

But not only gays make that Adamic choice. In a recent fund-raising letter, SUNSTONE editor Elbert Peck reported how one orthodox Mormon father attended the gay-related symposium sessions and changed his mind concerning holding his gay son to the Church's no-marriage-no-sex standard. The father told his son that he wanted him to be in a relationship because he didn't want him to "live his life without love." That experience is what Watts calls being "mugged by the reality of the lives of our gay children." Individuals so mugged grow in compassion,

and they temper their views on how to live seemingly absolute commandments given our ambiguous human situations.

Christians have redefined their practice of principles based on real-life experience before, even if they didn't change their theology. For example, while on earth, Jesus didn't say any recorded thing about homosexuality, but his hardline commands against divorce were unequivocal. Yet Christians have come to live with the necessity of divorce because we have been "mugged by the reality" of the lives of individuals stuck in harmful marriages.

Another example is circumcision. The Jewish Christians insisted that the Apostle Paul's adult, male gentile converts be circumcised or they "cannot be saved" (Acts 15:1). Paul complained, and there was strong debate because some believed "that it was needful to circumcise them, and command them to keep the law of Moses" (15:5). Peter silenced the controversy by noting that God had "put no difference between us and them" because He had purified the gentile converts' hearts just as he had done the Jewish Christians' (15:9). "Therefore," Peter concluded, "why tempt God, to put a yoke upon the neck of the disciples, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear?" (15:10). If circumcising adult males was an unbearable yoke other believers would not put on themselves, and thus was eliminated, perhaps requiring our gay Saints—"good people"—to

live lives without love, to stifle every romantic impulse, is a similar unreasonable burden we would never require of ourselves.

If we can moderate our practices of explicit teachings of the Savior and long-established, core commandments, perhaps when a critical mass of Saints have been mugged by the reality of the lives of their gay children, siblings, and friends, then instead of fighting gay marriages, as President Hinckley defended in the *L. A. Times* interview, we will accommodate and allow gay marriages in the Church (even if just for time and *not* eternity), leaving the sticky theological points to God, because we don't want to force our fellow "good people," whom God has accepted as evidenced by the Spirit in their lives, to live their lives without love, and without us.

SEAN CAMPBELL

Los Angeles

## TUGGED BY REALITY

GARY WATTS'S title, "Mugged by Reality" is incomplete because it does not specify which "reality" he was mugged by. A better title may be, "Mugged by My Personal Reality." We all live in our own intimate "realities," which are products of the veil and of our own thoughts and experiences. Yet there is another "reality," which is much more useful and far more "real." It includes everything inside the veil and everything outside of the veil in eternity (see D&C 93:24). Brigham Young explained: "Here is time, where is eternity? It is here, just as much as anywhere in all the expanse of space; a measured space of time is only a part of eternity" (*Discourses of Brigham Young*, 47). Prophets have been teaching about this reality for millennia.

To fully embrace this "reality," we would need to recall our premortal past—the ages and eons we prepared for mortality as spirits with distinct genders. We would also benefit from a look forward to the spirit world, the judgment, the resurrection, and beyond. Of course, seeing beyond the veil would allow us to view God as we used to, and also to plainly acknowledge the presence of Satan and the billions of his followers who are "encompassing us roundabout" (D&C 76:29) with temptations. Addressing homosexuality in relation to this "reality" might be more useful. These teachings about eternal realities (when taught with the Holy Spirit) may be the only thing with sufficient power to combat the emotional momentum inherently found within homosexual behavior.

Some people might think it cold-hearted to suggest that rapists and men guilty of incest should be surgically emasculated. Yet,



"Oh, that food down there, that's my two-day food storage. You see, I'm a Mormon."

symbolically, that is exactly what the resurrection does to all men (and women, if you will) who do not follow God's directives, including (1) being sealed by proper authority to a spouse of opposite gender and (2) strictly obeying the law of chastity, which is defined as no sexual relations with anyone but a lawful husband or wife. Only those individuals are promised "eternal increase" after the resurrection (D&C 132:19-20).

Through diligent, prayerful study and holiness, all can grasp the eternal reality, but it is now known in detail to few. Regardless, it will someday "mug" countless individuals who ignore its presence (D&C 38:8). At that day, will God's love be able to nullify the commandments he has repeatedly given through his prophets concerning homosexuality? Only time (and eternity) will tell.

BRIAN HALES  
Layton, Utah

### YOUNG IN ART

MARGARET BLAIR YOUNG'S "Grace and Truth in Mormon Art," (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1997) is extraordinary. The essay contains the logic of a well reasoned treatise, the imagery and elegance of poetry, and the compassion of a psalm. I have seldom read anything so stimulating.

I was introduced to her through "Zoo Sounds" (SUNSTONE, Dec. 1996). That riveting account of pain and redemption brought a tear in my eye and a smile on my lips. It made me search my soul. "Zoo Sounds" is in *Love Chains*, Young's new collection of short stories that are as good as any current fiction I've read—Mormon or non-Mormon.

LARRY DAY  
Milton, Fla.

*Publisher's comment:*

It is a great book; use the convenient form on the inside back cover to order it. :)

### SUNSTONED

WHEN I ATTENDED the 1997 Sunstone Symposium, I was a Sunstone "virgin." I came to the SUNSTONE/*Dialogue* thing rather late in life. I grew up in Norwich, England, became disillusioned with the Church, and stopped considering myself Mormon. Several years later, as I began research for a Ph.D. in social anthropology, I chose to look at aspects of Mormonism in England. My adventures in the worldwide-web led to meeting the Internet "Ward from Hell," a.k.a. "elwc-plus" (featured in a symposium panel discussion; tape

#SL95-363). One new Internet friend sent me a copy of SUNSTONE, and I was hooked.

Here was a publication I could relate to as a person and as a Mormon. For the first time in years, I felt Mormon, and I felt good about it. I laughed at the cartoons—humor that took hours to explain, unsuccessfully, to my Methodist/atheist-reared husband. I cried at the stories. I felt uplifted by the faith of the contributors—whatever form that faith took.

I scheduled a research trip to Salt Lake in early August so I could attend the symposium. There, I felt a connection to the Mormon world. I felt a strong sense of community with other symposium-goers and how important it was to them. I felt more "spiritual" than I had ever felt with other Mormons—something about the honesty with which people shared their experiences. When Mike Quinn detailed the consequences of his writing about Mormon history (tape #SL97-336), when Angela Toscano, Christian Anderson, and Nephi Allred shared the pain caused by the excommunication of their parents (tape #SL97-152), when people listened to "less-active" members (tape

#SL97-371), or when Karin Anderson England bared her hopes and fears (tape #SL97-291), I was deeply moved.

I felt closer to the people, and, perhaps, closer to God. The words of the prayers, chosen so carefully to say what was in the heart, touched me. I couldn't sing all of the hymns because of the lump in my throat. When I did, I sang from my heart—as everyone did.

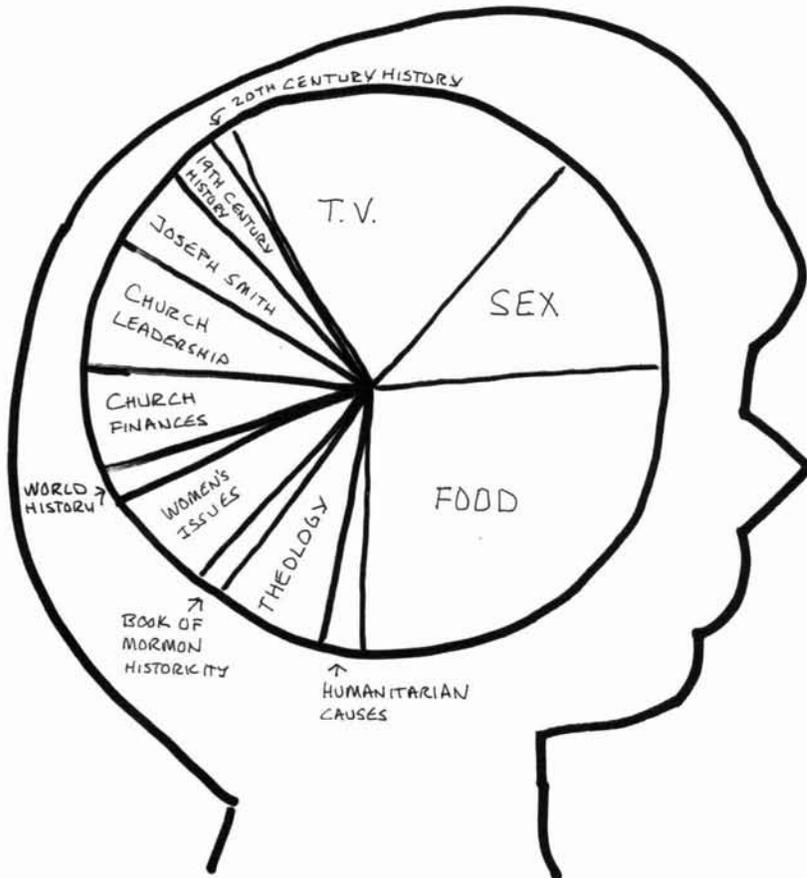
My heart still sings to know that there are Mormons "out there" who want so much to be Mormon that they risk official sanction or social ostracism to create an arena where they can be the kind of Mormon they think they should be. I don't think I ever wanted to be Mormon that much, but in company with them, I can accept the Mormonness in me.

Please, all of you, continue this work.

HILDI MITCHELL  
Brighton, East Sussex, England

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## THE LIBERAL BRAIN



COLIN CLAYTON

## FROM THE EDITOR

## BRASS-FUL THINKING



By Elbert Eugene Peck

## SUN BEAMS

WE'D LIKE TO welcome you to SUNSTONE this morning. First, a few items by way of announcement (and pleading):

1. SUNSTONE is now on CD-ROM. The text of all issues of SUNSTONE and the late *Sunstone Review* are now at one's ready reference for either IBM or Mac computers on Signature Books' *New Mormon Studies CD-ROM: A Comprehensive Resource Library*. The CD also includes *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, the *Journal of Mormon History*, all non-fiction publications of Signature Books (including the nine-volume diaries of Wilford Woodruff), the Mormon titles of the University of Illinois Press, plus other important early LDS works, such as the *Journal of Discourses*. Retail price is two hundred dollars; you may purchase it through the Sunstone Mercantile at a 10 percent discount (see the inside back cover). If Sunstone sells just one hundred copies, we'll make enough to cover the printing cost of one magazine issue!

2. Give us a piece of your mind. Is it a Mormon thing, typically American, or just human, but why don't people tell authors what they think of their article? You'd be amazed at how many even big-name SUNSTONE authors receive zero feedback on their published pieces. It's scary just to put one's ideas out in public for scrutiny, but it's equally frightening when there's no response: "Does everyone but me know what a fool I am? Is this silent void merely polite embarrassment?" Okay, Mormons don't like to share negative information, but, flip, we don't even share the kind of positive, "good job!" comments that Sunday School teachers regularly get! Private letters are a kind and

surprisingly rare act of service, and SUNSTONE forwards, unopened, all mail addressed to our authors (but we don't give out addresses or telephone numbers). To make author correspondence easier, we're starting to put e-mail addresses in our author bios, but SUNSTONE needs letters for publication, too. Before we got an e-mail address (SunstoneUt@aol.com), internet advocates promised we'd be flooded with letters to the editor and to authors. Hardly. "What was the response to such-and-such article?" I'm often asked. "We didn't get many comments," I reply. "Really? Well, everyone I know was talking about it." It's a mistake to assume the author already has heard the comments; make the time to share your thoughts; you'd be surprised at how one letter engages an author (or editor) in an on-going mental dialogue. The Mormon intellectual community will never flourish without a critical community, and, by golly, dialogue with our idea shapers is essential.

3. Fax us the facts. Similarly, I'm continually amazed at comments that imply SUNSTONE has a broad network of friends and correspondents who send us news clippings, reports, and submissions from around the world, and we just sort through the abundance of missives. We don't. We need readers to contribute items for the magazine. Consider these sections:

- *News stories*: most of our Update news reports are summaries from the Salt Lake papers, and while that is a valuable service, it makes our Church news too Utah-based (as Violet and Stan Kimball periodically, but charitably, remind me). We need reports of program innovations and other interesting developments outside of Utah.
- *Of Good Report*: this section near the front

of the magazine features a quote from a recent non-Mormon book that would resonate with Mormon readers.

- *Out of the Best Books*: this excerpt in the Cornucopia section spotlights a new Mormon book worthy of recommendation.
- *All-Seeing Eye*: this Cornucopia feature pictorially documents Mormonism, such as with an intriguing or ironic photograph.
- *CyberSaints*: interesting gleanings from the internet.
- *An Olive Leaf*: our last-page, LDS inspirational gleaning from a relatively unknown historical document, such as a diary, or a contemporary Church speech.

For all these, we welcome (and need) referrals. Keep us in mind in your reading.

## IN REMEMBRANCE

AS the croci, tulips, and daffodils poke their heads up and bloom this spring, I've been thinking a lot about Easter and the hope of resurrection that the flowers sprouting from dead seeds and bulbs engender. I've also been considering which church I'll worship in on Easter Sunday. I am deeply moved by a beautiful, "high church" Easter service. The exulting music and liturgy in a vaulting space parallel the yearnings of my heart to rise to heaven with the risen Jesus. Easter in the spring spiritually culminates Christmas in winter: that small, hopeful light that flickered into the world in the bleak midwinter solstice is now a brilliant sunrise making all things bright and beautiful.

I like the way the traditional Christian calendar was tied to the rhythms of the earth, to its seasons (at least in the northern hemisphere). Easter now occurs when it does because that's when Passover is, but we max out the spring analogs nonetheless. Christmas, however, was reportedly placed in December to co-opt a pagan solstice holiday. No matter; it works: Christmas in December is an effective pedagogical tool for teaching God's intervening love for our dark, bent world.

The Christian and Jewish religious calendars, full of days commemorating foundational events, were constructed for people who couldn't read and rarely thought abstractly. Then, ritualized drama and storytelling were the best tools to teach the mass of humanity who they were and what God expected of them. Dramatic rituals still work well today, even with highly educated congregations. On most Christmas Eves I attend midnight mass, where the baby Jesus is pro-

cessionally placed in the heretofore-empty manger. Even in LDS temples, the Adam and Eve drama is the best remembered instruction of the endowment, effectively constructing our view of our human existence.

In contrast to some Eastern religions, both the Jewish and Christian faith traditions are historically rooted. That is, their foundational stories cannot be separated from the religion, and hence, the retelling of the story is integral to maintaining the religion. So it is not surprising that each has ritualized its storytelling.

Mormonism is similarly rooted in an integral historical story, and while we tell our story over and over, we have not (yet) developed a religious calendar as was done in preceding dispensations—a fact some Saints lament, especially converts. And it does seem a little sad that even Easter is often just another Sunday with a theme sacrament meeting, unless, of course, general, stake, or ward conference happens to fall on it. And Christmas is a religious day for Mormons only when it falls on a Sunday.

I suspect the primary historical reason for the absence of the Christian religious calendar in Mormonism is that our early Saints and leaders came from "low church" Protestant traditions, which celebrate simple worship over pomp and ceremony and high ritual. There is value in that, and I prefer the democratic simplicity of our very human weekly worship services, which nevertheless are also highly structured rituals. And, while we feel no need to adopt the ceremonial accretions of the "apostate" Christian church (Lent, Pentecost, et al.), in all his restoring of Old Testament teachings and practices (including polygamy), why couldn't Joseph Smith have restored some of the Hebrew holidays, too? (Whether or not to maintain Jewish traditions was hotly debated in early Christianity.) For instance, can you see Mormons celebrating the minor merry-making festival of Purim, where the story of Esther is reenacted as a melodrama to an enthusiastic cheering and jeering audience. Actually, I can't, either; it just doesn't speak to what we're about as Mormons, but it does provide a different alternative to storytelling besides the preached sermon.

Given our current LDS services, an outsider observing a Mormon ward could easily wonder what gives Mormonism its vitality—certainly not its admittedly (even by devout Mormons) boring services. It takes time to see the life and spirit that in fact permeates Mormon services, for they are part of an incredible weaving of individuals' lives into a communal tapestry. And without that sense

of connectedness to the community, it's hard to see that a boring talk by an unskilled layperson is the beatification of that thread in the communal cloth. But with that insight, a bad talk becomes a good one when you see the individual's growth, and, too, the talk binds the speaking Saint to the congregation and the congregation to the Saint. It is amazing how just beneath the still, almost lifeless surface of the pond of a Mormon meeting thrives a vibrant ecology of life.

Having said that, however, I still like pomp on Easter, where, in the twinkling of an eye, a trumpet actually sounds to herald the last day. There are times when the soul wants to exult, and Mormon services rarely complement that deep, spiritual need, so I supplement them by joining with other Christians. And having a bent for mentally tinkering with how we "do church," I ponder what a Mormon religious calendar would be like and how it could add color and fun and diversity to our collective events. Just what values do we prize that we could structure into an annual day/ritual/event to remind us of them and to instill them in us?

Mormonism may not have developed its own religious calendar because it grew up in the literate, modern United States. Our meetings reflect that fact: we have an administrative calendar. Instead of rotating around the birth, death, and resurrection of Jesus, our annual cycle rotates around *semi-annual* general and stake conferences, *annual* ward and all-Church Young Women's and Relief Society conferences, *monthly* fast and testimony meetings, home teaching visits, and PPIs, *weekly* quorum and auxiliary meetings, and a plethora of leadership meetings, which because of our lay clergy are woven into the fabric and vocabulary of every active LDS family. One result of our pattern of meetings is that we're trapped by a habit of speech-giving as our nearly exclusive form of communal worship. When Mormons meet, they preach.

Nevertheless, perhaps Mormonism is slowly developing its own religious calendar—special days that commemorate events tied to the Restoration. We are still, after all, a very young religion, and our organization is in flux as we go international. The U.S. Church, led by Wasatch Front expatriates, has always celebrated July 24th with dances, fireworks, parades, and picnics. Yet, until recently, Pioneer Day seemed to be one more American cultural artifact that we weren't exporting to the international Church. Now, we have begun other annual Church-wide commemorations of Mormon history. The restoration of the Aaronic priest-

hood is an example; so is the annual First Presidency Christmas Fireside. But both of these events illustrate how we draw from our limited administrative-meeting tradition—these commemorations are just one more meeting where we sit and listen to people talk to us. Perhaps that's the Mormon way, but I believe we can be more creative and effective.

Last summer's all-Church sesquicentennial celebration of the Pioneers entering the Salt Lake Valley by having Saints everywhere participate in community service projects was truly exciting, combining commemoration with activism. We drew upon our deeply moving heritage and applied it in a modern way. The early Pioneers mobilized themselves as the Camp of Israel by organizing into groups of ten, fifty, and a hundred, and that event spiritually bound together all who crossed the plains. Similarly, today's Israel, spread abroad, organized itself for community building and bound together all of today's Saints who joined in. That can-do, effective organizing is just as Mormon as are meetings and pulpits, and we do it year-round in serving. But by shaping our service in the Pioneer model, the sesquicentennial event dramatically told us who we are and what we're about as God's people. In organizing under the Pioneer banner, we ritually connected ourselves not only to our fellow living Saints but to all the Saints, and we made that foundational exodus story our own—just as Passover does for Jews and the Lord's Supper does for Christians. And it was fun, to boot! Wouldn't it be nice if Pioneer Day became an annual, world-wide Mormon holiday? That ritual day would do more to inculcate these values than would a hundred general conference exhortations.

Several decades ago, the U.S. government decided that Washington, D.C., had enough memorials that consisted of statues with protective buildings. Officials decided that most future memorials would be "living" ones that had an actual, functioning purpose related to the person they honored. Hence, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, the Woodrow Wilson Center for International Scholars, and Theodore Roosevelt Island (a wilderness preserve). Similarly, Mormons don't need any more commemorative meetings where we give and hear talks. Such meetings have their place, but we have enough of them. What we need are more living commemorations where we act and interact while remembering and making the past live in and through us.

Oh, and brass in Church, at least on Easter, would be nice, too. ☐

## TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Boyd Petersen

THE PRIESTHOOD:  
MEN'S LAST, BEST HOPE

*Priesthood is all about: helping men overcome the obstacles, strewn before them by birth or culture, to intimacy, service, and nurturance; helping them become like Christ.*

AT ONE TIME in my life, I felt that our church's position of denying women the priesthood was simply a sexist tradition carried down by our forefathers and mistakenly and improperly adopted into the restored church of Christ. Apologetic talk about how the priesthood was a compensation to men for women's inherently superior spirituality did little to alle-

BOYD PETERSEN is the husband of Zina and the father of Mary Rose and Christian Degn. He teaches English at UVSC and is working on a biography of Hugh Nibley.

viate my concerns. I suspected the practice was designed to put women up on pedestals, where men could worship qualities women never could live up to, with the result being women's perpetual guilt and men's self-contentment. Furthermore, if women are inherently more spiritual than men, then Heavenly Father's most precious creation, human life, is half defective.

Over the past few years, however, my opinion has changed. I don't claim to know why men exclusively are ordained to the priesthood. My thoughts here are tentative. Living with my wife and children will surely

bring additional insights, and I will yield to any correction from my ecclesiastical leaders in this area. I possess no divinely proclaimed answers, only informed opinions. Nevertheless, I now see priesthood as a divine tutelage to help men overcome their unique roadblocks to becoming Christ-like.

It is all too easy for our notion of priesthood to get warped; too often we see the priesthood as a sort of status system, a merely bureaucratic structure. We define it as the authority to act in God's name. Yet, at its very core, priesthood is about nurturing, blessing, and service. Priesthood is indeed the authority to act in behalf of God, but only insofar as it is used to nurture, bless, and serve God's children. Christ taught us that the true priest is the servant of all. It is consistent with this teaching that priesthood holders cannot bless themselves, only others.

Doctrine and Covenants 121 reminds us that a man who tries to use the priesthood for a power trip has no priesthood. The priesthood can be exercised only with gentleness, meekness, and love unfeigned. As Hugh Nibley states, men possess these essential qualities: "Very few men on earth, including those in the Church, are really qualified. In terms of prestige, status, influence, pleasure, privilege, 'power, and authority, and riches' (3 Ne. 6:37), the priesthood has absolutely nothing to offer." Accordingly, he argues, "This leaves a few humble, unpretentious, and unworldly people as the sole holders of a valid priesthood." As he sums it up, "The world laughs at it, the Latter-day Saints abuse or ignore it, those who take it seriously do so in 'fear and trembling.'"<sup>1</sup>

The priesthood, therefore, exists only when exercised properly. Significantly, this requires men to adopt qualities we commonly associate with women: nurturing, patience, tractability, openness, empathy, and compassionate service. Patriarchal domination in the Church arises not because men hold the priesthood but because certain men abuse the priesthood. When men really follow the counsel of section 121, women find themselves being served and loved by men who are absolutely open to the kind of association women tend to value most—listening, caring friends who are confident enough not to feel threatened by women's ideas, opinions, and advice; friends willing to express weaknesses and vulnerabilities.

While there is, as Marie Cornwall has documented, both an institutional and familial role to the priesthood, I believe too many of the Church's bureaucratic functions have been assumed to be the sole province of the priesthood. This causes much of the re-

*"In a day when single parent—mostly fatherless—families are becoming increasingly common, the priesthood helps Mormon men feel an irreplaceable connectedness with their families, placing them as 'head,' or, perhaps more appropriately, 'primary servant.'"*

sentment that women harbor against their brothers in the Church. Women are aware of many logistical problems (e.g., in building design or meeting schedules), but have no voice in fixing them. Just because women don't hold the priesthood doesn't mean they should have no voice in the Church, and not having their influence leaves us all the poorer.<sup>2</sup>

Still, despite the priesthood's cultural misapplications, the great men I have admired most in the Church are great as a direct result, I believe, of the fact that they hold the priesthood. I am convinced that the priesthood has provoked them to service where otherwise they might not be involved intimately in others' lives. In my own life, I have witnessed how priesthood callings—whether service, teaching, or leadership positions—have given me opportunities for greater love, understanding, empathy, and concern, both for those I've been assigned to serve and for people in general. I am better because of the priesthood.

While some husbands have mistaken priesthood for power, the Brethren have continually admonished priesthood holders to listen to and work together with their wives. The late Church President Howard W. Hunter warned that, "For a man to operate independent of or without regard to the feelings and counsel of his wife in governing the family is to exercise unrighteous dominion."<sup>3</sup> In *One Flesh, One Heart*, Carlfred Broderick describes the admonition he received from Apostle Boyd K. Packer upon being called as a new stake president. Elder Packer gently cautioned him not to treat his wife the same way he treats the stake. Brother Broderick was "mildly offended" at this counsel, and protested, "I wasn't planning on treating either the stake or my wife badly." Elder Packer continued:

I know, . . . but you need to treat them, well, differently. In the stake when a decision is to be made, you will seek the opinion of your counselors and other concerned individuals. Then you will prayerfully reach a decision on the matter, and they will all rally round and support you because you are the president and you have the mantle of

authority. In your family when there is a decision to be made that affects everyone, you and your wife together will seek whatever counsel you might need, and together you will prayerfully come to a unified decision. If you ever pull priesthood rank on her you will have failed in your leadership.<sup>4</sup>

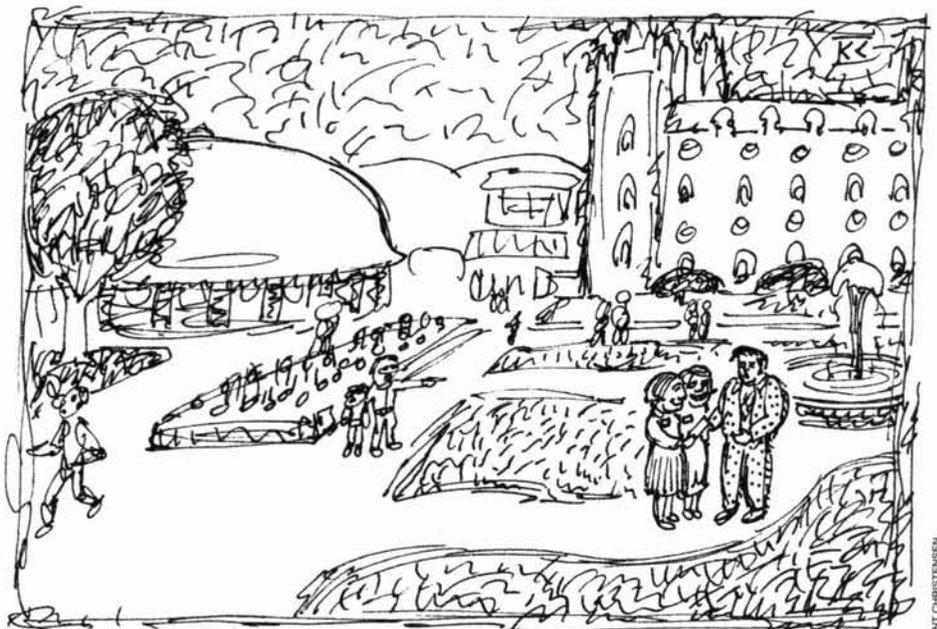
My marriage has helped me to become aware of the reasons women sometimes resent priesthood holders, but my being a father has helped me understand why I need that priesthood and how it should be used. Perhaps there is something true in Balzac's line in *Pere Goriot*: "when I was a father, I understood God." At any rate, the experience of blessing and administering to my children has greatly affected me. Not until I held my newborn son before my ward family to give him a name and blessing did I realize that that moment was the first instance since conception that I was uniquely needed in his life. I had watched as my wife provided my son's first nourishment and marvelled at the tight bond that formed instantly between them—even before his first day. While I was closely

involved in my son's first days on earth—taking my turn at changing, holding, and caring for him—I was constantly aware that his mother could do for him everything that I could do, and things I couldn't. I felt a little redundant and mildly jealous of their relationship.

But as I held him in that sacred priesthood circle, I knew for the first time that I was doing something that only his father could do. This didn't give me a power trip or make me feel highly esteemed by my fellow men; instead, I felt a sudden, deep bond with this child. Perhaps it was not as strong as the bond created by childbirth and nursing, which my wife felt, but I knew then and there that I would do absolutely anything for that child, my child.

The priesthood gives a man the critical opportunity to feel needed by his family—to feel that he is essential, that he alone can provide his unique love, guidance, and blessings through righteously exercising the priesthood. Priesthood can make a man a distinctly male parent—not an emasculated "Mr. Mom," but a Mr. Dad, who is both male and emotionally committed to his family. In a

## ANOTHER ELVIS SIGHTING



day when single parent—mostly fatherless—families are becoming increasingly common, the priesthood helps Mormon men feel an irreplaceable connectedness with their families, placing them as “head,” or, perhaps more appropriately, “primary servant.” And, consequently, placing them under greater condemnation for abrogation.

That said, I remain unconvinced that one sex is inherently more spiritual, loving, or caring than the other. There are just as many spiritual men as women. This is not to say, however, that I don't recognize a difference. In fact, biological difference makes women more prone to nurturing and intimacy—qualities attributed to Jesus Christ. Even before her baby is born, a mother is thrust into an immediate intimate relationship with her child. Fathers have to be worked into children's lives later.<sup>5</sup>

This situation has undoubtedly always been a challenge; however, structural changes in our society have added further wedges between men and nurture, their families, and their spouses. In agrarian societies, fathers lived and worked at home. Ideally,

these fathers worked and played side by side with their wives and children and provided the children with a constant fatherly role model. Home was also, as Wendell Berry puts it, “a circumstance that required, dignified, and rewarded the enactment of mutual dependence” between husband and wife.<sup>6</sup> In this setting, men were also intimately involved with nurturing; farming is nurturing work. A good farmer is at once “husband and husbandman, the begetter and conservator of the earth's bounty, but he is also midwife and motherer. He is a nurturer of life.”<sup>7</sup> In agrarian society, the sex “roles” of nurturer and provider were not as solidly fixed, and the man, as well as the woman, had a domestic bond to the household.

The industrial revolution forced fathers to leave home to work. And as men were uprooted from household and land, nurturing came to be the exclusive province of women. This, Berry argues, “served to signify to both sexes that neither nurture nor womanhood was very important,” since the economic rewards for work now came solely for work done outside the home.<sup>8</sup> And while the

woman's role was degraded, so too was the man's. His was reduced to the essential but impersonal role of providing money. The bonds between husband and wife, father and family, men and the land were diminished. Home, states Berry, “was no longer a condition, but only a place.” We still suffer from that disruption.

But after the industrial revolution, men at least were still needed by their families if only to provide a bankroll. In our post-industrial society, with women voluntarily and necessarily in the paid work force, fathers are victims of what William Raspberry terms the “Superfluous Father Syndrome”—they simply aren't needed. Technology guarantees that a woman can do virtually anything a man can do. Yet, only recently have we come to realize the social cost of fatherless families. Fifteen million U.S. children—one-quarter of the population under eighteen—are growing up without fathers. Of these, over five million are fatherless because of divorce.

The cost of fatherless families is great. The loss of a father's financial contribution and the loss of another adult to supervise children and do household work is substantial. Further, many researchers have noted a link between fatherless households and the social epidemics of crime, drugs, violence, poverty, mental illness, the decline in educational attainment, teenage pregnancy, and second-generation divorce.<sup>9</sup>

Consciously or not, fathers who leave home send children the clear message that adult male approval is permanently withdrawn, that the child has failed to keep the father's interest. In over 90 percent of all U.S. divorces, custody is awarded to the mother. For almost two-thirds of these children, within ten years after divorce, the father will be entirely absent from their lives.<sup>10</sup> In one recent study, a number of Hispanic elementary schoolboys who had exhibited violent behavior problems were compared with a matched control group. A significant factor contributing to violence, the researchers found, was absent or inept fathers. The violent boys were “significantly more likely” not to live with their fathers, to have fathers who never show them affection, or to have fathers who discipline by spanking.<sup>11</sup> Clearly, the father's presence is crucial. But notice that it is not just the presence of the father that matters, but the presence of a specific kind of father: not the father as disciplinarian or “ruler of the house”; rather, the father as nurturer, encourager, and friend.

Significantly, the priesthood fosters this very type of behavior in Mormon men. Men who do not hold the priesthood can develop



DRAWING BY RICHTER. © 1994, THE NEW YORKER MAGAZINE, INC.

**“Marriage, I believe, provides a school wherein both men and women can grow to become more Christ-like by noticing, praising, and cultivating the vision of Christ they find in their spouse.”**

similar qualities, but scriptural injunction, weekly instruction, and constant cultural reminders can have a real impact on men who care enough to listen, obey, and then serve their families with love, righteousness, and humility. Priesthood is one of the main incentives Mormon men have to be committed to family life and committed in the most nurturing ways.

Despite statistics showing single-parent families increasing among all faiths, including Latter-day Saints, the incidence of unwed mothers and divorce among active Latter-day Saints is relatively low, especially among the most active members.<sup>12</sup> Mormon families who take their religious faith seriously also take seriously, therefore, former Church President Harold B. Lee’s admonition that the most important work for both women and men takes place within the walls of our homes. And these same fathers and mothers seem to have learned former Church President David O. McKay’s counsel that no success can compensate for failure in the home. As Eugene England has stated, “The lesson to be taken from all this is not that women need more devotion to their careers in order to be equal with men but that men need less devotion to their careers.”<sup>13</sup> This is exactly what the priesthood, when exercised righteously, forces men to do.

Priesthood both binds men to their families and encourages them to care for their families. England says that “priesthood and child-bearing are alike in providing, if we let them, similar opportunities to learn charity—by being called to love and serve unconditionally.”<sup>14</sup> This line of thought may seem to some as an attempt to justify the simplistic (and, to childless women, demeaning) cliché that priesthood is the complement of motherhood, which is not the case. But the two experiences are similar; both foster commitment to the family, and both teach nurturing and charity. As Mormon sociologist Marie Cornwall has argued, the priesthood “establishes a relationship between father and child through the order of law, while motherhood establishes a relationship between mother and child through the order of nature.”<sup>15</sup>

Yet to argue that women don’t expressly need the priesthood is not to say that there needn’t be a specific social structure to foster

growth in women the way that priesthood fosters growth in men. The Relief Society does this to some extent, but I suspect that for many women there is more of the potential than actual. Furthermore, since women are different from men, women need to learn lessons that are different from those the priesthood teaches men. Men need to learn the nurturing and commitment priesthood demands. And from glancing through the self-help sections of many bookstores, I have come to suspect that what women want to learn is self-confidence and assertiveness.

While many of the differences between men and women are biological, these biological differences are further emphasized by culture. From Simone de Beauvoir to Deborah Tannen, feminists have shown that many of the differences between the sexes are culturally reinforced. Eternal marriage is all about: overcoming cultural dictates while remaining true to our biological selves. Two people with different bodies and different cultural experiences are sealed together for the express purpose of learning each other’s perspective. And this in turn makes them godlike—they come to possess, both individually and collectively, more of God’s all-encompassing qualities.

Interestingly, the words “whole,” “healthy,” and “holy” come from the same Old English root. Suzanne Lundquist notes that “The notion of imperfection literally means to be ‘incomplete’ or ‘unfinished.’”<sup>16</sup> Thus we see the profound beauty of Christ’s announcement: “I Am.” He is complete, perfect, whole, and holy. And Christ’s command to us is to become like him (3 Ne. 12:48). As Lundquist points out, “Identity becomes sure . . . only when [a person] clearly understands the laws of the gospel, the law of sacrifice, the law of chastity, and the law of consecration” through study and application of these laws in one’s life.<sup>17</sup>

I propose that we are incomplete until we come to seek for, understand, and emulate the Christ-like qualities we find in our spouses and members of the opposite sex. Many of the qualities our culture associates most with Christ—mercy, kindness, tolerance, patience, etc.—are qualities that we tend to categorize, whether fairly or not, as feminine. Yet the Bible also shows Christ to have (again, perhaps stereotypically) male

qualities—strength, assertiveness, power, self-control, and, ultimately, the ability to proclaim his own importance—his divine calling—in the face of his enemies. I am not arguing that Christ is genderless; rather, as he grew in stature and wisdom, he acquired all that is virtuous. Marriage, I believe, provides a school wherein both men and women can grow to become more Christ-like by noticing, praising, and cultivating the vision of Christ they find in their spouse.

I believe that the conferring of priesthood on men is an essential and divinely inspired component of celestial marriage. It gently pushes men into acts of compassionate service and provides them with a feeling of connectedness with their families without ever “feminizing” them or insisting they are “less than men” for being more than “natural man.” Priesthood compensates for the biological and societal conditions that otherwise hold men back from attaining essential Christ-like qualities.

Through association with the opposites of maleness and femaleness in the covenants of eternal marriage, a couple can become like God. A priesthood we have yet to understand is *shared* by our Heavenly Parents in the powerful partnership of husband and wife. As Eugene England states, “We believe that God is neither a lonely male, *nor* a lonely female—but rather an eternal partnership of equal opposites, one male and one female who have become capable of the perfect creative unity that we begin to build in our painful, struggling, exasperating, joyful marriages in this life.”<sup>18</sup>

D. Michael Quinn argues that through the ordinances of the temple, priesthood has actually been conferred upon women since 1843. As evidence, he points to the fact that women wear the garments and the robes of the priesthood, and he quotes Apostle James E. Talmage to buttress his argument.<sup>19</sup> However, Talmage made it perfectly clear that female ordination is not the purpose of the temple. “In the restored Church of Jesus Christ, the Holy Priesthood is conferred, as an individual bestowal, upon men only, and this in accordance with Divine requirement. It is not given to woman to exercise the authority of the Priesthood independently.” In the temple, Talmage says, a woman “*shares with man the blessings of the Priesthood*”;

nowhere does Talmage state that women are ordained to the priesthood.<sup>20</sup> Ordination is an explicit ritual, an act of conferral that includes various conditions in order to be considered felicitous.<sup>21</sup> Donning the garments and robes of the priesthood is a display of a woman's worthiness, righteousness, and the priesthood blessings she shares with her husband, but the priesthood itself is transferred by the laying on of hands by one already in authority, who must use specific words in a specific context to a specific recipient of the ritual. This, so far, has not been sanctioned for women, no matter what other blessings (different from, perhaps more desirable than, men's) the temple bestows upon them.<sup>22</sup>

Talmage did state that one day husband and wife will use their priesthood together:

In the glorified state of the blessed hereafter, husband and wife will administer in their respective stations, seeing and understanding alike, and co-operating to the full

in the government of their family kingdom. . . . Then shall woman reign by Divine right, a queen in the resplendent realm of her glorified state, even as exalted man shall stand, priest and king unto the Most High God.<sup>23</sup>

Yet I do not believe we need or should wait for the hereafter to seek this universal vision. After twelve years of marriage, I have only begun to see from my wife's perspective. It is a perspective that has been sometimes quite painful, as I have come to realize sins and imperfections of my own. But it has made me more whole, and it has helped me see my wife more completely. It is a path that I anticipate will bring me many tears but also unparalleled joys.

