

SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, AND ART

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Claims and
Book of Mormon

by Don
Bradley

Controversies of
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December 2010—\$7.50

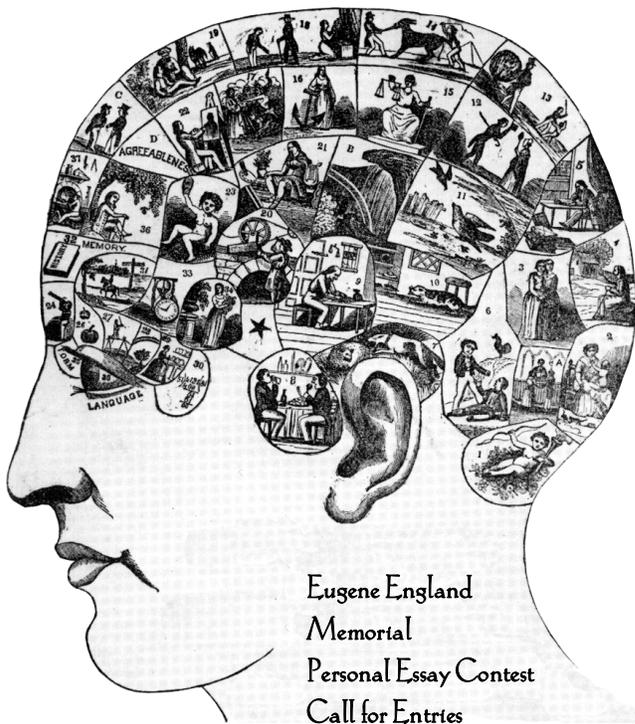


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SUNSTONE invites writers to enter the 2011 Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest, made possible by the Eugene and Charlotte England Education Fund. In the spirit of Gene's writings, entries should relate to Latter-day Saint experience, theology, or worldview. Essays, without author identification, will be judged by noted Mormon authors and professors of literature. Winners will be announced by 31 May 2011 on Sunstone's website, SUNSTONEMAGAZINE.COM. Winners only will be notified by mail. After the announcement, all other entrants will be free to submit their stories elsewhere.

PRIZES: A total of \$450 will be shared among the winning entries.

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3. In the body of the email, the author must state the essay's title and the author's name, address, telephone number, and email. The author must also include language attesting that the entry is her or his own work, that it has not been previously published, that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere, and that it will not be submitted to other publishers until after the contest. The author must also grant permission for the manuscript to be filed in the SUNSTONE Collection at the Marriott Library of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. If the entry wins, SUNSTONE magazine retains first-publication rights though publication is not guaranteed. The author retains all literary rights. SUNSTONE discourages the use of pseudonyms; if used, the author must identify the real and pen names and the reasons for writing under the pseudonym.

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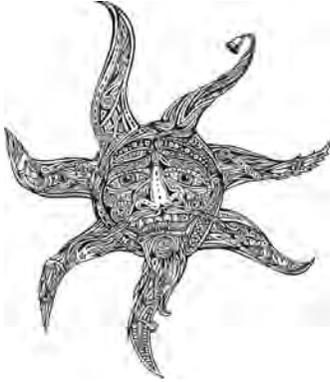
INDEPENDENCE

SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, & ART

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REMEMBERING LAMBDA DELT

IN HER EXCELLENT tribute to a beloved spiritual mentor, Laurie N. DiPadova-Stocks fails to mention the vital role played by the Church co-ed fraternity, Lambda Delta Sigma, in the 40's and 50's, which Lowell Bennion founded. As an appendage to the University of Utah's Institute of Religion led by Bennion and his fabulous colleagues (T. Edgar Lyon, George Boyd, Marion D. Hanks, and others), Lambda Delta Sigma afforded social experiences and opportunities to serve that surpassed those of even the elitist Greek clubs that many of us could not afford or that would have passed us over—and offered memorable spiritual enforcement as well. I've always contended that the combination—Institute and Lambda Delt—saved literally thousands of young LDS students from faltering in their faith over the then-so prominent science vs. religion controversy, among others.

I realize that Professor DiPadova-Stocks's privileged association with Bennion came later and that she therefore could not know that as rumors first arose at the Institute regarding his forthcoming summary dismissal, some of his students did indeed come to his defense: "Didn't your students protest?" DiPadova-Stocks wonders in her article. For the record, as Lambda Delt's U of U interchapter president, I was mission-bound at that very time (spring of 1955). I and several others did charge my newly elected successor to draw up a petition in Bennion's behalf. Sadly, no one appears to have followed through, though there was, for sure, a groundswell of sentiment for him. I regret we did not do more.

THOMAS F. ROGERS
Layton, Utah

A KEEPER

YOUR LATEST ISSUE (159) is a keeper! Robert Rees's article on Glenn Beck ought to be the last word on "The Real Glenn Beck." It is penetrating, all-encompassing, and far-reaching—all delivered with Bob's signature compassion.

Laurie DiPadova-Stocks's article on Lowell Bennion is helping to keep his legacy alive—so badly needed in our un-

civil society. While I was writing Bennion's biography, Laurie was a great help to me in understanding his use of Max Weber's sociology.

Linda Sillitoe was a valued friend, beginning when *Dialogue* published her unforgettable poem, "Song of Creation," on my watch. She later acted as an interviewer for my Bennion biography. I tried to keep up with her many successes, and I loved going to lunch with her and John. I look forward to her posthumous books!

MARY BRADFORD
Leesburg, Virginia

POINT FOR POINT

ROBERT A. REES'S "Rough Stone Roaring" (SUNSTONE June 2010) routinely presents incomplete information and misidentifies or doesn't identify where Beck's critics stand politically. I'm also disappointed that Rees quoted Beck himself so little.

Rees notes that the late Senator Robert Byrd declared Beck a member of the political fringe. Byrd was a former Exalted Cyclops in the Ku Klux Klan who filibustered the Civil Rights Act for days, which

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D. Jeff Burton
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makes me wonder if he was the best person to make the case that Beck is a political extremist. Byrd later renounced his actions and obviously repented and received “redemption” from his fellow Democrats, but only after he had been a senator for a considerable time. A more realistic and purposeful comparison may be to say that Byrd and Beck have at least one thing in common—a belief in redemption.

Rees’s accusation that Beck smears Vicks Vapo-Rub under his eyes to stimulate crying is misleading. The YouTube footage Rees cites is from a photo shoot in which Beck is clearly hamming it up. In context, Beck is clearly not trying to manipulate anybody but is mocking his on-camera emotionalism.

Rees makes much of Beck’s oft-quoted comment that Obama is a racist, ignoring the fact that Beck has since apologized for that remark. Beck has gone out of his way to laud the civil rights movement; he regularly has black participants and audiences on his show who demonstrate their affinity for him.

As for the McCarthyism charges, perhaps there is a point to be made, but Rees’s support is pretty thin. As far as I can ascertain, one of Rees’s sources, Bill Press, isn’t a *Los Angeles Times* writer, as Rees asserts, but a liberal talk radio host whose writing is sometimes published in the *Times*. Bill Press is a partisan of the highest order. If you hear him calling Glenn Beck a McCarthyite, your first thought should be, “Is it Tuesday already?” If Rees is going to quote such a partisan writer, he should identify him as such.

Later Rees asserts, “Like Beck, McCarthy ‘condemned people as communists perhaps without submitting a shred of evidence,” citing only Van Jones’s case. That’s unfortunate because Van Jones was a self-identified Communist. The following is from his profile in the *East Bay Express* in his hometown of Oakland:

“I spent the next ten years of my life working with a lot of those people I met in jail, trying to be a revolutionary.” In the months that followed, he let go of any lingering thoughts that he might fit in with the status quo. “I was a rowdy nationalist on April 28th, and then the verdicts came down on April 29th,” he said. “By August, I was a Communist.”

To truly criticize Beck for being a McCarthyite, Rees should have cited an example of Beck’s attacking someone who did not identify as a Communist.

Rees also compares Beck to Father Coughlin without acknowledging what a

complicated comparison this is. Coughlin began as a big-time Roosevelt supporter; he was invited to FDR’s inauguration and even wrote sycophantic letters to FDR promising to shift his on-air positions to his 40 million listeners if that’s what the President needed. Only much later in FDR’s presidency did Coughlin decide that FDR wasn’t sufficiently socialist. Had Rees heard any of Keith Olbermann’s recent rants about his disillusionment with Obama because he’s not left-wing enough, Rees would know Olbermann is a far better Coughlin comparison than Beck is, who seems to have no trouble criticizing a myriad of things about the Bush presidency.

Rees also attacks Beck’s questioning of Rep. Keith Ellison, America’s “first Muslim congressman.” While I think Beck’s pointed questions to the congressman were inartful, Ellison is notable for his extensive ties to the virulently anti-Semitic Nation of Islam. He was with former Nation of Islam spokesman Khalid Muhammed when Muhammed unleashed a vitriolic rant against gays, Jews, whites, and others.

To Rees’s credit, when I emailed my critique to him, he invited me to appear on a Sunstone panel about Beck, and for that I give him serious praise. Considering the audience and the subject, the panel needed balance for a much more honest discussion.

KATHRYN HEMINGWAY
Sunriver, Oregon

MORMON LIBERALS AND GLENN BECK

AS A POLITICALLY conservative SUNSTONE reader, I struggled through Robert Rees’s article on Glenn Beck that appears in the June 2010 issue. I’ve long considered Dr. Rees an elder statesman of Mormon studies, and he makes some legitimate points, though Democratic commentators have made them numerous times before.

Rees joins the many liberal writers, politicians, and talk show hosts in labeling Beck a “showman propagandist” who makes “absurd comparisons” with “little regard for fact or truth,” while also questioning Beck’s sincerity by asserting he is an ignorant entertainer who uses “sophistry, fear-mongering, and demagoguery” to push his ideological agenda and to build a financial empire. Such accusations are used so often in current political discourse these days they’ve almost lost meaning and certainly add nothing to the Mormon conver-

sation about Beck.

Moreover, “Rough Stone Roaring” shows bias in that at least thirty percent of the footnotes reference far-left websites, authors, or publications, including ten footnotes to the progressive site *Media Matters*, seven from the liberal blog *Huffington Post*, and nine to various liberal activists including Bill Press, Bill Moyers, and Jim Wallis. Rees does not identify these as liberal but denominates the conservatives who criticize Beck as such. The result mirrors the partisan mudslinging of cable news shows.

National Democrats have criticized Beck mainly for his staunch opposition to President Obama’s agenda, not for his LDS membership. Rightly so, because there is very little in Beck’s presentation that exudes or indicates Mormonism, though I’ve seen Beck quote without attribution the two Mormon scriptural phrases, “the natural man is an enemy of God” and “men are that they might have joy.” Alan Rex Mitchell’s article entitled “Meet Elder Beck” in the same issue of SUNSTONE does enumerate thirteen ways Beck advocates Mormonism; but none of the points listed is unique to Mormonism, reflecting rather traditional Christian beliefs and views that Beck’s national audience likely holds. I do not believe Beck uses dog-whistle tactics to subliminally appeal to LDS Church members.

When I have watched Beck (I’ve never listed to his radio program), I’ve noticed he scrupulously avoids discussing Mormon history or overtly using Mormon themes that would be offensive to evangelicals and members of other Christian churches. (Beck talks on-air twenty hours a week, so on occasion, indiscreet flecks of his LDS religious beliefs have slipped through.) Also, Beck has invited prominent evangelical ministers to be guests on his show, including some who’ve been previously affiliated in the past with sectarian groups that have disparaged Mormonism, among them Pat Robertson, Al Sharpton, and James Dobson. Beck’s ecumenical and traditional platforms resemble those of conservative radio talk show host Shawn Hannity, a radio host and fellow pundit at Fox News. Hannity has no affiliation with the LDS Church, but after he spoke at then Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah, during the 2004 election campaign, he was asked by an audience member “When are you going to take the [LDS] missionary discussions?”

As a convert to Mormonism, it appears

to me Beck is not steeped in Mormon culture. He did not immediately support Mitt Romney's 2008 presidential campaign like the majority of LDS members did, instead preferring Rudy Giuliani. Beck eventually came around to Romney after Rudy's candidacy flailed, but only then because of his disdain for the other leading GOP contenders, John McCain and Mike Huckabee. Possibly not aware of Beck's hesitancy to support Romney, Rees argues that if Romney runs for president in 2012, he might need Beck's support to win the Mormon vote. Yet without Beck's help in 2008, Romney garnered huge contributions from Mormons and 90% of the Utah primary vote. Further, as Alan Rex Mitchell notes, Beck frequently uses mild curses on the air, which could certainly prevent many orthodox Mormons from becoming Beck followers. Lastly, Beck has stated his opinion that gay marriage is not a threat to America—a position in direct opposition to his church and the majority of LDS members.

Rees takes pains to quote many Mormon critics of Beck, arguing that Beck has "latched on to some of the worst ideas from the Mormon fringe to shape his political and social agenda." But Rees does not explain why these so-called Mormon fringe ideas, advanced prominently by Cleon Skousen more than thirty years ago, have catapulted Beck to fame and fortune, while Skousen's political ideas remain on the LDS fringes.