In Hugh Nibley's *Temple and Cosmos*, editor Michael Lyon illustrated the text with a drawing of a veil that was discovered in 1925 hanging in an underground tomb in Asia. On this veil, a prince and princess embrace one

another on their wedding day. The constellations of the stars are positioned around their heads, and both are clad in their sacred wedding robes. Above their heads, the man holds a square in his left hand and the woman, a compass in her right. Nibley discusses how scholars have interpreted the symbolic meanings of these two tools. "The square probably means 'rectitude,' uprightiness," while the compass "means 'making equilibrium, . . . evenly balanced mind,' or measure in all things."<sup>24</sup> In these interpretations, it is apparent that the one tool emphasizes rules and order, the other balance and perspective. They are two different but not mutually exclusive modes of thought—one frequently associated with a male perspective, the other with a female perspective. Below the couple's aprons, their bodies are serpentine, entwined into one. The picture symbolically illustrates the powerful force of marriage. Husband and wife are to be one, united and equally yoked, coming to understand and accept the differences between them and using those very differences to create a perfect whole. If we are not one, as couples, we are not God's, nor can we become gods.

The Book of Mormon describes our returning into our Father's presence not as a typical "guy" greeting of a thump on the shoulder but as an embrace (2 Ne. 1:15). This reception sounds every bit as warm, inviting, and intimate as the one we anticipate having with our Heavenly Mother. Ultimately, this is what priesthood is all about: helping men overcome the obstacles, strewn before them by birth or culture, to intimacy, service, and nurturance; helping them become like Christ. Priesthood is men's last, best hope. ☐

#### NOTES

1. Hugh W. Nibley, "Priesthood," *SUNSTONE* 14:6 (Dec. 1990), 10–11.

2. Since the 1980s, the Church has begun to expand the institutional role of women. To cite only two examples, women now speak in general conference, and the wives of newly called mission presidents are recognized and set apart. I suspect this trend will continue, if at a cautious but steady rate. See Marie Cornwall, "The Institutional Role of Mormon Women," in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives*. Eds. Marie Cornwall, Tim B. Heaton, and Lawrence A. Young (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994), 239–64.

3. Howard W. Hunter, "Being a Righteous Husband and Father," *Ensign*, Nov. 1994, 49–51.

4. Carlfred Broderick, *One Flesh, One Heart: Putting Celestial Love into Your Marriage* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1986), 31–32.

5. My wife pointed out to me that the theories of Virginia Held confirm this. Held has pointed to the biological reality that women have only between twenty and twenty-five chances for producing children, while men have thousands. The biological investment in each individual offspring is therefore drastically different—the female is required to contribute more to the production and survival of an individual child than is the male. The consequent concern for nurturance is higher for a female than for a male, much the way various animals differ in their need for immature nurture. Human fathers must be acculturated to partic-



"I act on the belief that men are basically good."

ipate beyond conception; human mothers must always participate after conception. Held believes that the biological investment is mirrored in subsequent behavior. See Virginia Held, "Feminism and Moral Theory," in Eva Feder Kittay and Diana T. Meyers, eds., *Women and Moral Theory* (Totowa, N.J.: Rowman & Littlefield, 1987), 111–129.

6. Wendell Berry, *The Unsettling of America: Culture and Agriculture* (New York: Avon, 1978), 115.

7. Berry, 116.

8. Berry, 114.

9. See, for example, Nicholas Davidson, "Life without Father: America's Greatest Social Catastrophe," *Policy Review* 51 (winter 1990): 40–44; Sara S. McLanahan, "The Consequences of Single Motherhood," *American Prospect* 18 (summer 1994): 48–58; Richard Weissbourd, "Divided Families, Whole Children," *American Prospect* 18 (summer 1994): 66–72; and Kevin N. Wright and Karen E. Wright, *Family Life, Delinquency, and Crime: A Policymaker's Guide: Research Summary* (Washington, D.C.: Office of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, U.S. Department of Justice, May 1994).

10. Weissbourd, 68.

11. Jonathan I. Sheline, Betty J. Skipper, and W Eugene Broadhead, "Risk Factors for Violent Behavior in Elementary School Boys," *American Journal of Public Health* 84 (1994): 661–63.

12. Darwin L. Thomas, "Family Life: Family Demographics," in Daniel H. Ludlow, ed., *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, 5 vols. (New York: Macmillan, 1992), 488.

13. Eugene England, *The Quality of Mercy* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1992), 100.

14. England, 100.

15. Cornwall, 244.

16. Suzanne E. Lundquist, "The Repentance of Eve," in Mary E. Stovall and Carol Cornwall Madsen, eds., *As Women of Faith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1989), 99.

17. Lundquist, 100.

18. England, 97.

19. D. Michael Quinn, "Mormon Women Have Had the Priesthood Since 1843," in Maxine Hanks, ed., *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 369, 375–76.

20. James E. Talmage, "The Eternity of Sex," *Young Woman's Journal* 25 (Oct. 1914): 600–604, emphasis added. See also Talmage's *The House of the Lord*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976).

21. See chapter nine of Ronald Grimes's *Ritual Criticism* (Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1990), "Infelicitous Performances and Ritual Criticism," 191–210. Quinn's contention that the temple ceremony confers priesthood on women is a "failed" ritual, according to Grimes's formulation (and emendation of Austin's schema) of infelicitous performances. First, it is a "misinvocation" in that it is disallowed by the community. Second, it is a "nonplay," since it does not conform to accepted conventional procedure (in this case, the laying on of hands, a specific speech act of ordination). Third, it is a "flaw" in that it uses an incorrect and vague formula. The only conclusion to be made is that Quinn is guilty of "misframing" the ritual—of misconstruing its genre as a ritual of ordination instead of a ritual of dramatic liturgy.

22. See Marie Cornwall's "The Institutional Role of Mormon Women" for a concise history of women's relationship to the priesthood. Cornwall demonstrates that "there was never any indication" during the founding years of the Church "that priesthood was understood as something open to women" (242). Even the Relief Society, which granted women an institutional role and a degree of autonomy, was founded under the jurisdiction of the priesthood (245–46).

23. Talmage, 602–3.

24. Hugh W. Nibley, *Temple and Cosmos* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book and F.A.R.M.S., 1992), 111, 114–15.



## THE NEED TO STAY IN

We would gravitate  
toward the wood stove  
shaped like an elephant's torso.  
Took four men to budge it,  
warm and convincing enough  
to redden the cheeks,  
gather human flesh around it.

Childhood silences were heaped upon it,  
better than dry wood.  
Read books by its cast iron gut,  
orange flame spitting through the lid,  
its bouncing shadow scrambling the words.  
Sometimes, the only conflict  
in those creaky plots:  
how cold it is outside,  
how hot in here.

Did us a disservice  
that roaring dinosaur—  
soothed, melted what did not  
need the attention.  
Imagine the first kiss at  
that steady a temperature,  
those Indian rubber-man muscles  
kowtowing to the crackle of wood.

Kept us inside,  
thawed the doors shut  
even as it melted them open.  
Warmed us out of  
frozen lakes that hungered  
for our weight and speed.  
Hissed, "So little is possible."

Blood diluted to meditation  
strength, we were children made good  
by temperature.

The fat fire lingers on.  
We assemble where it's safe.  
Water boils.  
Tea hisses in the vein.  
What doesn't block our way  
still blocks our way.

—JOHN GREY



**Purchase  
books discussed  
in this magazine  
on page 81**



# CORNUCOPIA

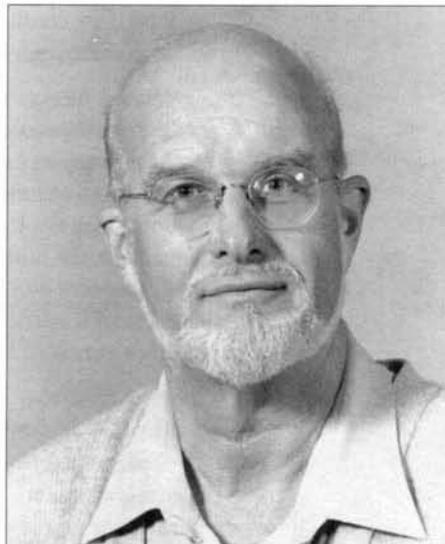
## My Creed

### ALWAYS LOOKING AND REACHING

1. *MY CREED BEGINS WITH A COMMITMENT TO THE gospel of Jesus Christ as the framework for living this life and preparing for the next, whatever it might bring.* Having completed the first seven decades of mortality, I have grown more certain about the validity of gospel teachings for this life even as I have learned to live with increasing uncertainty about the next. I hope and trust that the cosmological process we call the Plan of Salvation will indeed culminate in a divine destiny with eternal relationships, as promised; but I have many questions and little understanding about the meaning and implications of that destiny. I have learned to live with such ambiguity—doing so is an attribute of intellectual adulthood—and to enjoy it, because it leaves so much to think about!

2. *I thus choose to believe in a meaningful, progressive life after mortality, or at least to proceed as though it is real.* Such a belief is my overarching “hypothesis for living,” which, like any hypothesis, does not require final proof to provide guidance for the “experiment” we call mortality. Nor do I apologize for embracing what philosophers of science might call an “unfalsifiable” hypothesis, i.e., one that can be neither proven nor disproven in the empirical present. Whether we realize it or not, everyone lives according to some propositions that cannot be verified in this life, or at least not until some distant—even unspecified—point in the future. Think of the investor whose pay-off will come, if not next year, then the year after that, or the year after that. Think of the commitments to uncertainty we make at marriage, in the expectation of more happiness and fulfillment in the future than in the past, or our willingness to devote twenty-five years to bearing and rearing children in the hope that they will bring us more satisfaction than pain. Even in the rare ozone of academia, entire careers have been built on unfalsifiable theoretical frameworks like psychoanalysis, dialectical materialism, or a sanguine commitment to the inherent goodness and perfectibility of the human being.

3. *Meanwhile, we have to cope with earth life, and I find my inspiration in the teachings of Jesus of Nazareth.* I am not ignorant of the comparable, and often sublime, teachings of other great prophets, but I find in Jesus a combination of idealism and realism that has special appeal. I cannot comprehend the full meaning of his atonement, but I don't need a full understanding in order to apply the principle of repentance on which the Atonement depends for its efficacy. Indeed, the longer I live, the more repentant I feel, and the more I seek the forgiveness of others, especially but not only those nearest and dearest, for the sorrow inflicted on them by my weakness and selfishness across the years.



*“The longer I live, the more repentant I feel, and the more I seek the forgiveness of others.”*

Another increasingly important sentiment of my mature years is gratitude, especially to God, but also to countless others inside and outside my family and the Church who have looked past my weaknesses to enrich my life with opportunity, encouragement, and sustenance, both material and spiritual. Such are the ideals for earthly living that I find especially meaningful in the gospel: repentance, forgiveness, gratitude, and related ideals like empathy, all of which comprise a general syndrome that we might call “charity.” These are not my only ethical ideals, but they are the ones that have become increasingly important in my later life.

4. *My Church membership is an altogether separate matter from my life's creed.*

The Church is important to me, and I feel intensely loyal to it. The leaders with whom I have dealt over the years have always proved loyal to me. I believe the Church has a divine origin, though other churches might share such an origin to greater or lesser degrees. My study of LDS history convinces me, however, that since its origin, the Church has operated mainly as a human institution, given into our hands by a loving God as a structure, somewhat like the family, within which we must learn to tolerate, love, and serve each other.

Each of us, in the Church or in a family, is entitled to divine guidance for our roles or callings to the extent that we seek it and prepare for it. Scriptures teach that divine revelation typically begins with human initiative, with our formulating propositions to be presented for spiritual confirmation. This process takes a lot of thought, effort, and humility to get beyond the preconceptions and prejudices of our human condi-

tion and produce confirmable propositions. Sometimes we and our leaders go to that effort, and sometimes we don't. That's why the Church and its programs seem so often to muddle through, rather than to succeed fully; that's why leaders and members sometimes treat each other with arrogance and insensitivity; and that's why the Lord is not always pleased with what happens in the Church. Yet the Church is the means and not the end. Though we are assured that the family is eternal, we have been given no reason to believe that the Church exists in the next world. That is why we must keep an eternal perspective on what occurs in the Church, whether in the slights we receive or in the honors bestowed through high office.

At its best, the Church is a community of caring if deeply flawed souls where we can love and be loved, forgive and be forgiven, serve and be served, strengthen the weak and receive strength in our weaknesses. The Church does not always function at its best; nor do we as members. Any of us at any time can thus find ourselves among the alienated and marginalized. We must nevertheless always be looking and reaching for each other across categorical margins and boundaries in hopes of maintaining community bonds of eternal love; for eternal life must ultimately be a collective accomplishment, a triumph of enduring relationships over preoccupation with self.

—ARMAND L. MAUSS  
*professor, sociology, Washington State University*

## Robert Bennett:

Mormon Lobbyist, Campaign Manager, Nixon Appointee, Hughes P.R. Director

Interviewed by Peggy Fletcher



*Robert Foster Bennett, director of public relations for the Sunstone Corporation, is the son of Francis C. and Mildred F. Bennett. Republican Senator from Utah (1973-1978). He completed a mission in Scotland, graduated from the University of Utah, worked as a lobbyist in Washington, D.C., and served as a congressional liaison for the Nixon administration. In 1971 he brought the Robert E. Madole Company, a Washington public relations firm, and served in a hospital in Virginia. In 1970 there was media speculation that Bennett was the "Deep Throat" referred to in the Woodward/Bernstein book. All the President's Men, a theory which both he and Woodward have consistently denied. He is presently living in Los Angeles with his wife Joyce McKay Bennett, and six children.*

*Sunstone: What role did you play in your father's senatorial campaign?*

*Bennett: I worked in every one of his campaigns in one capacity or another. The first one was in 1950 when I was in high school. I passed out campaign literature door to door in Democratic precincts. In '56, I was in college and was involved at a little higher level. But it wasn't until the '62 campaign that I really became wrapped up in it. It was Dad's most difficult campaign—the only one (with the exception of the first) where he did not lead in the polls all the way.*

*Sunstone: Was religion an issue in that campaign?*

*Bennett: David King, the incumbent Democratic Congressman running for Dad's Senate seat, had been a member of the General Superintendency of the MIA before he ran for Congress. Dad, on the other hand, had been a member of the General Superintendency of the Sunday*

*Sunstone, Volume Three, Number Two, page 15*

### Twenty Years Ago in Sunstone

## A SMOKING, MORMON CONGRESSMAN

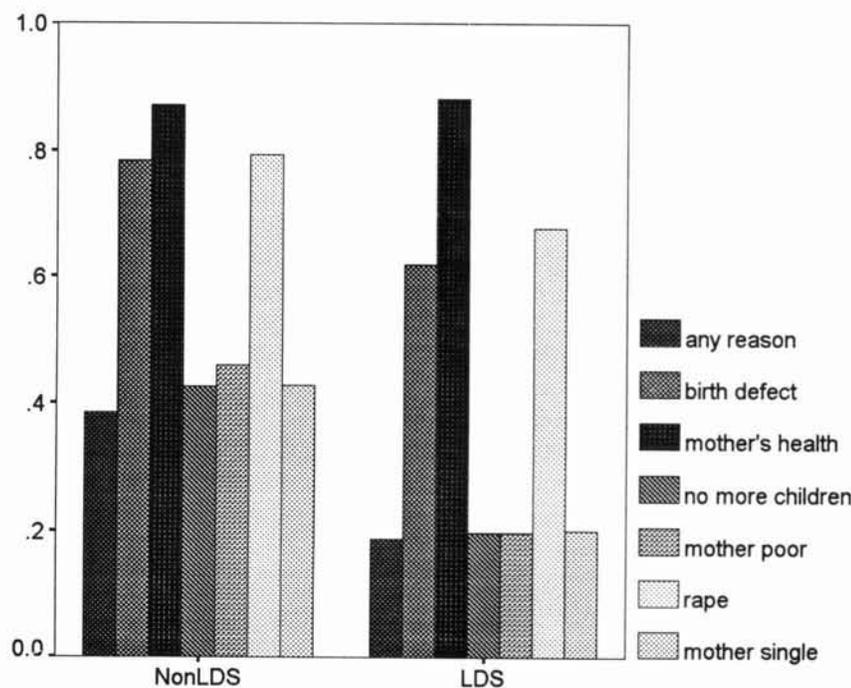
**I**N THE JANUARY/FEBRUARY 1978 ISSUE OF SUNSTONE, then lobbyist, now U.S. Senator (R-Utah), Robert F. Bennett said in an interview:

"I remember a remark made about a candidate who was not as faithful in the Church as he might have been, at least in

### Peculiar People

## ABORTION ATTITUDES

MEMBERS OF THE LDS CHURCH are less likely to say abortion should be legal than are non-LDS residents of the United States. This finding comes from responses to the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago from 1972 to 1996. The cumulative survey includes over 35,000 responses, 452 of which said they were LDS. Respondents to national surveys were asked if they thought "it should be possible for a pregnant woman to obtain a legal abortion if there is a strong chance of serious defect in the baby, if she is married and does not want any more children, if the woman's own health is seriously endangered by the



pregnancy, if the family has a very low income and cannot afford any more children, if she became pregnant as a result of rape, if she is not married and does not want to marry the man, or the woman wants it for any reason." Mormons were as likely as the national population to say abortion should be legal if the mother's health is seriously endangered. In each other case, Mormons were more opposed to legal abortion.

terms of some of his personal habits. Some of the people in the party complained bitterly that he wasn't living up to Church standards. One of the wiser heads, in my view, responded, 'Look, we're not running him for President of the Church; we're running him for that particular political office.' I think that members of the Church should remember that the man can be a smoking elder or a drinking seventy [stake missionary] and still be an excellent congressman. At the same time, if he professes to be a good member of the Church while he's in Utah and then sheds his religion when he crosses the state line and gets back to Washington, I think voters of any religious stripe should seriously question his intellectual honesty."

### Neither White Nor Black

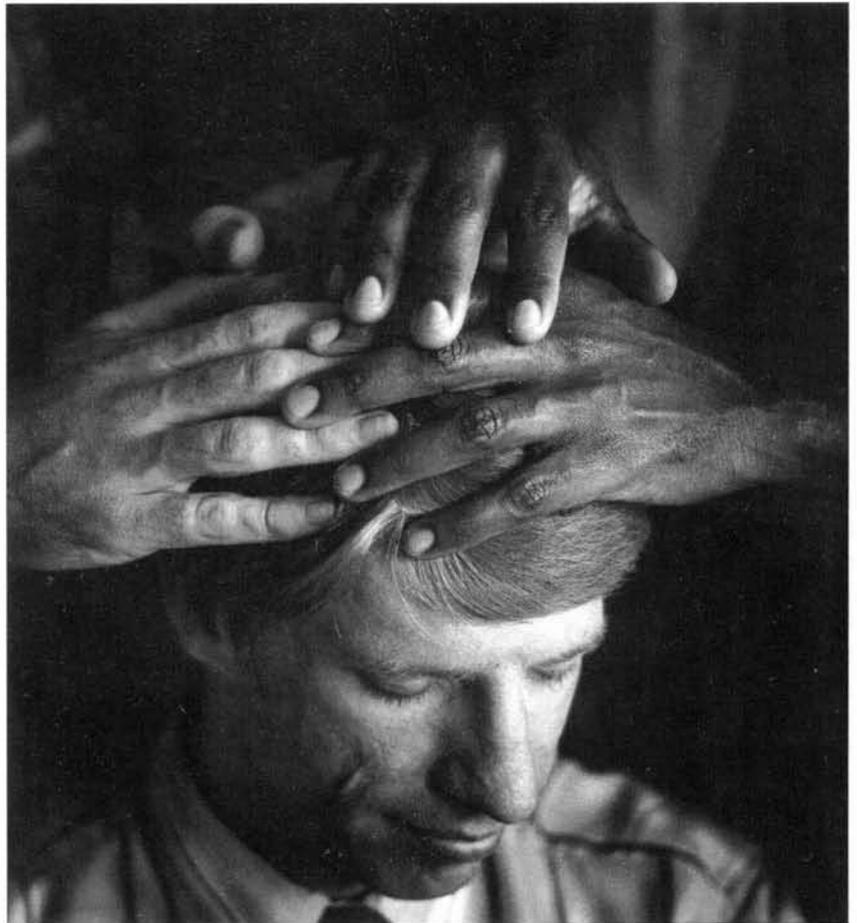
## CEASE TO CONCERN YOURSELF

NINTEEN NINETY-EIGHT commemorates the twentieth anniversary of revelation allowing black men to be ordained to the priesthood and the fulfillment of an important, personal spiritual lesson—having patience to wait for change. In the 1960s, I became concerned with the racial policy of the Church toward people of African ancestry. My concern became acute when I concluded that the practice was a result of cultural influence and historical precedent, not a revelation from God. I fretted and worried over this until a personal revelatory experience put my mind at rest. It occurred during a high council meeting, which was my last since I had taken a new job in a different state. The stake president acknowledged that it was my last meeting, said some very kind things about my efforts as a member of the council, and then asked if I had anything to say.

I spoke without any prior thought and spent a few minutes expressing my genuine affection for the men with whom I had associated and my love for the calling. Suddenly, I was talking about my concerns over the race issue, how much it bothered me, and my conclusion that blacks were being treated improperly in the Church. As I was speaking, there came to my mind as strong an impression as I have ever felt. In effect, it said: "My son, cease to concern yourself. This is my problem, not yours. Stop worrying about it."

From that moment, my mind was at peace, and I was able to function in a wide variety of Church callings without the constant personal struggle over the race matter.

A few years later, the issue came up in a different context



*"I fretted and worried that the racial policy of the Church was not a revelation from God until a personal revelatory experience put my mind at rest."*

while I was being called to be a bishop. I felt I had to tell the stake president that I would be prepared to give the priesthood to a black man under my jurisdiction if one became a member of my ward and were found to be worthy. I told him of my belief that there was no good cause for denying the priesthood. However, I assured the stake president that I would notify him ahead of time of my intent to deviate from the then-current Church practice so he could release me if he disagreed with my course of action.

The stake president swallowed hard, but he still extended the call because he was convinced that the Lord wanted me to be the bishop. My resolve was never tested; I served only for a year before moving out of the area, and no black people showed any interest in Church membership during that time.

Then, four years later, the change in practice occurred. He who had assured me that it was his problem, not mine, had resolved it in his way.

I believe that lesson in patience is taught again and again.

—J. FREDERICK (TOBY) PINGREE

*Sunstone invites similar personal reflections to commemorate the 1978 revelation.*

## BEING AND NOTHINGNESS

**I**N ORDER TO FULLY EXPLAIN THIS STORY, I NEED TO tell another one. About six years ago, just south of my hometown of Rochester, New York, two football players from a local college saw a female trying to get help at the roadside. They pulled over, got out of the truck they were in, and asked what the problem was. Seconds later, a man jumped out of the bushes and shot each of the football players three times. He drove off in their truck, and the female drove off in the car that she had said was broken. I read the story later in the newspaper and, of course, was appalled.

But now I'm in Los Angeles—Venice, actually. It's not the nastiest part of town, but it's not all that nice, either. That's actually one of the cool things about it. So I'm off to Hollywood to see the new Parker Posey movie I've been dying to see for so long, but I have to go to the ATM first. It's after dark, so I drive to an ATM not too far from my house, near the Coast Highway. Across the street from the ATM is a red van with drapes in the window. I park behind it, and an old, somewhat grungy-looking man walks up to my car. He asks me to roll down my window, and I inch it down just a hair.

"Do you have jumper cables?" he asks.

Without thinking I answer, "Yeah!" because I did.

"Good, I need a jump. My battery is dead."

I pull my car around to the front of his and realize just how stupid I had been. What was I thinking? This could be any nut, or a killer, mugger, carjacker, or someone like that. I needed an out. I got out of my car, opened the trunk, and looked down at my jumper cables.

"Dude, I guess my cables are at home. I was using them for something else, and I forgot to put them back in my car. Sorry, man."

I drive across the street to use the ATM while the man tries to flag down other drivers. With my money in hand, I scoot back into the car and drive off.

And I feel like crap. I had just lied to a guy and left him stranded on the street. While staring at my cables, I told him they weren't there. I ran through all the questions in my head. What could he have done to me? Would I have

helped him if he was a white guy? How much danger was I in? How awful a person had I become where I wouldn't help somebody who was in trouble?

I pull over, take the jumper cables out of my trunk, and put them on the passenger seat. I want to make it look as if I had gone home and found them. Still nervous, I drive around the block a few times before heading back to the street with the ATM. And there's that guy, still trying to get a jump. I pull up to his car and hold up the cables, yelling, "Behold, yon cables!"

"Thanks. You know, most people are just too scared to even help," he says.

I shrug and give a big sigh. Then his friend comes over. When I was doing my risk vs. morals math, I only factored in one guy. Now there are two. He just sort of stands behind the older guy and looks at me. Absolutely positive that I am going to be on the front page of tomorrow's *L. A. Times*, I hand them the cables.

"Can you help us?" asks the younger guy. "We don't want to blow anything up."

Trying to conceal the sweat that is now forming on my forehead, I quickly attach the cables to my battery. Fifteen seconds

### Mormon Media Image

#### "I HAVE A MOTHER THERE"

**A** RECENT New York Times Magazine examined religion and belief in American lives. Among individuals of several faith traditions, Mormon Gail Turley Houston, an assistant professor of English at the University of New Mexico, was highlighted in this "What I Believe" sidebar interview:

**Q:** You were denied tenure by Brigham Young University for "publicly contradicting fundamental church doctrine"—which in your case meant espousing feminism. Has this affected your faith?

**A:** I've had questions. But my faith has nothing to do with the men who fired me. They cannot touch my soul. My religion is based on my strong, deep and untouchable relationship with God. I know God loves me, and that I've done nothing wrong. I've been given the gift of teaching by God. My mission is to change the world for good by using my gift. My God also keeps telling me to tell people that what happened to me is wrong.

**Q:** You've spoken of praying to "Mother in heaven." Is God a woman?

**A:** In the beginning of the church, one of the wives of Joseph Smith—Mormonism's founder—wrote a song that included the lyrics, "Truth tells me that I have a mother there." In other words, the song says that on earth we have a mother and father, and in heaven we do as well.

**Q:** So, God is a couple? **A:** Absolutely!

**Q:** Let's hope they get along. **A:** Oh, they do. They do.





## “LOVE KEEPS NO SCORE OF WRONGS”

1 CORINTHIANS 13

KING JAMES VERSION

CHAPTER 13

THOUGH I speak with the tongues of men and of angels, and have not charity, I am become as sounding brass, or a tinkling cymbal.

2 And though I have the gift of prophecy, and understand all mysteries, and all knowledge; and though I have all faith, so that I could remove mountains, and have not charity, I am nothing.

3 And though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor, and though I give my body to be burned, and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing.

4 Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not; charity vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up,

5 Doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil;

6 Rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth;

7 Beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things.

8 Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away.

9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part.

10 But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away.

11 When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things.

12 For now we see through a glass, darkly; but then face to face: now I know in part; but then shall I know even as also I am known.

13 And now abideth faith, hope, charity, these three; but the greatest of these is charity.

THE REVISED ENGLISH BIBLE

Oxford and Cambridge University Presses, 1989

**13** I may speak in tongues of men or of angels, but if I have no love, I am a sounding gong or a clanging cymbal. <sup>2</sup>I may have the gift of prophecy and the knowledge of every hidden truth; I may have faith enough to move mountains; but if I have no love, I am nothing. <sup>3</sup>I may give all I possess to the needy, I may give my body to be burnt, but if I have no love, I gain nothing by it.

<sup>4</sup>Love is patient and kind. Love envies no one, is never boastful, never conceited, <sup>5</sup>never rude; love is never selfish, never quick to take offence. Love keeps no score of wrongs, <sup>6</sup>takes no pleasure in the sins of others, but delights in the truth. <sup>7</sup>There is nothing love cannot face; there is no limit to its faith, its hope, its endurance.

<sup>8</sup>Love will never come to an end. Prophecies will cease; tongues of ecstasy will fall silent; knowledge will vanish. <sup>9</sup>For our knowledge and our prophecy alike are partial, <sup>10</sup>and the partial vanishes when wholeness comes. <sup>11</sup>When I was a child I spoke like a child, thought like a child, reasoned like a child; but when I grew up I finished with childish things. <sup>12</sup>At present we see only puzzling reflections in a mirror, but one day we shall see face to face. My knowledge now is partial; then it will be whole, like God's knowledge of me. <sup>13</sup>There are three things that last for ever: faith, hope, and love; and the greatest of the three is love.

THE NEW JERUSALEM BIBLE

Doubleday, 1985

**The order of importance in spiritual gifts. Hymn to Love**

Set your mind on the higher gifts. And now I am going to put before you the best way of all.

**13** Though I command languages both human and angelic—if I speak without love, I am no more than a gong booming or a cymbal clashing. And though I have the power of prophecy, to penetrate all mysteries and knowledge, and though I have all the faith necessary to move mountains—if I am without love, I am nothing. Though I should give away to the poor all that I possess, and even give up my body to be burned—if I am without love, it will do me no good whatever.

Love is always patient and kind; love is never jealous; love is not boastful or conceited, it is never rude and never seeks its own advantage, it does not take offence or store up grievances. Love does not rejoice at wrongdoing, but finds its joy in the truth. It is always ready to make allowances, to trust, to hope and to endure whatever comes.

Love never comes to an end. But if there are prophecies, they will be done away with; if tongues, they will fall silent; and if knowledge, it will be done away with. For we know only imperfectly, and we prophesy imperfectly; but once perfection comes, all imperfect things will be done away with. When I was a child, I used to talk like a child, and see things as a child does, and think like a child; but now that I have become an adult, I have finished with all childish ways. Now we see only reflections in a mirror, mere riddles, but then we shall be seeing face to face. Now, I can know only imperfectly; but then I shall know just as fully as I am myself known.

As it is, these remain: faith, hope and love, the three of them; and the greatest of them is love.

later, the van is running. They thank me, and I throw my stuff into my Buick and drive quickly away.

And I'm still wired and upset from the adrenaline that is now coursing through my veins. And I'm upset at how upset I am over the incident. And I'm upset that I've been taught to fear the people around me. And I'm upset that fearing the people around me is basically for my own good and pretty much essential for survival in a big city.

And I turn the radio up as loud as it will go. And I keep telling myself, "You are not a liar. You are not a bigot. You are not dead to the suffering of others."

And in a week or two, I may believe that again.

—MATTHEW WORKMAN  
Los Angeles

### Recently Released

## "IN A RIGHTEOUS USE"

CONTROVERSIAL MORMON AUTHOR BRIAN Evenson, whose violent novella *Altman's Tongue* has become the symbol for critics and champions of a new kind of Mormon fiction, recently had published two new collections of short stories, *The Din of Celestial Birds* (Wordcraft of Oregon) and the very-Mormon chapbook *Prophets and Brothers* (Rodent Press). The following excerpt is from the short story "The Prophets," which takes a brutal and extreme look at conservative Mormon literalism and its notions of righteousness:

"In a holy vision the Lord came to and told me to buy myself a shovel and employ it in a righteous use, so I went next door and borrowed one off Boyd Laswell and awaited further instruction. I took to pondering and praying, striving to divine what God might have me accomplish by means of a shovel.

"I hauled the shovel through my comings and goings, slung upon my shoulders. I did some walking and standing, praying to God to prompt me where to dig, though I didn't even know if digging was for what the shovel was intended.

"Boyd Laswell saw me at it one noon and came after me shouting at me to render him back his shovel. I tried to dissuade him with *Leave off: God has confiscated this shovel!* but he knocked me off my feet and took it. He is not properly parceled over to the promptings of the spirit as am I.

"I had a few deep and easy nights, then the same fitful vision came awork at me. A few nights and it had harrowed me through, though, and I began to think that if I kept paying the dream no heed I was on course to hell. So I got up in the stark of night and scuffed my way down to the Central Hardware and broke the door window out with a garbage can lid. Would have gone in after a shovel too, but God showed me the glints of the dog's teeth as he waited to devour me. So I went home again and in a while fell asleep.

"Woke up an hour later with my mouth dry and sores on my lips, a vision of the shovel still rutting about my head. So I snuck on over to Boyd's and snipped a crowbar from the back of his truck, then pried the lock off his shed door. I'm no thief—all I took was the shovel. Would have left money for it, too, but figured it better to let God reward Boyd in his own way."

### Critical Matters

## ON THE PLEASURES OF PAIN IN DEVOTIONAL DISCOURSE

REAL

I like a look of agony,  
Because I know it's true;  
Men do not sham convulsion,  
Nor simulate a throe.

The Eyes glaze once, and that is death.  
Impossible to feign  
The beads upon the forehead  
By homely anguish strung.

—EMILY DICKENSON

MY VOTE IN AN ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON Letters internet list poll—"What is your favorite work of devotional literature"—probably struck some as a bit bizarre—I choose John Bunyan's autobiography, *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*. Part of this, I'm sure, is because I have an unreasonable fascination with seventeenth-century nonconformist writers (such as Milton, Bunyan, Winstanley, Sprigge, and Defoe), who make up the core of my dissertation project. But my fascination with *Grace Abounding* goes even deeper; I like the book because it is all about pain. Bunyan experiences the pain of sin before his conversion and the pain of his constant doubts about his elect status throughout the book. He goes through bouts of deep depression, conflict, and self-doubt, but, through it all, he remains deeply devoted to his God.

Most of the other books that I would be tempted to nominate are also about pain: The Book of Job, Augustine's *Confessions*, Gerard Manley Hopkins's "terrible sonnets," James Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Primo Levi's *The Drowned and the Saved*, Anne Sexton's *The Awful Rowing towards God*, Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*, and Levi Peterson's *The Backslider*. These books have no common religious position. They are by Catholics, Protestants, Jews, Mormons, and atheists. Some end with an affirmation of religion, some end with a rejection of it, and some end without any resolution whatsoever. But all of them comment—poignant and powerfully—on the pain and struggle that go along with trying to construct faith in a world that seems more than a little bit conducive to doubt.

Now I am not a masochist. Pain—any kind of pain—is about last on my list of things to experience during a day. But I am also aware that having faith and serving God are not always the easiest things to do. And that is as it should be. Joseph Smith once said that "a religion that does not require the sacrifice of all things never has power sufficient to produce the faith necessary unto life and salvation" (*Lectures on Faith*, lecture 6.7). I believe that this is true and that we can often forget that "the sacrifice of all things" can be very painful.

So I firmly believe that devotional literature should show people struggling and suffering. Religious writers are often tempted to show people suffering and struggling *until* they make the correct religious choices—only to have all their problems cease suddenly once they express the proper devotion. This ultimately creates a false perception. It would be nice if the only people who suffered weren't religious and if righteous actions always resulted in terrestrial rewards, but this is rarely the case. Often good people suffer in spite of their religion and sometimes *because* of it. Furthermore, my experience has been that religious joy is, for many people, deeply intertwined with less positive emotions like fear, guilt, anxiety, depression, and anger. I do not believe that literature needs to focus on these elements of religious faith to the exclusion of

the great joy that it can bring. But I also do not believe “devotional literature” should ignore all of these very real aspects of spiritual negotiation in an attempt to create a more sanitized—and ultimately less moving—picture of religious experience.

In the end, I suppose I completely agree with Emily Dickenson's poem. “I like a look of agony, / Because I know it's true.” When I read the desperate/hopeful/fearful literature of Bunyan, Hopkins, Sexton, and Joyce, I have no doubt that I am getting an authentic portrayal of a religious struggle—and that, independent of context, inspires and uplifts me. I cannot say the same for many of the more intentionally uplifting and inspiring devotional narratives I have read.

—MICHAEL AUSTIN

*A version of this first appeared on the AML-List.*



## MORMON INDEX

- Number of Mormons to serve as U.S. Cabinet Secretaries: 5
- Number of the seventy-three California singles wards that were dissolved during fall of 1996: 17
- Rankings of Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Massachusetts as least Mormon states, by percentages: 1, 2, 3
- Percentage of counsellors in the First Presidency to later become president: 19
- Number of 1847 pioneers named Joseph Smith: 3
- Number named George Washington: 7
- Number named John: 102
- Number named Mary: 102
- Percentage of American Mormon adults who have attended college: 55
- Ratio of Church members to Church bureaucrats: 2,744 to 1
- Number of bureaucrats in the Church's Salt Lake City offices: 3,367
- Number of buildings housing the Church's Salt Lake City bureaucracy: 34
- Estimated annual gross income of the Church: \$5.9 billion
- Annual non-tithe, investment income received by Church: \$600 million
- Ranking of Church-owned Deseret Cattle Ranch among world's largest beef ranches: 1
- Number of acres encompassed by the Deseret Cattle Ranch: 312,000
- Estimated real estate value of the Deseret Cattle Ranch: \$858 million
- Number of Church-owned radio stations: 16
- Number of Church-owned television stations: 1
- Time a person must get in line to get into the second, afternoon, general conference session: 3:00 A.M.
- Number of visitors to the Polynesian Cultural Center in its thirty-four year history: 25,000,000
- Number of Saints in Paraguay: 32,000
- Percentage increase in Paraguay Church membership during the past four years: 100
- Amount Church contributed worldwide during last five years to humanitarian projects: \$172 million
- Of the 13 films scheduled for the 1998 winter semester at BYU's Varsity Theatre, number rated R (before BYU editing): 9

1 Jay Parry, Larry Morris, *The Mormon Book of Lists* (Bookcraft), 210; 2 *Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 Mar. 1997, B2; 3,4,5,6,7,8 1997–1998 *Church Almanac* (Deseret News); 9 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton), 42; 10,11,12 D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Signature), 159, 159, 159; 13,14,15,16,17,18,19 *Time*, 4 Aug. 1997, 52, 54, 53, 53, 53, 54, 54; 20 *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 Oct. 1997, C1; 21 *LDS Church News*, 4 Oct. 1997, 11; 22,23 *LDS Church News*, 23 Aug. 1997, 4; 24 *LDS Church News*, 20 Sept. 1997, 5; 25 *Daily Universe*, 7 Jan. 1998, 13.

Moonstone Award winner, 1995 Brookie & D. K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest Winner

# HOMECOMING

By Michael Fillerup



*"Just one thing, Elder. You make a decision, you and the Lord, and you move on.  
No regrets. Regrets'll kill you."*

**H**AVE YOU FASTED AND PRAYED ABOUT IT?

Yes.

But exiting the 747 in his dark suit, white shirt, and red-and-blue striped tie, he looks back circumspectly, like Orpheus ascending, as if expecting any moment to be ambushed from behind, or for the smiling stewardess waving in the doorway to evaporate before his eyes.

At the end of the tunnel, he pauses, scanning the crowd for Welcome Home signs. For her—there! Sandwiched be-

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MICHAEL FILLERUP is the author of *Visions and Other Stories* and *Beyond the River*. He lives with his wife, Rebecca, and their four children in Flagstaff, Arizona.

tween her parents, the bullfrog-bellied bishop, the home-made, whole-wheat mom. The left corner of his mouth spasms as he takes two steps forward—slow, clumsy, uncertain steps, like an infant learning to walk. Turning her plain but pretty head aside, wincing, she betrays him with a half-kiss.

Then hugs, handshakes, everyone smiling awkwardly; shotgun wedding smiles. No one asks about it, or why; everyone politely ignores it, as if his face has been badly burned or disfigured and inquiring is just not the tactful, proper thing to do.

But he feels it, at church, at the post office, at the gas pump, their judgmental Mormon eyes boring through the back of his head.

*Give it six months, Elder. It takes that long just to get your feet wet.*

Within a week, she breaks it off. With tears, kisses—flat, dead, oh-so-ordinary, cousinly kisses. It isn't *that*, she insists. She'd been thinking about it for some time, actually. Long before. . . .

He sits quietly beside her in the used pickup truck he has just bought to christen their new life together, the engagement ring hiding in a little black velvet box buried in the pocket of his blue jeans. He feels, and knows, he looks silly, fatuous, childish. Almost twenty-seven, he had been the oldest full-time Elder in the mission, yet he doesn't look a day over seventeen: soft, choirboy bangs, peach-fuzz cheeks, a head shaped like a filbert nut, a little peg for a nose. He smiles brokenly. "Oh." Never venturing the obvious: Why didn't you tell me before? Why didn't you say something sooner? Why didn't you—

That night, he has a dream. Entering the churchhouse, he is greeted by a throng of skeletons in hooded white robes. Within the din of chattering teeth and holy organ music, he recognizes the voice of his father, a cold, cynical cackle: "Welcome home, son!"

He wakes up to a jagged moon peering through the window like a skullface as the smell of wet sagebrush and the damp dust of a thousand summers wafts through the rusty screen. The cottonwoods are creaking like old men in old rockers. He wipes his hand across his sticky, bald chest, wondering at what point he removed his priesthood garments.

*Whatever you decide, Elder, I want you to know I'll always love and respect you, no matter what.*

Every morning thereafter, as he pours himself a bowl of cold cereal and unfolds the newspaper, he will stare across the empty dinette table and think back to that late summer afternoon driving down the interstate in President Hawkins' blue Ford Taurus.

*But why, Elder? You've only been out two months. There's got to be a reason why?*

He had no concrete answer other than her 2x3 photograph in his wallet and a newspaper clipping he kept hidden in his dresser drawer back home. It is a brittle, yellowing photo of a naked little boy with bowl-cut blond hair standing in knee-deep grass amid a forest of long-haired men and halter-topped women in cutoff jeans. Battered old VW vans with LOVE and PEACE in psychedelic cloud-print fog the background. The caption reads: BOY BREAKFASTING AT THE WORLD EARTH DAY FESTIVAL.

The story underneath relates matter-of-factly how the boy had been walking around with a bowl of cold cereal—only the milk remained, discolored by the sugar-coated nuggets already eaten. The boy stopped, the article said, urinated in the bowl, lifted the bowl to his lips. . . "County Health officials have been called in . . . Child Protective Services. . . No restroom facilities. . ."

"That's you," the man he used to call Father had said the night before leaving them for good. "Don't you never forget it! That's you, and it'll always be you!"

*Just one thing, Elder. You make a decision, you and the Lord, and you move on. No regrets. Regret'll kill you.*

But he will remain in town. He will take a job stocking shelves at True Value Hardware and move into a smaller, cheaper apartment on the west side. His hair will creep over his ears and collar, but no farther. Sundays he will attend church faithfully if masochistically, grieving inside each time he sees her holding hands with the bristly blond who has returned from Stockholm speaking expert Swedish and telling tales of miracles and healings at his hands. The banker's son, the banker-to-be.

He will watch in silent anguish each time her belly swells like a brand-new planet and the children appear one by one as she strollers them down the narrow aisles of Stratton's Market. He will smile at her little deacon with the silly cowlick when he offers him the sacrament tray and at her daughters as they advance from the jungle gym to pom-and-cheer to high school cap and gown.

And he will watch, wincing, the day she leans over (so happy, so proud, threads of gray gleaming in her short, sculptured hair) and plants a public kiss on her husband's cheek as he (his proud mane salted silver) rises to take his newly appointed place upon the stand. With just a moment's hesitation, he will raise his right arm to the square with the rest of the congregation, pledging his allegiance, regardless.

And sometime later—a day, a week, a year perhaps—his new bishop will sit behind the big, burnished desk in the modest office smelling of homemade bread and solemnity, listening with cupped hands and beetled brows as he confesses his second and third sins.

"Bishop, I'm in love with a woman who's married to another man."

And he will be gentle in his reply: "I know, brother. You just have to do the best you can. We all do." ☞



## ANNUNCIATION

On which day  
did Mary feel the nudge  
of that mind,  
sharper than an elbow,  
stronger than the kick  
that Joseph saw billow her gown,  
just before he looked deep  
in her eyes and laughed  
with joy.

—MIKAL LOFGREN

*A world-renowned scholar of rhetoric shares the fruits of his life-long, interior discussion between his boyhood Mormon religious fundamentalism and his adult "faith," which he calls rhetoricology (the pursuit of an ecumenical dialogue in search of common ground). It was the direct result of his two years as a conflicted, intellectual LDS missionary.*

## CONFESSIONS OF AN AGING, HYPOCRITICAL EX-MISSIONARY

By Wayne C. Booth

UNTIL I WAS FAR INTO MY TEENS, I WAS AN utterly unquestioning Mormon. My parents and grandparents and aunts and uncles were all visibly, audibly, aggressively devout—all except one uncle, a smoker, a "black sheep." For our family, non-Mormons were beyond the pale—to be tolerated, of course, even treated kindly if they behaved themselves, viewed perhaps as potential converts, but never courted or married, and never even visited socially. They were certainly not destined, like us, to enter the celestial kingdom. We knew that in the next life those lost souls would not even be allowed to come near us, as we all continued our eternal progression, pursuing knowledge and righteousness—concepts that when defined correctly turned out to be the same thing.

What I remember as most important to me was that in heaven the non-Mormon or non-devout males down there in the lower kingdoms would have no hope for what I had a strong hope for, if I kept my nose clean: becoming the god of another world, accompanied by a pious female helpmate. Meanwhile, here and now, non-Mormons were so far beneath us that it was dangerous even to get near them. I remember feeling scared to walk too close to the one non-Mormon church in my home town, American Fork, Utah. I would always cross the road and walk on the other side, to avoid contamination, and I was thankful that we lived in another ward, far from that wicked place.

In short, until my first questioning began at about fourteen, I was a 100 percent devotee of what might be called an exclu-

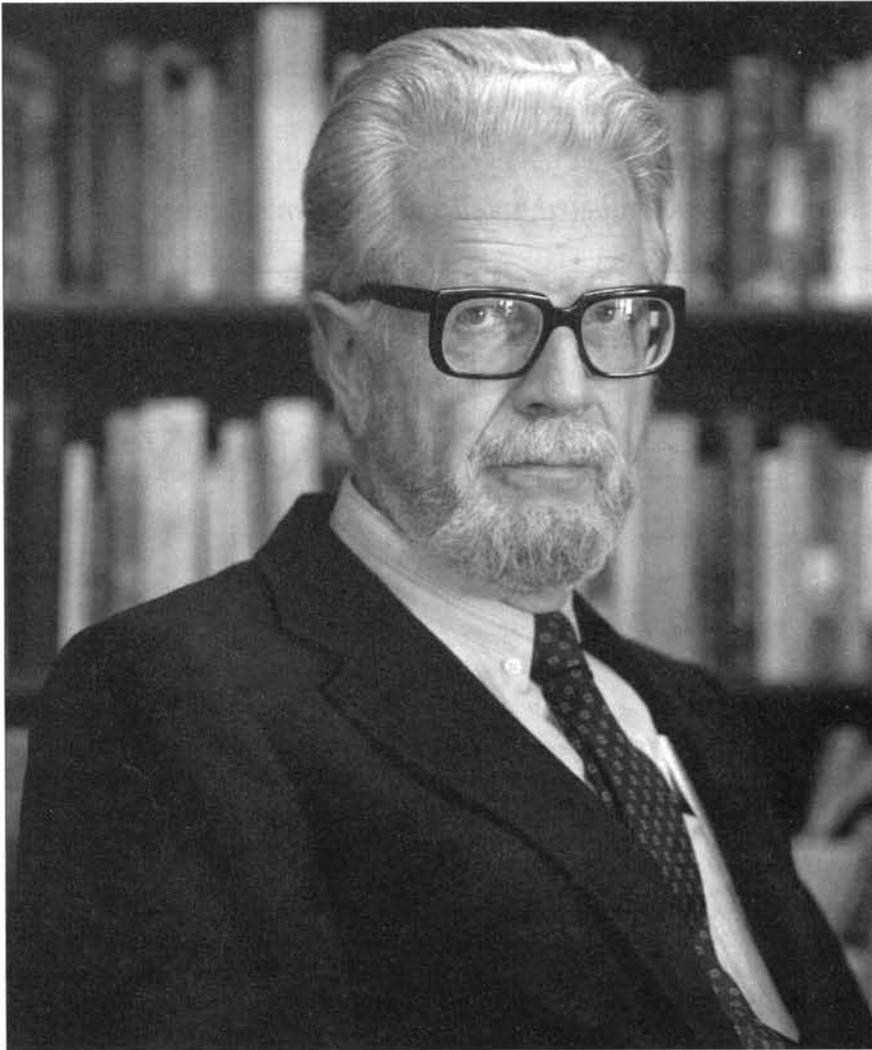
sivist, or particularist, anti-ecumenical version of Mormonism. That boy, the very young Wayne Booth, would perhaps these days be called by non-Mormons a fundamentalist (the word wasn't in our vocabulary, I'm quite sure). Born and reared in the pre-Darwinian nineteenth century, as you might say, he was for about fifteen years unaware of what had been happening to western thought from long before he was born.

Where am I now? Well, I'm still a "Mormon," but one who puts quotation marks around most of my religious commitments—the marks always translated not as "disbelief" but as "Allow me my own definitions." The pious young believer and I have engaged in a variety of dialogues for going on seven decades. As my beliefs and unbeliefs have shifted about, the debates have, of course, changed ground. At times I've treated the boy as a stupid oaf, and he's treated me as a lost soul. Sometimes he has been so shocked by my ideas, and even more by how low I rank coffee or wine drinking on the scale of sins, that he has simply and angrily cast me off, even as I have lamented his naive commitment to silly superstitions and destructive prejudices.

Now, though, as he and I face the many conflicting religious and anti-religious conflicts flooding our world, the distance between us seems to me far less, and the need to get together, in spite of his remaining conviction that that is impossible, seems ever greater. After all, I tell him, many of my admired religious friends now talk about an apocalyptic ending fully as confidently as he does. And some of them even have in mind, as he does, a second coming: if we can just probe space far enough and vigorously enough, we'll find some planet to escape to when this one collapses. Isn't it time, I now ask my young self, to probe beneath the superficial "verbal" differences to the true grounds of our strongest convictions? Isn't our real assignment, as we approach the new millennium, to

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Wayne Booth, the “old metaphorist” whose “faith” involves a genuine dialogue with the “young literalist” he used to be.

**N**othing we ever work at is more important than the drive not just to maintain peace with rivals but to understand them: to learn to think with them while assisting them to think with us in return.

discover what we share and then decide, probing our differences, just what can be cast aside?

He's a bit more open these days to that suggestion, but for many decades he viewed my profession of commitment to various “liberal” versions and virtues of Mormonism as simply a hypocritical disguise for genuine betrayal:

You're betraying Grandma and Grandpa Booth and Grandma and Grandpa Clayson and Great Grandfather and Great Grandmother Hawkins and all the Chipman pioneers. You're casting aside the very

testimonies that I have borne in fast meeting at least ten times already. You'll make it so we'll not be allowed to talk with any of the family in the next world. Even though you list yourself as a Mormon in *Who's Who*, you're not a Mormon any more! You don't even believe that Mormons have the Only True Church. You say you believe in the divinity of Jesus Christ and in Joseph Smith as a true prophet, but I know that you mean all that as something covered by a word I just learned in school: it's *metaphor* for you, not literal truth. You are just plain hypocritical.

And off he rides on his bicycle to go to a Boy Scout meeting, or to collect fast day donations, or to remind the other boys in his deacon's quorum that they must attend both meetings Sunday or the other quorum will win the contest for best attendance.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes I can manage, though, to entice him into a real discussion about what beliefs we still share. My claim in those discussions is that he and I still share the most important Mormon truths, the ones that are most *truly* “religious.” That radical claim continues to disturb him: “I don't see how you can make that claim, and I don't see how we can even discuss it. When you arrogantly reject what I *know* to be true, I just don't want to talk with you.” But I go on arguing—as I shall argue here—that beneath our differences, he and I still share common ground that is far more important than our differences.

#### LEARNING RHETOROLOGY

*Finding common ground even with enemies and remaining open to conversion.*

**A**S I've talked not just with that young fundamentalist but with various “enemies” and other “selves” over the years, I've been learning the kind of rhetorical practice that these days I risk labeling with a neologism, “rhetorology”: not rhetorical persuasion but rather a systematic, ecumenical probing of the essentials shared by rival rhetorics in any dispute—whether about religion or about other important matters. Though rhetorology shares many features with other “dialogical” efforts, what it perhaps most resembles is political diplomacy. But unlike skillful diplomats, rhetorologists do not just try to discover the rival basic commitments and then “bargain.” Nor do they just tolerate, in a spirit of benign relativism. Instead, they search together for true grounds then labor to decide how those grounds dictate a

change of mind about more superficial beliefs. Any genuine rhetorologist entering any fray is committed to the possibility of conversion to the "enemy" camp.

For decades I've been especially interested in the quarrels between those who specifically label themselves as religious (and who dismiss all atheists as inherently benighted) and many of those who call themselves atheists or unbelievers (and who dismiss all religious talk as nothing more than superstition). As I have struggled to write a book on that subject,<sup>2</sup> my imagined conversations with the lively, probing young believer I once was have come to seem more and more important.

For me, the pursuit of such a rhetorology has become a vocation that could be called religious, a kind of "faith" in, or unshakeable conviction of, the ultimate value of pursuing understanding and improved dialogue about shared fundamental values. The validity of such a faith could never be proved with hard logic or scientific evidence. It is as much a *faith* as any overt commitment to a church, but in my rhetorical terms it is both a religious and a *rational* faith: one that can be genuinely supported by careful argument of "the right kind," even though it can easily be described as naive or flatly absurd, according to some narrow notions of rational proof. There are obviously no scientific or strictly *logical* proofs for the importance of ecumenical, pluralistic probing. But I can find no *good* reasons to doubt its service to genuine religion.

Skeptics concerning this special kind of religious pursuit are found in every field and in most religious groups. And they always find good evidence for their skepticism. Our world is full of evidence showing that attempts at dialogue between contrasting faiths fail more often than they succeed; think of the failed conversations now going on among—or flatly denied by—Orthodox, Conservative, and Reform Jews. Indeed many philosophers and politicians and defenders of religion will claim that there can be no genuine discussion about religion between a pluralist like me and that fourteen-year-old religious dogmatist; religious dispute is in-

herently the kind that gets nowhere. As the self-proclaimed "atheist" Richard Rorty put it not long ago, religion should be "privatized"—it should be "kept out of the public square." It is bad taste to "bring religion into discussions of public policy," because all overtly "religious" groundings are irrational, refuted by the "Enlightenment" that he claims still to embrace.<sup>3</sup> In short, I'm sure that for him the "faith" undergirding the article I'm writing here is absurd.

Why should anyone persist in such a faith, looking back on a lifetime and out at a world, both of which seem to exhibit more failures than successes in the search for common spiritual ground? Within the Latter-day Saint community, one seems to see more and more drawing of sharp, impermeable lines, less and less embrace of the notion that religious devotion expresses itself best when "believers" get together and think through the grounds of their belief. Of course there's no way of proving that the lines are sharper now than when I was young. But it is clear that throughout my lifetime most Mormons would be skeptical about my claim that the young literalist and this old metaphorist belong, in the deepest sense,



As a young missionary, Elder Booth wrestled in his journal with the world views competing with his Mormon orthodoxy.

**U**nlike some friends who could not discern middle ground and leapt off into being non- or anti-Mormons, my search for shared ground removed all reasons for a break with Mormonism.

to the same church.

Such a claim might well lead in hundreds of directions. For the rest of this article, I'll pursue just one of them, with the question:

Where did I pick up a faith as difficult to defend as the faith in what I'm calling rhetorology—not just ecumenicism but the pursuit of ecumenical dialogue?

Only recently have I begun to suspect that it was the direct result of my two years as a confused, probing, often-troubled Mormon missionary.

#### MUSING ON MY MISSION

*Though a doubter, I found myself a missionary wanting to believe in the validity of my service.*

AFTER five or six years of reading and questioning and privately conferring with pious but unorthodox teachers,<sup>4</sup> as well as heated debates with orthodox and unforgiving authorities, the twenty-year-old Wayne Booth, argumentative and increasingly skeptical about many Mormon claims, and even more troubled by the behavior of many "Saints," surprised a lot of people by accepting a mission call. As he put it to skeptical friends at BYU, but never to the Church authorities, he was not going out to make converts, not to "get people dunked into the baptismal water," but "to do good in the world" and "to start liberalizing the Church from within." Did that feel hypocritical? Yes indeed—at least some of the time.

The key moment of decision went like this (reconstructed nearly thirty years later, in 1969, as I wrestled with my religious doubts and convictions in the light of my eighteen-year-old son's accidental death):

*Scene: The northwest corner of the Brigham Young University farmland, where the head sluice gates lie—sluice gates that I manipulate as I irrigate the farm through the long summer hours, reading my pocket Plato as I wait at the end of the furrows for the water to arrive. This evening, Professor M. Wilford Poulson has happened by, seen me pulling up a headgate, and stopped his car nearby. After finishing my simple task, I go to his car, place one rubber-booted foot on his fender, and we start talking. We talk and talk—talk on through the beautiful sunset, on into the twilight, slapping mosquitoes, talking, talking mainly about the Church and my doubts.*

POULSON: Don't throw out the baby with the bath water.

You keep leaping ahead into areas you know nothing about. The fact that some Church leaders are dishonest or unjust doesn't mean that the Church is valueless. Every institution, including every church, has some immoral leaders. Surely you're not going to relapse into the position that because the Church claims to be divinely led, and its leaders are clearly not divine, it must be valueless, when judged in human terms.

WAYNE: No, but I don't see any reason to . . .

POULSON: You shouldn't be looking for reasons *to*. You should be looking only for reasons *not to*. Here you are, raised in a marvelously vital tradition, surrounded by an

astounding number of good, intelligent people who have found a way to organize their lives effectively. You come along and ask them for reasons *to* do what they are doing! What you should ask for, before giving up anything they offer you, is reasons *not to* go along.

WAYNE: But I just can't *stand* even sitting in Church without speaking up when somebody talks nonsense. Last Sunday they were talking about personal devils, and some of them really believed that stuff.

POULSON: Well, you know what I've always said when some authority grills me on that one: "Of course I believe in personal devils. All my devils are personal." It's so unimportant whether you call it devils, or personal quests, or temptation, or schizophrenia. . .

*The fifty-five-year-old widower, hated by many students for his nagging discipline in the classroom, mistrusted by the Church and university authorities, owner of "the best collection of books on Mormon history" (he has previously invited me into his basement to have a look at his collection of "forbidden" sources) talks on into the dark, feeling lucky (I have no doubt) to have with him one of those rare students who really loves discussing deep questions for hours on end.*

*Of course I cannot see the boy; I only feel myself standing there, chilling a bit in my wet socks, tired after twenty hours of irrigating (not hard labor, admittedly, but still—), changing from one foot to the other—and exhilarated beyond description: this is what life can be, this is one of the great times—I'll stay here forever if he'll only go on talking.*

POULSON: What you should be doing, instead of trying to undermine other people's belief, is discovering beliefs that you yourself can live by. And you'll find most of them being taught right in the Church, by the people you're attacking. That's why I keep saying, "Show me a better Church." I'm not determined to stay with this one, if you'll find me another one that does as much good and that has fewer corrupt leaders, a better attitude on race, or what not.

WAYNE: But that's not good enough. Don't we have the right to hope for an institution that is at least honest with itself? I long for a cause that I can give myself to as fully as the believers—my father and mother, my grandparents—could give in earlier times.

POULSON: Well, I'm sure you can find it, if you want to badly enough. Because all you have to do is just put your mind to rest and let your emotions take over. Almost any church can easily become *that* to you, if you want it to badly enough. The Mormons have plenty of members like that; all causes do. What they lack is devoted men [I'm pretty sure he did not add women] who still are willing to *think*, not just be carried away with sentimentality. What they really need is a corps of missionaries who know everything that's wrong about the Church—and who don't care, because they know that it can be an instrument for good in their hands.

*In the dark, now, the moon not quite ready to rise, the stars bright as they never seem to be in 1969, the "old" man's gray*

hair is faintly visible inside the car; the deep thoughtful voice pours out into the night. His dirty fingernails are now invisible, and there is nothing but prophetic voice and silver glow.

WAYNE: Do you mean to suggest that I should go on a mission?

POULSON: Why not? If you could work not to get the people under the water in the greatest possible number but to take them where you find them and help them to grow—why not? Can you think of a better way to spend two years than setting out to help other people—with no concern about your own welfare or future? That's what the missionary system is, at its best. Oh, yes, I admit that it seldom works at its best. Most of the boys are so badly prepared, at nineteen or twenty, that they couldn't even do a good job in the narrow definition of making converts. But you might, if you worked hard, if you thought hard, and if you could keep from worrying too much about your own reputation—you might make a real difference for a lot of people. Just take for example the whole question of charity toward backsliders—who has *that* in charge, in our present set-up? None of the other missionaries will be working on *that*, and you might. Why not?

*So at ten o'clock they break up—and a few days afterwards Wayne Clayson Booth accepts the call.*

Now, here in the late nineties, it's clear that young Booth thus landed himself in rhetorical waters far more turbulent than he could ever have predicted: even Poulson, who had served as a missionary before doing the historical research that for him dissolved the gold plates, could not have predicted what this "second-generation Mormon liberal" would encounter.



Elder Booth (right) and his missionary companion, Elder Marion D. Hanks. Booth went on a mission to "liberalize Mormonism from within" and ended up framing a life-long interior dialogue, the dynamic of which is religion for him.

**T**he point of rhetorical dialogue is not relativistic tolerance but genuine progress toward truth.

rhetoric with *mine*, their surface codes with what I am sure are shared beliefs that are more important than all those conflicting literal claims?"

Elder Booth got to be pretty good at some amateur versions of rhetorology, sometimes in ways that his younger self (still surviving as conscience) damned as hypocritical. He somehow didn't get far on liberalizing the whole Church from within, but he did learn how to pray in public in a language that accommodated the literalists without violating his own meditations. He learned how to give sermons that woke some people up, undermined their clichés, and led them to dwell on the central virtues and limits of Mormonism, without leading (most of the time) to angry attacks against him for unortho-

From day one, the young Booth had to deal with shock concerning differences between what he believed and what "every missionary believes." His experience in the temple ceremony was so distressing that he almost gave up and went home, and he recorded in great detail the bloodthirsty oaths and other absurdities that were much more prominent in the ceremony then than now; Poulson and others had warned him that he would be shocked, but they had understated it.

And then he found himself tracting, door to door, struggling to reconcile what the manuals said he should teach with what he believed to be the best spiritual food for himself, for his companions, and for prospects who turned up. Now living daily with companions and supervisors who considered what he called "the superstitions" to be more important than love or charity or any of the other virtues, he found himself inevitably pursuing a practice that he would no doubt have cringed to hear called "rhetorology." He became not a mere practitioner of persuasion (a "rhetor" trying to win converts to his views), and not the mere student of how people persuade (a "rhetorician"), but a rhetorologist: "How can I reconcile *their*

doxy. He learned how to learn from the orthodox what was really valuable in their orthodoxy. He did so well at it that the liberal mission president, Leo J. Muir, absorbed in Egyptian numerology rather than rhetorology, chose him as mission secretary at headquarters in Chicago. He even felt some sense of triumph, as he returned home, in January of 1944, at last facing the draft. How I wish I had a transcript of the “celebratory” talk he gave at his homecoming sacrament meeting.

#### NOT OF ONE MIND

*How could I reconcile my liberal skepticism  
with my calling as a missionary?*

**T**HAT description of what he learned about dealing with rival rhetorics is much simpler and more cheerful than the picture I find in his journals of the time, full as they are of vast swings from up to down and back again. Sometimes he is in despair. Sometimes he finds himself cursing under his breath when listening to prayers that he considers not just stupid but wicked. Only rarely does he write openly, in the daily accounts, of the rhetorical problems he faces as he deals with the surrounding orthodoxy.

He slogs it out for two solid years, much of the time wrestling in his journal over the question of just which remaining “religious” ideas, if any, he can embrace. Like the history of many probers through their youth, his account reveals great swings from doubt to belief and back again, sometimes sounding absurd to me now, sometimes a bit pathetic, sometimes fairly impressive, depending partly on my mood as I re-read.

Often the journal reveals conflicts between the gods of scientific truth and the rival gods of moral and political service: “If you care about the truth of things,” I find him implying again and again, “you ought to quit this mission.” “If you care about human welfare, now or in the future, if you care about helping people, you should continue.”<sup>5</sup>

Most striking to me now are the ways in which Elder Booth labors to reconcile diverse views of religion and science in his missionary journal. When he reads Henri Bergson’s *Creative Evolution*, for example, a book then touted by “liberal believers,” his response is that of a would-be believer rescued from the seas of doubt:

*September 5, 1942*

Bergson is magnificent, especially where he is obviously wrong or only guessing. Bergson is “righter” than most philosophers. Bergson is a man after my own heart . . .

[He says that] evolution does not come about through natural selection but through the existence of an original vital impetus—*élan vital*—which is consciousness or “life” pushing upward against materiality (which naturally is descending). Through intuition and not through intellect we can discover this *élan vital*. There is no limit in time to the impetus; it may even transcend death. It is a becoming—as is all

movement—and the aim of philosophy should be to turn inward toward this becoming in order to apprehend, “in order to follow its present results.”

The “scientist” in him—he had enrolled at BYU intending to become a chemist—of course raises doubts: Bergson “carries himself away in his enthusiasm” he writes, “and uses specious reasoning instead of real proof.” But what is palpable is the relief Booth feels at having found a *reasonable* argument for a new version of religious commitment. “One of my reasons for liking Bergson is the beautiful way in which he suits my recent ‘conversion’ to spirituality, my reversion from materialism.” As he goes on reading Bergson and “mystics” such as Aldous Huxley and religious psychologists such as Carl Jung, his joy is palpable as he experiences a “feeling of oneness and sympathy for all life and especially all human life, the feeling of a creative and impelling force greater than oneself.” Elder Booth reports his pride in being able to do so without violating the tiny bits of “irreligious” or “scientific” knowledge that he thinks he has. But the threats of “hard reason” are never far removed:

Increased knowledge will surely supplant or modify much of Bergson’s metaphysics; his jet of life or energy or whatever it was must be little more than pure fancy. Quite probably his big idea of the consciousness and its instrumentality on matter is faulty. But that consciousness *now* transcends matter and can transcend it more in the future will not be refuted—I hope.

In entry after entry, I find Elder Booth struggling to reduce the dissonance between “religious belief” and “rationally defensible belief.” Armed with Bergson, and Plato, and (later) Jung (who “says that he has never known a psychological problem that was not essentially a religious problem”), Elder Booth can sometimes, with a clear conscience, “liberalize” whatever seems ready to be liberalized as it comes his way.<sup>6</sup>

*September 8, 1942*

Last night Clive Bradford [fellow missionary] and I had a long talk about the church, philosophy, the war, and the missionary system. Brad is an intelligent fellow, original in his thinking. . . . I’ve had him reading Hocking and Will Durant and James’ *Varieties of Religious Experience*.

That’s the tone of a young would-be wise man, spreading his mature harmonics to the world. The best critic of such pomposities was his favorite mission companion, Marion Duff Hanks. “Duff” provided brilliant challenges to most of his ideas, radical and conservative, and later provided the best possible model of what it means to be a totally devoted and active yet “liberal” Mormon. (As everyone says who knows Duff well, “He should have been made one of the Twelve.”)

Meanwhile, as the idiosyncratic mission drags on, the self-divided missionary takes refuge many hours each week in literature and music, sometimes with conscious reference to religious problems but often simply lost in the joys of art.

But almost every day he wrestles with religious questions. He says that he has discovered that every person is “a walking bundle of ineffability, a bit like God himself,” by which he ap-

parently means that the existential richness of each person finally escapes any attempt at description: forget about conceptual problems, essentially irresolvable, and revel in the riches God's world offers you. He reads *Ulysses*—can you picture it, reader, that young missionary, moving from orthodox testimony meetings to James Joyce's night-town scenes and back to the meetings? — the "most clever, most intellectual, most sophisticated book I've ever read!"

Of course, by my definition of intellectual and sophistication I exclude practically everyone before the nineteenth century, though in reality they may require more downright intelligence — the great ones — than any of the moderns.

And then he goes on wrestling with the Church he had hoped to rescue. As his first long year draws to a close, he gets the idea of organizing the liberals:

If all the so-called Mormon liberals . . . could organize . . . some beneficial changes could be wrought (might even be just plain made, without having to be wrought, but I'm sure it would be much more effective if they were wrought).

But then, in a long, fascinating paragraph, most of which I'll spare you, he describes the differences among the liberals and concludes that

the group who think as I do probably numbers no more than twenty at the most (and of course this is the *right* way, and all the others will eventually come to our position: of course!). Yes, we are a hodge-podge [the larger group of "liberals"] of mal-contents, and we'll probably never get together.

By the middle of Elder Booth's first year, the original reasons



Elder Booth (second from left) with Mission President and Sister Leo J. Muir and the office staff. President Muir allowed Elder Booth to take classes at the University of Chicago.

**T**he young man was discovering the pluralist religion that sparks my life now: the passion for furthering multiple, always partial understandings of a world, a cosmos, a God that/who somehow *deserves* to be understood and *commands* that we understand "It" and live by Its standards—even while It remains beyond any formula.

for becoming a missionary have grown rather dim. But the steady battle for intellectual freedom goes on, unofficial, never clearly formulated. In late December, eleven months in, "putting off the critique of *Ulysses*," the boy decides to "tabulate and mull over my various 'interests,'" and he proceeds to do so in three, single-spaced typed pages. After some preliminary efforts at humor (one page), he finally begins what from the perspective here could almost be described as a dialogue among three rival gods: Truth (reality), Goodness (human progress, individual and social), and Beauty (the religion of art then dominating the lives of many he most admired):

My primary interest . . . is to get closer to reality—or, I could say, "I am interested in Philosophy." I could profitably spend my whole time giving myself a rigorous philosophical education, working out a stable personal philosophical (al, al, al) position, getting at

the truth of this mysticism business. This is partly intellectual curiosity, but more it is something akin to aesthetic yearnings. I want something—the right, real thing—to replace the religion-philosophy of my childhood. I think that the mystics and the humanists and the scientific materialists all have vital things still to say to me, and I wish I could be with them constantly. . . .

Among my [deepest interests] is my passion (please let me call it that, and don't laugh) for great fiction and poetry. For instance, I could spend my whole time reading novels and training myself to write them—or at least to criticize them intelligently. . . .

Also in the "quest for reality" category is "science," the much abused and much misunderstood bane and joy of all modern thinkers. Really my first intellectual love, it still looms large in my horizon. I leave it alone—when you spend time reading this book you just can't be reading that book—far more than I should, because certainly with all my mystical leanings I must keep a firm grip on the genuine truth which science discovers.

Less ethereal, less theoretical, is my interest in politics. I'm subject to spasms of political conscience . . . the feeling that I should go actively into some liberal movement. . . .

And then, after adding music and art to these "passions," he makes a slight bow to his missionary work:

Missionary work—I neglect it horribly, always able to justify myself by saying, "Well, I'm really not ready for mature missionary work yet; what do I know? What can I teach?" . . .

And so the debates among the rival gods go on, each aspiring to replace or at least subdue features of the god he had once embraced without question. Sometimes he sounds like an arrogant prophet of the Enlightenment, with no self-doubt whatever, but more often it's a dance back and forth, up and down:

*January 4, 1943* [one year to go, after several pages on music, art, and literature]:

T. Y. [his cousin then in the army] and I are still arguing somewhat futilely about the "gospel." I find myself totally unable to convince him that when he persists in believing every detail of the J. S. [Joseph Smith] story, he is being gullible and intellectually immature. I cannot muster in sufficient force the long string of "reasons" for my present opinions to convince him. . . . His difficulty is that he thinks he has passed through the doubting period, that he has reached the final, firm ground of belief, and that I am where he was when he doubted. That is totally untrue. At the time he doubted it was merely youthful "questioning," curiosity, "show-me-ness"—the same kind I experienced at about the same time. He cannot see that the unfirm ground on which I now tread is an

entirely different intellectual bog from the one he once "wallowed" in. He says to me: "What is your concept of God?" I can't give it to him clearly. He says, "What kind of future life do you envision if the Mormon position is unacceptable for you?" I can't answer. He wonders why I doubt miracles. I can't give him acceptable reasons. He believes in a personal God. He is therefore justified in allowing that God to do miracles. One of those miracles could logically be the . . . [establishment of the Church]. All of my pointing-out of irrationalities, or inconsistencies, does no good. In the first place, he is a clever talker and can find explanations less far-fetched than the usual kind used for apologetics. In the second place, he can accuse me of trying to make religion rational which it is not (and I must admit that my kind of religion is more irrational than his). And so we go the pointless rounds, he in Australia, I in Chicago. It is good clean sport, and hurts neither of us. Although he wants to convince me more than I want to convince him, since according to his doctrine I am deliberately retarding myself, still he does not get dogmatic with me . . . and he is a great relief from the regular arguments I get on religion.

*January 29, 1943*

. . . the *Partisan Review* arrived . . . a section of three articles, "The New Failure of Nerve," by J. Dewey and two other almost-as-acute joes, made me realize even more fully than I've done before that I can't accept anyone's philosophy but my own. Their devastating comments in criticism of the so-called swing to religion were acceptable and—devastating. But their criticism of Neibuhr and Hocking . . . was more hard to take. But I had to admit the justice of many of the things they said, especially since I had said some of the same things myself.

Things they object to: (a) Attempts to discard the scientific method or to discredit it in social and political situations. (b) Arguments about "original sin"—whether literal or symbolical. Believing, they say, that man is irrevocably [sic] limited because [he is] not God, inevitably discourages attempts to eliminate the limits which *can* be eliminated. (c) The idea that since man's absolutes are usually if not always fallible, a divine absolute should be cooked-up. (They of course completely reject the idea of God. But if one accepts the Mormon theology—eternal progression of each man until he himself attains godhood—this one objection to God is done away with.)

As is quite general with me lately, I am unable to come to a decision, nor can I even accept a probability. I rather lean toward the rationalists, while still seeing that much of their "certitudes" are mythical, as Santayana would admit that they are. . . .

And then, only two days later:

Santayana, with all his naturalism, says more favorable things about religion — even dogmatic religion—than I would be able to. What is worse, he convinces me of the justice of his comments, thus making me apologetic for all the time I've spent condemning my religion and my people.

How to know where to draw lines, that is the goal of the Life of Reason, and because S. has never had to break away from a conventional belief on his own initiative, he doesn't realize the difficulties involved in drawing lines; he acts as though any halfway sensible person would be able to work out his compromises gracefully and quietly, without fanfare even in a diary.

Naturally, Elder Booth's guilt about his hypocritical missionary work frequently almost chokes him:

March 16, 1943

In trying to detect any particular theme running through my dreams each night, I find only one: I am a fake and in danger of being found out. One night I am back at my irrigation, doing my usual half-hearted job, not knowing where to go next nor when the water will get out of control, cheating the university (which, in reality, I did [I had sometimes charged them for more hours than I spent, even as they cheated me by paying only twenty-five cents an hour]); next night I am claiming five pictures in an art gallery as my own, when in reality they are not. I stalk through my dream trying to avoid questions about my methods of work, knowing I cannot answer them intelligently. I even forget which are "mine" and am in fear that someone will ask me, and so on. Another night I am a crook going to high school, and I get discovered and have to shoot my way out. . . .

April 6, 1943

One possibility [in explaining these dreams, considered, rather belatedly, after trying out some others]



Elder Booth (left) with missionaries and a family.

**M**y hypocritical missionary years taught me the inherent value of "hypocrisy upward" and how it helps us practice being "characters" superior to our ordinary selves.

is the essential hypocrisy of my present "mission" . . .

PREACHING THE PLURALIST RELIGION  
Having come to terms with a pluralistic universe,  
I confront the reality of war.

**W**HAT I find most revealing about this missionary record is the way in which all of that inner turmoil slowly begins, as the two years draw to a close, to resolve itself into more aggressive attempts at conscious "rhetorology." One could say that without quite knowing it, the young man was discovering the pluralist religion that sparks my life now: the passion for furthering multiple, always partial understandings of a world, a cosmos, a God, that/who somehow *deserves* to be understood and *commands* that we both try to understand "It" and live according to Its standards—even while It remains beyond any one formula. The journal entries are still predominantly about other matters—mainly Booth's own spiritual struggles. But there are many clues about his growing passion for effective dialogue—for the struggle to pursue the "overstanding" that can sometimes be found *under* various stands:

October 2, 1943

I neglected to mention, I believe, the speech I gave at the Northshore Ward last week. I was in my old

stride, at my best: perfectly at ease and composed, I yet had them intensely interested all the way—one can tell such things—and I *think* that I really made them think. My subject was, “Some of the faults which prevent Mormons from making what they could of themselves.” (It was never thus expressed, but that’s what it was). I gave it to them straight, and I believe there was only one member who did not like it; and even he seemed interested. I am a little disappointed with myself for not having given more such good accounts of myself while on my mission. . . .

I hardly ever mention my mission and my opinion of it here [in the journal]. That is, I suppose, partly because I am generally quite discouraged about the little I have accomplished. I enjoy myself around my Mormon associates more now than ever before. I think the Mormon people are good people, and I think that I am what I am, including the few good parts, largely as a result of the Mormon environment. Yet I have been discouraged by the difficulties in the way of intellectual improvement among my people. The Mormon ideology is so firmly rooted in superstition that it seems impossible ever to separate the two: despite all my apologetics, one is simply not a Mormon unless one believes in the literal divinity of the Book of Mormon, any more than one is a Christian unless one believes in the literal Christ Jesus. . . .

In general I would say that I am glad I came on the mission, though it has been far different from anything I expected. . . . [But then] the last year or so of any active life always seem very valuable in retrospect.

I still have in mind doing a book about and for Mormons, analyzing our faults, proposing future attitudes, clearing away dead beliefs. . . .

My big problem now is: shall I continue with my people as a hypocrite, shall I openly express my doubts and take my chances with my group, or shall I completely break away . . . ? As I see it now, the last named is completely impossible: I love too many Mormons . . .

November 12, 1943

Went down to a kind of miserable defeat tonight in trying to give an “original” Thanksgiving talk to the MIA of Logan Square Ward [I tried to get them to *think* about real thanksgiving]. . . . I’m sure it fell completely flat, partly because of poor treatment [I hadn’t thought it through hard enough], partly because of the people’s sentimental desire to stay within the set form of Thanksgiving thought.