Interestingly, neither Rees nor any of the Mormon critics he quotes has felt it necessary to publicly repudiate Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid of Nevada on Mormon grounds when he has used intemperate language such as:

- Calling President Bush a "loser" while Reid spoke to high school students.
- Refusing to apologize on national TV after Reid called President Bush a "liar."
- Asserting that unemployed men "tend to become [domestically] abusive."
- Stereotyping Italian-Americans by comparing Italian Senator Rick Santorum to the former mob boss John Gotti.
- Stereotyping Hispanics by stating, "I don't know how anyone of Hispanic heritage could be a Republican."
- Having his spokesman blast former NFL quarterback and current Democratic congressman Heath Shuler for throwing "twice as many interceptions than touchdowns" and having a "rock-bottom 54.3 lifetime [NFL] passer rating," in response to Schuler's criticism that Reid was not managing the Senate in a bi-partisan way.
- Describing President Obama as a "light-

skinned" African-American "with no Negro dialect, unless he wanted to have one."

- Comparing opponents of Obama's healthcare reform to historical opponents of women's suffrage and the civil rights movement.

- Calling African American Supreme Court Justice Clarence Thomas an "embarrassment" who produces "poorly written" legal opinions resembling an "8th grade dissertation."

Perhaps SUNSTONE should publish a Harry Reid cover story criticizing the senator's use of disrespectful language and his troubling pattern of racial gaffes. Reid, also a convert to Mormonism, wields greater political authority than Beck does, and will historically prove to be a more influential Mormon.

Rees, using section 134 of the Doctrine and Covenants, condemns Beck for criticizing President Obama—even positing the possibility that Beck's "fear mongering" rhetoric might lead to "violence against the President." Rees has not only been silent about the potential outcome of Reid's vituperative language against President Bush but also about how fringe elements of Mormonism have influenced the senator's boorish behavior. However, if Rees or anyone else were to attack Reid on Mormon grounds the same way Beck has been assailed, it would be equally offensive and misplaced.

Another fallacious assumption implicit in Rees's anti-Beck Mormon sources is that he is extraordinarily popular in Utah when compared with other parts of the United States. I know of no empirical evidence that supports this claim. Data on cable news ratings is available nationally, and it defies credibility that Beck's audience is higher per capita in Utah than in other regions in America with similar political demographics. From personal experience, I can say that Beck is very popular where I live in Texas. Back in 2009, when he held a taxday tea-party rally at the Alamo in San Antonio, an estimated 20,000 people attended. Beck's popularity outside of Utah is also supported by *New York Times* columnist Ross Douthat, who described Beck as an "ecumenical outreach coordinator" after Beck's successful, non-partisan "Restoring Honor" rally held in Washington DC on 28 August of this year. It also strains credibility to assume that the majority of the people attending that rally, estimated between two hundred and five hundred thousand, were members of the LDS Church.

When Glenn Beck is rebuked publicly by Church members on Mormon grounds, it cheapens public discourse within the

LDS community by setting up a Mormon straw man. Furthermore, this obsession with Beck leaves the impression that he has become a stalking horse against whom left-of-center Church members can vent against in response to belonging to a mostly conservative church. At a time of stark political division in our country and within segments of the Church, Rees's article on Beck fans the flames of polarization.

MICHAEL PAULOS
San Antonio, Texas

DARWIN AND BRIGHAM

ROBERT REES'S ARTICLE about Glenn Beck in SUNSTONE's June 2010 issue is an excellent critique of Beck's twisted logic and bewildering conclusions.

In an August episode, Beck taught that Charles Darwin is the father of modern racism and the Holocaust. As evidence, Beck cited several of Darwin's statements about the physical and intellectual differences between the white man and the "savages or people of color." Beck suggested that the theory of natural selection justifies racism because Darwin produced a handful of statements that, in retrospect, seem racist. Beck ignores Darwin's abolitionist sentiments as so well documented in *Darwin's Sacred Cause: How a Hatred of Slavery Shaped Darwin's Views on Human Evolution* by Adrian Desmond & James Moore. While aboard the *Beagle*, Darwin wrote to his sister, "I have watched how steadily the general feeling, as shown at elections, has been rising against Slavery. What a proud thing for England, if she is the first European nation which utterly abolish[es] it."

The same year (1859) Darwin published the *Origin of Species*, Brigham Young spoke of "some classes of the human family that are black, uncouth, un-comely, disagreeable and low in their habits, wild, and seemingly deprived of nearly all the blessings of the intelligence that is generally bestowed upon mankind." Brother Brigham went on to declare that upon such people "the Lord put a mark upon him, which is the flat nose and black skin . . . that they should be the 'servant of servants;' and they will be, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree" (JD, Vol. 7, p. 290). Using Beck's twisted logic, we could also accuse Brother Brigham of contributing to racism and the Holocaust. But being an active LDS Church member, Beck would certainly take offense.

JONATHON MARSHALL
Ogden, Utah

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Scripture notes

A HEARTBROKEN HALLELUJAH

Save me, O God; for the waters are come into my soul. I sink in deep mire, where there is no standing; I am come into deep waters, where the floods overflow me. I am weary of my crying; my throat is dried . . .
—PSALMS 69:1–3

I'M SURE I have never before understood the Biblical David's sense of drowning and helplessness the way I do now. I don't know why David suffers in this psalm, but the metaphor sings of being stuck in mud without escape, of the waters flooding him while he cries for help. I can easily imagine David's broken heart.

At least once or twice in nearly every life, a catastrophe happens that makes us feel as if we are drowning with no hope of rescue. At those times, we cry and plead to God for a miracle until our throat is hoarse, yet we still feel our prayer is unanswered. I now know what David means by being weary of crying. A song is a prayer, but a prayer can also be a cry of despair—a hallelujah that hurts to sing.

The first line of David's heartbreaking cry for help is understood better with a clearer translation. Instead of "for the waters are come into my soul," the line could be more accurately rendered as "for the waters have come up to my neck." Part of the confusion in the King James translation is that the same Hebrew word, *nepeš*, is used for both soul and neck (or throat). So David is expressing in this psalm his feeling of flood waters coming up to his neck while he cries to the Lord for safety.

A modern song that beautifully captures the Biblical David's sense of despair is "Hallelujah" by Leonard Cohen. Although it originally garnered little attention, it has now become one of Cohen's most covered songs. The first two verses read:

Now I've heard there was a secret chord
That David played, and it pleased the Lord
But you don't really care for music, do you?
It goes like this,
The fourth, the fifth

The minor fall, the major lift,
The baffled king composing Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Your faith was strong but you needed proof
You saw her bathing on the roof
Her beauty and the moonlight overthrew you.
She tied you to a kitchen chair
She broke your throne and she cut your hair
And from your lips she drew the Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah
Hallelujah, Hallelujah

Not long ago, my wife and I received a panic-stricken call from our son's mission president in Africa. The elders' quorum president in the ward in which our son had been serving had committed suicide, and the despair of the situation led to our son's suffering a debilitating mental psychosis. When the mission office called us, our son was in a hospital with few prospects for a quick cure. Before this breakdown, his mission president had described our son as a terrific, hardworking missionary.

Often our first impulse when learning of a loved one's mental illness is to keep the news within the family because we are too ashamed to tell others. Overcoming this hesitation, for we knew this burden was too great to bear alone, my wife and I asked our bishop to enlist some ward members to fast with us. The bishop was discreet, and the ward members he asked knew only they were fasting for our missionary son.

The next Sunday, however, a ward member took me aside and said, "Don't you just wish you could knock some sense into your missionary's head when he doesn't want to work?" Suddenly I felt as if the ward information system had become a version of the old game of "telephone." The bishop's discretion had led some of the members to conclude that the problem was a lazy missionary.

It is bad enough to suffer; somehow it seems worse when your ward members operate under the wrong assumptions. Similarly well-intentioned relatives also offered poor comfort. One asked us, "How could Heavenly Father let something like this happen to his missionary?" The implication of such a question, of course, is that either we or our son are doing something Heavenly Father disapproves of, and this is his way of calling us to repentance. Neither my wife nor I believe God works this way, nor do we believe that being on a mission gives someone special

protection from life's problems. After all, what about the heartbroken families who have received a returned missionary child in a coffin?

Of course, my selfish desires overwhelmed me as well. My wife and I are nearly empty-nesters, and I had joyfully anticipated an imminent emancipation from child-rearing. Now some of my expectations of a comfortable retirement had been broken as I considered the possibility of needing to care full-time for an adult son. I was overwhelmed with sadness for the difficult life he might have ahead but also with guilt at considering my own lost prospects.

After two weeks of treatment in a hospital in Durban, South Africa, my son contracted a blood infection and pulmonary emboli. Now not only was his mental health at risk; so was his life. He was moved to intensive care, and I impulsively decided to go be with him. My decision came just days before the World Cup started in South Africa, but I eventually found flights and a place to stay. I also secured the smallest rental car I've ever had—a car that forced me to learn to drive a left-handed stick shift on the left side of the road.

I visited my son in the Catholic-run hospital in Durban two or three times a day. I stayed a full week, during which he recovered from the infection and regained physical strength. I then began to work with him so he could begin vocalizing and remembering what had happened just before he came into the hospital.

I started slowly.

"Do you remember what area you were working in before you came to the hospital?"

"Kwadabeka Ward," he replied.

I asked if he remembered the name of the bishop.

"Bishop Mthembe."

"How about the ward mission leader?"

"Brother Dumasabe."

Do you remember the elders' quorum president? He shook his head.

"No, Dad. It's too sad. I don't remember his name."

"That's OK," I said.

After a few moments, I asked if he remembered what had happened to that brother.

"He died. He was my friend." Then my son began to sob intensely. He recalled visiting the brother's children in their home shortly after they had learned the news. "We put our arms around his children and told them it would be OK."

"Go ahead and cry," I told him. "It's OK to be sad and even mad when someone we love dies." Then I changed the subject to something more mundane, but over the next few days, he remembered the quorum president's name and more of the circumstances.

This particular brother's wife had died five years before; crumbling beneath the burden, he had eventually taken his children to a park, apparently intending to kill them and then himself. Instead, he took his children home before returning to the park and shooting himself.

I know that heartbreak comes with discipleship; God has said so many times. But does it have to be this heartbreak, in this way, at this time? And as painful as it is for my son, I wonder if much of this particular heartbreak is meant for me instead of him. I seriously doubt that when he regains his normal post-teen life, he will remember very much of this episode, but it is etched on my soul. I thought I was the strong one, but I surprised myself when tears wet my cheeks and my voice cracked as I spoke with my son in the African hospital.

THERE is a new song by Amy Grant now getting widespread airtime on Christian radio stations. It's called "Better than a Hallelujah." The chorus goes:

We pour out our miseries,
God just hears a melody
Beautiful, the mess we are
The honest cries of breaking hearts
Are better than a Hallelujah.

Now when my calls for help are unheeded and I feel flood waters rising around my neck, I want to cry out, "Lord, my heart is broken" and wish that my trials were already over. But even though it kills me to confess it, I nevertheless have my own painful hallelujah to sing: "Lord, my heart is not yet broken."

MICHAEL VINSON
Star Valley, Wyoming

A place for every truth

LET THE DEAD BURY THEIR DEAD

This regular Cornucopia column features incidents from and glimpses into the life and ministry of Elder James E. Talmage as compiled by James P. Harris, who is currently working on a full-length biography of this fascinating Mormon apostle. The column title is adopted from the statement inscribed on Elder Talmage's tombstone: "Within the Gospel of Jesus Christ there is room and place for every truth thus far leaned by man or yet to be made known."

TO WHOM OR what do we owe our highest allegiance? When desires and duties conflict, how do we decide what to do? Elder Talmage faced dilemmas such as these many times during his ministry. He describes one particularly poignant incident in his 9 May 1921 journal entry:

Immediately after arrival [in Salt Lake City] I learned of the death of my Aunt Bessie—Mrs. Elizabeth Rawlinson—which occurred at San Francisco at 9:30 p.m., Pacific time, Saturday last, May 7th. She is the last of my Father's gen-

eration; and I had particular reason for desiring to be present at the funeral services. Indeed, it was Aunt Bessie's oft-repeated request that I should be present when she was laid away. I laid the matter before the Counselors in the First Presidency, President Grant being absent, and it was decided that owing to pressing duties resting upon brethren of the Twelve, few of whom are at home, I could not be given permission to make the trip to San Francisco. I confess this proved very disappointing to me; but my obligation is obvious. Hurried arrangements were made, and Wife Maia left by the noon Overland Limited for San Francisco. She was to be joined at Ogden by Cousin May Scoville, Aunt Bessie's daughter.

Elder Talmage had been ordained as a member of the Quorum of the Twelve on 8 December 1911. As part of the "apostolic charge" he was given by President Francis M. Lyman, then President of the Quorum, Elder Talmage was told "it would become his duty to hold himself in readiness to go and come at call, and that his duties as Apostle should take precedence over all others whether of a public, private, or domestic nature; to all of which he assented."

The incident above is reminiscent of Matthew 8:22–23, which says, "And another of his disciples said unto him, Lord, suffer me first to go and bury my father. But Jesus said unto him, Follow me; and let the dead bury their dead." (See also Luke 9:59–60.)

In heeding the counsel of the Brethren to not take the trip to bury Aunt Bessie, Talmage was living in accord with his own conclusions laid out in his commentary on this scriptural passage in *Jesus the Christ*, which Talmage had completed six years earlier. There Talmage stated:

Some readers have felt this injunction was harsh, though such an inference is unjustified. While it would be manifestly unfilial for a son to absent himself from his father's funeral under ordinary conditions, nevertheless if that son had been set apart to service of importance transcending all personal or family obligations, his ministerial duty would of right take precedence. Moreover, the requirement expressed by Jesus was no greater than that made of every priest during his term of active service, nor was it more afflicting than the obligation of the Nazarite vow, under which many voluntarily placed themselves. The duties of ministry in the kingdom pertained to spiritual life; one dedicated thereto might well allow those who were negligent of spiritual things, and figuratively speaking, spiritually dead, to bury their dead." (*Jesus the Christ*, 306)

Tweet is the work . . .