With the mission that everyone else considered highly successful drawing to a close, he goes on attending concerts and visiting art galleries. Soon he begins taking courses part-time at the University of Chicago (completely counter to mission rules, but that liberal president, Leo J. Muir, has no objec-

tions). And he goes on reading and reading and reading. He reads Fawn Brodie’s life of Joseph Smith, alternating between total credulity and strong doubts. He falls in love with Blake’s “London,” memorizes it, and quotes it entirely in the journal, commenting on the mind-forged manacles that he feels still binding him:

In every cry of every man,  
In every Infant’s cry of fear  
In every voice, in every ban,  
The mind-forg’d manacles I hear.

January 7, 1943

“We are all conscript minds, but in different armies. And none of us are striving to be free, but each to make his own conscription universal.” Santayana is right; Blake is right. Yet there are some who work free of at least most of the manacles—some who become conscientious objectors in the conscription of the mind. [Block that metaphor!] If I didn’t think that I had, in part, cast off some of the manacles, I would have less hope of ever achieving any degree of greatness of spirit. But the distance ahead is indicated by nothing more than by my own “complicity” in the Jewish matter [the news about the Nazi atrocities was getting clearer and clearer]. With all my sincere horror and sympathy, with all my subscriptions to Refugee societies and my talking and debate, with all my reiterated concern about a society that allows mass brutality and does nothing until attacked, I find myself guilty, as I have found myself guilty a hundred times before, on the score of personal selfishness of the sort that has caused the war, personal desire for acclaim of the sort that breeds politicians and Hitlers, intolerance of the sort that persecutes Jews. . . .

Musing in this way leads one easily—unless one is careful—into nonsense about original sin. . . . Very few can ever maintain a true central position: man is neither good nor bad; he is both good and bad. He is eternally damned and he has eternal possibilities of “salvation.” Mankind as a whole will not go down to bestiality tomorrow, to please [Albert Jay] Nock or [Alfred] Kazin. . . . Nor will mankind achieve tomorrow any sort of genuinely Brave New World, with everyone being super-human, nor even with social ills eliminated, not even with war eliminated (I’m afraid). But I know empirically that men can improve (I have actually improved, myself). They can learn; they can sublimate their selfish desires (to use a corny phrase). They can, in short, progress, whether they have done so or not in the past.

And with this, the young unbeliever who yet believed in “progress,” in “the validity of the scientific method” and the continuing triumphs of science, in “the possibility of development of a beautiful spirit of man,” in “free will” (though some versions of “science” threaten this one especially strongly), in

the moral truth that “it is always in all cultures wrong to hurt others,” in the inherent value of a Mormon upbringing—that young man, radically confused not just about the problem of original sin but about almost everything (as I see it in 1998, in my utterly unconfused state of mind)—that young man completed his assigned two years as a designated “clergyman” and was then belatedly drafted into World War II.

For two long years, then, Elder Booth had been learning—without knowing what he was learning—the arts of rhetoric. As some of the skeptical Mormons he knew gave up their skepticism and returned to orthodoxy, and others pushed it further and broke with the Church, he chose, as I still choose, to pursue the ground shared by both the orthodox and the diverse brands of the unorthodox. (As M. Wilford Poulson had taught him to say, “Every Mormon trusts his own unorthodoxy.”) Just as I “pray” daily to “God” with full “devotion,” hoping for “salvation” (grant me my special definitions all the way), so I am now still a “devoted” “Latter-day Saint.”

That confession meets some difficulties when I add that I also believe in (my version of) Judaism, Catholicism, and Quakerism, not to mention (my even more ignorant versions of) Buddhism and Hinduism, and the three disguised “secular,” even “atheistic,” religions I am trying to write about in that book on the rhetorics of official and disguised religions.

#### COMING HOME TO COMMON GROUND

*Why I feel grateful for two years of hypocritical strivings.*

**W**HY did the young wanderer not feel guilty—except sometimes—about the hypocrisy implied by the vigorous “accommodation to the audience” required to survive as a Mormon missionary?<sup>7</sup> Why do I not feel guilty now—except sometimes—about the innumerable other accommodations to the audience that my rhetorical inquiries have required? Why did I not then and do not now feel like a mere waffler? Why, in short, do I now feel grateful for those two years of hypocritical strivings—to say nothing of the decades of hypocritical to-and-froing that followed?

Three main reasons have been implicit throughout here.

First, those years converted me to my lifetime “religion of rhetoric,” though even the word “rhetoric” never occurred at the time. I was learning, daily, just how deceptive our habitual dichotomies can be: believers/unbelievers; religious/atheistic; good/evil; saved/damned. And I was learning some of the crucial techniques for breaking into and dissolving such misleading dichotomies.

It was not a matter of theoretical inquiry; it was a daily practice that developed habits of probing what I later learned to call *topoi*, or “topics,” in the Aristotelian sense of shared *places* or groundings that underlie surface disputes. It was only when I was required in graduate school to dig into Aristotle’s treatment of topics that my practice of good and bad versions of hypocrisy became a subject for conscious intellectual inquiry. I can remember, working toward an MA four-hour examination on Aristotle’s *Rhetoric*, suddenly realizing, “Oh, *that’s* what I’ve been up to.” The old dismissive term “commonplaces” sud-

denly became crucial, as Aristotle distinguished the “common topics” (common-places—loosely defined spaces that all people share) and “special topics” (spaces that only practitioners in a given “specialty” share).

Consider some examples of “common,” or shared, topics, and special topics. All readers of SUNSTONE share many topics (common-places—call them universals if you prefer) with Catholics and Muslims and atheists and indeed almost everybody: for example, “To get more of whatever is really good is better than to get less of it,” but on the other hand, and in potential conflict, “It is wrong to harm a close friend, even if to do so will get you more of something you want”). More narrowly, Mormon readers of SUNSTONE share with one another and with readers of the *Ensign* certain somewhat more special topics: for example, “In our culture it’s better to be able to read and think about religious questions than not to be able to,” and “Some ways of reading are better than other ways,” and “To read about Mormonism is more important than reading about baseball scores,” and “To involve oneself with religion and religious questions is an essential part of any good life.” Any disagreements so far?

Finally, most readers of SUNSTONE share certain even more specialized topics not shared with many other sub-cultures: for example, “You’re likely to be a better Mormon, and a better person, if you think deeply about your beliefs and exercise free agency than if you accept blindly, without thought, whatever this or that authority says,” and “Too many important questions don’t get treated in official Mormon publications.”

Being my kind of missionary didn’t teach me to think quite like that (of common-places), but it built the habits that made such thinking finally indispensable. And it taught me, implicitly, the connection between those habits and the religious command to love our fellow creatures. I was learning to “worship” or “serve” that deepest of all human values that I celebrate here: genuine understanding, sympathetic serious listening, the “loving” act of entering the spiritual domain of other human beings—those who these days tend to be labeled “the Other.” Nothing we ever work at, the young man was discovering, is more important than the drive not just to maintain peace with rivals or enemies or misguided friends, not just to tolerate them generously, not just to condescend to them with a benign smile, but to understand them: to learn to think with them while assisting them to think with us in return. That became his definition of love, love not just as a belief but as an intellectual spiritual practice. In effect, that became his definition of God’s missionary assignment.

Second, in teaching rhetoric as a loving practice, those years saved me from a frequently powerful impulse to cast off the Church—or to get the authorities to cast me off. Unlike some friends who could discern no middle ground and consequently leapt off into being not just “jack-Mormons” but non- or even anti-Mormons, I found that my search for shared ground removed all reasons for a break: increasingly I discovered that most of what I most deeply believed was derived from Mormon teachings: “Do what is right, let the consequence follow,” “Have I done any good in the world today? If

not I have failed indeed," "All is well, all is well." Though ensuing decades yielded many moments of radical doubt about various notions of God and various choices made by Mormon authorities, I never came to doubt that Mormonism is *one* of the "true religions."<sup>8</sup>

Third—and perhaps most important as we think about the various forms of hypocrisy thriving within the Church today—my hypocritical years taught me the inherent value of one kind of hypocrisy, what I have elsewhere called "hypocrisy upward."<sup>9</sup> The word hypocrisy originally meant "playing a role on the stage," and it is clear that all of us at least some of the time are playing out roles we think appear superior to what we "really" are. Every parent tries to play a role that he or she knows is to some degree doctored, purified for the child's consumption. Every teacher knows that the "self" who stands before the class is an utterly different and (usually) superior person as compared with the one who the night before swore over her income tax returns or slapped his five-year-old daughter. If we did not rise above our "everyday selves" in that way, hypocritically enacting superior selves, our culture would collapse much faster than even the most cynical see it as collapsing today.

While not defending such acting out when it is used to exploit others, should we not defend it when it helps us practice being "characters" superior to our ordinary selves, thus learning how to be such characters? When I hypocritically *act like* a person of saintly generosity, am I not learning how to be generous? When I hypocritically enact the role of someone who believes in a belief I question, am I not likely to discover that thinking in that previously detested way actually makes sense?

Everyone who succeeds in any practice experiences such *hypocrisy upward* somewhere along the line.

—You know you're not a good public speaker, but when assigned to give a talk you pretend to be the best speaker you have heard—and you then give a better talk than you thought you could.

—You know that you do not possess the full range of virtues required for a given church position, but you accept the calling, act out those virtues, and soon discover that you are actually developing at least some of them: by pretending to be another, better person, you have become another, better one.

—You know that you are not a perfect surgeon, but you put on airs that show that you aspire to be.

What my practice of rhetorology as a missionary taught me was that if I pretended to listen sympathetically to beliefs I detested, I would sometimes discover that they were better beliefs than those I had held when entering the discussion. And even when that did not happen, my "hypocrisy upward," or "outward," did at least broaden and deepen my own grasp of the world and of how we limited creatures can deal with its mysteries.

I hope it is clear that nothing I've said suggests that *all* "religious" or "Mormon" "views," open or disguised, are in my view equally defensible; the point of rhetorological dialogue is not

relativistic tolerance but genuine progress toward truth. Some religious commitments save; some destroy. Some "hypocritical" efforts to listen can reveal beliefs even worse than they appeared at the beginning. To "take in" or "act out" the "other" with full empathy, learning to *think with* the other, is no surefire route either to self-improvement or to brightening some one corner of the world's darkness. And when rhetorical probing is used to exploit the other, as Tartuffe's brilliant imitations of piety are used, the practice cannot be called rhetorology but chicanery.

But surely our world would be a better one if more of our brothers and sisters more of the time would practice not the kind of lying, self-aggrandizing hypocrisy so prevalent around us but hypocrisy upward: the aspiration, through *taking on* roles or *taking in* "the other," that produces genuine understanding. Would not the Church itself be radically improved if more of us—not just lowly active members and peripheral hangers-on but the highest authorities, too—would really listen lovingly to "the enemy" long enough and closely enough to discover what is really *there*? ☐

## NOTES

1. My friend Garth Myers was president of the other quorum, and each Sunday morning an hour or so before church time we'd ride around the Second Ward on our bicycles, knocking on doors to round up the deacons needed to ensure victory by Quorum 1 or Quorum 2.

2. Still in unwieldy, unpublished manuscript form.

3. Richard Rorty, "Religion as Conversation Stopper," *Common Knowledge*, (spring 1994): 1–6. There are hints in Rorty's article of the possibility for finding some common ground between his views and the views of non-atheists, *provided* that the believers abandon the notion that their moral beliefs have any connection to religious conviction.

4. Most prominent among them: M. Wilford Poulson, professor of psychology, P. A. Christensen and Karl Young, professors of English, and A. C. Lambert, whose "field" I cannot even remember but who gave one of the best courses I had at the "Y": an introduction, in a required religion course, to the shocking sequence of changes that had been introduced into the Doctrine and Covenants through its first century. There were of course other unorthodox professors I can remember less clearly: a professor of biology and a professor of geology who openly professed belief in evolution; a historian who raised questions about some myths of Mormon origins; a member of the religion department who centered his required religion courses on the works of great, non-Mormon philosophers.

5. Oh yes, indeed: he has thought a lot about just how strong an effect the draft-threat had on his sticking with the full two years. One part of himself—the hypocritical part?—is convinced that it had nothing to do with it: he stuck it out from pure motives of service to the world. Another self knows that the motives were indeed mixed.

6. He was sometimes aided by reading reported struggles of other earlier probing Mormons, such as W. H. Chamberlin.

7. From Aristotle on through Quintilian and into modern times, rhetorical theorists have discussed—almost always superficially—just how much "accommodation to the audience" is ethical. The short answer is: accommodate your *means*, but hold fast to your convictions and purposes. But every rhetor knows how hard it is to draw a clear line between accommodation and selling out. As I view him now, he crossed the line rarely—but he did cross it.

8. Why, then, have I been not an active but a "peripheral" Mormon? A complicated, puzzling question. I must confess that one reason for "inactivity" is that I have found that too little of the current *official* activity has fed my own spiritual quests; too much of it is designed to induce blind, dull obedience.

9. *Critical Understanding: The Powers and Limits of Pluralism* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1979), 253–56; 258–59.

1995 Brookie & D. K. Brown Fiction Contest Winner

## RELEASED

By Carol B. Quist



MARK INCALIS

*"He turned a full circle. He whirled, ran through the chapel to the foyer, saw no one, could open no doors. He no longer had keys to anything."*

WHEN THE ORGAN POSTLUDE BEGAN, Michael Morsan stepped from the first row of interlocked chairs in the overflow section. The accordion-fold doors between the chapel and the cultural hall began to close behind him. The priests sidled from the sacrament table, and the new ward clerk began counting the cups left in the trays.

Del Strausser stepped down from the bass section, and Harley Dunn left the tenors. Stalwarts—these former counselors—doubting only Michael's commitment to choir-building, but not answering when he'd asked, "Well, when else can we hold ward council?"

Other nodding, smiling singers descended, shaking hands and talking with those surging toward the stand. Members eddied here and there. The newsletter editor cornered one, then

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another. Michael liked the way the man involved everyone and published on time. His spirituality, though—

Sister Fraley stretched for the huge basket of lilacs she'd rushed to the pulpit three hours ago. They teetered, threatening to bury her. But she cradled them the way her son caught a football and smiling, charged the door. The organist swung into Mendelssohn's "On Wings of Song," Michael's favorite.

The tides parted for Brother Woolley, the old, hard-of-hearing widower shuffling from the row of amplifiers. Del and Neva Strausser escorted him off, probably to dinner.

Evelyn, of the hair-combing-and-braiding Spratlings, leaned on her twin, a finger still winding blonde strands. Today they'd taken turns smoothing, measuring, and sectioning each other's hair—something Michael had never fully seen from the stand. Then loosening their brother's ponytail, they'd braided it into little ropes hanging over the shaved hair above his ears.

Sister Fortunata raised her hands from the keyboard, closed her music, and slid to the end of the organ bench. Her foot hit what the priests called the superblast pedal. Even Michael, who had expected it, jumped.

"At least you listened that time!" she laughed into the shocked silence. Then, clasping her hands like a winning boxer, she left.

New Bishop Saltis laughed, too, then bent toward Sister Ashley whose Bible knowledge seemed to come from *The Ten Commandments* and *Ben Hur*. Somehow, offending no one, Salt had defused her Joshua-Aaron mix-up in Sunday School. The instructor had been gratefully amazed.

The teachers finished stowing the portable microphones and huddled with Brother Oberle, their adviser. A convert from the former Yugoslavia, he spoke British English. Interpreting the scriptures literally, he'd taught his boys to clean the chapel and help deacons take fast offering envelopes to the whole neighborhood. He'd greatly increased collections—and attendance at ward Christmas dinners.

Michael saw a new brother in a silk suit but with a pull-through, three-foot braid down his back. He saw Sister Wintrobe, the audio-visual librarian staring at him and as she slipped from the chapel, realized she'd stared all morning. He saw young Parker Otteson trial-flying an airplane folded from the program. Parker had come to tithing settlement with two jars of grimy coins. The second jar had been for Michael, because he had been robbed.

Kim and Kang left, the tireless college students who tended the condos. Last summer, while Brother Woolley had been ill, Kim and Kang had borrowed enough hose to reach across lots to water his yard. And they grew exotic pumpkins for the kids.

Michael's stomach growled. Where was Bennie? He looked toward the Relief Society end of the building where she must be with her counselors. Should he wait for her? And what about their daughters? Where were they?

The crowd had thinned. Probably mainly those to be set apart or interviewed still surrounded the new bishop. Why was Michael's former executive secretary, now high priests group leader, there? Someone in that family must have received a call. Gradually everyone exited through the door nearest the bishop's office.

He turned a full circle. Where were his daughters? Where were they supposed to go, and what were they supposed to do? His stomach growled again. He'd better get some water.

He left the channel and the chapel just as the sound system blurted, "Oh, for heaven's sakes, don't ask me that question! I won't answer it. Why, I wear the longest sleeves and skirts in the stake—longer than anything your wife wears, for starters. And the other leaders' wives—don't get me started!" A different voice said, "Who are you to dictate and analyze people's testimonies?"

He whirled, ran through the chapel to the other foyer, saw no one, could open no doors. He no longer had keys to anything. Ultimately he walked around the building, inside then out. In the parking lot, his car was gone; Bennie's remained. He began walking home. ☐




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## LETTER TO FATHER

Pete and I drive for hours, notebook flat on my lap,  
fat sun feasting on miles of sky.

I want to write a letter,  
but the words are stubborn, won't come.

White snow bullies the earth clean,  
drifts are muscles of blank.

We haven't spoken since the divorce:  
wayward daughter, too much the turtle,  
afraid to cross your highway of fast cars.

A patch of trees distracts me,  
pine-green boughs are paws  
that weigh heavy clumps of white.

A cardinal fevers the landscape,  
ignites a lonely heat that feeds a tumor  
I've kept packed on ice:  
I could never please you.

Though I've tried,  
took political science classes in college,  
squeezed my wild weeds of thought  
into a business suit.

I voted for men as if I were voting for you,  
married one, and years later  
chip away at what is missing.  
Your daughters are disappointments.  
Their names stick in your throat  
like failure choked back.

Dusk spreads its orange roots across  
a dead horizon.

I see my life in pages of snow  
and launder myself of your anger.

Your bitterness is a yawn  
as long as this car ride.

—KERRI BROSTROM MASTERS

## Pillars of My Faith

*A cold, black vacuum sucks always, lightly, at the back of my neck.  
Loss—irretrievable—and its implications as I let myself love,  
hovers around my shoulders like a dream at the edge of memory.  
How can this be a gift? It makes light most precious.*

## TENTPOLES OF MY FAITH

TO REBECCA JOYCE AND HER MOTHER

By Karin Anderson England



**T**WO MONTHS AGO, MY AUNT, ELAINE Anderson Bateman, mother of twelve, age fifty-two, died of cancer. The three years she fought the disease were the last of her difficult life. If God is postponing our destruction for the sake of forty-five, or thirty, or twenty, or ten righteous souls among us, our peril has deepened since her departure.

I loved my Aunt Elaine, in a way not exactly like I have ever loved anyone else. Tonight, in order to make my comments most positive, most uncynical, most indicative of my yearning for harmony and

charity, I will speak as if she yet lives and can hear me. She made all of us who knew her good.

I dislike that Old Testament God who still rages through the Mormon church. A while ago a man in our gospel doctrine class explained that such a God was reassuring to him, that the black-and-white quality of good and evil in the Old Testament, with its definitive rewards and punishments, seemed to be what we need in our wishy-washy times. While I was on my mission, one bishop explained his disregard for our seeking out the "inactive" members of the Church: "One of these days, the Church has got to just clear out the deadwood," he said. "How can we get anywhere dragging all that extra weight around?"

My grandmother disdained a "mugwump," a legendary

(and clearly unwieldy) bird who kept its "mug" on one side of the fence and its "wump" on the other, never committing to either side. I think Grandma would have the good sense to love me anyway, even if she knew that I had become a mug-wump. And I'm not just fence-sitting—I sit on whole junctions, big intersections, surveying several possible paths and positions, gaping round and round. Juanita Brooks wrote about "riding herd," staying out of the dust and confusion of the cattle drive but staying close enough to see the progress, note the landscape. I wish I could keep up with Juanita, but I don't manage the horse as well. I keep getting dumped on my wump.

My profession as an English professor and my rather uncategorical personal life continually put me in the path of people who ask, "Are you a Mormon?" Or sometimes, "Are you a Mormon?" Or, "Are you a Mormon?" I dislike that question, with any emphasis. It's not a black-and-white thing. "Yeah, but I'm deadwood" is one possible answer. "Ethnically, yes" is another. Indisputably ethnically Utah/Idaho Mormon, with one refreshing strain of German Lutheran. "No," is an increasingly simple and personally gratifying response. "Yes," all by itself, remains painful and dubious. I'm temperamentally well-placed in this wishy-washy world.

But "yes," regardless of the footnotes, must be part of my answer, at least to those whom I respect, those to whom I care to give of myself in any degree.

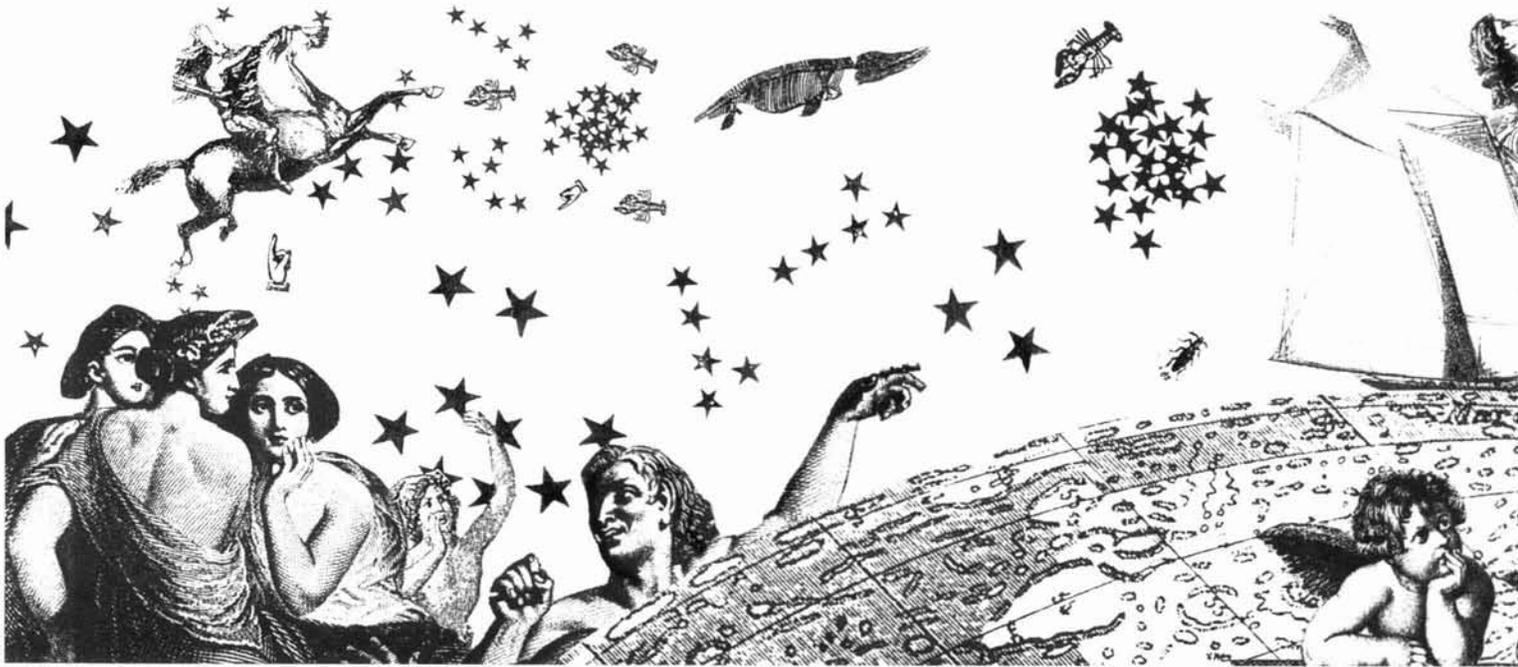
When I was a student in Eugene England's Mormon literature course, someone asked about Virginia Sorenson. "Is she still a Mormon?" was the question. Gene's answer struck me hard. It wasn't an answer; it was another question.

"What do you mean by 'Mormon?'" Gene queried.

None could answer. We knew, suddenly, that our definitions of "Mormonism" had been too narrow. And by realizing

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*"And if we and this world vanish tomorrow, if our souls are obliterated with our bodies, if our sun*

this, I began to think seriously about ways to live comfortably—or even uncomfortably—within its circumference. Not necessarily because I want to, as Paula Poundstone would explain, but because, for all practical purposes, "I have to."

I have to because this is where I live, not just geographically, but in my imagination. Flannery O'Connor, one author who has helped me confront the perplexities of growing up in a highly distinctive culture, explains:

The things we see, hear, smell, and touch affect us long before we believe anything at all, and the South [I say Utah] impresses its image on us from the moment we are able to distinguish one sound from another. By the time we are able to use our imaginations for fiction [or for anything else constructive] we find that our senses have responded irrevocably to a certain reality. This discovery of being bound through the senses to a particular society and a particular idiom, is for the writer the beginning of a recognition that first, puts his work into real human perspective for him.<sup>1</sup>

My imagination, regardless of my wishes, is defined in this life by my Mormon upbringing. That's not entirely tragic. It follows that my best imaginings are in some way attributable to my "Mormonism." I suppose they are the pillars of my faith.

Let's call them tentpoles. I can imagine a pretty huge tent, canopy style, nice open sides, good views of and easy access to beckoning forests, crooked pathways, and seductive deserts outside. Great for occasional shade and shelter, familiar company, re-orientation, held up by the Tentpoles of my Faith. It marks a circle that defines my slovenly wilderness, like

Wallace Stevens's anecdotal jar, whether I happen to be standing at any given moment inside or outside.



**R**IGHT now I stand outside but within arm's reach of the canopy. I might like to wander further, but standing just inside is my husband Mark, whose company I value. I'd hate to reduce him to a tentpole, but I could say that he's holding one of the shaky ones up for me. Mark's faith is strange and strong, a strain which some who wish the tent smaller and cozier might not want to draw in. Mark's faith is one which simply won't let him conceive of himself as anything but Latter-day Saint, anything but artist, anything but questioner, pusher, and puller. Maybe the reason his pole is so wiggly is that he's always pulling it out, stretching the cloth, widening the circle. But his grip is firm, and his feet are sure. His faith is, for all his wishes to speak freely and passionately of it to anyone near enough to hear him, actually a deep and silent wellspring, a jagged desert sentinel, vision far more than language. I catch glimpses of the Truth he sees because I live with his art, a universe weird and eclectic, fluid in time, obliquely and rhythmically beautiful, inexplicable but valuable, brought to unity by the hand of a creator willing to transcend the merely apparent.

My own forays into the non-apparent are often frightening excursions into flailing cluelessness. Soon after the birth of my first child, maybe because everything, *everything*, mattered so much more as a result of her arrival than I ever imagined possible, maybe because I changed chemically and physiologically, something at the foundation snapped. Emily Dickinson was kind enough to describe it for me:



*burns away and turns to vile black ice, our love mattered all the more, because that was all we had."*

I felt a Funeral, in my Brain,  
And Mourners to and fro  
Kept treading—treading—till it seemed  
That Sense was breaking through—

And when they all were seated,  
A Service, like a Drum—  
Kept beating—beating—till I thought  
My mind was going numb—

And then I heard them lift a Box  
And creak across my Soul  
With those same Boots of Lead, again,  
Then Space—began to toll,

As all the Heavens were a Bell,  
And Being, but an Ear,  
And I, and Silence, some strange Race  
Wrecked, solitary, here—

And then a Plank in Reason, broke,  
And I dropped down, and down—  
And hit a World, at every plunge,  
And Finished knowing—then—<sup>2</sup>

This is one scary poem. Dickinson's poems lend themselves to various interpretations, but my reading of this one describes the death of naive certainty, an encounter with sheer existential terror. If I have an identifiable spiritual gift, it is a frightening one: a gift for comprehending nonexistence, the brute power of absurdity, the reality of chaos, the possibility of eventual and

ultimate annihilation of consciousness. Ancient Norse mythology strikes a cold shaft in me—the belief that life and beauty, intelligence and charity are defeatable and most likely will be. I don't want to dwell on this, or begin to guess at my own psychology in relation to such vision. But a cold, black vacuum sucks always, lightly, at the back of my neck. Loss—irretrievable—and its implications as I let myself love, hovers around my shoulders like a dream at the edge of memory.

How can this be a gift?

It makes light most precious.

As planks in reason have broken for me, I have spun frantically, night after night, flailing for a world to land on. I have searched for a single Thing to Know, a foundation on which to mend the planks and rebuild.

Perhaps we all find our grace eventually, our irreducible premises, our sources. My "Knowing" stands on my love for my children.

My friend Sam, one person who seems to share my bleak endowment, assures me that maternal love is a biological phenomenon, a natural occurrence necessary for the survival of the race. Another friend assures me that the birth of each child in this overpopulated world brings our demise all the closer. Those things may be. Such information makes the plank slippery, but I choose to stand here, gravel up my boots on its greasy surface, and keep my balance. I love my children. Not perfectly, not without misgivings, not without cost. But I love them, and my love for them is good, a good thing in a sea of inexplicability and absurdity. My small choice to love my children gives me confidence to choose to love beyond them, to love my husband, to love my father, maybe even to love my cranky colleagues, eventually to love beyond my immediate

experience, to love without motive or requite.

I haven't "finished knowing," then. Not quite. My baby daughter's fat little cheeks are no illusion. I touch her cheeks; therefore I am. Therefore *she* is. She may be temporary, but her existence, however brief in galactic time, has altered the universe. The rightness of her existence, and therefore of all of ours, is for me unquestionable. If we go down in disaster, go out with a whimper, flicker away like the last match in a cold, black cave, I'm glad we were, all of us, here for a while.

And I hope for even more. I hope for more life. I hope for redemption. I hope that I get enough time with the people I love—and there are many—that all my stupid mistakes will fade into triviality. I hope that eleventh grade, for example, becomes a much smaller—and therefore less significant—proportion of my existence. I'd like to minimize a few dates, a lot of sarcasm, some terrible marital episodes. I hope to see Utah Lake purified of its foulness, to see the sand of its shallow bed glittering below the perfect water, to touch the shining, resurrected trout. I hope to stand on Lone Peak with my sons and daughters, at once children and adults, mortal and immortal, taking in eons, winter, spring, summer, fall, pristine and civilized. I'd like to skinny dip in Lake Bonneville. I hope to live on a planet without a single hamburger franchise, a solitary billboard.



I HOPE that orange poppies, spindled columbines, glacier lilies, lilacs, solstices, eclipses, meadowlarks, magpies, red sandstone, white granite, runoff water, ice caves, dinosaurs, petroglyphs, water snakes, elk, penguins, rope swings, fresh basil, acoustic instruments, Jeep Wranglers, strawberry ice cream, iced mocha lattes, Mexican beer, the entire west Utah desert, garden tomatoes, Gruyère cheese, and homemade bread, to name a few, last forever and ever.

I hope my Aunt Elaine will live again, here with us. I hope her mentally disabled daughter, just my size and build, a second child as I am, grieving without phrase or comprehension, seizes words to greet her mother and tell her wisdom. I hope someday to meet my mother's mother, dead at thirty-three. I hope to see the way she walks, hear the rhythms of her speech, catch a movement that her daughter kept and maybe passed on to me and my sisters, never knowing its source. I hope my parents become my age again, and that I get to be young and strong. And five inches taller. I hope to see my Grandma Anderson pick up one of the arguments we left unfinished, show her I'm smarter now, show her my amazing kids, and somehow, miraculously, climb her backyard locust tree again. I hope the graves of my grandfathers, of Flannery and Juanita and Emily, of the Jews killed in Europe and the "Indians" killed in America, slaves and masters, Missourians and Mormons, the men and women of Mountain Meadows, all who were killed and all who killed will open up and surrender their sorrows.

Gertrude Stein said, "Considering how dangerous everything is, nothing is frightening." I suggest: "Considering how

unlikely everything is, nothing is implausible." These things could be true. Occam, the razor man, recommended that good thinkers accept the most *likely* explanation for any given evidence. My four-year-old son Porter, at least as credible, defies him:

"But Mom, *maybe* there are popsicles in the mailbox."

"*Maybe* we could make a real rocket and get in."

"*Maybe* Grandma Annie is coming right now, and *maybe* it's my birthday."

*Maybe*, this world, our slender threads of goodness, our flickers of choice and existence are immortal. *Maybe* our tragedies and mistakes can be softened. *Maybe* grief can be balanced, eternally, by joy. *Maybe* there's even something, or someone, we can call God and speak with reverence, who will save Gomorrah for all our sakes, who comprehends our shades of gray and all the hues and tones besides.

Whether or not I can ever finally believe that the promise of Christ's atonement can be fulfilled, I do believe that the principles his name represents are the only possible salvation for the hungry, humiliated, violent, and hopeless inhabitants of this world. And so, though I rarely embody them, I believe in the efficacy of tolerance, peace, charity, patience, and selflessness, even among those with whom we are most familiar, even toward those with whom we most adamantly disagree. And if we and this world vanish tomorrow, if our souls are obliterated with our bodies, if our sun burns away and turns to vile black ice, our love mattered all the more, because that was all we had.



I DREAMED a while ago that I was a child flying in a tiny airplane with a little boy, someone I loved and took for granted. *Maybe* it was Amelia and Christian, my inseparable two oldest children. *Maybe* it was Mark and me. We flew, wondering, spiraling through a vast space, peeking through pillars into various rooms, brushing against walls as high as we could see, gradually moving upward until we reached a ceiling. Paint peeled off its surface to reveal the marbled blue paper that

Mark uses to signify the starry universe in his box constructions. One wing tipped up to brush the top, and a trapdoor opened. Out we flew into the glittering night, looking back at the diminishing, floating cathedral that we had once perceived to be the whole of space.

I think my tent will diminish in the same way, as I expand the circumference of my charted wilderness. The canopy will blow away to reveal the open sky. I will see that the poles which held it up were made from the larger world around it, that the landscape itself is structure and shelter enough. The circle will stand like an ancient ruin, memorial and micro-cosmic, as all mortal structures finally must.

I happen to believe that Emma Smith, good with words, helped her husband Joseph craft the remarkably concise set of statements that became the Mormon Articles of Faith. I personally wouldn't mind an even more ruthless editing; the thirteenth holds up the doctrinal section of my breezy tent

just fine:

We believe in being honest, true, chaste, benevolent, virtuous, and in doing good to all men [and women and children and other creatures, may I add?]; indeed, we may say that we follow the admonition of Paul—we believe all things [maybe I'd edit this line], we hope all things, we have endured many things, and hope to be able to endure all things. If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things.

For all my speculations here, I'm a bottom-liner at heart. I plan for the worst possibility, then hope to be pleasantly surprised. This little article seems to be a fine plan for disaster and a good one for pleasant surprises as well. Regardless of how all

this life spins out, we have the choice to seek after the lovely, and to make it lovelier, for a while at least. I value the choice. Frightening as this could be, I want to worship a God who will risk leaving our existence and redemption up to us, a God who is powerful enough to make that possible, kind enough to make it possible forever, and, once in a while, to bail us out.

And this is enough.

Amen. 

#### NOTES

1. Flannery O'Connor, "The Catholic Novelist in the Protestant South," in *Mystery and Manners*, ed. Sally and Robert Fitzgerald (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1986), 197.

2. Emily Dickinson, poem 280, *The Complete Poems of Emily Dickinson*, ed. Thomas H. Johnson (Boston: Little, Brown and Company, 1960), 128.



### AUTUMN WOMAN

All night long the sinking sound of the cold  
poured downward from the north  
and disturbed my sleep.

Today the eye can see deeper  
into the sky, and the stiff  
slender leaves of weeds near the river  
shine out like blades in brittle light.

From the corner of the garden shed  
where the foundation crumbles, I gather  
trowel and claw and hurry to the garden.  
Sumac trees flare up like torches,  
twisting and flaming, while high above  
birds flee in formation.  
I dig in the earth with my bare hands,  
sifting the soil with hungry fingers,  
scooping out deep hollows  
for the sleek, fat bulbs.

The crimson flags of the sumacs droop  
as wind dies down to nothing.  
The last fire of the setting sun  
catches topmost leaves.  
I cup each bulb in my hand, a ritual  
caress. Then I pull the earth down  
over their heads: already they begin  
to dream of light.

—CAROLYN ELKINS

*With a high birth rate, increasing conversions, and a more visible place in today's pluralistic America, Mormon Fundamentalists are here to stay. The author of an acclaimed study shares how a husband and his wives relate communally and in pairs.*

# YOURS, MINE, AND OURS: HUSBANDS AND WIVES IN CONTEMPORARY MORMON FUNDAMENTALIST POLYGAMY

*Irwin Altman*

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HIS PAPER DISTILLS NINE YEARS OF RESEARCH on contemporary Mormon polygamous families (families with one husband and two or more wives) that resulted in a book co-authored by Joseph Ginat and myself. In husband-wife and wife-wife relations in plural families, we examined: (1) how husbands and wives achieve viable *dyadic* (husband-wife) and *communal* (family and society) relationships, and (2) how they manage dyadic and communal issues socially and physically through the life cycle of plural family relationships.

Excellent analyses have been made of life in pioneer plural families by Kimball Young and Jessie Embry,<sup>1</sup> and of the history of LDS polygamy by Richard Van Wagoner, Carmon Hardy, and others.<sup>2</sup> Except for Martha S. Bradley's account of the 1953 raid on the Short Creek community,<sup>3</sup> there have been few social science studies of contemporary Mormon polygamy. To my knowledge, our book is the first comprehensive social science analysis of husband-wife and wife-wife relationships in modern polygamous families.

I have been a faculty member at the University of Utah for twenty-eight years in the department of psychology and the department of family and consumer studies. However, I am not an expert on LDS religion or culture, Mormon fundamentalism, or polygamy—or, to use the proper term, polygyny (one husband and multiple wives). Rather, I teach and do research in the social and environmental psychology of interpersonal relationships among friends, couples, and family members. My work deals with how people form and develop close

relationships, how they manage relationships, and how social bonds deteriorate or involve conflict. I also study environmental aspects of close relationships—how people design, decorate, and use their homes; how they manage privacy, personal spacing, and territorial behavior; and what places mean to people.<sup>4</sup>

Partly coincidentally and partly deliberately, I decided to study plural Mormon fundamentalist families. The coincidental part came from renewed contact with my co-author, Joseph Ginat, at a professional conference. Ginat is an Israeli anthropologist who teaches at the University of Haifa, Israel. He completed a Ph.D. in anthropology at the University of Utah in the 1970s, studies Bedouin polygynous families, and has had long-term friendships with members of Mormon fundamentalist groups. Given my psychological interest in close relationships, and Ginat's anthropological perspective, we began to collaborate in 1987.

The deliberate part of my interest in polygynous Mormon families grew from my desire to learn about another family structure on the contemporary American scene. We live in an era of pluralism and heterogeneity of beliefs and lifestyles—a trend that is likely to accelerate in the coming decades as a result of changes in the demographic and social landscape of America and the western world. One aspect of the changing scene is an increasing diversity of types of close interpersonal relationships and family forms. The stereotyped ideal of the nuclear family—a mother, a father, and their children—that pervaded American and western society in the first decades of the twentieth century is giving way to acceptance, or at least acknowledgment, that the social landscape is now populated by a great diversity of close relationships and family types. There are single parent families, usually headed by women; blended families, in which a woman and man bring children from previous relationships into a new family; cohabiting couples; same-sex couples; couples who agree to have children

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and share responsibility but do not marry or live together; elderly people living in group situations; older single or divorced children (some with their own children) returning to live with their parents; unique cultural and ethnic family structures; families in homeless shelters or other transient circumstances; immigrant populations with family members separated for periods of time; and others. To this diversity, we add the relatively small numbers of fundamentalist Mormons who believe in and live in a plural family structure.<sup>5</sup>

As both a scholar and citizen, I am interested in this array of close relationships and family structures. As a scholar, I believe it is important to study and understand these relationships in and of themselves—to see how they work, examine their underlying dynamics, describe their similarities and differences, and identify factors associated with their viability and well-being. As a citizen of a changing world where people with varied lifestyles will meet and clash over differences in values and beliefs, including how they live in families and close relationships, I hope that knowledge based on this research may be a small step toward mutual tolerance, if not mutual acceptance, of our differences. If we can penetrate the superficial and often inaccurate stereotypes about others who live differently than us, then we may be able to achieve a greater degree of social unity, peace, and good will amidst the diversity and plurality that will be with us for decades to come.

What is it that Ginat and I wished to understand about husband-wife and wife-wife relationships in plural families? In general, we sought a glimpse into how they cope with their unusual life style, especially since we learned that many members of fundamentalist groups are converts with little or no prior experience with plural family life. How do they succeed in aspects of their lives? Where are the stress points in these complex relationships?

Members of contemporary plural families face a difficult and somewhat unusual challenge. On the one hand, they have traditional American values about the special nature of the dyadic relationships between a husband and a wife; they believe in each marital bond as a unique, intimate, and treasured dyadic relationship. They share these idealized views about marriage with people in monogamous relationships. At the same time, their religious beliefs call for the plural family to function as a harmonious and unified communal system, with wives supporting, loving, sharing, and cooperating with one another, and with the family functioning in a constructive and unified fashion.

Polygamous Mormon families face the task of reconciling

dyadic and communal values. Our central research questions focus on how they manage these opposing values in different parts of their lives, how and why they fail to do so, and what cultural mechanisms assist them in balancing communal and dyadic ideals. These challenges are formidable, but they are not so different from the challenges many monogamous couples face. Figuring out how to maintain dyadic viability in the context of families and kin, friends and work groups, and others with whom we must relate is a tension all know. These challenges confront people in new forms of relationships as well. Blended families involve new dyadic relationships between a man and a woman, but that relationship must survive in the communal and often complex context of children who

are thrown together by it. Gay and lesbian couples must struggle with their own dyadic relationships in the context of their parents, co-workers, and others. Thus, no close dyadic relationship exists independent of its social contexts. The modern plural family's task is more difficult because fundamentalists live in a larger monogamous society that is hostile toward them and their beliefs, and because modern fundamentalist culture itself is young and offers little guidance. Thus individuals and families are part of an "experimenting" culture, a culture in search of itself, and often they

must find their own way through the complexities of plural family life, which is new for the many participants who are converts with monogamous family histories. Life in contemporary plural families is difficult for all participants—husbands, wives, and children—and individuals spend a great deal of time and energy figuring out how to cope day by day with dyadic and communal needs and goals and to remain steadfast to religious values that are criticized by society at large. Additionally, cohabitation (unmarried persons of the opposite sex living together) and bigamy (marrying or purporting to marry more than one member of the opposite sex) are felonies in Utah, where many of these families live.

Ginat and I sought to understand dyadic and communal processes in polygynous families by immersing ourselves in the lives of our participants. We visited and observed many homes, hosted some families in our homes, and participated in community dances, church activities, and other events. We did not use formal surveys, highly structured interviews with fixed questions, or other restrictive techniques. Instead, we used open-ended interviews to be sensitive to topics that emerged spontaneously in addition to those we had planned to study. We worked with about two dozen families, a dozen of whom were our primary participants. We conducted almost two hundred interviews/observations, speaking or meeting with about

## HOW DOES A

husband rotate among wives

to eat, talk, solve family

problems, sleep together,

have sex?

one hundred family members, and we based our analyses on fourteen hundred pages of field notes.

Our focus families belonged to two large fundamentalist groups, one in a western urban area that we called Metropolitan City; the other in an isolated rural town called Redrock. (Understandably, all locations and individual names used here are pseudonyms.) Each group has satellite communities in other places. Our sample is small, but our information about many families is extensive. The families were warm, gracious, and open, and we appreciated their good will.

We explored more than a dozen life domains of plural families: decisions about adding a multiple-wife, courtship, weddings, honeymoons, adjustment by a new wife to a family (and vice-versa), husband-wife and wife-wife socio-emotional relationships, conflict resolution, visiting patterns of husbands among families, celebrations, naming children, family structure, living arrangements, household management, budget and resource management, place attachment (privacy, decorating), management of a husband's clothing, family structure and community structure. Fuller details are presented in our book.

We also used archival sources, newspaper and magazine articles, autobiographies, and other writings on the theology and history of this unique American religion. Relying on ethnographic reports by anthropologists, we examined husband-wife and wife-wife relations in other world cultures that have historically practiced polygyny.

#### ADDING A WIFE

*Who decides? The husband, the wives, the whole family?*

THE decision process surrounding the addition of a wife to a plural family varies from family to family and from wife to wife. In the rural community, or Redrock, marriages are arranged by the prophet (sometimes with family consultation). In the urban community of Metropolitan City, there is considerable individual choice, although the initiation of a courtship must be approved by the prophet.

The decision of a plural family to invite a new wife to join it may be based on religious, individual, familial, or kinship factors. The process is often initiated dyadically, in ways similar to monogamous relationships: A man and woman may be mutually attracted, and either party may initiate a relationship. They may have known each other as children, met at church, or been introduced by friends. In contrast, some relationships are initiated communally: one or more wives in the family may individually or jointly approach a potential new wife, or urge the husband to consider a woman they know, like, and feel would fit in with the family. In some cases, husbands may try to convince a reluctant wife or wives to consider a new wife; in others, wives take the initiative. When a husband suggests the idea, he is expected to seek approval from his wives. Similarly, if one (or more) of the wives raises the matter, she must seek the husband's approval of both the idea and the proposed new wife. Sometimes, wives may resist adding a wife on communal grounds—e.g., feeling that a particular woman will not fit in

with the family, or that a new wife will threaten the dyadic relationship of an established wife with the husband. On occasion, wives give only grudging approval for a particular choice, or other times a husband may be pressured by his wives (or others) into a marriage. In the decision of whether to add a plural wife, both dyadic and communal factors play a role. The process is not uniform across or within families; each decision has its unique dynamic.

#### COURTSHIP

*As a couple? As a family?*

COURTSHIP formally begins when the group's religious leadership gives approval for a man and woman to pursue their relationship, although in Redrock, there is no formal courtship since marriages are theoretically arranged by the prophet. Courtship among Mormon fundamentalists and monogamous Americans is similar in its dyadic aspects. The couple spends time alone on dates—going to restaurants, movies, and favorite places. They explore each others' personalities and beliefs and also engage in intimacies—albeit restricted intimacies; these are very conservative people.

The woman fiancée also spends time with the established wives. She might visit the family home, attend church, or have Sunday dinner with the family, celebrate birthdays, and so on. Wives also go on dates with the courting couple—to the movies, out to dinner, for walks. The wives' communal role in courting is not casual; it is quite important, and it can destroy or preserve the relationship. In one case, while a woman's father temporarily halted a courtship for complicated religious reasons, the two wives already in the family kept the romance alive. They corresponded with the fiancée and counseled the husband about his letters. The marriage eventually took place.

Courtships can be stressful. Lengthy courtships are sometimes upsetting to established wives, who resent their husband's time with the fiancée, and feel he neglects them or is more attracted to a (usually) younger woman not weighed down by children, work, and running a home. Wives may find other difficulties in courtship—having to spend time courting the fiancée while maintaining their family, jobs, and relating to one another. One exhausted and exasperated wife finally said to her husband, "Will you please finish courting her and get married so that we can get back to a normal life?" Managing courtships may be stressful; it often requires much time and energy, trial and error, and patience. Courtship, then, requires an effort by all participants to maintain a balance between dyadic and communal processes.

#### WEDDINGS

*The wives "give" their husband his bride.*

THE wedding ceremony in the Metropolitan City community is culturally explicit regarding the interplay between dyadic and communal processes. The ceremony is conducted by the community's religious leader or his de-

signee at a sacred altar or in a home, and it may be attended by family and friends. In settings other than at a sacred altar, the bride and groom stand before the wedding administrator and are dressed in wedding attire or good clothing. The ceremony itself generally follows Christian wedding procedures, addressing the importance of mutual love between the bride and groom, their loyalty to one another, their rights and responsibilities as husband and wife, and their duties and obligations to religious doctrine.

While much of the ceremony is traditional (dyadic), weddings also have communal elements. Ideally, but not always, the wives, who are also dressed up, stand alongside the bride and groom (or if the wedding takes place at a sacred altar, kneel alongside the bride and face the groom). At one point, the wedding administrator asks them to publicly give their blessing and consent to the marriage. The wording of the question to them alludes to the biblical actions of Sarah in the Old Testament, who gave Hagar, her maidservant, to Abraham, as his wife, so that his lineage would be preserved. Thus, the wives sanction in word the dyadic bond of the bride and groom and express their endorsement of the bride as a sister-wife in their communal family. But there is also a physical dimension to the wives' ceremonial commitment. The most recent wife takes the bride's hand and places it in the groom's, essentially "giving" the bride to the groom. Then, all the wives place their hands on the couple's, symbolizing the joining of the wives with the bride and groom in a unified communal family.

There are sometimes tensions about weddings. Some wives give approval only grudgingly; some do not participate in the ceremony if they strongly disapprove of a marriage. Some problems that arise are dyadic, such as jealousy of the bride or fear of losing the husband's love. Other problems reflect communal concerns, such as feeling that the bride will not fit in as a sister-wife. Weddings, like courtships, involve an interplay of dyadic and communal processes.

#### HONEYMOONS

*Each one is short, sweet, memorable—and unique.*

**H**ONEYMOONS are customary among members of the urban Metropolitan City group, although they are modest and short. They are primarily dyadic, involving only the newlyweds. As in monogamous relationships, the bride and groom celebrate their marriage by themselves, away from home, work, and families. Each husband-wife couple in a plural family tends to spend their honeymoon at a

different place, and wives often proudly display memorabilia from their wedding and honeymoon in their homes.

Honeymoons are typically short, partly for economic reasons, but also because it is difficult for a husband to leave his other wives and children too long. Honeymoons are often difficult times for established wives, who may feel jealous, lonely, or rejected. Perhaps in recognition of these issues, some husbands telephone other wives when they are honeymooning with a new wife, in order to check on their other families and to show their concern and love. Some established wives spend the honeymoon time with one another, providing mutual social support if they are under stress because of a new marriage. Therefore, while honeymoons have strong dyadic features that involve a husband and new wife, they also reflect communal processes.

#### LIVING ARRANGEMENTS

*Wives live separately or together—it changes often.*

**M**ANY plural families primarily live in dyadic arrangements. Wives usually have separate homes (sometimes in a compound), or may share a large dwelling with separate apartments. There may also be communal qualities, such as shared gardens, yard entranceways, or halls.

Other plural families primarily live communally, with wives sharing a kitchen, living room, yard entranceways, and most public parts of a home. Yet, almost all communal arrangements also have dyadic aspects. Wives almost always have their own bedrooms, or sometimes a suite—their own bedroom, bathroom, and a sleeping area for their children.

A third type of arrangement is a mixed dyadic and communal house plan. In one family of eight wives, four wives shared a large home. Two wives lived on each side of the dwelling and shared a kitchen, living room, etc., but each wife had her own bedroom—a mostly communal arrangement. But this family's arrangement was also partly dyadic—another wife had her own separate home. Three other wives lived in a third dwelling, two of them sharing an apartment communally and the other having a separate downstairs apartment.

Many factors enter into living arrangements—finances, family size, work locations, child care needs, and so on. Psychological and social factors also play a role. For example, some wives want their own home in order to live as they see fit, raise their children alone and in their own way, and have a home for their family and husband. Sometimes wives may not get along and want to live apart from one another.

Some wives, on the other hand, want to live communally in order to meet their religious values and share life together and

## HONEYMOONS

are often difficult times

for established wives,

who may feel jealous,

lonely, or rejected.

to raise their children as part of a unified patriarchal family. And there are economic realities. Because it is sometimes financially difficult to maintain several households, wives may live together to cut down on expenses, take care of one another's children, and share household chores.

Even though families live in many combinations of dyadic and communal living arrangements at different times in their lives, we did see an overall pattern. In many families, a new wife often lives first with one or more established wives. As families grow—and they do so rapidly, as a result of a high birth rate—homes become crowded, and many wives want their own dwelling. Over the years, living arrangements may change many times to include any number of dyadic and communal patterns, as a result of family finances, job requirements, and the interpersonal complexities associated with a husband visiting his families. As a result, changes in residence are very common during the middle and growing years of a family's life. However, when families stop growing, and when older children begin to leave home to marry or live independently, families tend to settle primarily into dyadic living arrangements.

We also asked some families to describe their ideal hypothetical living arrangements. They consistently said that their ideal was a blend of dyadic and communal plans. One family for example, consisting of a husband, four wives, and their children, described their ideal as a quadrangular dwelling arrangement, each side of which would be a separate apartment for each individual wife and her children, fully equipped and with no sharing of any spaces—a typical dyadic configuration. However, they also included a central space for the unified communal family to meet, pray, and have celebrations.

#### ROTATION

*When does each wife and the husband have time alone?*

**H**OW does a husband rotate among wives and children to do what any married couple does—eat, talk, solve family problems, interact with children, sleep together, have sex? And how do they still manage to preserve family communality?

Modern fundamentalists use three types of rotation systems. In the first, rigid rotation systems, a husband visits each wife and her children according to a fixed routine, theoretically spending equal time with each family in a specific sequence—Monday with one wife, Tuesday with another wife, and so on. One family did this from noon of one day to noon of the next day, even shifting the seating of wives in the family car if they happened to be traveling at noon. Rigid rotation systems are rare in the families we studied because they do not take into consideration family matters that arise out of sequence—birthdays and anniversaries, work schedules, or emergencies. Families also say that a rigid rotation pattern is too mechanical and ignores personal and interpersonal needs and feelings.

Laissez faire rotation systems are at the other extreme; they

provide no particular system for when and how long a husband spends time with each wife. It is solely up to the husband where he spends an evening, a day, or a longer period of time. He might follow an irregular sequence of visits to wives. He might inform a wife in advance of his visit or simply show up unannounced. He might stay for a short time or for a longer period. Few families use laissez faire systems; they are unpredictable and can easily result in a wife feeling that she does not enjoy equal time with the husband.

Most families use some type of flexible rotation system, in which a husband visits his wives on a general schedule that is predictable but not rigid. In the long run, he will ideally spend a roughly equivalent amount of time with each wife. Husbands and wives may change a flexible visitation pattern for special family occasions. In this system, a husband can attend to the (dyadic) needs of specific wives and children. If everyone cooperates, a flexible system is “owned” by everyone and can function communally.

Rotation systems don't always work, especially when a wife feels that she is not being treated fairly and becomes jealous of the time he spends with other wives or if she perceives that the quality of their interaction is poor when he does visit her. Once again, contemporary plural families struggle to achieve an acceptable interplay of dyadic and communal processes in this important aspect of their lives.

#### BUDGET AND RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

*A centrally, locally run family economy.*

**B**UDGETING and management of resources is a crucial part of plural family life. Fundamentalist families are often in difficult financial circumstances in part because of the many children and households to be supported and because they often hold jobs in low-paying or seasonal occupations. As a result, many wives work, and children may also contribute to family income. Families vary widely in their budgeting systems, and they frequently change those systems depending on current circumstances.

Some budgeting systems are dyadic. Wives may separately support themselves, for example, with a husband supplementing each wife's income as necessary. In one of our families, the husband gives each wife basic funds, and wives who elect to work keep their own earnings. In other cases, a wife retains a portion of her own earnings and gives any surplus to the husband for distribution to other wives who may need assistance. The key principle of dyadic systems is that co-wives are not directly involved in each others' financial affairs or deliberations with the husband; families essentially budget in a monogamous style.

Purely dyadic practices are relatively rare; many dyadic systems also have communal features. For example, in several families all of the husband's and wives' incomes are pooled and then redistributed to each wife by the husband. Still, this type of system is primarily dyadic, because even though funds are originally pooled, the husband deals with each wife separately.

Other systems are more communal. One family pools all its

earnings, and each wife receives funds based on decisions made at a meeting of the husband and wives. In more fully communal approaches, wives live together in a single dwelling and share home management responsibilities. Money may be allocated to the wives collectively for food shopping and other joint needs, although a wife and husband may negotiate for personal items, thereby adding a dyadic component to this communal style of resource management. Plural families use different budgeting systems at different times in their lives as a result of changes in family status, tensions regarding fairness of a particular system, and overall income, as they struggle to balance dyadic and communal needs.

#### PLACE ATTACHMENT

*Homes are important to wives. Not so for husbands.*

**P**LACE attachment refers to the emotional bonds that people have for places—in this case, the feelings husbands and wives in plural families have about their home. A home is often important to a plural wife because it serves as a tangible symbol of her role as wife, mother, and religious observant. It is also a place that she can decorate in ways that allow her to display her personality, values and lifestyle preferences.<sup>6</sup> In many ways, the attachment and bonding of polygynous wives to their homes is similar to that of many women in mainstream American culture.

One aspect of a wife's attachment to her home is revealed in decoration. Plural family homes in our study contained four types of decorations, each of which symbolizes a central aspect of a wife's life. Personal identity items such as trophies, collections, art, or handiwork, reflect a wife's preferences, interests, and talents. Personal family attachments, such as photos, memorabilia, and gifts, link a wife to her natal family and relatives. Signs of religious and cultural attachment include photos of church leaders, church buildings, and religious objects and pictures; and dyadic attachment comprises decorations that illustrate a wife's unique relationship with her husband and their children. These include photographs of the husband and wife, wedding and engagement memorabilia, gifts from the husband, photos of events in the life of the couple, genealogy charts tracing the husband and wife's lineage, and pictures and objects associated with their children.

Interestingly, homes rarely contain photographs of other wives or decorations reflecting the communal plural family. Homes are used by wives to make salient their unique bond to the husband and their children; the home is not a vehicle to re-

flect the cultural ideal of a harmonious communal family.

At the same time, husbands show little attachment to any particular home. They appear uninterested in home furnishings and play no role in decorating; they usually do not have a place of their own in homes, seem to be quite willing to move from home to home, do not display personal items in homes, and seem to act as visitors to their wives' dwellings. It may be that the principle of a husband being "fair" to all wives and the status of the home as a wife's place, combined with frequent relocations over the years, result in little overt commitment by husbands to any one home. And husbands' low interest in the specifics of home furnishings and decoration may help them avoid conflict and jealousy between wives, and thereby contribute to family unity and communality.

#### FINAL WORDS

*Understanding is the beginning of wisdom.*

## MORMON POLYGAMY

is here to stay. Fundamentalists  
are growing by virtue of a high  
birth rate as well as  
by conversions.

**A** FEW general closing observations. First, plural family life is complex, often stressful, and requires a unique balancing of dyadic husband-wife relationships with communal family relationships among wives. Working through this complex set of relation-

ships is all the more challenging because many participants have little previous experience with plural family life. Additionally, the fundamentalist culture has not developed firm norms about how to live in plural families. As a result, plural family members often struggle to find their way and develop family-specific solutions as they attempt to develop a viable lifestyle that is compatible with their religious values. Put more generally, this is a culture in search of understanding itself.

Second, some families cope successfully; others do not. Some relationships within families are positive; others are not. And plural families change in how they cope with their circumstances as their lives move into new stages. They are as varied in their day-to-day lives as monogamous families—although they face some unique challenges.

Finally, plural families and fundamentalist groups are here to stay. They continue to grow in number by virtue of a high internal birth rate and by conversions. And they join the large array of family and household structures now on the American scene—traditional nuclear families, foster families, blended families, single-parent families, gay and lesbian relationships, elderly group-living arrangements, extended kin households, and others.

As a social scientist and a citizen, I believe that it is impor-

tant to understand the array of family and household configurations, including modern plural families. In so doing, I do not call for approval or acceptance of a polygynous lifestyle. But I also do not advocate condemning and criticizing those who choose to live differently. I simply plea for understanding, hoping that knowledge will translate into civility, an appreciation of why and how people live, and constructive exchanges. We live in an era of increasing divisiveness, fragmentation, and unwillingness to understand one another. If our feelings of difference and separation continue to escalate and polarize, the effect on American society will be catastrophic. Our work with Mormon fundamentalist families is intended to be a step toward understanding, and I hope that it will contribute in some small way to a more peaceful and gentle world. ☐

## NOTES

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4. See Irwin Altman, *Environment and Social Behavior: Privacy, Personal Space, Territory, and Crowding* (Monterey, Calif.: Brooks/Cole, 1975); Irwin Altman, "Toward a Transactional Perspective: A Personal Journey" in Irwin Altman and Kathleen Christensen, eds., *Environment and Behavior Studies: Emergence of Intellectual Traditions*, vol. 11 of *Human Behavior and Environment* (New York: Plenum, 1990), 225–256; Irwin Altman and Martin M. Chemers, *Culture and Environment* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989); Irwin Altman and Dalmas A. Taylor, *Social Penetration: The Development of Interpersonal Relationships* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

5. See P. L. Kilbride, *Plural Marriage for Our Times: A Reinvented Option?* (Westport, Ct.: Bergin and Garvey, 1994), in which Kilbride describes a variety of other de facto polygamous arrangements on the contemporary scene, including "man sharing," in which two or more women knowingly have close relationships with a man but do not marry him; extra-marital polygamy by men and women; and same-gender and mixed-gender triadic and group relationships.

6. Irwin Altman and Carol M. Werner, eds., *Home Environments*, vol. 8 of *Human Behavior and Environment* (New York: Plenum, 1985); and Irwin Altman and Setha M. Low, eds., *Place Attachment*, vol. 12 of *Human Behavior and Environment* (New York: Plenum, 1992).



## NEAR POINT YBEL

I sit alone in the white silence  
of sand, the blue scent of water lapping.  
Beneath the fronds of palms and palmettos,  
it is easy to forget.  
This morning at dawn I walked—  
one foot on land, one in sea—  
stooping to take up tiny pink coquinas  
and lightning whelks, a lion's paw,  
angel wings. Always  
I've felt a longing for water,  
its movement and motion.  
In the whorled lives of mollusks,  
wounds heal themselves;  
beneath the currents, holes in pockmarked shells  
fill in, recreate what's missing.  
From this tide line,  
I see a pod of porpoise  
weaving a parallel path.  
I do not want to wake from this dream.

—GEORGANNE O'CONNOR

## THIS SIDE OF THE TRACTS

SINGLE IN SAN FRANCISCO:  
A MEMOIR

By Karen Southwick



An underlying spirit of love—as well as colorful incidents—knit together a ward “family.” Four members were (left to right) Janina Cobar, David Howard, Sonia Bedon, and Blain Stoddard.

*The San Francisco Single Adult Ward stood for an embrace of diverse cultures, lifestyles, heritages and ethnicity, a loving standard of what the gospel of Jesus Christ should be, but all too seldom is.*

IT WAS LATE SUNDAY AFTERNOON on a crisply brilliant fall day in San Francisco when you just have to be outside. I'd returned from a long walk with the dog to find a telephone message from Bishop Richard Smith. I knew why he was calling, and my heart sank.

He'd been bishop of the San Francisco Single Adult Ward for less than a month, so his phone number was unfamiliar. I punched the buttons clumsily, unwillingly, but the

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connection was made.

“Hello,” a male voice, low, guarded.

“Bishop Smith?”

“Yes.”

“This is Karen Southwick returning your call.”

He cleared his throat. After some discussion, he got to the point. “We’ve found someone else to play the organ . . .”

I'd been expecting this for two weeks, ever since, in Relief Society, another ward “long-timer” had said the just-called bishop was quietly telling all over age thirty-five they must leave the ward. This would be her last Sunday, she said. But there have been rumors about this ward for years, I said. Why not wait to see? Because, she said, this time it's true. She'd heard it straight from someone

who'd already been asked to leave.

Next week, her foreboding was proven correct. The bishop released her and several others, nearly all, I realized, among the older group of singles. From the organ, where I was waiting to launch into the sacrament song, I glanced over the congregation and breathed deeply. I was almost the only one left. But who would they get to replace me? To my knowledge, no one else in the ward played the organ. When I was gone, they used a pianist.

Yet the following Sunday, here Bishop Smith was telling me they'd found someone to play the organ.

“Who is it?”

“We'll be fine . . .”

. . . without you. He didn't actually say that, but the implication was there.

I'd spent a decade spanning four bishops in the San Francisco Single Adult Ward, and now this unsought parting triggered a Proustian flood of recollection. Most of it was about what the ward stood for: an embrace of diverse cultures, lifestyles, heritages and ethnicity, a loving standard of what the gospel of Jesus Christ should be, but all too seldom is. I remembered when Bishop Stan Roberts, my first bishop at the ward, came to talk to us Relief Society sisters. I expected the usual admonition to follow the brethren or a plea for more service or improved visiting teaching.

I was stunned when he cautioned that he was going to talk about the homosexual men in the ward. It was a word never heard inside church walls, except in condemnation. Yet here was someone saying it with love. He estimated that 20 percent of the men—one in five—were gay. Though I did not know it then, Roberts had been actively fellowshiping gay members and returning them to the fold. Until then, any acknowledged homosexual had usually been excommunicated.

These men need understanding and compassion, he said, just like the rest of us. We don't know everything about homosexuality, but gays don't do it out of choice or perversion; being gay is innate. Do what you can to encourage them in the Church, he urged us, for it's a difficult battle for them to remain faithful.

“I still feel that there's something different in [gays'] make-up from birth,” Roberts said in an interview for this article. “Some may do it out of choice, but among members of the Church, I didn't see many of those.” Roberts was bishop from 1984–89, after having been the high councilor assigned to the single adult ward. He said his outreach to gay members had been inspired by Apostle David B. Haight, who'd said, “We need to get people

out of the caves of San Francisco."

Roberts' simple philosophy for the single adult ward was: "Everyone is welcome here." He said gay members faced tremendous struggles to remain faithful. He said one gay member of the ward, Jim Lemmon, whom Roberts had known since Lemmon was a boy, "taught me the need for compassion." He recalled that Lemmon's mother "nearly had a nervous breakdown because the prevailing theory was that the mother [of a gay man] had been too dominant and the father too passive." Casting blame, Roberts said, "was not going to solve the problem."

Every Saturday morning at their home, Roberts and his wife, Fran, held a meeting where the issues of homosexuality and the Church were discussed. "The best home teachers and visiting teachers were those people who had really serious problems," he recalled. "They knew they probably wouldn't get married, and the Church puts a lot of pressure on people to get married and have a family. I tried not to add to that pressure. Doggone it, it was hard enough already." He also named a gay man as one of his counselors, someone who had been excommunicated and then re-activated and re-ordained to the priesthood. "He was a great help" in the fellowshiping effort, Roberts said.

The bishop dealt forthrightly with sexual sin: gays and straights had to live the gospel, which meant celibacy for singles. "I told people, if you want to partake of the bless-

ings of the temple, you have to toe that line of chastity. I didn't have a right to let anybody go to the temple who wasn't worthy." Not everybody was successful. Gay and straight, "some dropped out, and some did okay," he said. Even though the Scriptures state that the least amount of sin will not be tolerated, too many Mormons label homosexuality "as the worst sin that can be imagined," Roberts said.

In the mid to late '80s, the AIDS epidemic was in full swing in San Francisco. In the ward, a young hairdresser, Tom Morgan, had been the first to sicken. He'd been re-activated when a ward member who lived in the same complex invited him to church. He had been a teacher in the priesthood when he died. "He was on his way," said Roberts. "He had come to grips with his feelings about the Savior." Morgan "liked to hug everybody," a trait that Roberts could appreciate, since he shared it. Ward members took care of this man as he slipped away. "He kept his sense of humor to the end," Roberts said.

The human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) had infected other members of the ward. Our Relief Society and home teachers soon became all too familiar with the deadly scourge. They cleaned the houses of those afflicted, bought them groceries, drove them to doctors' appointments, visited them in hospitals, and, inevitably, sorted through their belongings and attended the funerals. At the time, AIDS was a death sentence, hitting its

victims with infection after infection, draining away strength with "wasting syndrome." It was easy to recognize the sufferers—that pinched look, that stumbling walk, that exhaustion. New members of the ward would sometimes get up and move away from those with AIDS. It was a frightening disease.

Roberts remembered when a stake patriarch from Canada had come to see his son who was hospitalized in San Francisco with AIDS. "He asked me how come I didn't excommunicate [his son] because he had AIDS. It was filthy," Roberts told him bluntly he was wrong. The father visited his son again. "Then he came back and said, 'Please forgive me.'" Eventually, he took the son home, where he died.

Roberts scheduled educational sessions to teach ward members about AIDS. Our Relief Society president at the time, Jean Perry, who was a nurse, teamed with Lemmon, who later died of the disease, to explain that you couldn't catch it from sitting by someone, even if they sneezed or coughed; or by using the same toilet; or by touching them. Inside and outside the Church, "People were very homophobic and HIV-phobic then," Perry recalled. Bishop Roberts "condemned the immoral activity without condemning the person." Perry said that as Relief Society president, she worked with members, both gay and straight, who struggled with sexual issues, drug abuse, and other problems. "How many heterosexual people slip?" she asked. "Because they didn't get HIV, it doesn't show." The ward helped people try to overcome the consequences of self-damaging behavior, Perry said.

For most people, love eventually overcame fear. I accompanied the choir then, and we were often called to perform at the bedside or at the funerals of those with HIV. One woman who had moved into the ward from the South was at first openly disgusted by the prospect of dealing with homosexuality and AIDS. Then she got to know some of the gay men. She sang with them in the choir, and they talked to her, as they did to many of us, about their struggles to stay in the church. In the end, she wept and put her arms around them as they died.

I remember sitting in the hospital room of one man, a tenor in our choir. His voice was weak and thready now, but the message came through: how much the ward had meant to him. His family had disowned him; his former companion was dead. There had been no one else there for him but the members of the ward. We were there when the torrent of words subsided and he was at rest.



"...SYMPATHIES WITH APOSTATE GROUPS? WELL, EIGHT YEARS AGO SUNSTONE PUBLISHED MY LETTER TO THE EDITOR."

JOHN DEPOISIER

***“Many people . . . will remain single during this life, or a good chunk of it. Active participants in singles wards should be encouraged and applauded, not questioned for overstaying their welcome.”***

Another man, also a choir member, could barely be heard any more, but he came every week to our hourlong practice. He was always on time, and as we waited for enough people to start practice, he would tell me about his latest medication and how much stronger he felt. He would describe the change in his symptoms in excruciating detail. The illness had, in a way, become his life. So to hang on, he had to go over and over the minutiae. But the inexorable virus loosened his grip, and he passed on. When I went to his funeral, I was astonished to find he'd been born in the same year as I had. He'd seemed so much older, wasted; I had been unaccustomed to thinking about people my age dying. AIDS changed that, cruelly and swiftly.

In early 1989, Roberts was released as bishop, a difficult, exhausting but ultimately rewarding time, he said. “What we tried to do was say, ‘We’re all children of God. We all have difficulties, so let’s get along and help each other.’” He said his legacy was in getting people “to listen to the promptings of the Holy Ghost, that still small voice that speaks to us all.” What he learned from members, particularly those struggling with sexuality, was their willingness to tell the truth. “In a family ward, many people skirt the issues, but in the singles ward, we met the issues right on and said, ‘what can we do?’”

In the January 1989 *Flamingo News*, a newsletter published by gay Mormon activists, editor Marty Beaudet said about Roberts: “If the healing process is to continue, it is now up to us who Bishop Roberts has assisted to do for others what he has done for us. In addition, the straight members have gained insights from his leadership

which have enabled them to make gay men and lesbians feel welcome.”

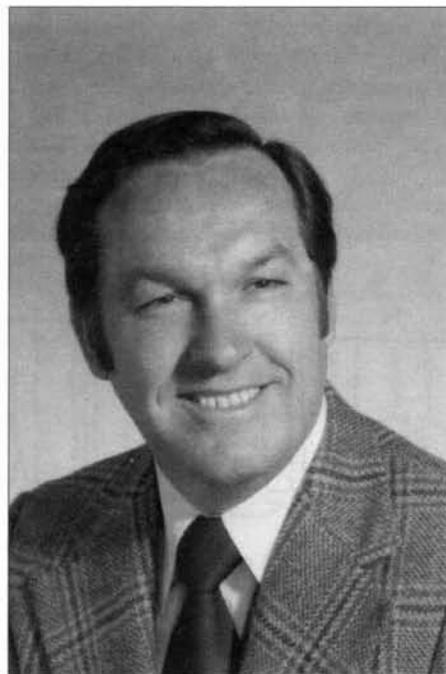
The new bishop, Lee Wade, had been serving as a stake missionary to the ward, along with his wife, Betty Jo. A convert who attended Sunstone conferences, Wade was tolerant, kindly, humorous. But even his tolerance could be stretched too far. It was the day in 1990 that James Kent wore black

high heels, “A stake conference speaker spoke of his uncle who didn’t fit in, but yet his ward always made him feel welcome.” The next week, as Kent got ready for church, he asked himself, “just how accepting is the Church to those of us who are different?” He added, “I was in an angry phase at the time and it was a dare for me to find out just how tolerant the ward, the bishop, and the Church would be.”

I didn’t see Kent during Sunday School, but I heard that the bishop had called him into his office. Recalled Kent: “I can still see me with those pumps in my hands, and after a prayer by the bishop, slamming them down on his desk and asking him, ‘Tell me, what difference does it make whether or not I wear pumps to church?’” After a lengthy discussion, Wade finally said: “Lee Wade is offended by what you did, but Bishop Wade needs to be impartial.”

The following Sunday, Kent said, “Bishop Wade came up to me, shook my hand and gave me a hug, and said, ‘Hey, Cha-Cha, how’re you doing?’ Which gave a good laugh to the bishop, my friends, and me.” Kent never felt the need to wear pumps to church again. “That was the first and last time.” Once, he confesses, he and a friend showed up at a Saturday night Mardi Gras party in full drag. Ever since, invitations to costume parties at the singles ward have stated: “no cross-dressing, please.”

Kent’s bitterest critic in the ward was a man who had lived the homosexual lifestyle for years, had alcohol and drug problems, and then renounced both drugs and being gay. (This man was a wonderful ballroom dancer; he once told me he had learned



Karen Southwick, left, spent a decade in the San Francisco Single Adult Ward. Her first bishop, Stan Roberts, right, estimated one fifth of the ward’s men were gay.

pumps to church. Kent, who openly talked about his homosexuality in testimony meetings, had decided to make a statement, he told me when he came to choir practice in the unusual footwear. I was a feminist who advocated giving the priesthood to women, so Kent and I sympathized with each other’s struggles to fit into the church. What kind of a statement? I asked. That gender isn’t as rigid as we think, he replied. I wasn’t sure this was the way to do it. High heels are the stupidest apparel that women wear, I told him. They’re uncomfortable and damaging; find another way to make your statement.

Kent, who moved to Philadelphia in 1992 and recently re-activated there, recalls the day vividly. The week before he donned the

dancing in gay bars, where they took turns leading, so he figured he could better understand how to lead in mixed couple dancing.) David Howard, who joined the ward in 1990, remembered this man and his fiancée speaking during a 31 May 1992 sacrament meeting. Howard wrote in his journal: "He said he first began coming to the ward six years ago and was a gay activist. A mighty change took place in his life. A miracle. Now he was marrying a girl he truly loves . . ."

Sunday School teachers from the singles ward all remember a brain-impaired man who was singularly faithful in attending meetings. He would sit close to the front, raise his hand and make rambling, disjointed comments. Said one former teacher, "I just said, 'thank you very much,' and moved on." The man also showed up in his bathrobe for ward volleyball night, but in contrast to the reaction to Kent and his pumps, no one said anything about he robe. They just went on with their game.

Not only colorful incidents made the singles ward what it was. The underlying spirit

of love uplifted and knit together a "family," even of those who were misfits and rebels. "I will always be amazed at the talent and diversity of that ward," said Kent. "For many members, it represented the loving family they had never had or were far away from. All were welcome no matter where they lived, how old or young they were, no matter how they lived."

Aline DiNoia, a convert from Tunisia, North Africa, was another individualist. She wore extremely short skirts and always spoke her mind. "They [the ward] accepted me," she said, "a person with a very strong sense of self who didn't want to dress like everyone else. It was good to be part of it."

Jean Perry left the ward in November 1994 after she married another member, Matt Verley, whom she'd introduced to the gospel. The two had met while swing dancing at a San Francisco ballroom and now have a two-year-old daughter, Julie. Perry-Verley was forty when she married and nearly forty-one when she gave birth. "Marriage doesn't have to be perfect to be

very good," she said. On the other hand, she appreciated the singles ward as an oasis where people "could turn their lives around." Because many members were isolated from their own families, "we really were the family for each other."

One person I shall miss very much is Aileen Olson, who had been in the ward for many years and was over the age limit. She is a devoted member who goes to the temple and fulfills her callings faithfully, upholds her leaders, and never fails to have a thoughtful comment when difficult issues are raised in Relief Society or Sunday School. When I e-mailed her about how discouraged I was about being "cast off" by the singles ward, she responded:

"I've wondered if the great group that is leaving will be remembered for how much we've contributed, how committed we've been; how we kept the ward going for years with our willingness to serve. . . . Then I realized, 'Hey, the one who knows is the Lord! He knows my heart. He's seen my offerings over the years. He will be my judge. And it is His kingdom I am serving.' So it's really not about recognition. . . . It's about taking a calling and magnifying it and knowing that the Lord knows what you've done and how well you've done it."

In her testimony upon leaving the ward, Olson commented that when she joined in 1989, "this ward was kind of scary, but it was a very loving ward. Everybody was accepted. I hope the next generation coming in will carry on that tradition." She added, "No matter how odd you were or what you looked like or how you dressed or where you were in the gospel, you were accepted. People missed you if you weren't here. This is a Church for everyone. There's a place in God's kingdom for all of us."

Joe Fong, another "old-timer" who testified, spoke about going back to the time of Bishop Roberts and said his time in the ward "has made me a better person." Fong, who has cerebral palsy that inhibits his walking and speaking, served a two-year mission to Hawaii and held numerous callings in the ward, including membership clerk and second counselor in the elders quorum. He was a fixture in every fast meeting, even the last one at the singles ward he would attend, always getting up to share his love of the gospel.