THE BIBLE, 140 CHARACTERS AT A TIME

Just over a year ago, religion scholar, author, editor, and Sunstone favorite Jana Riess began "Twible" (rhymes with Bible), a three-plus year project to "tweet" one Bible chapter a day. Employing a light-hearted style typical of much of the communication one finds on Twitter, the social medium that limits messages to 140 characters or fewer, Riess releases a description of, and sometimes biting commentary on, a different Bible chapter each day. You can subscribe to "Twible" by adding the Twitter feed for "@janariess" or by becoming a Facebook friend of "Jana Riess."

The following are some of our favorite Twible tweets to date:

Genesis 1: After 6 days creation, G totally wiped. Day off tomorrow. Key point: human beings v good. M & F in G's image.

Genesis 2: 2nd creation story. G forms Adam from dust; v green, 100% recycled material. Eden good. Don't eat THAT tree. Yup, that 1.

Genesis 9: They've de-arked. G sends rainbow to promise he'll never again off us by flood. Keeps earthquakes, tsunamis in reserve.

Genesis 10: Begat, begat, begat. Name index includes Ludium, Lehabim & Jerah, all now available by prescription. Ask yr dr abt Ophir.

Genesis 17: Abram now Abraham. G not thinking ahead re: Twitter character count. Name longer; foreskin snipped. Tradeoff.

Genesis 18: Ab: What if 50 righteous are in Sodom? G: OK, I won't torch if I find 50. Ab: 45? 40? 30? 20? 10? G: OK, OK! Lay off!

Genesis 20: Ab pulls the "she's my sister" thing again; successfully pimps out Sarah for more sheep, oxen & slaves. Yay Father Ab!

Ex 2: Baby Moses: I'm cool with floating down the Nile in a basket, but who is this Egyptian chick I'm supposed to call Mom?

Ex 4: G imparts cool parlor tricks & says to let Him do the talking. Mo's Wife Zippy performs bizarre *Time-Life* home circumcision.

Ex 12: G starts cooking show w only unleavened ingreds. Heb viewers follow tips; their 1stborns are saved. Egp'ns don't have cable.

Ex 20: G's Top 10. No gods, idols, blasphemy. Keep Sabbath holy & love Mom. Don't kill, cheat, steal, lie, or look @ Xmas catalogs.

Ex 26: G gets seriously over-involved in blueprints for Tabernacle. Hires HGTV designer to ensure purple & crimson drapes will "pop."

Ex 34: Once more, with feeling! G has Mo do the 2 tablets all over again. G insists he is slow to anger. Well, except that one time.

Overview of Leviticus: Don't eat this. Don't screw that. Don't touch this. Don't DO that. Thus saith the Lord.

Lev 5: You're unclean if you touch a pig, swear aloud, or sin by accident. Apologize to OCD G; slaughter ewe. Rinse. Lather. Repeat.

Lev 15: Bodily discharge v bad in both genders. Wash your sheets. Don't even think abt having sex. You just thought it, didn't you?

Lev 18: Incest is v bad. Don't go there with yr mom, sister, daughter, aunt, or SIL. And don't sacrifice your kids to Molech. Thx.

Lev 25: Every 7th year, give the land a rest. Every 50th, free some of yr slaves & cancel credit card debt. Jubilee or infomercial?

Num 1: One. One tribe of Israel! Two. TWO tribes of Israel! Ah, ah, ah. Everyone except tribe of Levi has to fill out census forms.

Num 4: News flash: Ancient Levites were actually Episcopalians. Intense preoccupation w sacred objects, violet cloths, oil & incense.

Num 19: CSI: Canaan. All forensic specialists are unclean. Don't touch a corpse, bone, or grave. You will



The serpent beguiled me, and I did Tweet.

spread Bible cooties.

Num 33: Trip review: we started in Egypt, walked a lot, camped, sent postcards & kvetched. Aaron died @123. Was it the McManna?

Overview of Deuteronomy: Moses' Big Speech. Like when you get to Disney but can't enter until AFTER Dad's lecture re: how to behave.

Deut 2: Wow, that Toastmasters class really helped Moses. He's come a long way from being "slow of speech" to a 30-chapter good-bye.

Deut 5: 10 Comms, Take 2. But now we don't just "remember" the Sabbath; we have to "observe" it. Drat. Farewell, handy loophole.

Deut 14: From "Don't boil kid in Mom's milk" we get diff pots 4 meat/dairy. I can't haz cheeseburger. Why do we make religion hard?

Deut 15: Whew, 6 years of papers are graded & I'm finally on sabbatical. Aaaaah. Too bad I also have to free my grad student slaves.

Deut 23: Important penis update: You can't be w holy folk if you're castrated, have crushed testicles, or had a recent wet dream.

Deut 32: Mo sings country ballad abt G's achy-breaky heart. G hides face; rips pix from better times. Will Isr give the truck back?

Blogwatch

THE BEST BEARDS IN MORMON HISTORY

Twenty-first century conventions aside, Mormon men have sported some dandy beards over the years. Whose was the best, though?

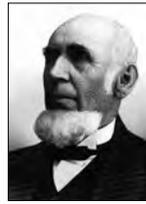
Recently the blog *Keepapitchinin* (www.keepapitchinin.org), ran a contest to determine just that. Who is the finest whisker wearer that Mormondom has ever produced?

The contest was divided into nine cleverly named categories, each category boasting four nominees and accompanying photos. Blog visitors were encouraged to vote for a winner in each category.

After more than 300 votes, a winner was determined for each category. Following this elimination round, a separate vote was held between each of the category winners to determine the overall "Best Beard in Mormon History"!

Vote for your favorites before peeking at the results at the end of this column.

GREAT GOATEES



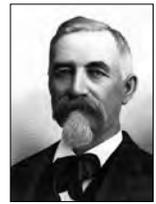
E. F. Sheets



John S. Davis



Seth M. Blair



James E. Bromley

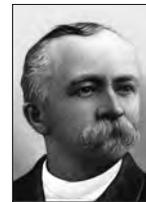
SOUL PATCHES AND CHIN STRIPS



John H. Gibbs



Amos Milton Musser

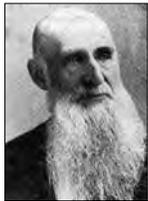


Angus M. Cannon



Moses Thatcher

THE PATRIARCHAL BEARD



George Goddard



Brigham Young

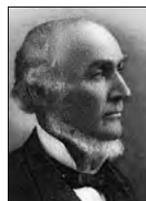


Lorenzo Snow

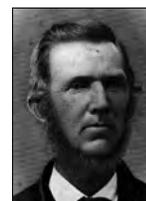


Joseph F. Smith

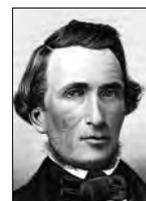
CHIN CURTAINS



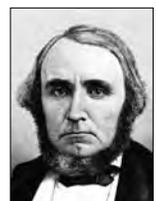
Lorin Farr



Thomas H. Woodbury



Jedediah M. Grant



William Clayton

JUNCOS



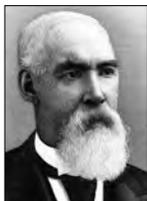
George Albert Smith



John R. Murdock

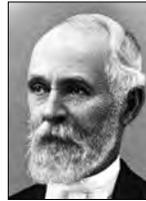


Elias Morris

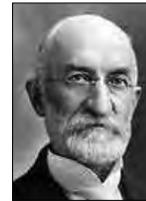


John Sharp

DIGNITY IN SIMPLICITY



John R. Winder



Heber J. Grant



William Budge

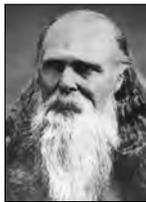


Thomas E. Ricks

THE BEARD YOU'D LEAST LIKE
TO MEET IN A DARK ALLEY



William A.
Hickman



Porter Rockwell



Orson
Hyde

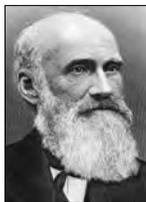


Blair Hodges
(LDS Blogger)

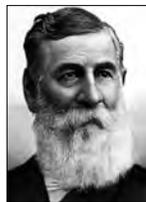
SUBBING FOR SANTA



Edward G.
Cannon



William H.
Hooper



John D.T.
McAllister



Orson
Pratt

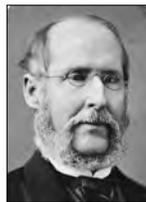
FREESTYLE



Samuel Brannon



Benjamin F.
Johnson



Albert
Carrington

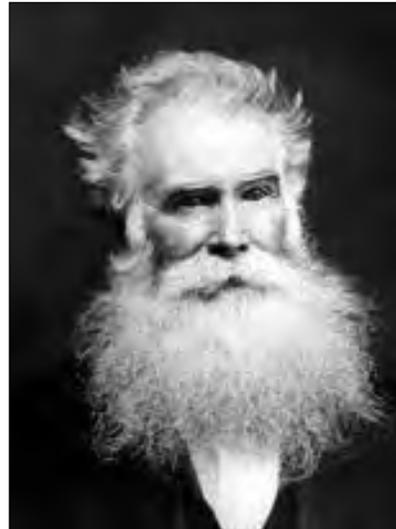


William
Whitehead
Taylor

THE RESULTS:

Second Runner-up: Porter Rockwell
First Runner-up: Heber J. Grant

AND THE AWARD FOR "BEST BEARD IN
MORMON HISTORY" GOES TO . . .



ORSON PRATT!

Following his historic win, Pratt granted a special interview to a *Keepapitchinin* reporter, part of which is reproduced here:

"Oh, shucks," Pratt murmured, his eye cast modestly toward the ground where the toe of his right boot traced the solution to a quadratic equation in the dust. "It wasn't something I set out to do. My chin was as clean-shaven as the next missionary's when I went on my first mission, and when I was called to the Quorum. But like most young men, I indulged myself once by not shaving during a fishing trip, and, well, I discovered I could grow whiskers purty fast and purty thick. Before I knew it, all the youngsters were treating me with awe in December, real eager to do their chores and such, and once I caught on to their misunderstanding, well, there was no going back. I had a time of it convincing Sarah that it was a good thing, but even she eventually came 'round."

KEEPAPITCHININ.ORG is the creation of historian and genealogist Ardis E. Parshall and is named after a comic newspaper (the Mad Magazine of its day) published in Salt Lake City in the 1860s. The blog is a great source for informative and often-entertaining glimpses into Mormon thought and culture of yesteryear. Recent posts include selected irreverences from early Church magazines, excerpts from the "She Had a Question" column in a 1912 edition of the Young Women's Journal, and a letter from Friedrich Nietzsche (yes, the "God is Dead" philosopher) in which he thanks Mormon leaders in Idaho Falls, Idaho, for the good treatment he received from the "farmers of your creed" when he was held as a prisoner of war during October and November of 1845.

Adventures of a Mormon Bookseller

MAKING A MARK ON HISTORY

In this new *Cornucopia* column, Curt Bench, owner and operator of Benchmark Books (www.benchmarkbooks.com), a specialty bookstore in Salt Lake City that focuses primarily on used and rare Mormon books, will tell stories—both humorous and appalling—from his 35-plus years in the LDS book business.

DURING MY LONG career dealing in LDS books, manuscripts, collectibles of all kinds, and even kitsch, I have seen or participated in more than my share of unusual, strange, funny, and exciting events. And I have seen some wonderful, thrilling, and even humorous books, documents, and other items come through my store. These experiences and cultural pieces have truly made my life in Mormon books an adventure.

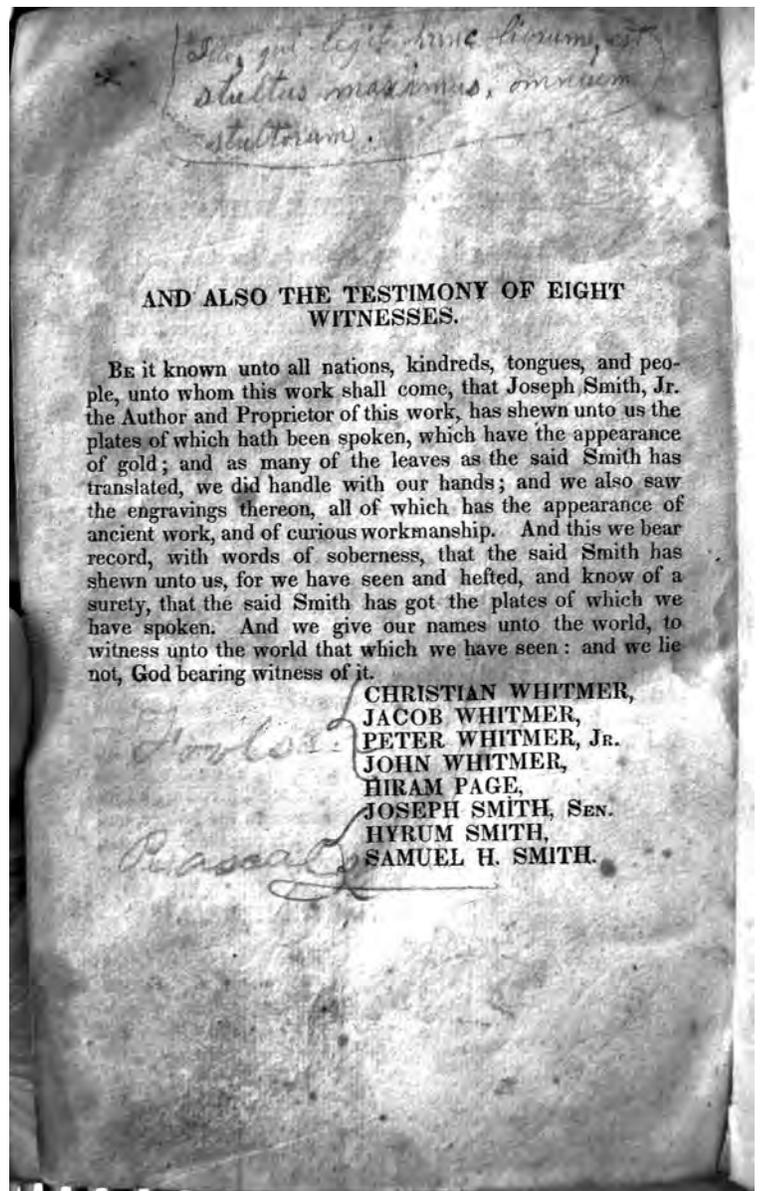
A good starting point is the tale of two of the more unusual copies of the 1830 Book of Mormon that have come through my store. The 1830 edition is the first edition and is, as you can imagine, a very valuable and highly collectible book.