"I felt that because I was more likely to get a calling, the opportunity to serve was much greater here than it would have been in a family ward," he told me. His lasting impression of the singles ward is the "spirit of love" that pervaded it and the "spirit of trying to



MARVIN FRIEDMAN

*"The real reason we're in Bosnia is so that in thirty years there can be a temple there—look at Korea and Japan."*

*"I accompanied the ward choir, performing at the bedside or funerals of those with HIV. I had been unaccustomed to thinking about people my age dying. AIDS changed that, cruelly and swiftly."*

understand people's challenges." People aren't perfect anywhere, of course, and Fong said he often thought members were hesitant to approach him. "But I could have gone up to them, too," he said.

Janina Cobar, originally from Guatemala, spent four years in the ward. "I was a stranger, and they took me in," she said. "I felt so welcomed by everyone . . . all of a sudden I had all these great, supportive friends. I grew from their testimonies, their friendships, and their talents." She calls the ouster of herself and others "the end of a great era. I will always be grateful for the opportunity I had to be part of such an incredible ward, and I will treasure these years with my fondest of memories." She added: "It didn't matter what country, what race, how tall, how skinny—we were all friends and enjoyed each other's company. Love and acceptance was what made our ward so special."

Under Bishop Wade's successor, the very straightforward Richard Hollon, called in 1993, the ward became more orthodox. "I told those whom I dealt with that to be gay is okay, but to be sexual would be violating their covenants," Hollon said. His wife, Marilyn, said stake officials were concerned that the singles ward had gone too far. "There was this group of gay people who wanted to set the agenda. Richard [Bishop Hollon] told them he didn't care whether they were homosexual or not; that was between them and God. But if you break the law of chastity, you're subject to the same discipline as anyone else." The number of gay men attending the ward has dropped considerably, due to inactivity, attrition, and from deaths from AIDS.

Hollon was stern but loving. He recalled

at least two funerals where the families of men who had died of AIDS would not attend. "You love your children," he said, "whether they do good or bad." David Howard remembered attending the 24 July 1994 memorial service for Dan Stephens, who had lived with AIDS for more than a decade before succumbing. "He feared the church of his youth and God," Howard wrote in his journal.



James Kent, left, was in an "angry phase" when he wore high heels to church; Joe Fong, right, who has cerebral palsy, felt a "spirit of understanding" from ward members.

"Despite his fear, there was a conviction to do something about getting straight with God and receiving forgiveness for his sins." Stephens returned to Church and, several years later, went through the temple. "The sickness, though it killed him in the end, was the catalyst that helped him turn to his creator," Howard said. "He was like the prodigal son."

**D**URING Bishop Hollon's tenure, the policy that anyone who was striving to live the gospel could attend the singles ward was still largely intact. Hollon said that during the past year, rumors had begun about the demise of not only singles wards but also ethnic wards. "We were told

we would be eliminated," Hollon said. But it didn't happen. Hollon speculated there may have been many complaints to Church headquarters about discontinuing the wards. Whatever happened, the San Francisco Single Adult Ward remained in existence, but Hollon, at the request of the stake presidency, began talking to members in their fifties to tell them their records were being sent to

their geographical wards. He also contacted the bishops of those wards to tell them about the change.

"It was obvious that we had two wards within one, a singles ward [for older adults] and a young singles ward," said Hollon. He suggested the formation of an older single adult ward, which would hold its sacrament meeting with the young singles but have separate Sunday School and Relief Society/priesthood meetings. This suggestion was not accepted. When the time came for his release, in August 1997, Hollon asked

the San Francisco West Stake President, Rand Ollerton, to announce the coming change. Finally, after all these years, the San Francisco Single Adult Ward would live up to its designation as a ward for young singles. Everyone else would be asked to leave.

"I see a need to have singles wards," said Hollon, particularly in a region like the San Francisco Bay Area where the two overlapping stakes have about two thousand single members. Hollon said such wards give singles a stability they otherwise might not have. "This is a ward that shows love no matter what your situation, what you might find yourself involved in."

Bishop Richard Smith was left to carry out the new policy, which he did behind closed

doors. Neither he nor Ollerton, at least while I was still there, ever made any public acknowledgement, and the remaining members of the ward were left to puzzle out what was going on. (Both Ollerton and Smith declined to be interviewed.)

One sister voiced the concerns of many when she wondered why a church focused on eternity would make such a big deal about a birth date. A Catholic friend of mine wondered why any church would discourage active, participating members from attending. His own church and others are working mightily to hold on to their members by any means possible. Of the way the change was made, Hollon added: "I don't think they understand the total needs of those in this age group who were turned out and told to go find out where they belong." The ones who left under Hollon's tenure "knew their new bishops, and the bishops knew their names and had their records."

From officials who did not want their names used and from other members, I heard varying reasons for the change at the ward and, I gather, others in the Church. If the age range in singles wards is too great, older men "hit on" the younger women. Singles wards are meant to be temporary, and something is wrong if people wind up there for years. The geographical, family-oriented wards need the service of the single people. More than half the San Francisco West Stake, in which the singles ward is located, is composed of single members. If the single adult ward skimmed off the most active ones, what happened to the rest? Better, some suggested, to have active singles groups on a stakewide basis, and indeed, as this was written, ex-members of the ward were being called to start firesides and home evenings.

What is clear is that the Church continues to wrestle with the issue of what to do with its single adult wards. Should we even have them? If we do, they should be treated like other wards, not as if they were something slightly shameful, to be left behind as soon as possible. In today's world, many people, even those inside the Church, will remain single during this life, or a good chunk of it. Active participants in singles wards should be encouraged and applauded, not questioned for overstaying their welcome.

Single and family wards do need to have more contact. They're already talking about scheduling overlapping meetings so that single members can serve in Primary and mutual callings but still have their own sacrament meetings. The danger in eliminating singles wards is the marginalization of single people. The Church is devoted to family

values, and its meetings reflect this, especially the speeches from the pulpit. I've attended both family and singles wards, and I feel much more empathy in the singles wards for how difficult it is to be unmarried in a Church in which family is paramount.

I also think a greater age range is good for both younger and older singles; after all, there's a real possibility that you might not find your eternal partner in this life. Many young people, especially women, view that fate worse than death. But if they can look upon older people who are having fulfilling lives in the Church and in their careers, that is a blessing. It might even help the young women learn to "just say no" when the older men hit on them; after all, that's an age-old problem hardly confined to the Church. And

for us "old folks," interacting with and mentoring younger people allows us to continue to grow.

It is devastating emotionally and spiritually to be suddenly thrown out of a ward you have attended and served faithfully for years because your birth date falls at the wrong time. As Bishop Roberts put it, "Doggone it, it's hard enough already." The Church should be extending a helping hand to all those who are repentant and struggling to live the gospel, single and married, gay and straight. The San Francisco Single Adult Ward leaves a great legacy of love and acceptance. I echo Aileen Olson's words when I hope that the next generation can carry that on.

*Forgive us; we know not what we take for granted.* ☞



## THE VACATION

We once drove through Yellowstone Park,  
our only vacation.

My father, proud in his red convertible,  
top down, his shoulders bouldered like tanks,  
his prize blue eyes wide, then thin  
in a face of fast laughter.

My mother's moist white skin reflected the sun  
off high cheek bones as she told a funny story.  
Her blonde hair kept splashing my face as I leaned  
into the crease from the backseat to listen,  
masked in her spring scent  
like the wash on her clothesline at home.

I rarely think of those early days  
when love was still a fruit without bruises.  
More often I wake abruptly, shaking,  
two in the morning a bad habit,  
my father shooting the blank from the gun  
over my mother's head.

He only wanted to scare her, must have forgotten  
I was in the house.

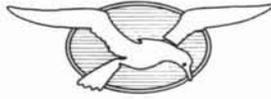
Or the night her bedroom door  
swallowed the imprint of his fist,  
a strange man staggering from her room,  
jaw bearded in blood.

I look at black and white photos from that trip,  
myself taking turns holding hands  
with each parent  
while the other works the camera,  
never a way to keep us all in one shot.

—KERRI BROSTROM MASTERS

## LINE UPON LINE

## NO TOIL NOR LABOR



Chapter 1

## A DISTURBANCE OF LIGHT

By Neal Chandler

*This is the first installment of a short-short story, which will ultimately be written by six authors.*

JENEAL SAT out on the deck in the Kennedy rocker Larry had bought on credit in 1986, brought up to the summer cabin to stain and to varnish for her birthday, but then forgotten and never looked at again. Now the naked pine was smoke yellow except where it was gummed and charcoal beneath her hands. She liked to sit on the shabby, neglected wood and rock slowly for perspective. Sun was warm through the thin air, the sky clear, the mountain hushed with bird song, but Jeneal was working. That's what she'd told the bishop on the phone. She was conducting an audit, which she hadn't told him exactly, but if he wanted to talk, had time for rumors and for nosing into private business, then he'd have to come up to her office. She sure wasn't going down to his. She wasn't even going to get dressed.

Among other things, things like politics and sexual intercourse and family values, Jeneal was reassessing religion. She kept on rocking and squinted down over



*"Among other things, things like politics and sexual intercourse, Jeneal was reassessing religion."*

the road that climbed up through the canyon. She stroked the deer rifle in her lap and studied things out in her mind. The establishment was coming to have its say. She was calm now. She was looking forward to the conversation. 

*To be continued . . . Next issue's installment by Margaret Young.*

## THROUGH A GLASS DARKLY

MESSAGE FROM MOSCOW:  
RIDING THE BUS

By Cherie Woodworth



*Misha rides the bus without a ticket out of principle—bus fare would take up exactly half his government salary.*

SATURDAY MORNING I talked my friend Misha into going to the historical museum with me. The museum and its neighboring square in central Moscow have just had a major renovation (the square has been rebuilt as a deluxe shopping mall). And just imagine! Misha, a native Muscovite, hasn't seen it yet.

So we go out early Saturday morning. Usually I walk to the subway, but today we get on the bus. We sit in the last row of seats.

Misha asks me, "Do you have a ticket?" I am thinking: as always, Misha is being solicitous in making sure the foreign girl is fully provided with all the necessities of living in this monstrous metropolis.

I dig out my last bus ticket, show it to

CHERIE WOODWORTH is a graduate student in history at Yale University currently living in Estonia.

Misha (no need to worry about me; I know the ropes, see!), and I punch it in the machine by the window. (In Moscow, you buy tickets ahead of time, and then punch them when you get on the bus. Each bus has a unique design in the punched holes.) I put the punched ticket in my shirt pocket, and start to drift into my typical absent-minded daze (a useful state for bus-riding).

Just then, we pull up to the next stop. A whole crowd of little kids swarms into the bus, all carrying backpacks and fishing poles and other stuff. They fill all the empty seats and completely clog the aisle, a munchkin battalion.

We ride a couple more stops, and then a ticket checker gets on the bus. The ticket checkers roam the city bus routes, randomly boarding buses and checking that each person has paid the fare and holds a (correctly) punched ticket. They are not very

common, and this was the first I've seen in a month in Moscow.

Misha leans over to me and says, "Do you still have your ticket?" I follow Misha's eyes and see the ticket checker. Misha doesn't even have to say it; I know the system, and I know who that is.

I'm trying to remember where I put the ticket, and the ticket checker is already leaning over our seats when I finally find the ticket and show it to him. So then he looks at Misha.

I look over at Misha, and I'm surprised to see that he is looking rather sheepish and pained. He pulls out his wallet and hands the ticket checker a fifty ruble bill. Without a word, the checker tears off a receipt and gives Misha back forty rubles in change.

Ten ruble fine for riding the bus without a ticket.

I am trying to figure this out. So I say to Misha, "If the fine is ten rubles, and the ticket costs only two rubles [which is equal to about forty cents], then if you can ride only five times without getting caught, the sixth time you come out ahead." Since Misha is a mathematician and a physicist, I imagine that he will be impressed that I have figured this out.

"So riding the bus is like casino for you," I conclude.

"Actually," Misha tells me, "this is the same bus I ride to work. They don't check even every sixth time. When I ride to work, I never punch a ticket."

Aha! I see. Misha is a mathematician. He is smarter than me. He rides this bus every day. He has this all figured out.

But it is not what I think.

"I ride without a ticket out of principle. Because I work in a government-owned physics lab, the salary is really low—only about one third of what, say, a salesgirl in the grocery store makes, because the stores are in the capitalist sector of the 'new' Moscow economy. If I were to pay my bus fare every time I ride the bus to work, it would take up exactly half of my salary.

"So at first I walked to work every day," Misha tells me. "But it took too much time. So then I decided that the government could pay for me to ride the bus to work, so that I could work in the government lab. If a ticket checker comes, I show him my official pass from work, and it says right on it what my salary is. And I tell him how it would take half my salary just to pay for bus tickets."

"And then they don't make you pay the fine?" I ask.

"It's not in the rules, but they understand.

And besides, what can the ticket checker do? He can see right there what my salary is."

Now I understand. Except that I don't. Why did Misha pay the fine this time? I am thinking, I hope it wasn't just because I was here.

"But when I ride the bus on my own business," Misha concludes, "then I punch a ticket. Today I didn't have any tickets, because I wasn't expecting to go anywhere on the weekend."

I realize that while Misha was still making sure that I had a ticket, all those little kids had gotten on the bus and packed the aisle. And then he couldn't get up to the bus driver to buy a ticket from him. Bad luck—it was just this day that he should run into a ticket checker.

So, in good conscience, Misha paid the ten ruble fine.

WE went into the city center, saw the new deluxe shopping mall. Misha told me it had been built at a cost of three hundred million dollars from the city budget. We walked around a bit, I bought a book of Dostoevsky. But we didn't go to the museum, because it was also full of school kids.

Then we split up—Misha had some errands to run, and I went to the library.

I came back on the same bus later that day. And I realize, it is not just the same bus route, it is the *very same bus* that we rode in the morning. I know this, because I remember the graffiti that some kid had written on the back of the seat.

It is the same graffiti, the same seat, the same bus.

I check in my shirt pocket. If I still have the ticket I punched this morning, then I won't have to punch a ticket again, and I will save two rubles. Because all the punching machines on the bus are the same, and it is impossible to tell when you punched a ticket on that bus—whether it was right when you got on, or two hours ago, or two weeks ago. And the ticket checker would never know. But I don't have my ticket from this morning. I punch a new ticket, and this time I carefully save it in my wallet.

I get home. I am excited that I am so clever. "Look Misha," I say. "All your bus ticket problems are solved. That route always runs the *very same bus*. I could tell because I recognized the writing on the back of the seat. All you have to do is punch a ticket once, and hold onto it. Then if you are checked again, you have a ticket to show to the ticket checker. Here—" I show him.

"I saved my punched ticket for you."  
"It's been the same bus for over a year,"  
Misha answers me.

And now it is my turn to look sheepish and pained. Because I realize that Misha knew this all along. 



## GOLDEN CALVES

*(In memory of the BYU Committee to  
Promote the Status of Women)*

On Friday night when israel goes out of egypt  
to varsity cinema where the ten commandments  
plays at midnight for its fortieth straight year, the daughters  
skip aerobics and drink their weight  
in diet soda. Not everyone is in love  
with charley heston. The sons see themselves projected  
large, ready to rock the walls of jericho but not everyone  
craves honeycomb and grapes or wants to be somewhere  
she's not. Barren and foreboding

loveliness of wilderness makes you forget the fleshpots. So  
let it be written: the chosen shall have canaan, leaving no stone  
unimproved until they flourish safely  
wherever they look. No green heathen groves. Even  
pharaoh's firstborn infidel dead, brynner's well-oiled army  
washed out of the picture only to slip through admissions  
with faces that threaten to be anyone.

Dinah, in the daylight you may find your furtive tribe  
leprous with anger at the back of a classroom. You know too much  
about sackcloth and ashes since the revelation  
that you are not everyone. Yet in the desert you become  
blooming fountains and roses from rocks. You are gathered  
gently and taste like honey. Finally

at night when israel goes out to see  
its images glittering in the dark, demille's god dubbed  
in a tornado fresh from the enemy's trailerpark,  
let it be done: unveiling. This tabernacle filled  
with your holiest secrets stands in the eye  
of a sinai sandstorm. You burn like a pillar;  
who can stand in your presence? Not everyone.

—EMILY FISHER

## REVIEWS

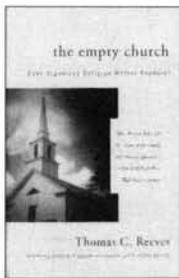
## PREACHING TO AN ABSENT CHOIR

THE EMPTY CHURCH:  
THE SUICIDE OF LIBERAL CHRISTIANITY

by Thomas C. Reeves  
The Free Press, 1996  
276 pages, \$25



Reviewed by Carrie A. Miles



*Like me, Reeves wants a church with liberal and conservative elements in it, but the combination he would create doesn't exist anywhere.*

FOR YEARS, my non-Mormon husband and I have suffered from what I call our "socio-economic dilemma." On one side, we both valued characteristics of the "low" churches in which we were raised—a lay clergy, a strong sense of community, respect for the scriptures, and highly committed members. On the other side, we were highly educated, wary of dogmatism, and committed to gender equality—personal characteristics that did not always sit well in a low church. We wanted to find a church that combined commitment and openness, energy and equality, but the combination proved elusive. Despite their many strengths and obvious vigor, the low churches we attended were narrow and sexist. The high churches were more liberal and egalitarian,

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but they also had little interest in the Bible, minimal lay involvement, and limited sense of community. Indeed, the "high" churches we visited were so dismal that I began to joke that the typical liberal Protestant congregation consisted of forty old ladies.

My joke was sadly prescient, as historian Thomas C. Reeves chronicles in *The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity*. The "mainline" Protestant churches (Episcopal, Evangelical Lutheran, United Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, Presbyterian, Methodist, and American Baptist), once the pillars of the American religious establishment, have suffered such a decline in membership and attendance that many of their congregations are not too far from that forty-old-ladies benchmark. These churches have lost between one-fifth to one-third of their members since the 1960s and '70s. Congregations are graying rapidly, a symptom of their failure to retain their children. Budgets

are in crisis, membership satisfaction is low, missionary zeal is vanishing, and church-sponsored colleges have lost their religious identity. In sharp contrast, conservative churches (Southern Baptist, pentecostal, evangelical, and LDS) have grown and thrived during this same period.

According to Reeves, the decline of the mainline was caused by the liberal politics of its clergy and denominational leaders. Congregants, who are largely conservative even in mainline denominations, fled in the face of pressure from their leaders to support communism/socialism, draft resistance, the unlimited welfare state, homosexuality, anti-American sentiment, sex outside of marriage, and abortion.

Those members who survived the political controversies then had to brave what was coming from the pulpit. Influenced by critical biblical scholarship, liberal ministers doubt everything ("Jesus' miracles become inventions of the early church; accounts of God's intervention on behalf of the people of Israel become legends or myths"<sup>1</sup>), when they bother with scripture at all. Indeed, divinity professors complain that their students don't know the names of the books in the Bible. Sermons are as apt to be on social justice or pop psychology as on the scriptures. For although the denominations take strong positions on social issues, they don't know where they stand on religious ones. As one Methodist woman looking for guidance on a serious personal problem said, "Our church seems to think that the main thing is to do what you personally think is right. What help is that?" (21).

To find the roots of contemporary liberalism, Reeves takes us back to the Enlightenment, the French Revolution, Marx, Darwin, late nineteenth-century biblical criticism, and the Scopes trial. This liberal heritage culminated in the excesses of the sixties, and according to Reeves, the sixties' mentality still dominates the churches today.

Reeves's attribution of the decline of the mainline churches to anything-goes liberalism is not a new insight. Scholars have long traced the liberal churches' decline since the 1960s to the social activism of the clergy. What is interesting is Reeves's nonchalant use of the word *dogmatism*, a term historically reserved for those "narrow-minded fundamentalists" (the low churches of my socio-economic dilemma), to characterize the liberal agenda. That this word should be applied to the left's increasingly intolerant demands for "inclusiveness" is exactly right, and I applaud Reeves's courage in using it.

For despite my early perceptions of low churches as exclusive (and they are—Christianity is inherently offensive, as it tells people and cultures that they aren't okay just as they are), only in high churches have I been made to feel unwelcome because of my standard Christian beliefs. And, as Reeves documents, the mainline's treatment of evangelicals and fundamentalists has been anything but tolerant. Instead, they label conservative attempts to maintain traditional moral standards, especially sexual ones, as "bigoted" and "exclusive" (149) and have done their best to keep conservative Christian principles out of the schools, off the airwaves, and generally out of American public life (159).

Although Reeves subtitles his book "The Suicide of Liberal Christianity," the death he describes looks more like murder. The people who stay after the majority of the congregants have left seem glad to have the conservatives gone (200). Indeed, I have observed first hand a mainline congregation whose minister, supported by a very small group of members, told people unhappy with his "inclusive," Bible-free preaching to leave. When they did, in large numbers, the only concern the pastor voiced was over the now-decimated budget. Other congregations, with richer endowments, don't even care about that.

So there is an active agenda, complete with agents, at work here, but it involves more than the churches. The extreme liberal element Reeves blames for the decline of the mainline churches has also taken control of many universities, public school systems, and the media, a fact he seems to be aware of and misses at the same time. Since Reeves would argue that such liberalism doesn't work, I would like to see him deal with the question of how a small, presumably unpopular minority can subvert so many institutions. Within the church, Reeves suggests that the average member's passion, if he or she has one, is to preach the gospel, and that this simple motive can't compete with the political scheming of liberal zealots and special interest groups. This assertion may be true, but more detail is needed for it to be a useful explanation. I can't believe that conservative majorities never fight the liberal factions. Under what circumstances do they win or lose? Why have particular institutions, and not others, fallen under their spell? Is there a fatal lesson that other churches and social institutions, not yet afflicted, must learn to survive?

In this regard, the book raises questions for Mormons. The LDS church in recent years

has disciplined some of its liberal element—"feminists, homosexuals, and so-called intellectuals." It has also taken steps to preserve orthodoxy among the faculty at Brigham Young University. Individuals have been excommunicated, disfellowshipped, asked to leave or fired outright, denied tenure, or otherwise hassled over their "inappropriate" research or interests. In light of Reeves's work, these actions can be seen as part of a struggle to protect the LDS church from the same factions that overcame the mainline churches. Ironically, I doubt if any of the LDS individuals so disciplined are particularly radical. I would probably agree with them on most of the issues that led to their censure, and their treatment seems unjust. But I wonder what else the Church can do to prevent what has happened to mainline Christianity from happening in the LDS church. There seems to be no middle ground.

Reeves ends his book with suggestions for "Renewing the Mainline": Returning to the essentials of the Christian faith, preaching better sermons, creating radical-free divinity schools, sending children to Sunday School, calling for moral reform, making religion relevant to people's lives, building community. But he doesn't seem to realize that these rec-

ommendations essentially call for the liberal churches to become conservative churches, although perhaps without the popular music he personally dislikes. Like my husband and me, Reeves wants to pick and chose, but the combination we would create doesn't actually exist anywhere.<sup>2</sup> A lot of us seem to be suffering from that socio-economic dilemma. Reeves gives us the historical background for our quandary, but ultimately only partially explicates it. "The persistent problem" of "how to keep the world from subverting the church"<sup>3</sup> remains unanswered. ☒

## NOTES

1. T. Manfred Brauch, "Let Us Now Praise Foolishness," *In Trust* (Spring 1994): 5.

2. My husband and I thought we had found such a blend of liberal and conservative tendencies a couple of years ago. As time went on, however, we learned that it wasn't a blend at all, but a congregation deeply divided along liberal/conservative lines. Within two years, it self-destructed before our eyes, with average adult attendance falling from 210 to fewer than 90.

3. William H. Willimon, *What's Right with the Church* (San Francisco, 1989), 57.



## YELLOW MIST

Here, among visitors: pines burnt black,  
miles and miles of scorched land  
with seedlings pushing through.

I come to see bison roam, reclaimed  
from the past; moose, antelope  
graze and stretch in the sun.

Waterfalls bigger than my dreams  
mute the rocks  
where geysers spew.

Their foamy jets  
hide Circe here somewhere  
in the stories of hot springs,  
bubbling mud, Old Faithful.  
I move cautious, climb  
through moon landscapes. . .

A voice:  
*an elk*  
A thousand faces turn.

—DIANA FESTA

# OPENING EYES, OPENING HEARTS

## RUSSIA AND THE RESTORED GOSPEL

by Gary Browning

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1997

377 pages, \$21.95

## THE MORNING BREAKS: STORIES OF CONVERSION AND FAITH IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION

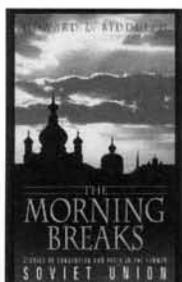
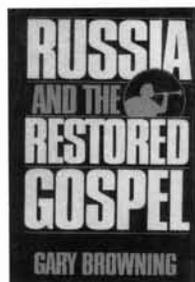
by Howard L. Biddulph

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1996

212 pages, \$15.95



*Reviewed by Tom Rogers*



*These two books by former mission presidents are likely to open one's eyes to the essential goodness that the restored gospel awakens in people's lives.*

**Y**EARS AGO, at Yale, I heard a public address by a living relic, Aleksandr Kerensky, the leader of Russia's pre-Lenin era provisional socialist government and, by then, a very old man. Mentally, I kept pinching myself as I looked and listened. His actual presence made everything that had happened after him all the more real. I now wish that I could have been as aware of the key role various Church members I came to know in St. Petersburg had earlier played in the establishment of the gospel in their native land—the curly-haired, Russian towhead who appeared in my mission president's office to be released at the end of his mission to northern Utah, just weeks after my arrival as mission president, and whom I later called to be a branch president; our faithful district president in Vyborg; our mission's customs

*TOM ROGERS was president of the Russia St. Petersburg Mission from 1993 to 1996.*

specialist; even the brilliant student who had been in my Dostoevsky and Tolstoy seminars at BYU, Adam West.

From Gary Browning's impeccably researched chronicle, *Russia and the Restored Gospel*, I learned, or was reminded, that the first of these—that Russian towhead—had not only been the first member to be baptized in Russia since the Revolution, but the first, full-time Russian missionary ever; the Vyborg district president had been the first Russian citizen to receive the Melchizedek priesthood and, with his family, to be sealed in a temple; the customs specialist had been the first Russian, with his wife and daughter, to be baptized in this century (in Budapest), the first Russian branch president, and one who was particularly instrumental in helping the Church procure official status and institutional recognition from the Russian government. Nor could I have foreseen that our wise, senior district president in St.

Petersburg, who rescued me from innumerable pitfalls, would, within a year, be called to Ekaterinburg as the first Russian mission president. Adam West, I discovered, had, among his other equally memorable accomplishments as a missionary, been the first to baptize anyone in Moscow.

The names of so many other students who have come to my classes (both before and since their missions) also leap out from Browning's pages—as they also do from the pages of the Ukraine mission president, Howard L. Biddulph's *The Morning Breaks: Stories of Conversion and Faith in the Former Soviet Union*—each name a pioneer in those critical early years at the turn of this decade. As one such missionary put it, "Once in Russia, I learned by experience that there were many more trials than there was glory in being a 'pioneer'" (Browning, 307).

The Russian Duma's recent, renewed threat to curtail the activity of "non-traditional" religious bodies betrays the country's still unstable and precarious democratic foundations. It also reminds us that the Mormon presence in the former USSR over the past decade has afforded the Church a rare window of opportunity, however tenuous and long- or short-lived. The accounts by these two early mission presidents—Browning and Biddulph—are an invaluable record of an extraordinary moment in the Church's global expansion. Biddulph's account vividly and fervently reflects his experience as president in Kiev between 1991 and 1993. The book's moving epigraph, an Easter poem written the year before Biddulph's call to serve in Kiev, uses spring imagery that, in its final stanza, bespeaks both his eager faith and his sense of the precious moment:

O while this wond'rous season lasts,  
We would bear witness through the  
land—

From Leningrad and Tallinn, east to  
Magadan;

Along the Dnieper, Volga, Don, to  
Yerevan;

The River Ob, the Yenisei, and south to  
Samarkand—

Proclaim again the joyous salutation:  
CHRIST IS RISEN!

(Biddulph, v).

Biddulph's account is largely devoted to "remarkable stories of conversion" that took place in Ukraine and Belarus between 1991 and 1993. Like those stories solicited by Browning, which so forcefully enhance his thorough documentation of Church-related events in Estonia and Russia, beginning a year earlier, Biddulph's provide a rich medley of personal and family histories of consider-

***“Both authors convey that what is accomplished transcends individual efforts. People are the medium that carries the Spirit into others’ lives, and that process is reciprocal and symbiotic.”***

able inspiration and human interest. Besides being the principal “pioneer” heads of missionary work in Russia, the Baltic republics, Ukraine, and Belarus, both authors are, by profession, academic specialists on Soviet politics and Russian literature, respectively, with years of personal, first-hand involvement in the cultures of those nations. Their backgrounds significantly augment the events they chronicle.

With far fewer missionaries than would come later, the early Eastern European Church missions attracted, for all their physical hardships and political barriers, a proportionately larger ratio of investigators and converts than they would later draw. Whereas St. Petersburg, where it all started, at first led the way with more members and congregations, Moscow, with twice the population (nine million), caught up and took something of a lead in 1993. For some reason (greater persecution by the government? a poorer, more desperate economy?), the Ukrainian response was, throughout this period and in subsequent years, twice as strong. Though there are still only two missions in the former Ukraine (there are now six in the former Russia), Biddulph, by my count, helped open more cities than were proselytized during the same period in all of Russia. His history highlights the grassroots charitable service of Ukrainian members (including the establishment of a medical service council in Kiev) and the large, highly effective body of young, local district and full-time missionaries, whose American counterparts assigned to Ukraine were numerically restricted and for long intervals de-

nied visas. These local missionaries baptized, in one critical instance, enough converts to enable the Church to remain in Odessa.

Both authors movingly describe the first trips by members in their missions to temples in the West, and both describe the trauma of the ominous 1991 coup attempt, which led to the rise of Yeltsin and the complete downfall of the former Soviet regime (which reminded me of what I had felt during the subsequent attempt, in October 1993, to dethrone Yeltsin, and his bloody firing on the White House in Moscow). Both also recount the difficult effort, despite encouraging legislation, to win initial governmental recognition for the Church in both lands. Indeed, a prevailing, underlying theme of both accounts (and of my own later experience) was the tenuous status of civil rights legislation in both countries and the difficulty not only to register the Church at various levels but to procure missionary visas, facilities for Church meetings (mostly on a rental basis), as well as permission to import Church literature (and, later, humanitarian aid), and to receive favorable media coverage. Clearly, like so many of their missionaries, both men and their wives expended themselves unsparingly.

Though both accounts are important and complementary, Browning’s is clearly the more thorough (with 377 compared to 212 pages, including full names and exact dates) and well worth the additional two years he took to write it upon the completion of his mission assignment. It includes a useful and detailed chronology and a history of the Church’s connection with Russia, beginning

with the remarkable mission call of Orson Hyde, in 1843, and elucidating the fate of a single early member family, the Lindelofs, who had been baptized in St. Petersburg in 1895. Browning also offers an excellent account of magnanimous Finnish missionary couples, the first Estonian members, and the earliest Russian branches in Leningrad (later St. Petersburg), Vyborg, and Moscow, all of whom played key roles in the Church’s early Russian effort.

Browning is ever gracious, acknowledging the contributions of his predecessor, President Stephen R. Mecham, as well as those of President (later Elder) Dennis B. Neuenschwander, who from Vienna orchestrated the earliest proselytizing efforts in Moscow. Like Mecham, Browning commuted from Helsinki until his third year of service. By the end of his mission, Browning had assisted in bringing the number of Church branches in Moscow and Zelenograd from one to fifteen, with a combined membership of 624; he could truthfully say that “An organization was in place that could sustain the growth of the Church in the capital of Russia” (Browning, 312). He and his associates had also established the Church in Voronezh and Nizhni Novgorod, as well as in Samara and Saratov, which now constitute a separate mission. The Church in Estonia, Vyborg, and St. Petersburg, for which Browning was also directly responsible from 1990 until February 1992, had meanwhile also grown apace, with nine branches in St. Petersburg by 1992.

Browning’s graciousness extends to those—both Russian and American—who, with enthusiasm and sacrifice, assisted in



laying those early foundations. Some of those members are actually no longer active or in good standing. Without identifying them as such, Browning has included the powerful testimonies that some of them at one time shared with him. He candidly observes,

A few letters are from early members who may not currently be active. I am hopeful that under more ideal circumstances, even if beyond this life, most will return to full communion with the Saints who, like them, struggle along toward perfection. . . . During our mission there were setbacks, of course. About a third of our baptized members apparently fell away—but who knows what yet lies deep in their hearts. Many others battled great odds to persevere and endure. Given their backgrounds and current pressures, our Russian leaders and their members were steadily becoming more saintly, and I felt invigorated and humbled to be among them. (Browning, ix–x, 258–59.)

Meaningfully, Browning adds that “the nearer one can approximate true accounts, the more inspiring they will be because, for all of us, experiences are complex and contradictory”

(Browning, xi).

I hope that the first-person accounts of members' conversions that so richly adorn both books don't lose their force for those who have not made their direct acquaintance or because of their difficult sounding names for readers unfamiliar with a Slavic language. Here are just a few of the singular declarations that stood out for me and that coincide with the deeply felt affirmations I remember so often hearing from the lips of those we had known in St. Petersburg:

- “For more than seventy years . . . there was little understanding about charity and loving one another. Love just seemed to have evaporated. . . . [At the temple:] This was for me an immense blessing, because I saw our Saints there, our Russian Saints. I saw them before they went to the temple and I saw them after. . . . And I saw how they were growing, how they were changing and becoming stronger, more committed. They truly understand that through their strength, the Church will develop.” (Browning, 28.)
- “I am very glad that we have been given these boys from different continents to help us learn the Holy Scriptures. . . . They are bringing light into our darkness. Over the former years we lost

much. We lost our spirituality, our morality. . . . we had much harshness, falsehood. People became coarse. There was little love. But when you are with the boys in church, you feel like you want to become a better person. You want to strive for perfection.” (Browning, 45.)

- “Do you know how Russian Mormons differ from an ordinary Russian person? We have learned to smile.” (Browning, 95.)
- “I investigated other churches as well, but they didn't satisfy me. . . . Now I can more precisely define my feeling. I didn't sense the joy that comes with the fullness of the gospel.” (Browning, 200.)
- “After I was confirmed a member of the Church and had received the gift of the Holy Ghost, the first thing that I saw when I opened my eyes was a light. This light was everywhere and it was very bright and joyful. I looked around. The missionaries who had confirmed me were surrounding me. I no longer thought of them as Americans, rather they were like my own people, and I loved them sincerely. I had never been so happy.” (Browning, 202.)
- “As soon as I saw the faces of the two missionaries standing at the entrance to the meeting place, a voice inside me told me that I had finally found my friends, that I had found those who live by the very same ideals for which my soul had been longing. For the first time in my whole life, I felt as though I was among my own kind.” (Browning, 221.)
- “I especially remember their [the missionaries'] faces: big smiles and clear eyes. You could see right away as you looked at them that they knew why they were living on this earth.” (Browning, 259–60.)
- “My life changed. I became more tranquil, tolerant, and patient. Problems in our family life gradually diminished. For the first time in my life I understood the meaning of the words ‘quiet happiness,’ that is to say, harmony with one's self—peace of mind.” (Browning, 294.)
- “When I went to one of our sacrament meetings for the first time. . . I felt love, I saw love, I heard love. . . . That which seemed impossible to me before my conversion is now possible. I love people. I want to serve them. That which has transpired with me in my life



“Well, bishop, since 70 doesn't necessarily mean 70, and 12 doesn't necessarily mean 12, I figured that 10 percent doesn't necessarily mean 10 percent, either.”

is a miracle, and is much more powerful than anything I could have ever dreamed of." (Browning, 303–304.)

As Biddulph puts it, "Over and over the Saints would thank the missionaries in their public testimonies 'for teaching us how to love one another'" (Biddulph, 166). Recalling members who, on a cold rainy day after an Easter service, resisted departing from each other, even outdoors, Biddulph adds, "We realized that the Latter-day Saints of Kiev had, indeed, become a spiritual community—a people of God" (Biddulph, 168).

What strikes one about all these statements is the constant human factor—that *people* are invariably the catalyst, the medium that carries the Spirit into others' lives, and that the process is reciprocal and symbiotic. What the missionaries impart to others is reflected back and reinforces the same in them—hence the essential role of collectivity, of fellowship in one's spiritual life. As, in agreement with my own long-held view, Browning correctly avers,

I have been impressed again by the compatibility of Latter-day Saint ideals with those developed by Russians through the ages. . . . The Russians highly value a feeling of community, "a shared culture" and "economic interdependence" that create "a strong sense of belonging together." (Browning, x–xi.)

A recurring, correlative theme is the way the members' associations with one another have enabled them to overcome self-absorption and find happiness through becoming involved with, and caring about, others. Echoing my own experience with missionaries, Russian members, and investigators, both authors further convey that whatever is accomplished transcends individual efforts. Striking parallels come to mind not only of the circumstances and response of Restoration-era Saints, but of Saints at the time of Christ and the first apostles. These parallels strongly attest to the Church's and the restored gospel's universal import: the profound appreciation and unqualified acceptance of the missionaries' message; the radical change that manifests itself in the lives of many; the obvious fact that, apart from holding a conviction of the deepest sort (i.e., testimony), such persons would have no reason to become involved in the Church in the first place.

The bold response of these Saints sadly contrasts with the prevailing mood among many contemporary Wasatch Front Saints, which tends to take one of two extreme forms (both of which may grow from the same root): dutiful complacency or disaf-

fect, divisive criticism. Witnessing the powerful, whole-souled reaction of these recent European converts is likely to open one's eyes to the fundamental and essential kindness and goodness that the restored gospel awakens in people's lives. As Robert Rees, former *Dialogue* editor and, more recently, counselor in the Baltic mission presidency, has so astutely observed in a conversation in St. Petersburg in 1996, "When you're working in a primary way with the basic issues of the gospel with people who are learning them for the first time and employing them in their lives, there is no room or luxury for criticism or negativity. People who leave the Church have lost their memory of that primary witness from the

Holy Ghost. It is nevertheless the genius of the Church that it provides so many ways to reinforce it [if, I would add, we keep allowing it to do so]. People who take extreme positions at either end of the critical spectrum also tend to lack charity."

Browning and Biddulph forcefully convey the extraordinary, foundational events, both religious and socio-political, upon which later missionaries and members would build. How are the now longer-term members enduring? What are the current patterns in Church growth there? How are current local leaders ministering to the present flock? The answers to those questions will comprise an equally arresting sequel that, at some point in time, deserves telling. ☐



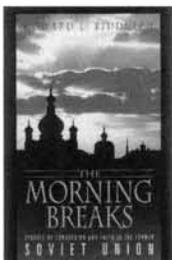
## SIC TRANSIT

Weary of humans,  
I sat on a park bench  
    throwing crumbs to the pigeons.  
  
And behold! a sparrow  
    appeared in their midst.  
  
And it came to pass that the pigeons  
    smote him sorely  
    and cast him out.  
  
But he darted back and  
    seized the largest crust in his beak  
And rose up as on eagle's wings,  
For the race is not to the swift  
Neither the battle to the strong.  
But lo! his fellow sparrows  
    did fall upon him to despoil him,  
  
Upon which seeing,  
I decided I might as well  
go back to the office.

—KARL SANDBERG

BOOK  NOTES**THE MORNING BREAKS: STORIES OF CONVERSION AND FAITH IN THE FORMER SOVIET UNION**

by Howard L. Biddulph  
Deseret Book, 1996  
212 pages, \$15.95



Reviewed by Bradley D. Woodworth

IN THE seven years since LDS missionaries serving in Finland began quietly visiting the Russian border town of Vyborg and Tallinn, the capital of now-inde-

pendent Estonia, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints has established a significant presence throughout much of the former Soviet Union. There are now ten missions in the territory of the former USSR: seven in Russia, two in Ukraine, and one for Belarus and the three Baltic countries (Latvia, Lithuania, and Estonia). At least five thousand people have joined the Church in these countries.

Howard Biddulph, a former professor of political science at the University of Victoria, served as the first LDS mission president in Kiev, Ukraine, from June 1991 to July 1994. In his book, Biddulph describes the establishment of the Church in the former Soviet Union, focusing on the opening of various cities in Ukraine to LDS missionaries and on the conversion of citizens of Ukraine to the Church. Biddulph also describes the religious ferment unleashed by reforms introduced in the late 1980s by Soviet leader Mikhail Gorbachev, whose greatest achievement, Biddulph says, was to bring freedom of religion to the Soviet Union.

The main purpose of the book, however, is to present the conversion stories of a number of LDS church members in Ukraine. Thus, it is primarily a book of devotion dedicated to the bearing of testimony and the relating of small miracles and spiritual blessings. As sources, Biddulph uses his own experiences as well as fifty-three written accounts by Church members in Ukraine. Authors of most of the accounts presented give only a first name, and many are identified only by pseudonyms. While freedom of religion now exists in Ukraine, many people apparently still feel discomfort with fully

public expressions of their faith.

Biddulph also discusses some challenges faced by Church members in Ukraine—perhaps the most interesting part of the book. In the chapter “The Blessings of Obedience,” he explains that due to hyper-inflation, many Church members have difficulty in paying tithing. To cope with the high cost of food, city-dwellers often grow vegetables in outside-of-town garden plots, which they tend on the weekends. Some Church members must balance the imperative to care for these needed gardens with the commandment to attend Church. Abstaining from alcohol, tea, and tobacco also presents difficulties for many prospective members. In this account, faithful Ukrainians are invariably blessed so that their problems are eased, if not solved, when they join the Church.

The commandment to honor and obey the law also creates difficulties in the chaos of post-Soviet society, where the line between legal and illegal is often fuzzy. To join the LDS Church, some Ukrainians must sacrifice their place in line for housing, which is distributed by the state. To improve their chances for obtaining a better and larger apartment as single individuals, Ukrainian couples, though married in a church, generally refrain from registering their marriage with civil authorities. However, the LDS Church insists that all couples obtain a civil marriage before they can be baptized. This requirement has kept some people from joining the Church.

The most challenging adjustments Church members in Ukraine must make, Biddulph writes, are “moving from a purely private religious life to participation in public worship” (152) and learning to trust their fellow Church members. Life in the Soviet Union bred a deep distrust of those in authority and taught people it was safest not to get involved in the emotional lives of others. But here, as throughout the book, the emphasis is on how Ukrainian members have successfully overcome these difficulties.

Noteworthy is Biddulph’s description of an LDS medical resource council in Kiev, which has mobilized Church members with medical training to assist needy fellow members. Also discussed is a charitable organization founded by Church members in the Belarussian capital of Minsk to help people still suffering from the effects of the 1986 Chernobyl nuclear disaster.

The book includes a bibliography, which lists a number of works dealing with religion in the former Soviet Union. Spread

throughout the book are some forty-five black-and-white photographs of Church members, missionaries, and visiting LDS dignitaries. Interspersed in the text are poems by the author’s wife, Colleen Biddulph. Useful maps are found inside the book’s front and back covers.

Those interested in a more academically-oriented discussion of LDS Church activity in Ukraine should see sociologist Tania Rands’s article in the spring 1997 issue of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*. Rands, who served a mission in eastern Ukraine, describes the dissonance that often arises in the intersection of American LDS culture and post-Soviet society; she also explores the reasons, since 1993, growth of the Church in Ukraine has slowed considerably. Also see Gary L. Browning’s *Russia and the Restored Gospel* (Deseret Book). A BYU professor of Russian, Browning served from 1990 to 1993 as the first LDS mission president in the Soviet Union and Russia. ☐

BRADLEY D. WOODWORTH is a Ph.D. candidate in Russian history at Indiana University. He currently lives in Tallinn, Estonia, where he is conducting research for his doctoral dissertation.

**SECRETS KEEP**

by Linda Sillitoe  
Signature Books, 1995  
244 pages, \$15.95

Reviewed by Brian Evenson



MORMON CRITICS have done a disservice to the development of Mormon literature by crowing loudly every time a book by a Mormon author is published, trumpeting the literary merits of books that are far from literary.

Indeed, critical joy over books Mormon has resulted in three things: the realization of Mormon artists that they will be praised if they fit the right mold, the realization by those outside of Mormonism that Mormon literature is not very strong, and (finally and most important) the glossing over of the real strengths of the books.

Though Linda Sillitoe’s latest novel, *Secrets Keep*, is a strong popular novel that often, especially late in the book, threatens to become literary, it is a mistake to call it literature. Indeed, from a literary perspective, there are flaws: the characters are at first a

little wooden, for instance, and the language is not as finely wrought as it might be. Nevertheless, *Secrets Keep* is a valuable and courageous book, one that our culture has needed for some time. As a social text, its investigations of the repressions at the heart of Mormon culture are extremely incisive, and Sillitoe explores with great tact and sensitivity the issues that others either shy away from or approach clumsily.

*Secrets Keep* is the story of the extended Lewis family, a family torn apart by two things: the recent disappearance of Roger Lewis and the death of his brother Boyd years earlier. Roger's disappearance, troubling in itself, leads other members of the family to reevaluate Boyd's death. The exploration of the death, its circumstances repressed by the family for years—its details and significance slowly and gradually unveiled—is disturbing and quite well done. Through it, Sillitoe makes clear the way in which the tenets of Mormon culture and the advice and commands of bishops and parents—always well intentioned but sometimes blind—grind up certain members of Mormon culture. Even when (and perhaps because) they try to follow the roles the culture has mapped for them.

The Lewis family, consisting of individuals from every level of participation in the LDS church, serves as an emblem for the larger struggles that occur in Mormon culture. They range from the conservative Barbara and her husband (the latter employed by the Church to monitor telephone conversations of Church employees) to the free-spirited, working-mother and reporter, Caitlin. In addition to the family's struggle with the disappearance and the death, the story traces Caitlin's investigation of a Mormon murderer and his hostility towards her, her emotional and mental exhaustion brought along partly by him. All of these things tie together in interesting ways, one story line resonating in another.

Sillitoe understands how easily neurosis can develop in a culture in which a church takes such great interest in family and individual lifestyles. Indeed, encouraged by ecclesiastical leaders to cover over what makes them uncomfortable about Boyd's death, the Lewis parents' silence has a devastating effect on their children, causing difficulties which surface only years later. Collective family neuroses, silent agreements not to discuss certain things, tug at the fabrics of individual lives and eventually threaten to unravel them.

Running beneath the surface of some of the other characters in the book, and impor-

tant to the book as a whole, is an issue which is seldom discussed with any seriousness or understanding: child abuse. Abuse seems to haunt the book like a spectre, in a way analogous to how it haunts lives. Other issues pushed out of the range of Mormon vision—homosexuality, bishops' treatment of unwed mothers, and the dangerous convening of abuse and religion—surface briefly as well. These are always dealt with sensitively by Sillitoe, but dealt with in such a way that it is clear that the issues will not go away on their own.

Supplementing this deep critique of culture, however, are elements that some readers may find more dubious. The first, and least challenging, is the expression of the spiritual in *Secrets Keep*. Spiritual promptings are dealt with by Sillitoe in a way that affirms their reality though not always in the ways our Sunday School manuals tell us. Visions and promptings literally exist in *Secrets Keep*, despite some characters' attempts to repress them through reason. Mormons talk so little about their spiritual feelings that I find it admirable that Sillitoe is able to do so in a way that, even if different from the way many of us feel about spiritual issues, allows us temporarily to suspend our disbelief.

More difficult perhaps is the collision of Mormonism with New Age culture: healing crystals play a significant role, as do psychics, a rough equivalent of voodoo, telepathy, telekinesis, and a Navajo medicine man. At times, the characters' beliefs seem a hybrid of Mormonism and New Age. Since many Mormons are used to thinking of Mormon spirituality as operating in a certain fixed way, readers might find the connection to other cultural spiritual practices and to supernatural phenomena troubling, though again I think that Sillitoe is skilled enough that she is able to do so in a way that is convincing within the fiction.

If I have a complaint about the book, it might be that in James Hubbard, the murderer that Caitlin is investigating, we have too incomplete an understanding of evil for Hubbard to be convincing. Though Sillitoe has, in the words of the other characters, in Hubbard's thoughts, and in Caitlin's growing understanding of Hubbard, all the tools needed to provide an effective portrait of Hubbard, she is unable to bring it together to the degree she might and opts for a slightly flatter portrayal of evil than the material demands.

There is a great deal to recommend *Secrets Keep*, and Sillitoe seems able to reveal aspects of Mormon culture that, in the past, have remained highly resistant to scrutiny. It is a

moving and powerful book, one that will make Mormons think a great deal, a book that will help direct us toward a more complete understanding of the idiosyncracies of our culture. ☐

BRIAN EVENSON is a professor of English at Oklahoma State University and the author of *Altmann's Tongue: Stories and a Novella*.

## WHAT'S A MOTHER TO DO

by Ann Edwards Cannon  
Signature Books, 1997  
159 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by Marilyn Davey Springgay



READING ANN  
Edwards Cannon's  
*What's a Mother to Do* is  
a trip down memory  
lane. And, many of us  
need walk no farther  
than the peanut-butter-  
covered kitchen floor to  
know we are stuck in  
motherland. Ann's sto-

ries remind me of a baby shower, where women regale the first-time, soon-to-be mom with labor horror stories, each one becoming funnier and more true to life than the last.

From the first universal truth of men not asking directions—doubtless Moses wandered in the desert for forty years because he wouldn't ask directions—but I digress—to the last poignant plea of keeping Dad with her to play those wonderful old songs for Christmas, I alternately laughed and swallowed to keep the lumps down and the eyes dry. One can't read her book without throwing in one's own hidden past—and who am I to show self-restraint at this age? For example, on our way to the hospital to deliver our third child, my husband, Rob, decided we needed a deck of pinochle cards to make the "labor wait" bearable, so he stopped at Pay-Less. While I was going through transition, for fifteen unforgettable, hard-breathing minutes, he was strolling up and down each aisle looking for a deck, because heaven forbid a man ever asking a "macho" store clerk (4) where the playing cards are. As Cannon told about her idea (and mine, too) of a vacation being a hotel where one ices the sodas, sleeps till noon, and soaks in the hot tub, I laughed at her family's lares and penates of "golf shoes, hiking boots, waders, tennis shoes, and running shoes" (130)—and don't forget those

automatic bike snap-on Nike Pooh-Bah Tu shoes, but just give us thongs!

Being a mom is not for sissies. No one else can handle the embarrassment of those Type B viruses stormtrooping your home (94) or the school board calling you up and announcing on the P. A. system, "Yes, it's true. Head lice are growing and hopping all over those well-used, undercleaned sheets and uncombed, unkempt, shaggy, 'buffalo heads' (61) at the Springgays!" As she says in giving advice to neophyte moms who want to live down the plague experience, "Don't write a column [or, I say, a Christmas newsletter] about it" (95).

Ann's book is not only funny but also practical. Where else can one get these realistic New Year's resolution tips?:

1. DO NOT CLEAN OUT MY CLOSET
2. DO NOT PAY OFF VISA
3. DO NOT START A REGULAR EXERCISE PROGRAM
4. DO NOT TAKE UP A NEW HOBBY
5. DO NOT IMPROVE MY MIND (135-6)

Ann reveals our real-life, "white-trashiness" selves—forget the celibate monkfish, and give me that Chuck-A-Rama/Sizzler "all-you-can-eat shrimp and steak meal!" (69-70). Her dazzling and inventive expose on the sex-life of dirty sweatpants would make any voyeur drool (101-2).

As Ann says, "life is an accumulation of small events, most of them supremely ordinary" (47), which makes reading her book so universally appealing. We who have been planning on writing our life histories for years can just grab a tape recorder while reading this book and dictate the name, date, and place changes, and voila! It's done! The nice thing about her writing is you need not be a mother to identify with the main character; you need only to have been born of a woman, preferably a Wyoming Rodeo Queen, to enjoy every syllable.

Should you buy the book?—of a fellow Provo High alumna, for pete's sake, I mean, you know, you bet!! Heavens, we should all remove our hats, bow our heads, and give a moment of silent commendation for a full-time mother who took time from solitaire, scrabble, and free cell games to put actual experiences and humiliations on a computer print-out! I just want to know the color of the slip that was dropped on Center Street while she was talking very loudly to her husband and not inventorying her lingerie. I lost my blue one during Preference in front of the old Heaps of Pizza. ☑

MARILYN DAVEY SPRINGGAY (Provo High '70) writes very funny Christmas newsletters.

*She once taught a BYU English 111 class where Elbert Peck came, sat, and laughed at her jokes, which is why she believes she was asked to write this review—he's always wanted to give her a writing assignment. She lives in Redmond, Washington, with four children, one cat, assorted fish, and her electrical-engineering/NRA life-time-member husband, Rob.*

## THE TABERNACLE BAR

by Susan Palmer  
Signature Books, 1997  
177 pages, \$17.95

Reviewed by Kathryn H. Kidd



THIS IS a hard book for me to review, and I shrink from it. I have an opinion of the book; I never lack opinions, right or wrong. But my opinion of *The Tabernacle Bar* doesn't matter because I can't presume to recommend

whether or not the reader should read it.

The writing is brilliant. The prose is so vivid that words stand out like leaves vying for attention on an autumn tree. It's rare to see Mormon-oriented fiction with clarity like this. Donald Marshall's 1970s-vintage book *The Rummage Sale* had moments of crystalline power, as have a few other books over the years. I would love to recommend Susan Palmer as someone who would take her place in this short list of writers. Heaven knows, Mormons could use some novelists of clarity and truth.

But Palmer pushes herself away from that category. Her writing is classified as "Mormon fiction" not because she writes for practicing Mormons. Nor does she portray practicing Mormons in any way that practicing Mormons would see themselves in her mirror. On the contrary, *The Tabernacle Bar* is written for "cultural Mormons"—those people who are technically members of the LDS church but spare no effort to let everyone know that anyone who actually believes the doctrine is a blithering idiot. Indeed, that viewpoint is reinforced throughout Palmer's text. Just about every living Mormon in *The Tabernacle Bar* is portrayed as either misguided or evil. The bishop profanes the chapel with the Sunday School teacher. The dewy-eyed returned missionary commits vandalism and thievery in the name of the Lord. The father is a bully; the mother is a martyr; the assorted extended family mem-

bers are tight-lipped, sanctimonious prigs.

The protagonist of *The Tabernacle Bar* is Jessie, the only one in the family who hasn't been blinded by Mormonism's perfidy. Her epiphany comes when, at the age of eleven, she discovers her bishop boffing her Sunday School teacher in the ward chapel. After that, she uses her disillusionment as an excuse to spend the rest of her life punishing everybody else. She sleeps with so many men she should have a "for rent" sign on her underwear. She drinks, usually to excess. She's sarcastic and cynical and, worse, calculatingly mean. She does everything she can to horrify her Mormon family, and then is genuinely hurt when they react in exactly the way she has orchestrated them to respond.

When the story opens, the family gathers in fictional Bridger, Utah, to read Grandpa's will and be stunned to learn that the old man has left everything to the family's black sheep. Jessie takes the money and buys a bar with it. Not just any bar, mind you—a bar that, for some unexplained zoning aberration, sits directly across the street from the local Mormon tabernacle and is named *The Tabernacle Bar*.

Twisting the knife, Jessie goes to a great deal of effort to find a statue of the angel Moroni just like the ones on the temples. She affixes the statue atop the bar's roof as a beacon to lure customers inside. When a thief removes the statue, she spews forth in righteous indignation. Again and again she replaces the angel, only to lose it to the mysterious thief. She can never understand why the thief would deface her bar by stealing her angel—but truth be told, she doesn't even make the effort. It's a lot more fun to be angry and to take it out on everyone else.

Meanwhile, subplots abound. We have Nephi, the half-Shoshone whose heart Jessie has broken once too often, and who seeks solace by turning toward his ancestors. We have Melody, the fresh-faced Californian who comes to Utah and is immediately converted by Jessie's brother. We have gentle Ben, the wandering Zen Buddhist bartender, who keeps searching for the secret of immortality. We have Uncle Alden, who has found peace in the Church by ignoring the "lies" in Mormon history, and who counsels Jessie to do the same. We have a bunch of Basque shepherders, who exist as little more than evil stereotypes, but who have dedicated their lives to the pursuit of booze and money and sex. We have Caroline, a walk-on character who makes a major appearance after she has long been forgotten, who will apparently go to inexplicable lengths to show hatred for her ex-husband.

And we have the dead grandfather. Like the dead grandfather in that odious comic, "The Family Circus," Grandpa Cannon makes an appearance only from beyond the grave. But this grandfather's appearance is powerful. Indeed, the lesson he tries to teach Jessie is achingly beautiful and so simple only an idiot would miss it.

Jessie, of course, misses the point. She is touched by Grandpa's posthumous attempt to show her the goodness in her abandoned faith just as she is stirred when her brother uses a priesthood blessing to raise a man from the dead, but she learns no lessons. Mormons are still charlatans and fools. If the angel Moroni statue had hopped down from the roof of her bar and had given her a first-hand testimony that the LDS church was not founded on a stack of lies, Jessie would have found some reason to ridicule him and to discount whatever he said.

*The Tabernacle Bar* is a chronicle of people's search for meaning in their lives. Some find meaning through their roots; others find meaning through affiliation with a church. Still others, like Ben, find meaning through the quest itself. But Jessie pushes away any inspiration to search for anything beyond Jessie. She is exactly the same person at the end of the book as at the beginning—still hurt and bitter and ever determined to inflict the same hurt on others.

Had there not been moments of truth and beauty in *The Tabernacle Bar*, I'd be tempted to write it off as just another Signature book. But the writing has such potential, especially during the priesthood blessing and the revelations Jessie has when she finds the messages her grandfather left for her. It would have been easy to exploit these scenes with maudlin or melodramatic writing, but they are so beautifully understated that I marvel at the author's gift. Those scenes should have been part of a great book, but they are thrown away on a protagonist who is blind to beauty or truth and a storyline that goes nowhere. Because of the brilliance of some of the passages, I feel cheated by the way *The Tabernacle Bar* unfolds. I want the angel Moroni to blow his horn, figuratively speaking. Instead, the book ends with a miserable whimper.

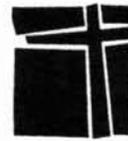
Depending on what you're looking for in a novel, *The Tabernacle Bar* is something to be highly recommended or a work of fiction best left alone. If you're a "cultural Mormon" looking for reassurance that practicing members of the LDS church are not as smart or as virtuous as you are, you'll find it in *The Tabernacle Bar*. You'll also find some fine writing along the way, peppered with ob-

scenities and an occasional profanity.

But if you're so unenlightened that you actually swallow the stuff they tell you in Sunday School, you'd be better off reading Jan Karon's Mitford series of books. That prose lacks the flashes of brilliance that are found in Palmer's writing. Also, there's not a Mormon in the series; indeed, the books follow the misadventures of an Episcopal priest. But the people in the books are the

kind of people who go to church with us—people practicing to be Christlike, even if they don't always succeed. The characters in Karon's books are more "Mormon" than anything in *The Tabernacle Bar*, and that's the pity of it. ☞

KATHRYN H. KIDD is the author of *Paradise Vue*, *The Alphabet Year*, and *Return to Paradise (Hatrack River)*.



## THE ARTIST

There's an art form  
in monody;  
we listened as your  
mouth spat words  
with no property,  
fell to pieces and cleared  
your heart's precipices.

You set yourself apart  
as some hybrid—  
we loved your smoothed  
bank-face  
igloo chin  
ground-dark eyes  
settled mind.  
Within our meanness  
you spaded  
a decade's ignorance:  
disease, discrimination,  
religion, racism—you took  
them on, even embarrassed  
yourself & we loved you  
great or diminished—we curtsied.

And now, to see you  
calmed: thin & flaccid  
simpleton grin the sole remnant  
of thunder.

You soak,  
stir the tub's waterspider silks.  
Honor demands we speak no cruelties  
as we drain the tub  
fit sheets  
draw straws & cut your hair.

—SEAN BRENDAN-BROWN

## NEWS

## IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE: SHOULD ETHNIC MORMONS HAVE THEIR OWN WARDS?

by Peggy Fletcher Stack  
Tribune religion writer

*This story originally appeared in the 6 December 1997 Salt Lake Tribune. Reprinted in its entirety by permission.*

LOS ANGELES—Bridget Rivero and Sophia Lopez arise each morning at four and board a city bus in the darkened dawn to arrive promptly at five for their LDS seminary class in a riot-pocked neighborhood of South Central Los Angeles.

It may be a dangerous journey, but these teen-agers would rather attend Spanish-speaking services than go across town to an Anglo congregation.

"God's always with us," Bridget, sixteen, said on a recent Sunday. "We would rather keep to our own [Spanish] stake."

Helen Hernandez, also in the Spanish-speaking Young Women's class, comes to Sunday services all the way from Pasadena, nearly fifty miles away.

"Everything is the same in the English ward, but," she pauses for just the right word, "different."

These young women, who move easily from Spanish to English, give voice to an ongoing debate on how best to handle the thousands of Latinos and other immigrants who are flooding the ranks of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

Should they be clustered in wards built around a single language, or quickly integrated into English-speaking wards based on geographic units, which is the pattern in the rest of the Church?

Of 11,200 LDS wards and branches in the United States, 530 are non-English speaking. Since the average ward has about four hundred members, that



*The Wilshire Ward, in downtown Los Angeles, has more than fifteen languages spoken in it.*

means some 212 thousand Mormons attend services given in their native languages.

According to Brigham Young University researcher Jessie Embry, missionaries from the Salt Lake City-based LDS church first were sent to the Southwest to work with Spanish speakers in 1915, and the first Spanish-speaking branch—a small ward—was established four years later in Mesa, Arizona.

California's first LDS ethnic ward was established in the 1920s. Since then, there have been numerous attempts to integrate non-English speakers by shutting down ethnic wards, but Church leaders have always backed off.

Just last year, Elder Loren Dunn—then the California Area president—announced that the 205 non-English speaking wards in the state needed to be disbanded.

It sent a shock wave through the community. Some local LDS

leaders resisted the move, others complied and many struggled with how to tell their flocks.

But some months later that mandate was reversed by top Church leaders in Utah.

According to several sources, the flip-flop was based on conflicting Church surveys. The first, an informal study of Church records, suggested that ethnic units were not producing as many temple marriages or missionaries as the English-speaking wards.

But a second survey by Church researchers compared the involvement of Spanish-speaking members who attended English wards versus Spanish wards. Those in the Spanish wards (especially the most recent converts) were more successful by every Church measure.

After the second survey, the plan to dismantle the ethnic wards was dropped.

The initial move to disband may have reflected the state's

conservative politics, says Ignacio Garcia, a history professor at LDS church-owned Brigham Young University in Provo.

"It is not surprising that these kinds of things would have happened in California, given the political climate there, the anti-immigrant and antiminority feelings," Garcia says.

But most of all, the episode suggests a profound ambivalence at the highest levels of the Church about how to handle ethnic wards.

"These decisions are most often made by regional leaders [area or stake]," says Garcia, who researches LDS Latinos. "When it gets to the top and they find out it's causing problems—members are disgruntled or Anglo wards don't integrate these members well—there is a tendency to say, 'stop.'"

For a church used to programmatic solutions to every problem, the issue of ethnic

wards continues to be thorny.

#### A LONG-STANDING DEBATE

LATINOS make up the fastest-growing group of Mormon converts, most of whom live in Latin America. At present, Latinos comprise about 25 percent of the LDS church's ten million members. Some researchers estimate that within twenty years Latinos will make up 80 percent of the membership.

The idea of ethnic wards in the United States was to provide a temporary haven until the people could speak English well enough to enter the mainstream Church. But many never make that move.

Still, Garcia considers the ethnic ward model to be a "real success story for the Church," and he cites several reasons:

- It is an opportunity for members to worship in their own language, in an environment they consider secure and safe;

- Members can assume positions of leadership and they have the elbow room to learn as they go;

- Members can feel they are contributing to the work of the Church in their sphere;

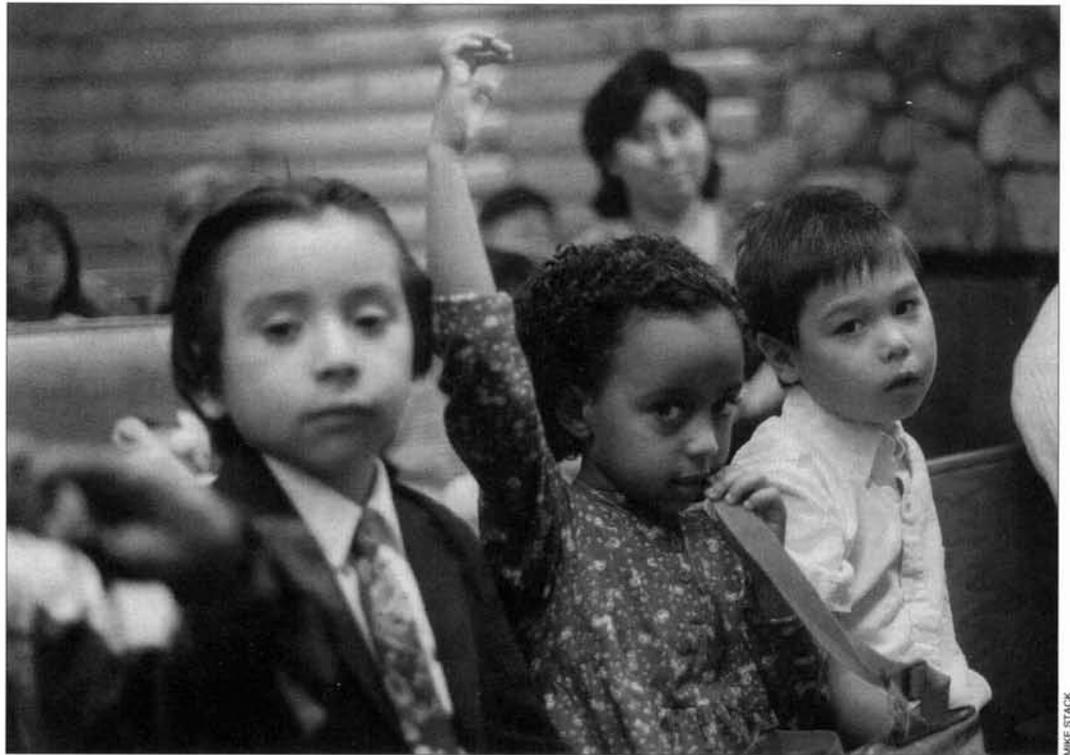
- Members feel good about themselves in relationship to the church.

"Ethnic members are the most loyal members that they have," Garcia says. "You don't see too many doctrinal challenges coming from ethnic wards."

And, he says, the non-English wards have a strong spirituality as they strive to live the Mormon gospel.

"For whatever reason, the Church is growing faster among immigrant groups than traditional ethnic groups," Gracia says.

In the Los Angeles suburb of West Covina, the Spanish-speaking LDS stake—a collection of wards—baptized more than eight hundred people last year. That was the highest number for a stake in the United States, says



*"The old idea of nondiversified, English-dominant wards will one day be a thing of the past. Anglo wards will be a luxury of the Wasatch Front, and only part of that."*

Stake President Carlos Garcia.

But when an ethnic ward is dissolved and its members told to attend English-speaking churches, some will stop going at all.

"Some people have the strength and the faith to go and make the transition, but in many cases they just go inactive," says Renan Disner, former stake president of the Santa Ana South Stake, a Spanish stake southeast of L. A.

#### BEYOND LANGUAGE

THERE ARE equally compelling arguments for non-English speakers to learn the language and move to English-speaking wards as soon as possible.

"If they do not integrate into geographic units and remain dedicated to the parents' mother tongue, they are economically disadvantaged," says Howard Anderson, former president of the Los Angeles Stake.

He cites a problem with resource materials for the Primary,

the Church's organization for children ages three to twelve.

"If the materials were in Spanish, the children couldn't read them, but if they were in English, the teachers couldn't read them," Anderson says.

Indeed, generational differences pose the strongest problem for ethnic wards. Evelyn Baires attends the sixth ward of the Huntington Park West Stake, a Spanish ward in South Central L. A. But she encouraged her daughter, Tiffany Baires, thirteen, to learn English.

Now Tiffany cannot speak Spanish well enough to understand the services, but doesn't feel comfortable at an Anglo ward. So she is becoming inactive in the Church, Baires says.

"The teens sometimes feel an identity crisis," Disner says.

They were born in the United States and so do not identify with their parents' countries. And they may speak English well, but they are not considered Anglos.

"So they form their own culture, going back and forth be-

tween English and Spanish," Disner says. To send them to an Anglo ward "is like saying, 'Let's get a knife and cut them off.' That would break communication between parents and children."

The *LDS Church Handbook of Instruction* refers to these wards as "ethnic units," not language units, suggesting that "there are more differences than just the language," says BYU's Ignacio Garcia. "Ethnic wards are not minor-league teams that prepare people to go to major leagues. These wards are for people who have a different culture, different style."

The wards that work, he says, "are those that teach people to be happy with who they are. Those that don't function well tend to produce ambivalent young people."

#### INTEGRATION STRENGTH

THE WILSHIRE WARD, which covers all of downtown Los Angeles, got its first Latino

bishop four years ago. Its membership is so diverse that more than fifteen languages are spoken, and services are in English.

On any Sunday in the exquisite 1928 Spanish-style building, one can see any number of skin tones and hair colors.

"We have a mixture of people from Africa, Nigeria, all the Central and South American countries, Mexico, the Pacific Islands, Armenia and Russia," says Bishop Tony Vargas.

The community tries to make each new member feel welcome.

"We focus on their testimony, not on their culture," Vargas says. The mixing of cultures "teaches us that God does in fact love everybody, that he has no favorites."

Kent Smith, who is black, is the second counselor in the bishopric. He was impressed by the ward's integration when he joined the Church four years ago.

"Having grown up in an all-black neighborhood, I desired for my children to know the good in all people," Smith said. "I have found this good in the Wilshire Ward."

#### THE FUTURE

FOR NOW, California's ethnic wards are secure, but the debate continues. As in years past, the 1996 closing caused many Latinos who have been Mormon for decades to lose some confidence in the Church, says Ignacio Garcia.

"You see the tremendous pain

in which they felt often as if they have been manipulated," he says. "They may forgive it, but deep down they are hurt."

It has also left Latino bishops on awkward middle ground.

"They have to make a choice between losing the confidence of their ward or not falling in line with their stake leaders," Garcia says.

Santa Ana's Disner, who wrote many letters to LDS authorities trying to explain the need for ethnic units, now attends an integrated ward.

Ignacio Garcia twice has been a bishop of Spanish-speaking wards. In both, there were many Anglo members either married to a Spanish speaker or having served a Spanish-speaking mission.

"They receive callings and are seen as one with the members," Garcia says. "These people are happy. There is no difference between the poor ethnic member and the [Anglo] member."

He believes that as the Spanish-speaking population increases in the United States, integration ought to be reversed—Anglos moving into Spanish-speaking wards and learning that language.

Even in predominantly white Utah, Latinos make up the fastest-growing minority population.

"This is a changing society. The old idea of nondiversified, English-dominant wards will one day be a thing of the past," Garcia says. "Anglo wards will be a luxury of the Wasatch Front, and only part of that." ☐

## UPDATE

### CHURCH, BYU TRANSLATING MUSLIM CLASSICS

AT LEAST THREE times in the Doctrine and Covenants, the Saints are enjoined to seek wisdom out of the best books. One passage reads "study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people" (D&C 90:15).

Nevertheless, the *Deseret News* recently noted that the world may well be surprised to learn that the LDS church and BYU are orchestrating an effort to translate nine classic Muslim tomes into English for the first time. These ancient works—some as important in Islamic culture as Plato or Aristotle are in the West—have never before been translated into any western language.

The first of the nine translations to be completed, a book by twelfth-century philosopher Al-Ghazali, was unveiled on Thursday, 12 February 1998 in Washington, D.C., at a dinner where the Church was hosting diplomats of sixteen Islamic nations. Apostle Neal A. Maxwell presented each of the diplomatic embassy attachés with a leather-bound edition of the book which has the original Arabic alongside the English translation. To Elder Maxwell, the "beautiful leather binding is symbolic of how we are bound together as the sons and daughters of God."

BYU has scholars from around the world—most non-LDS—working on this project. One, Parvis Mowerridge, a professor at State University of New York in Binghamton, told the *News* these translations have long been a dream of Islamic scholars and that Church leaders deserve praise for their work. "This body," Mowerridge said of the Church, "is the most avante garde, the most progressive carriers of the torch of Christianity and American values" through its work to "conserve and cherish the treasures of all humanity."

Managing editor of the series Daniel C. Peterson, a BYU associate professor, said that Islamic contributions to world knowledge have

long been undervalued by western scholars largely because of the westerners' inability to read the works. "Historians of science . . . are unable to evaluate the magnificent Muslim contributions to chemistry, optics, mathematics and astronomy," Peterson told the *News*.

Peterson further said that one example of such contributions is the Arabic numerals and math system now used by most of the world. "Try doing long division sometime with Roman numerals. It can't be done easily."

More truth and light should result from the translations, Elder Maxwell said. "I believe when we see things by God's light, then we see things as they really are, and we see things as they really will be. . . . When we know who we really are, then we know what we are to do and be. Then, in my personal opinion, universal brotherhood can prevail—and universal brotherhood does not depend upon national or foreign policy. It transcends these things."

### IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY WINS CHURCH-RELATED SUIT

IDAHO STATE UNIVERSITY does not violate the U.S. Constitution's separation of church and state by granting college credit for off-campus religion courses, a federal judge ruled on 17 March. U.S. District Judge Edward Lodge ruled that the university could continue to grant school credit to students of the LDS church's Institute program and to students of other faiths who attend off-campus religion programs. Lodge said, "There is no excessive entanglement between any of the defendants in this matter and any religious body or entity."

In January, student Carole Wells was shown the door at the LDS church's Institute of Religion when she appeared for a "Parables of Jesus" class. Wells, of Pocatello, was a plaintiff in a lawsuit aimed at ISU over its granting college credit to students of sectarian religious programs. Idaho State University is the only public institution of

higher education in the U.S. to grant school credit for LDS-sponsored religion courses, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

A school official told Wells that she could enroll in the "Parables of Jesus" class next fall, but that since Wells is a plaintiff in the suit, the school and the LDS institute had the right to deny her admission. "Nonsense," said David Hollander, a Portland, Oregon, American Civil Liberties Union-affiliated attorney representing Wells in the fight. "They're retaliating against her. Idaho is still part of the United States. The Constitution still applies there," Hollander said in the *Tribune*.

Wells, who is not LDS, had had a long-standing complaint with the university even before the college credit issue arose. Wells said a land swap between the university and the Church two years ago had unfairly benefited the Church. The university and the LDS church exchanged parcels of land, and the Church subsequently built its institute on the land acquired in the trade.

While neither of the two sides in the college credit suit would comment specifically about Lodge's ruling, both said they were pleased with the results. "The only thing I can tell you is that the case has been resolved to the satisfaction of both parties" one school official told the *Tribune*.

ISU's student body is about 65 percent LDS, and Wells's suit, while directed at all religious classes receiving school credit, was seen to primarily target Mormons. About three hundred of the two thousand students enrolled in the LDS program actually receive college credit each term. Roger Porter, institute director, told the *Tribune* before the suit was settled that "There is no pressure from us. Our program will move forward with or without university credit."



*Unlike the first pioneers, modern Mormon trekkers left no significant impact upon the land.*

## LAND MANAGERS PLEASED WITH TREK'S MINIMAL IMPACTS

IN 1847, Mormon wagons left ruts upon prairies of the American west that remain to this day as a testament of their passing. But similar ruts from modern-day pioneers were exactly what federal land managers feared when the trek's reenactment was under way in 1997. With little pristine prairie land left in the United States, bureaucrats were under mandate to protect the sensitive landscapes. According to

**LDS Work in Hong Kong to Continue.** Before the last British band played its last farewell hurrah, Elder Kwok Yuen Tai, of the Church's Second Quorum of the Seventy, had received verbal assurances from Tung Chee-hwa, the incoming governor of Hong Kong, that LDS work could continue—including normal operations for the temple. "No written agreement was necessary. His word was good enough for us," Elder Tai told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. But while Church work will continue in Hong Kong, the Church will still not proselyte or conduct official meetings in mainland China.

### Disc Jockey Fired for Comments about LDS.

Jacor Communications, a Cincinnati-based company that owns KZHT (94.9 FM) in Salt Lake City, fired Dani Curtis in September 1997 for derisive comments she made over Utah airwaves about a speech President Gordon B. Hinckley had delivered to Native Americans. A Jacor press release apologized to the community and expressed "no-tolerance" for politicizing the family-friendly radio station.

### Sesquicentennial Events Include Native American Conference.

To note the role that Native Americans played during the Mormons' trek west in 1847, the Church's Pioneer Sesquicentennial Committee sponsored a conference in Provo in July 1997. Speakers noted similar beliefs among Native Americans and Latter-day Saints, such as respect for the elderly and strong family bonds. Among the participants were Apostle Russell M. Ballard and Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland and Larry EchoHawk, a Pawnee and professor in BYU's law school. The greatest thrill for

many of the attendees, however, was a visit by professional basketball player Karl Malone who spoke on teaching by example. Malone is an African American who also has Native American ancestry. He has long advocated children's issues in Salt Lake City.

### Christmas Box Inspires Angels.

Inspired by Richard Paul Evans's bestseller *The Christmas Box*, the Oklahoma County Chapter of the American Red Cross unveiled a four-foot angel sculpture this past Christmas season in remembrance of the victims of the bombing of the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building in Oklahoma City. Similar angel monuments have been erected by families in Idaho, Wyoming, Nevada, and New Jersey to remember their deceased children. Meanwhile, Evans, who has published two additional popular books, has formed Richard Paul Evans Publishing exclusively to publicize his works and has formed The Christmas Box Foundation to raise money for a Salt Lake City children's shelter. Evans also has plans to develop a Utah resort named Arcadia.