The first story took place two years ago. We acquired from a public library in Michigan an 1830 Book of Mormon that had for many years been accessible to patrons in the open stacks of books. Eventually, when someone realized its immense monetary value, it was locked away but regrettably not before someone had marked it up in pencil. We don't know who wrote the comments found in the book—whether a nineteenth-century owner of the book or one of the library's patrons. Whoever it was, we have the strong impression that this person wasn't very fond of the Mormons. On the page containing the testimony of the eight Book of Mormon witnesses and the unknown commentator drew a bracket next to the names of the four Whitmers and labeled them "Fools." The three Smiths fared worse: they were deemed "Rascals." Only Hiram Page escaped judgment.

The second story involves a first-edition Book of Mormon that a couple from New Mexico brought in to sell. This copy had belonged to a member of their ward who had purchased it at a flea market. This couple was at a ward picnic when they noticed the man reading an old book. They asked what the book was, and when he told them it was an 1830 Book of Mormon, they inquired whether he would be willing to sell it to them. He said he would, but he wanted to

finish reading it first. Even after being told the book was valuable, the man said he had bought it cheap and didn't want to make money on the deal.

Ultimately, they negotiated a modest price, and taking the book from him, the couple began thumbing through it. As they did, they were horrified to see many passages underlined in blue ballpoint pen. When they asked the man about the markings, he replied that he had underlined his favorite scriptures while reading it. When this couple told me this story over the phone, I gasped aloud. When they brought it in and showed it to me, I thought I was going to be sick. Page after page of blue, underlined passages in a first edition of the Book of Mormon! Needless to say, this copy didn't fetch as high a price as it would have had this good brother had chosen to do his scripture study in a paperback missionary edition.



DEVOTIONAL

GRATITUDE:
A CONTAGIOUS CHOICE

By Frances Lee Menlove

It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities.

—ALBUS DUMBLEDORE

I BEGIN WITH A story, a story about making choices. It begins, as all good stories should, with . . .

Once upon a time, there was a peddler who earned his living by traveling to the market each Saturday and selling his wares from his horse-drawn cart. He traded in tools, pieces of farm equipment, and random housewares. One day, in preparation for his trip, he laid some squash and two bushels of fresh corn on top of some tools, and at the last minute, his wife added a bag of recently harvested sugar beets.

But when the peddler was ready to go, the horse could not move. The cart was simply too heavy. The peddler walked carefully around his cart, surveying his inventory for something that could be left behind, but could see nothing that wasn't absolutely essential. He knew he had to lighten the load. He knew it was decision time. After careful thought, he made his choice. He took off the wheels.

The moral of this parable is, of course, to look thoughtfully at our choices, to be careful about removing the very things that propel our journey. As Albus Dumbledore, Headmaster of Hogwarts School for Wizards counseled, "It is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities."

One of the choices we have in life is something that is often not considered a choice at all. Gratitude.

Gratitude is that spark that arises in us when we are thankful for even the smallest everyday courtesy: a stranger picking up a paper we have dropped, or holding the elevator door for us, or showing us how to

choose ripe mangos in a supermarket. We smile when we see pigtailed bunnies on the head of a running child, or light reflected off our grandmother's glass vase, or a bird on the branch outside our window. Each moment may be an occasion for gratitude—but maybe gratitude can be more than a spontaneous pleasant emotion. Maybe it can be an attitude of mind and heart, an attitude we can choose. Maybe gratitude is the wheels on the cart that help us move forward each day.

Philosophers and theologians have always considered gratitude a major virtue. It is prominent in our Latter-day Saint scriptures, as well as in Islam, Hinduism, and Buddhism. All religions, with their differences of belief and ritual, their claims of uniqueness and superiority, still consider gratitude a major virtue.

The ancient Roman philosopher Cicero said, "Gratitude is not only the greatest of virtues but the parent of all others."

More recently, LDS Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, took the idea one step farther, saying "Gratitude is the very essence of worship."

WELL aware of the core place of gratitude in philosophical and religious discourse, social scientists have recently more earnestly begun studying and analyzing gratitude.

In one study, participants were divided randomly into three groups. Each group was asked to write down five things about the previous week: group one writing five things they were grateful for, group two writing about five hassles they'd experienced, and group three listing any five things. Over the course of several experiments, the researchers learned that the groups keeping weekly gratitude journals reported more progress toward their personal goals, were

more optimistic, felt better about their lives, and even exercised more than those who kept weekly journals of hassles or random life events. (I love the part about the gratitude group's exercising more!)

Martin Seligman, a professor of psychology at the University of Pennsylvania, devised what he calls the gratitude visit. It works like this: Think of a person in your life who has been kind to you but whom you've never properly thanked. Write a detailed "gratitude letter" to that person, explaining in concrete terms why you're grateful to him or her. Visit that person, and read the testimony aloud. According to Seligman, the ritual is powerful. "Everyone cries when you do a gratitude visit," he says. "It's very moving for both people."

Several studies link the recollection of warm memories to a slight, but measurable, elevation in mood. We were all taught to count our blessings, and wisely so. When things go south in our lives, we can imagine what-if scenarios that are darker than our current reality. But instead of dwelling on the unexpected flat tire, we wonder what would have happened if the passerby hadn't been so helpful. We feel gratitude.

Memories such as a baby's first smile, the sighting of the Hale-Bopp comet, watching robins eggs hatch in a nest outside an upstairs window, a child's graduation from college, can invoke an inner smile. As I was conjuring up a memory for which I was grateful, I was surprised at what popped up. I remembered a particular day when I had been visiting my grandkids. Hearing riotous laughter, I went downstairs where I saw what was making the commotion. Two older grandchildren were teaching a younger one to march around the playground chanting:

*Amster, Amster, Dam Dam Dam,
Amster, Amster, Dam Dam Dam*

I am reminded to count my many blessings. I am reminded that I am very lucky to have grandchildren. It could have been otherwise.

The social science research of the last several years has concluded that gratitude is positively related to happiness, life satisfaction, inner peace, and empathy but negatively correlated with anxiety and depression. In other words, maybe Cicero was right: gratitude is a parent virtue, one that creates a ripple effect, a virtue that nurtures other virtues.

Thus, ancient philosophers, theologians, the scriptures of many religions, and contemporary social science research all agree:



FRANCES LEE MENLOVE, one of the founders of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought, holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Michigan and a Master's of Divinity from the Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She has four children, six grandchildren, and lives in Oregon. This sermon was given as a devotional address at the 2010 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (CD or download #SL10301).



Gratitude is positively good for us.

But, can we *choose* gratitude, or is something that arises only spontaneously? Can we *decide* to live gratefully? Robert A. Emmons thinks so. In fact, he has devoted his career to what he calls the “new science of gratitude.”

Emmons asserts that feelings of gratitude don’t depend on our circumstances or our genetic wiring or anything else we don’t control. In fact, even material possessions aren’t essential for a grateful disposition. Gratitude can be an attitude we choose that makes life better for ourselves and for other people.

One more thing: gratitude may be contagious. Not exactly in the way yawns are contagious or the way people tend to laugh more at a funny movie when in a theatre full of people than while watching the same movie alone, but contagious nevertheless. We humans are susceptible to catching other people’s emotions whether they be anger, fear, hilarity, or gratitude.

But before you start singing kumbaya, we must make sure we understand each other. There is a brand of pop psychology (and almost pop religion) that starts with preaching gratitude and positive thinking. But from this modest beginning, it slithers through all manner of slippery reasoning and theological sleight of hand to end up explaining that whatever happens to us is always for the best, and that whatever ails you can be traced back to your own negativity.

Further, such preachers contend that whatever you want is yours for the taking, or

the asking, or the visualizing. This philosophy is not what I’m promoting here. I am not supporting the abandonment of critical thinking. There is no single formula for coping with the pain and joy of living.

What I am talking about is more akin to what the astrophysicist Carl Sagan, of *Billions and Billions* fame, suggests as a kind of deep, profound gratitude—a sense of awe. All you cooks in the audience listen to Sagan’s mini-meditation: “If you want to make an apple pie from scratch, you must first create the universe.”

Gratitude seems to provide a framework for processing the events in our lives. A framework of awe. A framework of thankfulness. Gratitude can be the way the heart remembers.

I recently visited a Buddhist monastery in Korea. The monk who greeted us suggested we open our minds and let the winds waft through them as we proceeded up the stairs to the ancient temple. Open your minds as I tell you a story; listen deeply, and let this ancient tale have its way with you.

There were two Buddhist monks, one somber and one joyful, living miles apart. The first monk prayed all day long in deep, motionless silence. The second monk would sing and dance his praises to God near a huge tree in the monastery garden.

One day, an angel appeared to the first monk and said, “I have come from God. You have been given permission to ask God one question. What is your question?” The

somber monk looked up and asked, “How many more lives must I live before I attain self-realization?”

The angel left him and reappeared miles away to the second monk, who was singing and dancing before God. The angel said, “I have come from God. You have been given permission to ask God one question. What is your question?” Without hesitation, the joyful monk asked, “How many more lives must I live before I attain self-realization?” And with that, the angel disappeared.

One week later, the angel returned to the somber monk and said, “I have the answer you seek. You must live three more lives before you attain self-realization.” Hearing this, the first monk fell dejectedly into heavy sobbing, “Three more lives, three more lives. Oh, no,” he cried, “three

more lives.”

The angel left and appeared to the dancing monk. “I have your answer,” the angel said. “Do you see that tree around which you have been dancing and singing your praises to God?”

“Yes,” replied the joyful monk.

“You must live as many more lives as there are leaves on that tree before you will attain self-realization,” the angel said.

The monk looked up at the tree and said, “Why, there must be ten thousand leaves on that tree. Only ten thousand lives? Only ten thousand more lives, and I will attain self-realization!” And the monk began to sing and dance joyfully before God.

Suddenly a deep voice thundered from heaven, “My child, this day you have attained self-realization.”

This story depicts gratitude as almost a state of being. The joyful monk is an example of President Hinckley’s assertion that gratitude is the essence of worship. Being grateful for the shining moon, the orange on the counter, and the open book on the table. Grateful when the right word comes to mind, when a name is remembered—and a sense of humor when it doesn’t. Grateful for the laughter of the kids running around the front yard. Grateful for the astounding space photographs taken by the Hubble telescope. Grateful for the gift of life.

Bottom line, gratitude is a choice that Albus Dumbledore, that wonderful, wise Headmaster of Hogwarts, would certainly approve of.

TOUCHSTONES

TRANSCENDENCE

TOOLS, NOT IDOLS

THE NEXT TIME someone asks me why Mormons don't discuss the specifics of temple ceremonies, even amongst themselves, I am going to say this: "To leave each of us free to interpret the temple in our own way; to protect it from correlation." I used to crave more open discussion about temple rituals so that I could figure out their real, fixed meaning once and for all. Now I am almost thankful for the secrecy—the symbols, the archetypes, the influence of Masonry—whatever keeps the endowment from being easily codified by a committee.

Now that I feel free to apply my own reading to the endowment, I find it surprisingly universalist. I am delighted at how Mormonism's highest ordinances are not very Mormon at all in an institutional sense. Mormonism's ultimate worship experience actually points away from itself, to a universalizing faith. Although one must be very Mormon in order to be admitted to the temple, once one is inside, where is Joseph Smith? The Restoration? The cultural politics? The institutional church? It's almost as though we need to embrace the extremes (unbelief or partisan belief) before coming to the temple to discover that denominationalism is a means, not an end. Now that I have stumbled on transcendence, so many of those turns of phrase and

symbols that used to bother or puzzle me, I see as endearing trappings: tools, not idols; convenient media for teaching, but not literal at all. God really does want me to transcend Mormonism, not get hung up on it. And that's one reason I love Mormonism.

JOANNE CASE

North Manchester, Indiana

"LOOK!" AND LIVE

Meditation on 3 Nephi 28

WHAT DO YOU want after I'm gone?" Zed swallowed. He had expected the question but still was not ready. No one answered.

The question echoed in the silence. *Which of you, if your child asks for bread, will give a stone? If asked for fish, will you give a snake? Ask and you will receive.*

The questioner reached out. Zed tilted his head slightly and raised an eye to see just past the head in front of him to where the questioner's hand rested briefly on another. They spoke quietly. Zed couldn't hear. The questioner touched another and another, as they spoke. Zed strained to listen, watching sincere wishes flicker across faces. The questioner turned, and Zed returned behind the head. Heart racing, he silently rehearsed familiar words. *They are delivered from that awful monster; death. If I die in the dark, it'll be because I don't ask.*

"What do you want after I'm gone?"

Zed heard the question repeated faintly, and soon less faintly. Closing his eyes, he thought he could make out others' words, asking for reunion and rest, and the questioner's response, "You're blessed."

"Zed, what do you want me to do for you when I'm gone?"

He shuddered. *My wish is a sin. I should be content with my allotment. We must die.*

"Look!"

Zed dared not move, but essayed a peek at the ground. The feet of the questioner were near. *If I touch even his clothes! The grace, justice, power, and mercy of deliverance from death.*

"I know your thoughts."

Zed's face burned.

"You want what John, whom I love, asked of me."

Zed started. Carefully, his head was raising. Tentatively, his eyes were meeting the questioner's. *As many as look with trust will live.*

"So you're more blessed, because you'll never die."

Zed was touched, not by the questioner, but by a friend at his side. The questioner continued to speak. Zed was touched again, by another friend. The questioner moved on to others. Zed almost reached out, but he realized he was not alone. They were no longer ashamed of their desire, and they lived.

LINCOLN CANNON

Mormon Transhumanist Association

HIGHWAY TO HEAVEN

THEY SAY GHOSTS are the spirits of people who are dealing with loose ends. Urgent unfinished business can make any death untimely and spawn a haunting.

Based on this theory, if my wife died tomorrow, I believe she would feel the need to come back as my driving instructor. She would haunt every car I drive. Even my rentals would come equipped with a ghostly, sarcastic GPS system with an intimate knowledge of all my weaknesses.

"Whyyyyy didn't youuuuu ahhhhpgrade?" she would moan and nag.

"Whaaaat are youuuu doing? Youuuuu should haaave turrnned therrre." (That one is my favorite—"You should have turned there." Gee, thank you for withholding that information until it was "criticism." Two blocks ago, it would have been "advice.")

Another favorite? "Waaaatch wheeeeere yourrrrr'e goooooing!" Of course, even after death, she would say this right after she pointed out something of interest: "Ahhhh,

TOUCHSTONES was inspired by "Readers Write" in The SUN magazine. TOUCHSTONES topics are intentionally broad in order to give room for a wide variety of personal expression. Writing style is not as important as the contributor's thoughtfulness, humor, and sincerity. SUNSTONE reserves the right to edit pieces, but contributors will have the opportunity to approve or disapprove of editorial changes prior to publication.

To submit a reflection by email, send it to Touchstones editor Dan Wotherspoon at: DANWOTHERSPOON@ME.COM. If submitting by mail, send it to Sunstone, 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City, Utah 84103. Submissions should be kept somewhere under 500 words, but we are willing to make exceptions for exceptional pieces.

Please submit something right away for these upcoming topics!

Upcoming Topics: { A WINDOW OPENS
PROMISED LAND



looooooook aaaat thaaat poooooony!”

She’s right, though. I do tend to look at everything but the road when I drive. And who can blame me? Have you seen the road lately? I have. I started a “career” as a stand-up comedian in 1998. Most of my gigs were in small towns without airports, so for the next ten years I drove about 75,000 miles each year. Therefore, with the authority of experience, I can say that the road is boring. It’s gray, flat, and of uniform width with several billion, white, dashed lines identical in length and uniformly spaced. Occasionally the road narrows down to two lanes of opposing traffic separated by yellow lines—and that’s where things occasionally get pretty exciting. Still, for the most part, our interstates are unbearably boring compared to everything going on around them.

Take a valley I have often driven through on my way to Denver. A mile wide, air full of hawks, maybe an eagle, and with a long, winding line of half-dead cottonwoods and deep orange willows all sidled up to a river like pigs to a trough. A river with a billion fish and water both turbulent and still, reflecting and refracting light from a naked sun in a sky as blue as Cyndi Lauper’s eye shadow.

Naturally I’m going to think about being down by the river. At its edge. Turning over

rocks, panning for gold, smelling mud, finding a body. Checking my traps and scanning the current for fish. Peering into the brush for deer, elk, bear, cougars, and Indians. Rifle in hand, knife at the ready. Every nerve spent serving my survival.

Instead I’m *driving*. My nerves are shot sitting behind the wheel, mulling over joke premises while looking for punch lines and checking mirrors instead of traps. I am consciously trying to *shut out* the beautiful scenery so I can scan, constantly scan, not down rivers for fish but behind billboards and at on-ramps for cops—uniformed people armed with guns, tasers, pads, and pens. People who scold me, raise my car insurance rates, and sternly wave me past the scenes of horrific accidents, all calm and composed like people working in their yard. The cops are at home on the road.

I’m not at home on the road. I’m between everything I know and everything that matters to me, urgently crawling along at 85 miles an hour in a machine I don’t understand, like a spirit in limbo with unfinished business ahead and behind.

When dark settles in, and my headlights let me see only a few hundred yards into my immediate future, I always get scared. Yet, mercifully, even that fear gets boring, the jitters settle into complacency, and I

calmly begin to take in all the glowing yellow warning signs. Soon they are simply depictions of ways for me to die out here: Hey, look, I could get done in by a leaping trophy buck or crushed by a falling rock! Wow, I might slide off the wet road or slam into a cow—or maybe both at the same time! Or I could simply drift off the road while day dreaming—or *literally* dreaming. Dying alone in your sleep has a whole new meaning now that we’ve entered the age of the automobile.

On the bright side, a high percentage of these various ways in which I might transcend the earthly sphere are not slow and painful. On the dark side, they all occur “out here,” on the road, far from home in the land of unfinished business. If I die out here, a haunting would definitely be in order.

I suppose if I died out on the road, I would probably haunt my own funeral. I would want more than anything to be in a room full of people who knew all my jokes and me. And I would actually love, more than the laughter of strangers, the sound of my wife’s nagging voice delivering her line with perfect timing, under her breath, tinged with irritation and I hope some grief—a bearable amount of grief: “*I told you so.*”

BENGT WASHBURN
Dettenhausen, Germany

Dr. Boiuz

DEJA VU?

THE REAL QUESTION facing the Church with regards to homosexuality is whether there is a genetic element to sexual preference. Many of the issues to be dealt with are similar to those I faced as a young man knowing that colored men could not hold the priesthood yet being told by my parents that Negroes were every bit as intelligent and able as whites. They tried to impress on me that “nigger” was an offensive term, something they had learned in Los Angeles when my father was an engineer at Lockheed. But that was a hard lesson for a young man to learn growing up in the U.S. in the 1950s. From friends, I learned all the offensive words together: nigger and queer, coon and fag, darky and fairy. My father had learned to work with and respect Negroes, but he and my mother rarely discussed homosexuals. No one mentioned that my father’s cousin might be queer, a fag, a fairy. No one taught me any restraint in referring to gay men. In fact, for years I nursed a grudge that queers had co-opted a perfectly good word in an attempt to gentrify their image.

The Church finally faced the question of blacks and priesthood head-on in 1978. I was working for the Church’s historical department at the time and well recall the wave of relief and joy that greeted the announcement that all worthy males could now hold the priesthood. We have yet to face the question of gays and marriage in the same way.

I find what we Mormons are now saying and doing with regards to homosexuals to be the same kind of knee-jerk reaction as our former claims about blacks having been fence-sitters during the war in heaven, born with dark skins as a mark of their equivocation and disloyalty. At present we ask gays to transcend their emotions, to resist the desire to act on any feelings of same-sex attraction. Ostensibly, we ask them to act as we ask heterosexuals to act, allowing themselves sexual activity only within the bounds of marriage. But here is the rub: we don’t recognize any form of permissible marriage for gays, so how can they ever enjoy sexual fulfillment?

EVEN while growing up in the 1950s, I was never taught that sexual activity was bad. It was *precious*. We were to reserve it for marriage, for procreation, but it was not evil. As I grew up, more and more General Authorities spoke of it as a sacred bond between couples, not reserved for reproduction only. The Church did not

change its teaching that sex outside of marriage is improper, but I heard statements like this much less often than I used to: “We have seven children and we made love only eight times. The eighth time was a mistake.” The importance of sex to a marriage extends beyond conception, we have learned.

But if we were to take our current position regarding gays to its logical extreme, we would be creating a class of Mormon monks and nuns, welcome in the church, welcome in service to the world, welcome in the mission field but not welcome to express their deepest emotional yearning for permanent connection to one they love. We ask them to remain celibate, forever celibate, and single. Especially for young men, this is a lot to ask in a culture that still regards them as queer.

During the fuss over Proposition 8, Church spokesmen suggested that civil unions are acceptable for gay couples, just not marriages. That stance raises the question of how the Church would respond to a gay couple who had a legal civil union and were sexually active within that union, but not outside it. Would they then be able to participate in Church in full faith and fellowship? Would gay men be able to hold positions of priesthood leadership? Could they affirmatively answer the question: Do you live the law of chastity? Could they serve as proxies in the temple? For any single gay person at present, the answer to those questions is yes as long as they are not sexually active; this is the same test applied to a single straight person. But, unlike the single straight person, single gay persons cannot, at present, hope for any sexual expression that would not effectively estrange them from the Church and the gospel. And this brings us back to a connection with the question of blacks and the priesthood: if there is a genetic component to sexual preference, wouldn’t this represent gospel discrimination based on a characteristic as innate as skin color?

That point raises another hard question for us straight Mormons. If the Church were to recognize some form of civil union for gays, could we transcend our contempt, our hatred, our fear of our gay brothers and sisters?

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THE CALL OF ABRAHAM

THEIR FERVOR TRIGGERS a trip to a different dimension. The members of the Gospel Doctrine class are involved in an energetic discussion of the Abrahamic

covenant. In my cocoon, I’m aware of what’s going on, of how dynamic the exchanges are as various class members share ways that being part of that covenant blesses their lives. I’ve hardly ever seen them so animated. From my in-between space, I watch with detached fascination and begin to ask how long has it been since I’ve even *thought* about Abraham’s covenant, let alone how my life might be affected by my partaking in its responsibilities and promises. Do I even believe in things like this—that God could make a promise to one person that can create real effects in lives four millennia later? I’m pretty positive that whatever blessings my fellow class members are recounting, these are mostly *their* readings of various positive things having come into their lives partly as a result of their spiritual lineage.

Just as I generally sit in the back of the Sunday School class, for most of my waking life the Mormon sacred narrative has taken a back chair to critical thought, ethics, and a science-driven overarching vision of what the world is really like or the criteria I should use to decide what is and is not really important. I definitely like many aspects of the Mormon mythos, and I even champion some of its most compelling ideas. But I often keep myself aloof from fellow ward members. I’ve learned to step outside the gospel’s story and see it as myth, as sacred narrative, as true in only certain ways—and *they* haven’t. I’m inside the Mormon tent, yes, committed to it even; but still every story told at church gets filtered through my academy-honed lenses: “Yeah, that’s a nice idea, but come on! You *have* to know that this, that, and that are full-on mythic!” Through these lenses, I hardly ever see the heart of the person telling the story.

At this moment, however, it all shifts. During my time-out-of-time, I stop deconstructing and am flooded with love for the good, humble, remarkable people in my class who are sharing their hearts, their determinations, their dreams for their lives and those of their children. I feel the call of Abraham—and I want *in*.

FOUR years later, I still occasionally deconstruct; I still notice gaps between myth and fact. I speak up when I think an idea has the potential to send a hurtful message. But I no longer feel distant from my fellow Saints. I *am in*.

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Mapping Mormon Issues

WRITTEN BY THE FINGER OF GOD?

CLAIMS AND CONTROVERSIES OF BOOK OF MORMON TRANSLATION

PART I: HISTORY

By Don Bradley

THE ACCURACY OF THE BOOK OF MORMON'S rendering into English was so important for Mormonism's founding claims that—like the divine Sonship of Jesus in the biblical narratives of the Baptism and the Transfiguration—it needed to be declared from heaven (Matthew 3:13–17; 17:1–5; D&C 5:11–13).¹ In June 1829, the Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon saw the golden plates in vision and heard the voice of God declare: “These plates have been revealed by the power of God, and they have been translated by the power of God. The translation of them which you have seen is correct.”²

Yet despite the divine declaration that the translation was “correct,” even a number of the Book of Mormon's staunchest *defenders* assert that the English translation is sometimes over-literal, ungrammatical, and inaccurate.³ These difficulties have brought into question how the Book of Mormon was translated. Were the words of the Book of Mormon, errors and all, delivered verbatim to Joseph Smith as was widely believed in the early Church and often still today? If so, how does one explain the textual errors or his later revisions? Are the Book of Mormon's difficulties better explained by regarding Joseph Smith as an interpreter instead of a transcriber? If so, what should one make of the significant eyewitness testimony suggesting that Smith received the

translation word for word?

Part I of this article lays the groundwork for discussing these questions by offering a brief overview of how the translation was described by its witnesses and Smith's contemporaries. What do these sources assert about the translation process and the instruments Smith employed? The article will then trace the controversy that has arisen more recently over the method of translation and assess the evidence for competing claims. Part II, which will appear in the next issue of *SUNSTONE*, will explore the theological dimensions and implications of the translation question. What cultural factors have made the translation question so urgent for many Mormons? What significance does the process used to translate the Book of Mormon have for living Latter-day Saint faith?