*Richard Paul Evans*

### RLDS Issue Call for More Missionaries.

Trying to expand his church's missionary efforts, RLDS Church President W. Grant McMurray in a September 1997 speech to church leaders called for two hundred new missionaries over the next three years. And in noting that the RLDS church has suffered membership losses since granting women the priesthood, McMurray also said he hopes the church will add two hundred new congregations in coming years. McMurray's remarks outlined goals of Transformation 2000, a church-wide project to "rise up and fulfill [the RLDS] destiny."

a recent governmental report, however, the Bureau of Land Management and the National Park Service are "very pleased" and find no substantial environmental degradation. The agencies concluded that "once the grass grows for a summer, no trace of the wagon train's passage will be visible," reported the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

The reenactment was so successful—environmentally and otherwise—that the LDS church is now undertaking plans to develop a ten-acre parcel near Wyoming's Martin's Cove into a campground to accommodate the crowds to come. The Church has already constructed a visitor center at the site. A Wyoming official was quoted in the *Tribune* as saying more people are expected along the trail in 1998 than visited in 1997.

Last year, some twenty-five wagons, ten handcarts, and about two hundred people traveled the 1,040 miles from Omaha, Nebraska, to Salt Lake City. The reenactment was the first of its kind in terms of scale and authenticity, but plans are underway for a similar 1999 reenactment along the California Trail, which was created by those lured by dreams of gold. The lessons from last year's Mormon trek are being implemented in the California plans: one California nonprofit organization planning the event is currently being led by three wagon masters from last year's event.

## UTAH MAN SUES CHURCH OVER PRIVACY BREACH

SAYING HIS reputation and personal life were destroyed when a therapist-patient tape recording was disbursed and listened to, a Highland, Utah, man is filing suit against his bishopric, stake presidency and stake high council, and the LDS church.

Jeffrey Throckmorton began receiving counseling in that state in 1994 for "issues of a personal nature," reported the *Deseret News*. But when his therapist, Nancy Shipley Rubin, accidentally sent a taped conversation to his Utah residence while he was away on business, Throckmorton's wife, Annette, opened the mail and listened to the tape. She then gave the tape to their bishop who, after listening to it, shared it with his counselors, stake president, and other leaders.

The suit says that bishopric counselor James Haskins not only used the tape in his ecclesiastical duties but also when he, being an attorney, represented Annette Throckmorton in divorce proceedings.

"This exposure caused [Throckmorton] enormous suffering, anxiety, pain, embarrassment, confusion, bewilderment, angst, ignominy, humiliation, grief and horror," the *News* quoted the suit as saying. Throckmorton is seeking damages to be determined in trial.

## PEOPLE

### TRANSFERS



Chieko N. Okazaki

- **E. Gordon Gee**, former president of Ohio State University, took over the reigns of Brown University, in Providence, Rhode Island, in January 1998. Gee was born in Vernal, Utah, and worked for four years as associate law dean and law professor at BYU.

- The popular past Relief Society general presidency of **Elaine L. Jack**, **Aileen Clyde**, and **Chieko N. Okazaki** have made transitions back to the civilian world: Sister Jack is now in Cardston, Alberta, with her husband, who is the temple president;

Sister Okazaki is supervising several public school principals in training through BYU's school of education; Sister Clyde is vice chair of the Utah State Board of Regents, which oversees Utah's nine public institutions of higher education.

### AWARDS & HONORS

- **Erlend "Pete" D. Peterson**, BYU dean of admissions and records, was recently honored with knighthood by the king of Norway. The knighting ceremony was performed by Norway's ambassador to the United States and was a tribute to Peterson's efforts in bringing Norwegian students and officials to the BYU campus.

- In a Jerusalem ceremony, two Mormons, Utah's Senator **Orrin Hatch** and Provo businessman **Brian Larson**, were recently given the prestigious Theodor Herzl Award for contributions to Israel. Hatch was cited for his "unwavering commitment to justice" in supporting Israel, while Larson has had many business dealings in Israel, primarily involving the Ben Gurion airport.

- **D. Michael Quinn** was presented on 12 January 1998 with the Herbert Feis Award for his *Same-Sex Dynamics Among 19th-Century Americans: A Mormon Example*. This is the first time the American Historical Society, which presents this annual "best book" award, has honored a book on homosexuality.

- A 1939 BYU alumnus and professor emeritus at the University of California at Los Angeles, **Paul D. Boyer**, is sharing the 1998 Nobel Prize in Chemistry for his pioneering work on cell energy production.

### DEATHS

- Long-time president of the Days of '47 Inc., **Floyd R. "Flip" Harmon**, died 28 June 1997 at age seventy-two. Harmon had been responsible for planning numerous events each year commemorating Mormon and Utah history, including Salt Lake's Days of '47 Parade as well as the Territorial Ball and Community Family Home Evening. A First Presidency statement read in part, "All these activities have given life and color to Utah. . . . We will miss him greatly."

- A member of TV's famous King Family, **Luise King Rey**, died 4 August 1997 at age eighty-three. Rey and her sisters began their musical careers on the Church-owned KSL radio in the 1930s before moving on to theaters, nightclubs, movies, and television. Rey authored three books about her life and served a mission in Hawaii with her husband, Alvino Rey.

- **Glen L. Taggart**, who served eleven years as president of Utah State University, died 10 August 1997 at age eighty-three. Current USU president George Emmert said, "What USU is today is the result of Glen Taggart's talent and leadership." Taggart, who helped establish USU as a research uni-



Samuel Woolley Taylor

## CHURCH COMPENSATES FIRED AUSTRALIAN WORKER

UNDER THE HEADLINE "Sacked church worker loses faith . . . in men," the *Sydney Morning Herald* reported that Kerry Anne Hozack, an LDS church employee at the Pacific Area headquarters, was fired after losing her temple recommend because of adultery. Hozack, however, sued the Church for illegal dismissal, and an Australia federal court sided with her, ordering the Church to pay \$7,280 (Australian dollars) in back wages. The compensation is equivalent to six months of Hozack's part-time salary.

An Australian law, the Workplace Relations Act, allows for a religious organization to terminate an employee "in good faith in order to avoid injury to the religious susceptibilities of its adherents." Judge Rodney Madgwick ruled, however, that merely losing one's temple recommend did not constitute a valid reason for an employee to be fired. Madgwick also said that both parties in the suit agreed that Hozack's continuing to work in her former capacity would be impractical. In the United States, courts have upheld the Church's right to terminate an employee for not holding a recommend.

Alan Wakeley, a Church spokesman in Australia, told the *Herald*

that "A minimum requirement for employment is membership in good standing, which means living the church's basic standards of behavior. Ms. Hozack accepted these conditions when she was hired and it surprises us somewhat that she has taken this action [of suing]."

Wakeley condemned the court's ruling, saying it denied the Church the ability to set its own standards. "It discriminates against religious groups by ignoring a church's own religious freedom, which is a basic civil right."

At the time of her involvement with a man other than her husband, Hozack, 37, was in the middle of court proceedings to determine custody of her and her husband's children. Hozack, a Church member for twenty-five years, said "I still go to church and it doesn't change what I believe in." Of her employers, Hozack said, "This is a group of men who have acted on the spur of the moment. They did this because they thought they could get away with it."

In its report, the *Herald* said that the Church's "male members are allowed to have more than one wife."

## BYU "POLITICALLY INCORRECT," BUT NO LONGER "STONE-COLD SOBER."

THE *PRINCETON REVIEW*'s 1997 rankings of the ten most "stone-cold sober" schools in the United States came not only as a surprise but indeed as an insult to many at BYU. The Church-owned school was number two on the 1996 rankings, and many at the university were hoping to move up to number one, according to the *Deseret News*. "We still feel that we're just as strong in that category as ever," university spokeswoman Carri Jenkins said. But school officials need not worry yet: BYU was second in the *Review* on another list titled "Scotch and Soda, Hold the Scotch." BYU was also second in three other categories: "Students Most Nostalgic for [Ronald] Reagan," "Future Rotarians and Daughters of the American Revolution," and students least likely to use marijuana. Also, for the third time since 1994, BYU was named the most religious school in the country.

Additionally, *Insight* magazine lauded BYU as one of the ten most "politically incorrect" universities in the country, saying the church school was among those that "are true to themselves and haven't altered their traditions to fit academic fads," according to a *Salt Lake Tribune* report.

## MORMONARTS FESTIVAL AND TUACAHN PART WAYS

BECAUSE THE Tuacahn arts complex asked for double the rent in 1998 that it had charged in 1997, the MormonArts Foundation decided not to return to the site near St. George, Utah, for its fourth annual festival. Instead, the festival was held at various venues within St. George over March 25-28.

Last year's festival drew about three hundred Mormon artists from all over the world for displays and workshops on performance and fine arts (see *SUNSTONE*, Oct. 1997). The foundation was charged ten thousand dollars rent last year and could not afford to pay more, according to foundation Executive Director Doug Stewart. Stewart told the *Deseret News* that the festival "provided a quality event that enhances Tuacahn's image. It saddens me."

Tuacahn interim CEO Hyrum Smith said, however, he was forced to end low rates for non-profit groups because low revenues have forced him to cut spending and consider closing the complex. Smith launched a successful fundraising effort during the fall of 1997, which has ensured the facility will remain open throughout spring

versity, was born in Lewiston, Idaho, and raised in Utah's Cache Valley. He also spent ten years of service with the Department of Agriculture, helping develop agricultural experiments in Central and South America.

- **Samuel Woolley Taylor** died 26 September 1997 at age ninety. Grandson of Church President John Taylor and one of thirty-six children of a polygamous apostle, Taylor published hundreds of articles and short stories, including "Flubber" and "The Absent-Minded Professor," and was a Pulitzer Prize nominee. Several books on Mormonism marked Taylor's passion for his heritage.

- **Marian Richards Boyer**, a former General Board member and counselor to former President Barbara Smith in the Relief Society, died on 26 September 1997. She was eighty-four. She and her husband, Hal Boyer, had served as directors of the Hill Cumorah Pageant.

- **Esther Peterson**, age ninety-one, died on 20 December 1997. Peterson, who was raised in Provo, was long an advocate for consumer rights, workers, and women. She served in the administrations of presidents John F. Kennedy, Lyndon B. Johnson, and Jimmy Carter and was the first Mormon to receive the presidential medal of freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor.

- Emeritus member of the First Quorum of the Seventy **Paul Harold Dunn** died at age seventy-three on 9

January 1998. Dunn, a World War II veteran, professional baseball player, and Church educator, was a leader with a keen sense of humor and enormous generosity; he was especially known for his speeches to youth.

- **Jeffrey Rand Hardyman**, died on 10 January 1997 at age 42. He was on *Sunstone's* National Advisory Board and once underwrote the hotel costs of a *Sunstone Symposium West*.



Esther Peterson

## M O R M O N M E D I A I M A G E

## "THE MORMONS MOVE TO ATTACK"

*RUSSIA MAY STILL let the LDS church in, but it still knows very little about Latter-day Saints, as this English translation of a Russian émigré press news story illustrates, which appeared in Uzglyad, a San Francisco-based Russian language newspaper, under the headline, "The Mormons Move to Attack."*

Residents of the American city of Salt Lake City are being subjected to real terror at the hands of the Mormon sect. Using clubs, knives, bottles with flammable liquids and homemade bombs, the Mormons are attempting to convert residents of the city to the "true faith." As fervent opponents of alcohol and tobacco—and some of them are also zealous vegetarians—the Mormons are storming bars and meat markets. They are calling themselves soldiers fighting against the worldly vices.

One of the most widespread methods of intimidation is the so-called "stone sandwich." This is when they place the victim face down on the pavement and kick the back of his head with their boots.

As has been reported by representatives of the local police force, which has had to intervene often of late in conflicts involving sect members, after such torture many people fear going to bars. And several even lose altogether the desire to eat meat or smoke.

1998.

The 1998 festival included Utah Senator and songwriter Orrin Hatch. Hatch delivered a speech at this year's event in which he said Mormon musicians need to assert their Christianity because mainstream Christian musicians do not represent Mormon as Christians.

## LDS PLAYWRIGHTS EXPLORE THE WRITING OF MORMON PLAYS

"FIGHTING TO maintain integrity as a playwright and artist as well as maintain a standing in the Church can be straining," Mormon playwright and Brigham Young University assistant theatre professor Eric Samuelsen told the American Theatre Critics Association. The association met in Cedar City, Utah, in July 1997 and hosted a panel of four BYU faculty/playwrights. According to the *Salt Lake Tribune*, Samuelsen said he is drawn to "the edgy and difficult issues in [Mormon] culture" and he has to use creativity to succeed. "If you write characters that the audience cares about, you can deal with complex issues within the context," said Samuelsen, whose recent controversial play *Gadanton* dealt with how Mormons act in a downsizing, Utah Valley corporation where Mormons have to fire other Mormons. He also acknowledges that "Mormons will go to the movies and won't be offended when someone says 'O God,' but if they go to a play they know is written by a Mormon and they hear 'O God,' suddenly they're offended."

BYU English professor Susan Howe related how complaints about plays are often dysfunctionally routed first to Church general authorities and then sometimes down channels to the playwright without the name of the original complainant. All the playwright/panelists, which also included Russian professor Thomas Rogers and theatre professor Tim Slover, admitted that they have had to make changes in

the scripts to avoid offending Mormon audiences and to get their plays produced, and sometimes even to protect their jobs.

Howe summarized the situation: "We don't have a very old culture, but we have one we love. . . . We are a culture that is only 150 years old, still in its adolescent phase, and like all adolescents we hate to be criticized. But to fully understand a culture you must criticize it. You must show its good side as well as its bad."

## RECORD PRICE PAID FOR FIRST EDITION BOOK OF MORMON

EXCEEDING EVEN the most fanciful wishes of sellers in a 19 May 1997 auction at Sotheby's in New York, a first edition Book of Mormon sold for a record \$32,200. Auctioneers had expected the book to bring between seven thousand and ten thousand dollars, according to the *Deseret News*. Selby Kiffer, vice president in Sotheby's books and manuscripts division, noted that the price was "by far a world auction record for that book."

Kiffer said the sale culminated a "really spirited bidding competition by four bidders." A rumor quickly spread saying that the anonymous purchaser of the book was Microsoft's Bill Gates. The story traveled from New York to Salt Lake City where it was spread for weeks as gospel truth. However, Microsoft spokesman Greg Shaw denied that Gates, who does collect first edition books, had made the purchase.

Missouri book dealer John Hajcek told the *News* that the previous high price for a first edition Book of Mormon was \$19,550. Dealers estimate that 250 first edition copies are in the hands of known collectors and a like number to be in unknown private collections.

## BOOKCRAFT PURCHASED BY YOUNG, UPSTART PUBLISHER

IN A MERGER between two large, privately-held publishers of LDS works—one time-tested and well established, the other in existence for less than a decade—the young Infobases Inc. acquired Bookcraft, Inc., in undisclosed terms, according to a *Deseret News* report.

Infobases began in 1990 and has produced several LDS CD-ROM compilations, including *LDS Collector's Library* and *LDS Family History Suite*. Bookcraft has been one of two principal publishers of LDS-oriented books since 1942, when it began competing with the Church-owned Deseret Book. Bookcraft's many titles by general authorities include *Mormon Doctrine* by Bruce R. McConkie and *The Miracle of Forgiveness* by Spencer W. Kimball. The company has also enjoyed recent success with the *Work and the Glory* series by Gerald N. Lund.

Alan C. Ashton was named chairman of the board of the new company. Ashton founded WordPerfect. According to a news release, "Ashton will take an active role" in determining the future direction of the company. Bradley D. Pelo, president and CEO of Infobases, will also take over in like capacities for Bookcraft.



*A first edition Book of Mormon recently broke records by fetching \$32,200.*

## SOCIOLOGISTS UNVEIL MORMONISM

WANT TO UNDERSTAND how the early Christian church grew? Look at how early Mormonism grew, asserted nationally distinguished sociologist of religion Rodney Stark. Speaking at the combined annual meetings of the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion (SSSR) and the Religious Research Association (RRA) in November in San Diego, California, non-Mormon Stark said that Mormonism is the next world religion and by studying it scholars can better understand the rise of earlier world religions, such as Christianity and Islam. Stark noted that in addition to having a founder who receives direct communication from God, each religion, including Mormonism, began with "a holy family" and an intense primary group of followers. These religions initially spread through networks of families and friends connected with individuals in the primary group.

At the SSSR/RRA meetings, more than ten other sessions and twenty-five scholars also looked at Mormonism. Non-Mormon Henri Gooren of Utrecht University in the Netherlands compared Mormon and Pentecostal spirituality and convert retention in Guatemala. Noting the difference between the skins of a peach and an orange, Perry Cunningham of the LDS church's research and evaluation Division examined how the boundaries between Mormonism and the larger world are thinner today than in nineteenth-century Mormonism. Armand Mauss and Laurie DiPadova participated in a session analyzing leadership and authority relationships within religious organizations. Several presenters looked at homosexuality within Mormonism. The openly gay BYU sociology student Sam

Clayton reported on his university-approved survey of BYU students' attitudes toward homosexuality. Clayton said 42 percent of students feel that even celibate, honor code-abiding gays should not be allowed to attend the university.

BYU faculty who spoke at the conference included Jessie Embry, who reported on the Church's efforts to meet the needs of immigrant Asian Americans, and Ronald Jackson, who deciphered what can be learned from pictures of Jesus Christ in LDS homes.

The Mormon Social Science Association (MSSA) sponsored several sessions, including one that reflected on the trailblazing early work of Harold Christensen. In another MSSA session, Grant Underwood and Vernice Wineera, both with BYU-Hawaii, explored how cultural boundaries were negotiated in the Pacific islands' celebration of the Mormon pioneer sesquicentennial and at the Church-owned Polynesian Cultural Center in Hawaii. Meanwhile, Thomas Murphy discussed "Christianizing Quetzalcoatl, Mexicanizing Mormonism."

## MANTI GROUP PUBLISHES NEW BOOK OF MORMON

THE TRUE AND LIVING CHURCH of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days (TLC) has published an edition of the Book of Mormon that uniquely combines the text of the first edition (complete with original spelling and grammar) with the versification of the current LDS edition. TLC's new version also incorporates the book's original paragraph breaks and notes changes in the current LDS version. The TLC edition is available from T&S Publishing, 37 South Main Street, Suite 202, Manti, Utah 84642.

## ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

- *Time* magazine, in its recent special edition on medical advances, featured **Paul Alan Cox**, BYU's former dean of general and honors education and a world-renowned botanist. Cox, who raised money to save a thirty-thousand-acre forest in Western Samoa, studies the medicinal benefits of rain forest plants.
- The *Wall Street Journal* in January 1998 ran an article on Salt Lake City industrialist **Jon M. Huntsman** that praised the self-made billionaire for his leading the way among the very wealthy in privately funding medical research. Over the past two years, Huntsman—a former stake president—has given one hundred million dollars to fund the Huntsman Cancer Institute in partnership with the University of Utah.
- The **LDS church** has donated one hundred thousand dollars to the Utah Youth Village's Families First program. The program offers an intensive, in-home family skills curriculum to those at risk of losing a child to state custody. Families First has aided 130 families over the past four years, and thanks to the Church's gift, Families First will now be able to assist low-income families free of charge.
- The **LDS church** Foundation recently provided \$28,275 to Volunteers of America, Utah. The volunteers group will use the funds for construction of a Women's Detoxification Center. The center will primarily serve homeless women and their dependent children. Up to twenty women will be housed at any given time.
- The **LDS church** has paid one year's rent for the Salt Lake Interfaith Network's new offices. The network is a coalition of churches working to help homeless families get a new start. Member churches take turns housing and feeding the homeless for

a week once every three months. While the Church does not permit overnight use of its facilities, it instead provides food and volunteers in addition to office space.

- Mormon philanthropist **Jon M. Huntsman** gave \$250,000 and the **Church** kicked in another \$225,000 to fund Salt Lake's Community Winter Shelter for Families. In receiving the two donations, Pamela Atkinson, a long-time advocate for the homeless, remembered Virgil Robinson. Robinson froze to death on a Salt Lake street on Thanksgiving Day 1996. Atkinson said the Huntsman and LDS church donations would ensure that no homeless persons would freeze during the '97-'98 winter in Utah. During the past holiday season, Atkinson said, "We will make sure there is room at the inn."
- Church-owned **Deseret Industries** (D.I.), a Utah thrift store chain that often employs recent immigrants to the U.S., has initiated an aggressive English language training program. "We have people from twenty-four countries, representative of fourteen languages," said Douglas Roberts, rehabilitation manager for the D.I., to the *Church News*. Through its program, which trains doctors as well as unskilled laborers, the D.I.'s aim is to equip immigrants for higher paying jobs than the D.I. is able to provide.
- **Seattle-Area Saints** were awarded one of three Ecumenical Service Awards presented by Associated Ministries of Tacoma/Pierce County in recognition of a Church canning project, Church response to storm disasters, Church members' service in a Paint Tacoma/Pierce County Beautiful campaign, and missionaries' work in a local interfaith center.

## THE MORMON UNIVERSE

## SUNSTONE CALENDAR

**1998 Sunstone Symposium to be held in August.** The actual dates for this summer's symposium are not final yet, but it will be in the first half of August. Individuals wanting immediate notice of the dates and/or a copy of the preliminary program should contact Sunstone, 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City, UT 84103 (801/355-5926; fax 801/355-4043; SunstoneUT@aol.com).

**1999 Sunstone Symposium to be held at Salt Palace.** 1999 marks the silver anniversary of the founding of the Sunstone Foundation, and the annual symposium will be held at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City on 14-17 July 1999.

**Two Regional Symposiums to Be Held in September.** Mark your calendars, and plan to attend one of two symposiums that will be held in September 1998: Northwest Sunstone Symposium in Seattle, or the Washington, D.C., Sunstone Symposium. Contact Sunstone at above address for details.

## LDS ORGANIZATIONS AND CONFERENCES

**Mormon Historians to Gather in Nation's Capital.** The Mormon History Association will hold its annual meeting at the Washington Marriott Hotel on 21-24 May 1998. Topics being discussed include the activities of Reed Smoot and George Q. Cannon in Washington, D.C.; a twenty-year review of Blacks and the priesthood; the changing Mormon perception of Abraham Lincoln; and Joseph Smith's 1844 U.S. presidency campaign. Noted sociologist of religion Rodney Stark will be the Tanner lecturer. Stark is best known to Mormons for his predictions that Mormonism will grow to become the first new world religion to arise since Islam. For details, contact the Mormon History Association, c/o Craig and Suzanne Foster, 2470 N. 1000 W., Layton, UT 84041 (801/773-4620 or 801/779-1348; suzfoster@aol.com).

**Affirmation to Meet in Portland.** The annual conference of Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons will be held in Portland, Oregon, over Labor Day weekend, 4-7 September 1998, at the Lloyd Center Doubletree. For information, write the Affirmation Conference (P. O. Box 80654, Portland, OR 97280-1654), call the conference hotline (503/288-2037), or visit the conference website (<http://www.affirmation.org>).

## CYBERSAINTS

**Break out the Birthday Cake.** The *Church News* website (accessed via <http://www.ldschurchnews.com>) has recently celebrated its second anniversary by offering subscribers or browsers a telephone customer service representative to answer any computer questions. It's available Monday through Friday from 7:30 A.M. to 4:30 P.M. Mountain Time at 800/710-7141.

**Saints Create a New Nauvoo.** A new website—to be named Nauvoo—will soon be posting the work of LDS poets. The site will be accessed at [www.nauvoo.com](http://www.nauvoo.com); those interested may submit poetry to the Nauvoo site by e-mail at [stepherry@aol.com](mailto:stepherry@aol.com) or by snail mail to Nauvoo Poetry, 1303 N. Riverside Ave. #31, Provo, UT 84604.

**Offshoots Branching onto Internet.** Some groups claiming Latter Day Saint heritage in one way or another now have pages on the Internet, including:

Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints (Strangites)

<http://www.Mormonism.com/strang.htm>

New Covenant Church of God

<http://home.sn.no/~cwarren>

Restoration Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints

<http://www.execpc.com/~talossa/restoration.html>

School of the Prophets/Robert Crossfield

<http://home.sprynet.com/sprynet/gazalore/homepage.htm>

True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days

<http://www.tlcmanti.org>

**LDS Research Site Organized.** A mailing list for "serious scholars"—i.e., not the sermonizing types—has recently been created. Questions may be posted or information obtained by e-mailing [lds-research@xmission.com](mailto:lds-research@xmission.com).

**Disabled Empowered on Web.** A mailing list called LDISABLED is for LDS members who are disabled or chronically ill in any way (or for the loved ones of such persons). To subscribe, send a message to [listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com](mailto:listserv@home.ease.lsoft.com). Include "subscribe LDISABLED" as well as your first and last name.

**Got the Blues?** An electronic mailing list supporting Latter-day Saints suffering from depression has been created to discuss emotional distress in an LDS context. The list is available at [peace@ldschurch.net](mailto:peace@ldschurch.net); subscribe to the list at [majordomo@ldschurch.net](mailto:majordomo@ldschurch.net).

**Y Chat? Why Not?** Joshua Elledge, a BYU family studies major, has created YCHAT, a website with eighteen chatrooms designed to be free of questionable material and language. The site will be monitored to ensure that BYU and LDS standards are upheld. It also includes a world-wide archive of news articles on the Church and BYU.

## LDS scholar offers tours to Book of Mormon lands



If you're like most LDS members, you love the Book of Mormon. *But how much do you really know about the Book?* Most of us are familiar with the Book's teachings. But few of us know much about the geography, language, archaeology or culture. *Why visit Book of Mormon sites?* Your knowledge, understanding and desire to learn more will increase. I'm Dr. Joseph Allen, author of the bestselling "Exploring the Lands of the Book of Mormon." Our company, Book of Mormon Tours, has taken more than 200 guided tours to Middle America since 1970. For one low flat rate, everything's included: airfare, deluxe hotels, meals, luxury buses, pre-tour education, experienced directors. Call now for a FREE info packet. **Toll free 1-888-226-5205, extension 460**

## SUNSTROKED

A recent internet gleaning, ascribed to Robert Armstrong, M.D., reads as follows:

I work part-time as a teacher of family doctors. The program provides training on psychiatric disorders and emphasizes the importance of emotional support. The new doctors are given plenty of time in clinic to visit with their patients and learn about their challenges. One of our interns who has never lived in Utah and knows nothing about Mormons is still struggling to understand the cultural climate here. Last week he was interviewing a new patient and stumbled on what he thought was a raging psychosis.

DOCTOR: "Well, Mrs. Olsen, we've talked about your high blood pressure and your medications. Are you experiencing any particular stress in your life?"

PATIENT: "Oh, yes! It's the Sunbeams. They're driving me crazy."

DOCTOR (very surprised): "The sun beams?"

PATIENT: "Yes. I've never had trouble with them before, but this group won't sit still. They bounce all over the room, and run out the door and down the hall."

DOCTOR (reaching for a pen): "Have you told anyone about this?"

PATIENT: "Of course. I told the president."

DOCTOR: "Really! What did the president tell you?"

PATIENT: "She said Sunbeams are like that. I'm just going to have to learn to deal with them."

DOCTOR (concerned that he may be missing something): "I know people who are sensitive to sun beams. Do they cause you a rash or anything?"

PATIENT (confused): "A rash? No."

DOCTOR: "What's the biggest problem they're creating?"

PATIENT: "It's the noise. They just won't quit talking."

DOCTOR (astonished): "The sun beams are talking to you?"

PATIENT: "Well, yes. But mostly they talk to each other."

DOCTOR (scribbling furiously in the chart): "I see. Can anyone else hear them talking?"

PATIENT (after a moment of stunned silence): "You're not LDS, are you?"

## ONE WAY OR ANOTHER

HEARD ANY GOOD Mormon jokes lately? Here's one we recently found on the Web that folklorists might enjoy analyzing what the retelling or forwarding of it tells about us.

Three people applied for a CIA job: a counselor in a bishopric, an elders quorum president, and a Relief Society president. At the end of the interviews, all three were taken into a room. They were told that their bishop was sitting in the next room. The counselor was given a gun and told to go into the next room and shoot the bishop. He said he could not do that. The elders quorum president was told to take the gun and shoot the bishop. He took the gun, went into the room, but in a minute returned. "Sorry, I just cannot do it," he said. Finally, the Relief Society president was put to the test, and she took the gun into the room. A couple of shots rang out, and then there was the sound of a struggle.

When she returned to the room, the interviewer asked her what all that struggle was about. She replied, "Somebody put blanks in this pistol, so I had to strangle him!"



PAT BAGLEY

## IN MEMORIAM

## LOWELL MARSDEN DURHAM

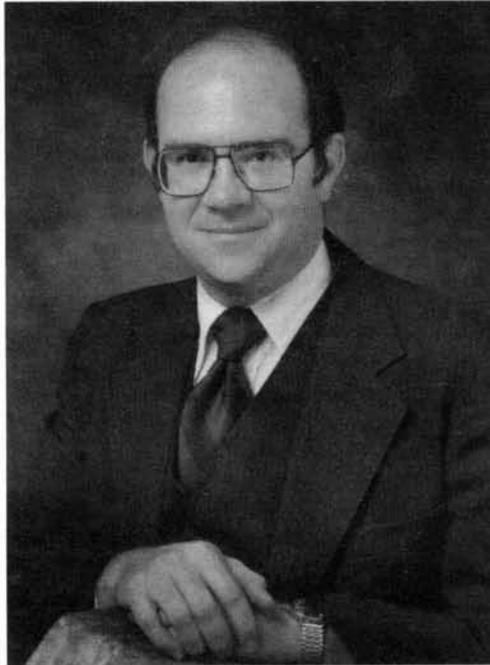
By Martha Sonntag Bradley

WHEN SOMEONE we respect and care about dies, we are stunned by questions about the meaning of our existence. Suddenly our philosophical musings seem pompous and insipid. Even our answers based on faith and belief fail to satisfy or mute our profound sense of loss. The value of a life well lived is immeasurable. Lowell Marsden Durham was a friend I would have gone to with such questions. He and his wife, Linda, began enjoying grandchildren not long before their long struggle with his cancer. They valued every moment spent with them.

Lowell was a good man. He lived a life of poetry and family, of church and business. He mentored many about how to enter the world of writing, about the power of well-chosen words and ideas, about being a member of a community, caring about each other. Lowell valued, more than titles or wealth, an authentic life with a certain quality of intellectual and spiritual energy. And he made incredible shifts to live that kind of life.

His impressive and varied career included a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Washington, many years as associate editor of the *New Era*, president of Deseret Book Company, president of ZCMI, and, last, director of the Obert C. and Grace A. Tanner Humanities Center at the University of Utah and founder and co-owner of Technographics, a book bindery.

Lowell was a man of paradoxes: he was nationally recognized as a squash champion and a businessman; an award-winning poet and grandfather; a Mormon leader and humanist. He was as comfortable in an academic setting as in a corporate board room. He had an uncanny ability to see straight to the core of a person. He recognized and in fact celebrated diversity—caring about people who were most different from him, counting among his best friends Apostle Marvin Ashton, Church educator Lowell Bennion,



and Episcopal Bishop Carolyn Tanner Irish. He fished or played squash or tennis with Spence Eccles and other Salt Lake business leaders. Yet he gave the same care and attention to his friendships with students, neighbors, and employees. We all felt we were his special friends, that he understood who we are and why we are of value.

A bridge builder, Lowell was described by one colleague at the University of Utah as “uniquely situated to move between the Mormon world and the academic world.” One friend, Grethe Peterson, acknowledged his remarkable skill at negotiating the shifting planes between “town and gown,” moving easily in both worlds.

Lowell was far too young to die, and those of us who knew him well and cared about him feel robbed—he had stories and poems yet to write, children and grandchildren to raise. He had often promised to join with Leonard Arrington to tell the story behind the commissioning and de-commissioning of

the Church’s sesquicentennial history project, which he worked on while running Deseret Book.

I have thought at funerals—far too numerous this past year because so many of my heroes have died—that regardless of how well funeral addresses comment on an individual’s life, they fall very short. The best things about Lowell Durham aren’t listed on his résumé; they are the matters of his heart: his consistency and steadiness, his clear intellect and questioning mind, his dry humor and wit.

Many times when he spoke, whether before board meetings or church groups, he had a volume of Emily Dickinson in front of him or of Robert Frost or John Harris. And he loved to tell a William James story that explained best, for him, the unexplainable: A woman came to a famous philosopher asking for a sensible explanation of the origin of the earth. The teacher patiently told her that the world came forth on the back of a turtle. She impatiently asked him for more, for what came before that. “Well,” he said, “it was on the back of a turtle. In fact, it was turtles all the way.” (Lowell’s point is that while there is no way to explain the mysteries of life, it is good to contemplate them.) In a recent Tanner Humanities Center publication, Lowell is quoted as saying that a humanities education helps students to “ask important questions about life, encouraging them to seek answers that are thoughtful, that avoid the insular, and that take into consideration differing cultures and worldviews.” This was his approach to all of life—believing that the learning was in the doing: “In the beginning and throughout the continuing process of doing humanities our strength is indeed, the deed—in the doing. It is the exciting things that we do that can make a difference.”

There is no way to understand or accept this loss but to remember the lessons he taught us through his life well lived. ☐

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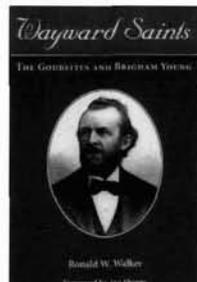
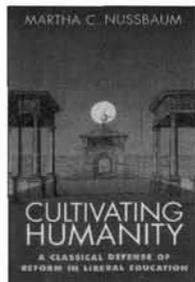


### Sunstone Magazine 9 issues for \$36

This great offer brings Sunstone's award-winning humor, fiction, history, and its thoughtful reflections on contemporary Mormonism and personal faith journeys. Offer good for new or renewal subscriptions.

### New Mormon Studies CD-ROM: A Comprehensive Resource Library CD ~~\$200.00~~ \$180.00

Mormon studies is going high-tech! This jam-packed, searchable CD-ROM contains the entire Signature Books library through 1996 (excluding fiction), all Mormon titles from University of Illinois Press, the earliest editions of LDS scriptures, all issues of *Dialogue* and *Sunstone* through 1996, nineteenth-century LDS church classics, and more. **Over 950 works with illustrations—an incredible value!** For Macintosh and Windows. (Smith Research Associates)



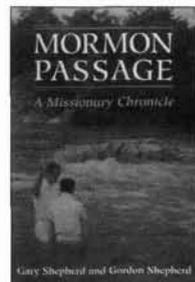
### Cultivating Humanity: A Classical Defense of Reform in Liberal Education by Martha C. Nussbaum, hb. ~~\$26.00~~ \$23.40

Extremely relevant to the culture wars at BYU, especially the chapter that compares BYU with Notre Dame. Philosopher and classicist Nussbaum tells how higher education can create a community of critical thinkers and searchers for truth that "transcend the boundaries of class, gender, and nation." She draws on Socrates and the Stoics to defend the core values of liberal education and such burgeoning subject areas as gender, minority, and gay studies. (Harvard University Press)

### Wayward Saints: The Godbeites and Brigham Young

by Ronald W. Walker, hb. ~~\$40.95~~ \$44.95; pb. ~~\$25.00~~ \$22.50

A compelling story of 1870 British Mormon intellectuals who challenge Brigham Young's leadership and authority because they don't like his authoritarianism and intrusion into areas of personal choice. This study of Mormon intellectual history and religious dissent has clear parallels and implications for the tensions among contemporary LDS intellectuals. (University of Illinois Press)



### Mormon Passage: A Missionary Chronicle by Gary Shepherd and Gordon Shepherd, hb. ~~\$40.95~~ \$44.95; pb. ~~\$24.95~~ \$22.95

Anyone who has tried to make sense of their mission will want to read this book. This terrific read blends the author's missionary diaries and reminiscences with sociological analysis. "A Mormon version of *On the Road*." —Rodney Stark (University of Illinois Press)

### In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith

by Todd Compton, hb. ~~\$30.95~~ \$35.95

Carefully researched, engagingly written, this book not only thoroughly documents the controversial polygynous marriages in Nauvoo but also traces each woman's biography into pioneer Utah, making it an invaluable resource on nineteenth-century Mormon women's history. (Signature)

*Benediction* fiction by Neal Chandler, ~~\$14.95~~ \$13.45

*Beyond the River* novel by Michael Fillerup, ~~\$14.95~~ \$13.45

*The Company We Keep: An Ethics of Fiction* by Wayne C. Booth, ~~\$18.95~~ \$17.05

*The Din of Celestial Birds* fiction by Brian Evenson, ~~\$10.95~~ \$9.85

*The Empty Church: The Suicide of Liberal Christianity* by Thomas C. Reeves, ~~\$12.00~~ \$10.80 paper

*The Morning Breaks: Stories of Conversion and Faith in the Former Soviet Union* by Howard L. Biddulph, ~~\$16.95~~ \$14.35

*Polygamous Families in Contemporary Society* by Irwin Altman and Joseph Ginat, ~~\$27.95~~ \$25.15

*Prophets and Brothers* fiction by Brian Evenson, ~~\$10.00~~ \$9.00, limited auto-

graphed edition; ~~\$6.00~~ \$4.50 standard edition; both paper

*Rhetoric of Fiction* by Wayne C. Booth, ~~\$16.95~~ \$15.25

*Rhetoric of Irony* by Wayne C. Booth, ~~\$16.95~~ \$14.35

*Russia and the Restored Gospel* by Gary Browning, ~~\$21.95~~ \$19.75

*Same-Sex Dynamics among Nineteenth Century Americans: A Mormon Example* by D. Michael Quinn, ~~\$20.95~~ \$26.95

*Secrets Keep* novel by Linda Sillitoe, ~~\$15.95~~ \$14.35

*The Tabernacle Bar* novel by Susan Palmer, ~~\$17.95~~ \$16.15

*Utah in the 1990s: A Demographic Perspective* edited by Tim B. Heaton, Thomas A. Hirschl, and Bruce A. Chadwick, ~~\$10.95~~ \$17.85

*What's a Mother to Do?* humor by Ann Edwards Cannon, ~~\$12.95~~ \$11.65

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## THE WORD BAZAAR

### MORMON ORGANIZATIONS

#### MORMON ALLIANCE

Ecclesiastical/spiritual abuse occurs when a Church officer, acting in his calling and using the weight of his office, coerces compliance, imposes his personal opinions as Church doctrine or policy, or resorts to such power plays as threats and intimidation to insure that his views prevail in a conflict of opinions. The suggestion is that the member's faith is weak, testimony inadequate, and commitment to the Church lacking. The member who wants to talk about the issue frequently finds that the leader accuses him or her of "not supporting Church leaders."

The Alliance listens to people who want to talk about such experiences. By documenting cases, we hope to encourage more sensitive leaders and more empowered members.

To report cases, write to the Mormon Alliance (6337 Highland Drive, Box 215, Salt Lake City, UT 84121) or telephone Lavina Fielding Anderson (801/467-1617). Subscriptions are \$30 per calendar year and include four newsletters and the annual volume of case reports. 111

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