THE BASICS OF THE TRANSLATION

EARLY MORMON ACCOUNTS consistently affirm that Joseph Smith obtained the plates on which the Book of Mormon was written, along with other sacred relics, on 22 September 1827. The plates reportedly “had the appearance of gold,” with characters engraved on them—the grooves filled with what one account describes as “a black, hard stain.”⁴

Smith began translating the Book of Mormon between December 1827 and April 1828 at his home in Harmony, Pennsylvania, and finished in late June 1829 at the home of Peter Whitmer, Sr. in Fayette, New York. At both locations, the work of translation was done in the “chamber” or upstairs room of the house. Smith and his scribe would open a translation session with prayer, but if Smith found himself unable to proceed, he would go outside to pray in solitude until he felt ready.⁵



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What would happen next is a matter of controversy. Some assert that the prophet always translated by looking into a scrying instrument that he found with the plates. The Book of Mormon called this instrument “the interpreters.” From the descriptions, the instrument consisted of two seer stones bound together by a curved rim, like the lenses of “old-fashioned spectacles.” The stones were held in front of the eyes by a rod attached to a “breastplate” worn by the user.⁶ The instrument was understood to be equivalent to the biblical Urim and Thummim, and early Mormons came to refer to it by that name; the term “Urim and Thummim” is also employed for the interpreters in D&C 17:1.⁷ (The term “Urim and Thummim” will hereafter be used interchangeably with “interpreters” and “spectacles.”) Joseph reportedly used the interpreters only when separated from his scribe by a veil.

However, another view holds that Joseph used the interpreters (and perhaps also a seer stone) to translate only the first 116 pages of the Book of Mormon. After these pages were stolen an angel reportedly took back the interpreters and Smith used a brown seer stone to continue the translation.⁸ A number of early accounts report that he placed the stone in his white stovepipe hat, then set the hat on the desk, table, or floor and peered within.⁹ But whether Smith is understood to have used the Urim and Thummim only or to have employed the seer stones as well, the various accounts concur that he used a seeing instrument. This consistency tends to confirm William James’ observation that in early Mormonism, and particularly in the case of Joseph Smith, “the inspiration seems to have been predominantly sensorial.”¹⁰

Another controversy surrounds what Joseph experienced when he looked into the scrying instrument. All witnesses who purport to describe his translation process have Smith *seeing* words to be dictated to the scribe. The most specific translation accounts states that Smith would see, on “something like parchment,” a “Reformed Egyptian” character from the plates and below it the English rendering. A single character would render sometimes just a word or two in English and sometimes several words, with Joseph apparently dictating on average about twenty to thirty words at a time.¹¹ These details do not, however, come from Smith’s accounts; they are all secondhand.

Whatever method Smith used to obtain the text, he next dictated it to a nearby scribe. The scribe would record the

dictated snippet of text and then read it back to Smith, who, apparently comparing it with the supernatural writing he saw, would either pronounce the text “correct” or instruct the scribe to modify it.¹² Those who filled the scribal role include Joseph’s wife Emma Hale Smith, her brothers Alva and Reuben Hale, Joseph’s brother Samuel Harrison Smith, Martin Harris, Oliver Cowdery, and one or more sons of Peter Whitmer, Sr.¹³

THE MEANS OF TRANSLATION

RESearchers of Mormon history have overwhelmingly agreed that Joseph Smith employed one or more instruments of translation in the process but, as noted, have disagreed over the identity of the instruments. “Official” accounts of the translation process, such as

those provided by Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery in their narratives written for the public, say simply that Smith translated the book “by the interpreters” or “by the Urim and Thummim.”¹⁴ But some accounts by Smith’s scribes or by other witnesses to the process state explicitly that he translated the book, or some portion of it, via the stone in his hat.

A further complexity is introduced by revelations to Joseph Smith suggesting that Oliver Cowdery also translated or attempted to translate a portion of the book *without* either instrument (D&C 6, 8, 9).

Despite these complications, the testimony that Joseph translated with a seer stone as well as with the interpreters is overwhelming. Newspaper accounts from as early as the spring of 1830 have Joseph “reading” the translation by “put[ting] his face into a hat” to look into his seer stone.¹⁵ More direct testimony was offered by members of Joseph Smith’s family, his scribes, those he selected as formal witnesses to the Book of Mormon, and others close to the translation work. Members of Joseph’s extended family who explicitly described him as using a seer stone to translate include his brother William¹⁶ and wife Emma,¹⁷ two of Emma’s first cousins, and her father.¹⁸ Also reporting Smith’s use of the seer stone were Martin Harris and David Whitmer, two of the Three Witnesses who testified to hearing the voice of God validate the translation.¹⁹ Harris based his report on his experience as one of Smith’s scribes, and Whitmer on firsthand observation of the process. Willard Chase, the Smith family neighbor in whose well the stone



was found, concurred, claiming his information from Joseph's brother Hyrum.²⁰

But if Joseph Smith's use of the seer stone for part of the translation is so clearly evidenced, why the accounts implying that the "Urim and Thummim" was used throughout?

Two major factors have confused the issue. First, some of the eyewitness accounts that refer to the "Urim and Thummim" may in fact be referring to the seer stone, not to the spectacle-like instrument. At the time Joseph Smith recovered, along with the golden plates, the stones of "the Urim and Thummim, which were given to the brother of Jared upon the mount" (D&C 17:1; Ether 2:22–23, 28), he already possessed his own personal set of two seer stones—a white stone and a brown stone, both acquired in 1822–1823.²¹ These two sets of stones—Smith's personal stones and the Jaredite stones—were equivalent in purpose and operation. The stones mediated revelation through a literally or metaphorically visual process. Furthermore, in each case, the two stones of a set were used individually instead of simultaneously: the Jaredite stones were reportedly set too wide in the frame of the "spectacles" for Joseph to look through both at once.²² If the Jaredite stones could be regarded as a Urim and Thummim by parallel with the biblical instrument, so could Joseph's. Consequently, Smith and his associates would refer to either set of seer stones, or to any one of the stones, as "the Urim and Thummim."²³ Given that "Urim and Thummim" became a general term for Joseph Smith's seeing instruments, confusion was inevitable, and references to use of "the Urim and Thummim" in the translation process are ambiguous.

Another factor promoting the impression that the Book of Mormon was translated using only the Jaredite interpreters is public relations. Twenty-first century Mormons and their critics are not the first to think it a little odd that Joseph Smith used the same stone to treasure-search and translate the golden plates. In October 1831, disillusioned Mormon Ezra Booth wrote that the Mormon prophet's "[buried] treasures were discovered several years since, by means of the dark glass, the same with which Smith says he translated most of the Book of Mormon."²⁴ That same month at a conference in Orange, Ohio, Hyrum Smith asked Joseph to recount the coming forth of the Book of Mormon, but the prophet refused: "Br. Joseph Smith jr. said that it was not intended to tell the world all the particulars of the coming forth of the book of Mormon, & also said that it was not expedient for him to relate these things &c."²⁵ Both Hyrum's question and Joseph's stonewalling may have been defensive reactions to disclosures about Smith using his brown stone for both the translation and treasure-seeking operations.²⁶ As one researcher has noted, "Booth was definitely not the first to make this negative connection, neither was he the last."²⁷

The early Saints thus had a motive for highlighting the role of the Urim and Thummim, or "interpreters," in the translation and eliding that of the seer stone. But regardless of how the seer stone's role might have been obscured,

friendly accounts are emphatic that it was used.

When using the seer stone, Smith did not directly consult the plates, which sometimes lay nearby concealed in a cloth and at other times were hidden in a remote location, such as the woods. Rather, he would dictate from the stone in his hat. But when translating through the interpreters, Smith was much more likely to use the plates and their associated artifacts from Cumorah's reliquary.

Smith reportedly used the interpreters for part of the lost 116 pages ("the Book of Lehi"), which he worked on between November 1827 and mid-June 1828. While using the instrument, he would seclude himself, sometimes by sitting in a room apart from the scribe but usually by surrounding himself with a curtain or veil.²⁸

Based on his 1836 interview with Joseph Smith, Truman Coe gave the following description of what would happen next:

The manner of translation was as wonderful as the discovery. By putting his finger on one of the characters and imploring divine aid, then looking through the Urim and Thummim, he would see the import written in plain English on a screen placed before him. After delivering this to his emanuensi, he would again proceed in the same manner and obtain the meaning of the next character.²⁹

As described, the device would have worked like a modern projector or one of the Masonic slide lanterns of Joseph Smith's day.³⁰ Viewed through the lens, the minute character on the plate would be projected, along with its translation, onto the screen. This might be understood as a literal fulfillment of Jesus' words to the Brother of Jared: "the language which ye shall write I have confounded; wherefore I will cause in my own due time that these stones shall *mag-nify* to the eyes of men these things which ye shall write" (Ether 3:24, emphasis added).

DIFFERING INTERPRETATIONS OF THE TRANSLATION PROCESS

SEVERAL INTERPRETATIONS OF the Book of Mormon translation process have been promoted over time, but they generally posit one of two basic modes of translation: literal-visual or conceptual.

The notion that Joseph Smith acquired the Book of Mormon's English translation by seeing it through an external instrument found its way into print within seven years of the book's production and was supported by a number of translation scribes and witnesses.

According to this interpretation, Joseph Smith and his scribe created a transcript, not of the characters from the plates, but of their English equivalent from the supernatural "parchment" shown to him. Joseph would read this English text and dictate it to the scribe, who would record it, after which the pair would proofread it against the divinely revealed original to achieve a precise match. The translation

process would therefore actually be a process of transcribing a text revealed directly from heaven, presumably one supernaturally guarded from error.³¹ The text was “translated” in the sense of being literally transferred (or copied) from one document to the other.

However, since at least the 1870s, a number of LDS thinkers have identified anomalies in the Book of Mormon that have caused them to pass over the testimonies of the translation witnesses in favor of evidence derived from the English text. Noting apparent flaws in the translation, such as ungrammatical expressions and anachronisms, these thinkers reason that the translation must have been made by fallible humans through an imprecise process.³² This model suggests that Smith was given concepts via spiritual impressions, which he then had to clothe in familiar and appropriate language. The task was like that of an artist trying to capture a scene with paint, or of a poet attempting to capture an emotion using what Smith once called the “crooked, broken, scattered and imperfect language” of human beings.³³ In this view, the translation of the Book of Mormon sprang from an interaction between God and Joseph Smith: it was a co-creative effort.³⁴

This model has considerable explanatory and apologetic potential and, moreover, corresponds to the process of personal revelation as many Latter-day Saints have experienced it. Notwithstanding the model’s appeal, important questions about it need to be raised. For instance, why would this process require translation instruments, and how can such a model be reconciled with eyewitness accounts describing a visual revelation of the text?

These two models—“transcription” and “co-creation”—have been at loggerheads since the late nineteenth century. The history of each, and of the conflict between them, will illuminate present-day controversies around the translation question.

The Literal-Visual Model

From the earliest sources, the translation of the Book of Mormon has been framed as a visual process. If sight was not the literal medium of translation, it was at least its defining metaphor, shaping even the basic actions of the process. Smith looked into instruments that he defined using visual terms: seer stones and spectacles. Smith wrote of using “spectacles” to “read” the translation. And an 1833 revelation told him that God had given him “sight and power to translate.”³⁵

Joseph went beyond merely hinting at the visual nature of the translation. Truman Coe, cited above, reported Smith’s description of literally “seeing” the words of the translation “written in plain English.”³⁶ Further accounts of visual translation were recorded in the 1840s by Joseph’s mother Lucy Mack Smith, translation benefactor Joseph Knight, and Palmyra minister John A. Clark.³⁷ And numerous parallel accounts were collected over the succeeding decades in interviews with surviving Book of Mormon witnesses (most pro-

lifically David Whitmer) and members of the Smith family.

Some witnesses’ accounts of the translation process describe what Royal Skousen, director of the Book of Mormon Critical Text Project, has called “iron clad control”: the stones would not show Smith a new segment of text until the previous segment had been transcribed verbatim from the divine parchment manuscript. Other witnesses went only so far as to describe what Skousen calls “tight control”: visual presentation of the text to Joseph through the instrument, but without a supernatural proofreading system. In each case, those describing the translation process in detail characterize it as rising at least to the level of “tight control.”³⁸

The testimony favoring visual translation is extensive and can only be summarized here. Some testimonies imply or suggest a visual method while others explicitly detail it.

The testimonies that imply a visual method do not detail the process but nonetheless employ the language of vision, reading, optical instruments, and the like. Such statements come from Joseph Smith, some witnesses, and references to the translation process in revelations. In most of his comments about the translation, Joseph said no more than that he accomplished it “by the gift and power of God” or “by the Urim and Thummim.” However, in his 1832 private history, written just three years after the fact, he gave his own (and only extant) characterization of his activity in the translation process: “the Lord had prepared spectacles for to read the Book therefore I commenced translating the characters.”³⁹

An 1831 account from non-Mormon evangelist Nancy Towle reported that Smith found with the golden plates “a pair of ‘interpreters,’ (as he called them,) that resembled spectacles: by looking into which, he could read a writing engraven upon the plates.”⁴⁰

Other early accounts that describe the translation in visual terms—e.g., that Joseph “looked” into the spectacles or seer stone to “read” the translation—come from Lucy Mack Smith⁴¹ (the translator’s mother), Oliver Cowdery⁴² (the book’s principal scribe, one of its Three Witnesses, and an attempted translator himself), Pomeroy Tucker⁴³ and John H. Gilbert⁴⁴ (participants in the book’s Palmyra printing), and contemporaneous (1829) newspapers in Palmyra and nearby Rochester.⁴⁵

The Book of Mormon itself supports a visual model. It prophesies of “Gazelem” for whom the Lord would prepare “a stone, which shall shine forth in darkness unto light” to reveal the wickedness of the Jaredites (Alma 37:23). The book describes a revelatory instrument, the Liahona, whose operations combined those of a divining rod and a seer stone along with a compass to communicate information to Lehi’s family “by a new writing” which appeared on the pointers and “was written and changed from time to time” (1 Nephi 16:29).

The idea that Joseph Smith saw the translation when he looked into the interpreters or stone, much as Lehi saw words on the Liahona, is further implied in several passages of LDS scripture: a statement that Smith had been given “sight” to translate, Book of Mormon prophecies about the golden plates’ translation, and descriptions of ancient prophets translating (D&C 3:12; 2 Nephi 3:11; 2 Nephi

27:15–22; Mosiah 8:12–17; and Alma 37: 23–25).

Although Latter-day Saints have come to associate seer-ship with translation because of Joseph Smith's experience, the connection is neither a natural one nor one that was part of the culture of supernaturalism familiar to Joseph Smith. A "seer" in that milieu was not someone with preternatural linguistic ability, but rather someone possessing supernatural sight, able to see things that were real but not present or invisible to the natural eye. Seers were called on for tasks such as finding lost or hidden objects, not for translating scripture into other languages.⁴⁶

In this milieu, to translate or receive revelation as a seer would have most naturally been understood to mean seeing the translated or revealed text. And this is certainly what it meant in the other known case of early Mormon revelation through a seer stone. One of Smith's revelations refers to Hiram Page receiving revelations in 1830 by "writing from a stone," implying that the revelation appeared on the stone (D&C 28:11). While the language used in the Doctrine and Covenants to describe Page's revelatory process is ambiguous, disaffected Mormon Ezra Booth described the process much more concretely in 1831:

Hiram Page, one of the eight witnesses . . . found a smooth stone, upon which there appeared to be a writing, which when transcribed upon paper, disappeared from the stone, and another impression appeared in its place. This when copied, vanished as the former had done, and so it continued, alternately appearing and disappearing.⁴⁷

Page's revelatory method was likely modeled on Smith's method, which Page would have known as a witness to the work of translation.

Joseph's visual translation process is explicitly detailed by many, including several translation witnesses. Those who explicitly attested to the visual nature of the process include Oliver Cowdery⁴⁸ (a scribe and one of the Three Witnesses), Martin Harris⁴⁹ (a scribe and another of the Three Witnesses); David Whitmer⁵⁰ (a translation witness and the third of the Three Witnesses); John Whitmer⁵¹ (a scribe and one of the Eight Witnesses); William Smith⁵² (the translator's brother); Elizabeth Whitmer Cowdery⁵³ (a translation witness and Oliver's wife); Joseph Knight, Sr.⁵⁴ (benefactor of the translation effort and probable witness); and even Joseph Smith himself via three secondhand accounts: Ezra Booth in 1831, Truman Coe in 1836, and David Whitmer in 1879.

In a letter published in a newspaper in the fall of 1831, Ezra Booth reported Smith's claim that "in translating," he used his dark seer stone, by means of which "[t]he subject stands before his eyes in print."⁵⁵ Coe, whose testimony on visual translation through the Urim and Thummim was discussed earlier, concluded his narration with an attribution of source: "This is the relation as given by Smith."⁵⁶ And Whitmer, who left no fewer than fourteen extant testimonies

to visual translation, reported in 1879 that "Joseph said" that "a spiritual light would shine forth" from the stone and "parchment would appear before Joseph, upon which was a line of characters from the plates, and under it, the translation in English."⁵⁷

Others close to the process provided similar details without actually naming Smith as their source. For instance, Joseph Knight, Sr., writing sometime between 1833 and 1847, said of Joseph Smith: "Now the way he translated was he put the urim and thummim into his hat and Darkned his Eyes then he would take a sentence and it would apper in Brite Roman Letters."⁵⁸

A diverse array of persons left extant accounts detailing the mechanics of the translation. They include believers and skeptics; the faithful and dissidents; family, friends, and near strangers; acquaintances of Joseph Smith from Palmyra, Colesville, Harmony, Fayette, and Kirtland; and persons who recorded their testimonies over a time span from 1831 to 1887. Yet all those who left accounts purporting to explain the translation process describe a method that was visual, in which Joseph Smith saw the text and read it to his scribe.

Given the geographical and religious diversity of the witnesses, and Joseph Smith's known links to these varied persons and their locales, he is the plausible thread that connects them—the one from whom all could have heard the same explanation of the process. And, although not explicitly identifying him as their immediate informant, these sources could only have understood such details to derive from Smith: no else could have disclosed what he alone saw in the hat. If Joseph Smith did not report seeing the words of translation through the spectacles or stone, then it seems inexplicable that those assisting him in the work uniformly and emphatically thought he did.

All extant sources that present Joseph Smith's specific actions and experiences as translator paint them in visual terms. The more detailed an account of the process, the more likely it will say that Joseph saw and read the translation as it was provided to him. Similarly, the closer an informant was to Joseph and the translation process, the more likely the informant will report that he saw the words of the translation.

Further evidence for a visual process is afforded by the translation manuscript (the original manuscript of the Book of Mormon), which contains clues to the method by which it was produced. Royal Skousen has written:

There is clear evidence in the original manuscript that Joseph Smith, as part of the translation process, could see the English spelling of names. Frequently, in the original manuscript, when a Book of Mormon name first occurs (or has not occurred for some time), that name is first written out in a more phonetic but incorrect spelling, then this incorrect spelling is crossed out and the correct spelling immediately follows.⁵⁹

This manuscript evidence confirms testimony by translation scribes Emma Smith and Martin Harris and probable scribe John Whitmer that when Joseph encountered novel or difficult names from the golden plates, he spelled them out. It also dovetails with Emma's additional testimony that her husband could not pronounce the name "Sariah" when it arose in the text early in the translation. Joseph's trouble was with pronouncing the name, not with spelling it, indicating that there was a name in front of his eyes for him to read. Smith's knowledge of how the names in the text were to be spelled but not necessarily how they were pronounced is more consistent with a visual mode of translation than with a nonvisual, conceptual one.

Reasoning from language usage patterns, instead of the methods of textual criticism, Skousen has made two further arguments that Joseph Smith was merely reading the work and not actively engaged in rendering its concepts into English. First, Skousen has reported the perplexing conclusion that the Book of Mormon's grammar and word usage make a poor fit for nineteenth-century America—but are characteristic of sixteenth-century England. Using the Oxford English Dictionary and similar sources, Skousen argues that many seemingly misused or meaningless words and phrases in the Book of Mormon make sense if understood in this earlier linguistic context. Second, he has argued that some awkward Book of Mormon phrasing is not merely poor English but "non-English," non-English that nonetheless makes good sense if understood as a literal translation from Hebrew.⁶⁰

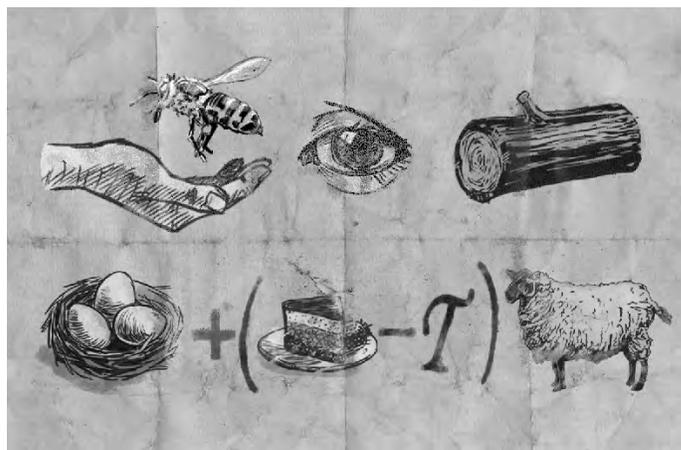
Skousen's intriguing arguments for visual translation should not be taken as definitive. The debate with other scholars that would tend to confirm, disconfirm, or reformulate Skousen's claims has not concluded, nor even yet begun. Nevertheless, there does appear to be manuscript evidence for visual translation, and the witnesses' evidence for it is clear, extensive, and long-standing.

The Conceptual Model

Evidence favoring a nonvisual translation process—in which concepts were delivered to Smith impressionistically, and not spelled out—emerged around the 1870s in response to perceived difficulties in the Book of Mormon's text. Among the view's first advocates were apostles of the Reorganized Church who, under the influence of biblical higher criticism, rejected the verbal, "plenary" inspiration of scripture⁶¹ (the idea that scripture is inspired by God word for word). That the conceptual model also gained currency among Utah saints is attested by an 1881 quotation from Joseph Smith's nephew, apostle Joseph F. Smith: "[The Prophet] Joseph did not render the writing on the gold plates into the English language in his own style of language as many people believe, but every word and every letter was given to him by the gift and power of God."⁶² Apostle Smith's firm conviction that "every word and every letter" of

the translation had been given to his uncle by God drew strength from his interview three years earlier with David Whitmer. The conceptual co-creation theory grew up very much in the shadow of the established literal-visual model.

Despite its literary complexity,⁶³ the original English text of the Book of Mormon contains a number of grammatical and syntactic errors, possible errors of fact, and instances of regional dialect. It is written in a somewhat strained Jacobean English, mixed with upstate New York dialect, including such nonstandard expressions as "they was," "in them days," and "had smote." Yet the book's translation was declared on its title page—and, according to the Three Witnesses, by the voice of God—to have been made "by the gift and power of God."



To account for this apparent contradiction, some LDS thinkers, most notably president of the Seventy B. H. Roberts, began promoting the co-creative or conceptual translation model. Writing at the time Joseph F. Smith took the reins of the Church, Roberts objected to President Smith's earlier theory of literal translation, arguing that the grammatical errors in the Book of Mormon excluded the possibility that the text was a divinely authored translation.⁶⁵

If . . . the divine instrument, Urim and Thummim, did all, and the prophet nothing—at least nothing more than to read off the translation made by Urim and Thummim—then the divine instrument is responsible for such errors in grammar and diction as did occur. But this is to assign responsibility for errors in language to a divine instrumentality, which amounts to assigning such error to God. But that is unthinkable, not to say blasphemous . . . [T]hat old theory cannot be successfully maintained . . . To advance such a theory before intelligent and educated people is to unnecessarily invite ridicule, and make of those who advocate it candidates for contempt.⁶⁶

Roberts believed that the conceptual model was supported by D&C 9, the April 1829 revelation which states

that Oliver Cowdery's attempt to translate failed partially because of his misunderstanding of the process. According to the revelation, Oliver mistakenly thought he could passively receive the translation in his mind. Instead, he needed to actively work it out—he needed to “take thought” (D&C 9:7). “You must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you . . . But if it be not right you shall have no such feelings, but you shall have a stupor of thought that shall cause you to forget the thing which is wrong” (D&C 9:8–9). Because this was the only revelation providing specific instruction about the mechanics of translation, Roberts argued that it was also the primary source on the subject, overriding secondary evidence provided by those who were present during the translation but not involved in the process.

As influential as Roberts's reasoned approach was, not everyone was persuaded. The early twentieth century saw a backlash against conceptual models such as Roberts's. When Joseph F. Smith died and Heber J. Grant became president of the Church, Grant's brother-in-law Heber Bennion held to the authority of the witness accounts in support of a literal-visual model.⁶⁷ Despite such opposition, a review of publications on the Book of Mormon indicates that the conceptual model of translation predominated throughout the twentieth century. However, this dominance was never absolute. The transcription model was retained in the Mormon cultural memory and continued to appear in the literature, if often only as a point of departure for authors arguing in favor of conceptual translation.⁶⁸

Three lines of historical evidence have been offered for a nonvisual conceptual translation process. First, certain early accounts can be read to imply such a process. Second, D&C 9 describes a nonvisual process. Third, Joseph Smith did not

treat the Book of Mormon text as an infallible, word-for-word revelation—he freely made revisions prior to the book's 1837 and 1840 printings.⁶⁹

That the translation was made by spiritual impressions, without visual input, has been argued from early accounts that speak of the translation as a process of inspiration or revelation by the Holy Ghost. An 1841 news account summarized statements by William Smith, Joseph Smith's brother, as follows: “Joseph Smith was supernaturally assisted to read and to understand the inscription.”⁷⁰ The *Evangelical Inquirer* reported in 1831 that “the angel . . . informed him [Joseph Smith] that he would be inspired to translate the inscription without looking at the plates.”⁷¹ Political correspondent Matthew L. Davis reported the following in a letter he published in a newspaper after hearing the prophet speak: “The Mormon Bible, he said, was communicated to him, direct from heaven.”⁷² And, in one of the earliest surviving accounts of the translation (from 1830), Diedrich Willers, the German Reformed pastor to the family of Peter Whitmer, Sr., wrote: “By using these spectacles, he [Smith] would be in a position to read these ancient languages . . . the Holy Ghost would reveal to him the translation in the English language.”⁷³

It should be noted that none of these statements was made by a known witness of the translation process, and three of the four are journalistic restatements. They do not detail an alternative to reports of a visual process; they are, rather, vague about the translation process. However, what they do say is potentially consistent with visual translation. “Revelation” or “inspiration” could be “communicated direct from heaven” by the Holy Ghost through a conceptual process, but also via an auditory or visual process. The statements identify the divine source of the translation but communicate nothing of the specific actions or experiences of the translator. They are process-neutral.

As demonstrated above in the discussion of B.H. Roberts, D&C 9 is a primary source that has been cited to support a nonvisual and impressionistic translation process. The revelation prescribes a process of “studying out” the scriptural text in one's mind and confirming it through a “burning in the bosom” or disconfirming it through “a stupor of thought” (D&C 9:8–9). A potential objection to the argument from D&C 9 is that the revelation prescribes this process for one translating by “the spirit of revelation,” like Oliver, not for one translating by the gift of seeing, like Joseph (D&C 8:1–4). Thus, on the logic of this objection, because Oliver was not a seer and therefore unable



“No, Joseph. You can't just download the Kindle edition.”

to translate by the seer's gift, his mode of translation would be nonvisual. But the revelation does not necessarily indicate that Joseph Smith would have translated in this same manner. Instead, D&C 9 can be understood as suggesting that the method of translation was tailored to the gifts of the translator, a concept consistent with Book of Mormon teaching on spiritual gifts (such as Moroni 10:8: "there are different ways that these gifts are administered"). By this logic, Joseph's translation of the Book of Mormon, made in his capacity as a seer employing the spectacles or seer stone, would have capitalized on his gift of second sight.

The third argument for a conceptual model is that Joseph Smith did not treat the Book of Mormon like a text divinely and infallibly translated. He treated it as something over which he had some right of authorship—and which he could improve using his expanding mental and spiritual faculties. In the two post-1830 editions of the Book of Mormon published during his lifetime, he reworded the text and allowed others to do so. He displayed no self-consciousness in sending out to the world, without explanation or justification, a Book of Mormon containing hundreds of revisions to the grammar and clarity of his original translation, and even a handful of doctrinal revisions or clarifications.⁷⁴

These revisions are difficult to reconcile with the considerable testimony that the translation was supernaturally provided to him by a visual-literal process. There is also internal textual evidence to support a conceptual model. As explained earlier, the original Book of Mormon manuscript shows signs that Joseph spelled out names to the scribes (a fact tending to confirm that he saw the text "letter by letter"); and the text may also contain usage patterns from outside Smith's environment. Yet the text displays other features more readily ascribed to Smith. The rustic grammar and provincial expressions that vexed B. H. Roberts, the book's verbal tangles, limited vocabulary, and exaggerated use of King-Jamesisms all suggest that Joseph Smith's voice manifests itself strongly in, if not throughout, the translated text.

Recent years have seen contrasting developments in which each "side" marshalls stronger arguments. The conceptual model has been extended and systematized by scholars such as Book of Mormon commentator Brant Gardner who argues that adopting the conceptual model eliminates many of the objections to Book of Mormon historicity, such as its possible misnaming of ancient American flora and fauna.⁷⁵ At the same time, the visual transcription model has garnered renewed respect from such scholars as Royal Skousen. Skousen has refuted the hypothesis of "iron clad control" by demonstrating the presence of misspelled and omitted words in the translation manuscript. Yet Skousen argues for "tight control" from manuscript evidence that Joseph read the text and often spelled out names to the scribes letter by letter, supporting witness reports that he saw them letter by letter.

Neither side in the traditional debate between the visual transcription and conceptual co-creation models can claim a monopoly even on one type of evidence, such as participant

testimony or textual features. Nor, after all this time and inquiry, does the evidence for either position seem likely to prove merely illusory. This debate, on the terms under which it has been conducted, almost certainly cannot be resolved.

The problem may not be that the translation issue is itself irresolvable, but that it needs to be engaged differently. Albert Einstein once said of encountering heady difficulties, "The significant problems we face cannot be solved at the same level of thinking we were at when we created them."⁷⁶ So it may be with this issue. Arguments on the historical and textual "level" of the traditional debate will not resolve the controversy and integrate the evidence if the conflict is rooted in unexamined theological assumptions. Nor does a sifting of the historical evidence about the translation method provide anything resembling a complete understanding of the translation's meaning and implications, nor of why it has inspired a generations-long intellectual debate that is with us still. Part II of this paper will attempt to illuminate the causes of the conflict by taking up the translation's theological, cultural, and rhetorical-symbolic meanings.

NOTES

1. The Three Witnesses in their formal testimony printed with virtually every edition of the Book of Mormon, affirmed that they saw the golden plates on which the book's original was written and knew "that they have been translated by the gift and power of God, for his voice hath declared it unto us." Several issues raised by the testimonies of the Book of Mormon witnesses will be treated in a forthcoming Mapping Mormon Issues paper in SUNSTONE.

2. Joseph Smith, History (1839), in Dean C. Jessee, editor, *The Papers of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1989), 296.

3. See, for example, Royal Skousen, "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon: Upstate New York Dialect, King James English, or Hebrew?" *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 3 (Spring 1994): 28–38; and Brant A. Gardner, *The Gift and the Power: Translating the Book of Mormon*, forthcoming from Greg Kofford books.

4. Orson Pratt attributed this description of the "black, hard stain" in the grooves of the plates to witnesses who had examined them. Sermon dated 2 January 1859, *Journal of Discourses* (Liverpool, England: 1853–1885) 7:31. Francis Gladden Bishop offered this parallel description: "The characters are rubbed over with a black substance so as to fill them up, in order that the dazzling of the gold between the characters would not prevent their being readily seen." Bishop, *A Proclamation from the Lord to His People, Scattered throughout All the Earth* (Kirtland, Ohio, n. p., 1851). Bishop's description of other features of the plates (e.g., their dimensions) closely follows that separately given by his close associate Martin Harris, but Bishop claimed to have received this knowledge by examining the plates himself.

5. Most of the sources cited on the translation of the Book of Mormon in this piece are available in John W. Welch's near-comprehensive compilation of sources, "The Miraculous Translation of the Book of Mormon," in John W. Welch, editor, *Opening the Heavens: Accounts of Divine Manifestations, 1820–1844* (Provo and Salt Lake City, Utah: Brigham Young University and Deseret Book, 2005), 77–214. Sources that may be found in this compilation will be cited as given by Welch, with both the original reference and the page numbers where they are quoted in Welch's work. The details that the translation was done in the "chamber" and opened with prayer may be found in J. L. Traugher, Jr., "Testimony of David Whitmer," *Saints' Herald* 26 (15 November 1879): 341, in Welch, 145–146; and David Whitmer interview, 15 December 1885, as reported in "The Book of Mormon," *Chicago Tribune*, 17 December 1885, 3, in Welch, 153–154; also Orson Hyde, *Ein Ruf aus der Wüste, eine Stimme aus dem Schoose der Erde* ("A Cry from the Wilderness, a Voice from the Dust of the Earth"), translation by Marvin H. Folsom, provided in Dan Vogel, editor, *Early Mormon Documents* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1996), 1:167. See also Frederick G. Mather interviews, July 1880, in Vogel, *Early Mormon Documents* (2002), 3:355.

6. In Joseph Smith History 1:35, Smith describes this instrument: “there were two stones in silver bows—and these stones, fastened to a breastplate, constituted what is called the Urim and Thummim.” In a late reminiscence of an 1890 interview with William Smith, J. W. Peterson wrote, “Explaining the expression as to the stones in the Urim and Thummim being set in two rims of a bow, he said: A silver bow ran over one stone, under the other, around over that one and under the first in the shape of a horizontal figure 8 much like a pair of spectacles.” “Statement of J. W. Peterson Concerning William Smith, May 1, 1921, Miscellaneous Letters and Papers, Community of Christ Library-Archives, in Welch, 164. Lucy Mack Smith describes them in her memoir as consisting of “two smooth three-cornered diamonds set in glass, and the glasses were set in silver bows, which were connected with each other in much the same way as old fashioned spectacles.” Lavina Fielding Anderson, editor, *Lucy’s Book: A Critical Edition of Lucy Mack Smith’s Family Memoir* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2001), 379.

7. The translation device has been called the Urim and Thummim since at least the earliest extant recording of Joseph Smith’s 1829 revelation D&C 17, but this earliest available text is an 1834 copy in the Kirtland Revelations Book. It is possible that the earlier manuscripts used the term “interpreters.” The term “Urim and Thummim” for the instrument is not attested in contemporaneous documents until early 1833, when it was used by W. W. Phelps in the January issue of the *Evening and Morning Star*. (For discussion see Richard S. Van Wagoner and Steven C. Walker, “Joseph Smith: ‘The Gift of Seeing,’ *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15 [Summer 1982], 49–63; and Stephen D. Ricks, “Joseph Smith’s Translation of the Book of Mormon,” <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/transcripts/?id=10>, accessed 12 November 2010.) However, as will become clear in this paper, the Book of Mormon translation device was used in conscious parallel to the Urim and Thummim as early as 1828.

8. See Emma Smith to Emma Pilgrim, 27 March 1870, in Welch, 129. The lost manuscript is addressed in greater detail in the author’s 21 November 2010 Sunstone lecture “The Lost Book of Lehi: Reconstructing the Book of Mormon’s Missing 116 Pages,” available via recording on the SUNSTONE website.

9. “The Book of Mormon,” *Chicago Tribune*, 17 December 1885, 3, in Welch, 153–154. John Whitmer interview with Zenas H. Gurley, as reported in S. F. Walker, “Synopsis of a Discourse Delivered at Lamoni, Iowa,” *Saints’ Herald* 26 (15 December 1879): 370, in Welch, 159. Michael Morse (brother-in-law to Emma Smith), as reported in W. W. Blair, Letter to the editor, *Saints’*

10. William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience: A Study in Human Nature* (New York: Random House, 1902), 471–472.

11. David Whitmer, as reported in James H. Hart, “About the Book of Mormon,” *Deseret Evening News*, 25 March 1884, in Welch, 151–152. That Joseph Smith ordinarily dictated twenty to thirty words at a time has been determined through text-critical methods by Royal Skousen, as described in Skousen, “Translating the Book of Mormon: Evidence from the Original Manuscript,” in Noel B. Reynolds, editor, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins* (Provo, Utah: Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies, 1997), 71–75.

12. Martin Harris, as reported in Edward Stevenson to the editor, 30 November 1881, published in the *Deseret Evening News*, 13 December 1881, in Welch, 135; and David Whitmer, as reported in the *Kansas City Daily Journal*, 5 June 1881, in Welch, 147–148.

13. For sources on the scribes to the translation, see Welch, *Opening the Heavens*, 121, 125–126, 129–134, 143, 145, 150, 168, 190, 196; Jessee, *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:234, 293; Dean C. Jessee, “The Original Book of Mormon Manuscript,” *Brigham Young University Studies*, 10:3 (Spring 1970): 259–278; and David Whitmer, as reported in the *Daily Missouri Republican* (St. Louis, MO), 16 July 1884, available online at <http://sidneyrigdon.com/dbroadhu/MO/Misr1850.htm>.

14. In an 1838 Elder’s Journal editorial intended to answer frequently asked questions, Joseph wrote that he “obtained [the plates], and the Urim and Thummim with them; by the means of which, I translated the plates; and thus came the book of Mormon.” “Answers to Questions,” *Elder’s Journal of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints I* (July 1838): 43. Oliver Cowdery wrote that he acted as scribe “day after day” while Joseph “translated, with the Urim and Thummim, or, as the Nephites would have said, ‘Interpreters.’” Oliver Cowdery to W. W. Phelps, *Messenger and Advocate* (October 1834): 14.

15. *Cincinnati Advertiser and Ohio Phoenix* (2 June 1830). Reprinted from *Wayne County Inquirer*, Pennsylvania, circa May 1830.

16. William Smith, *William Smith on Mormonism* (Lamoni, Iowa: Herald Steam Book, 1883), 80, in Welch, 164.

17. Emma Smith to Emma Pilgrim, in Welch, 129; and Emma Smith as reported in Joseph Smith, III, “Last Testimony of Sister Emma,” *Saints’ Herald* 26 (1 October 1879): 289–290, in Welch, 130.

18. Hiel Lewis, “Review of Mormonism,” *Amboy Journal*, 4 June 1879, in Welch, 193; Joseph Lewis, “Review of Mormonism,” *Amboy Journal*, 11 June 1879, in Welch, 193; and E. D. Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* [sic], (Painesville, Ohio: Telegraph Press, 1834), 264–265, in Welch, 166.

19. The documents in which Martin Harris and David Whitmer affirm that Joseph Smith translated via a seer stone are too numerous to list individually. See Welch, Documents # 52, 55, 57, 81, 85, 86, 89, 90, 92, 96, and 98.

20. Willard Chase, in Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* [sic], 243–247, in Welch, 179–180.

21. Joseph Smith’s influential contemporary Adam Clarke, commenting on “I . . . will give him a white stone” in Revelation 2:17, described an ancient divinatory practice in which decisions were made by means of a set of two stones, one white, one dark. Adam Clarke, *The New Testament of Our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ: The Text, Carefully Printed from the Most Correct Copies of the Present Authorized Version, including the Marginal Readings and Parallel Texts, with a Commentary and Critical Notes* (New York: A. Paul, 1823), 2:897. Joseph Smith’s recovery of his own “white stone,” his first seer stone, is examined at length in the author’s work in progress “Acquiring an All-seeing Eye: Joseph Smith’s First Vision as Seer Initiation and Deification Ritual.”

22. Charles Anthon to E. D. Howe, 17 February 1834, in *Mormonism Unveiled*, 17; “Statement of J. W. Peterson Concerning William Smith,” in Welch, 164.

23. For instance, several years after Joseph Smith is understood to have returned the interpreters to the angel, Oliver Cowdery blessed him that “[i]n his hands shall the Urim and Thummim remain,” employing the term “Urim and Thummim” for Joseph’s white seer stone: <http://www.saintswithouthalos.com/c/1835.phtml>, accessed 19 November 2010.

24. Ezra Booth to Rev. Ira Eddy, 24 October 1831, in “Mormonism—No. III,” *The Ohio Star* (Ravenna, Ohio), 27 October 1831 (reprinted from *New York Courier and Enquirer*). Notably, even in this early report that Joseph used a seer stone for translation it is only claimed that he used it for “most” of the book, consistent with other statements that he also employed the interpreters. Regarding Joseph Smith’s treasure searching, see Richard Lloyd Anderson, “The Mature Joseph Smith and Treasure Searching,” *BYU Studies*, 24:4 (1984): 489.

25. Minutes of a conference at Orange, Ohio, 25 October 1831, in Donald Q. Cannon and Lyndon W. Cook, editors, *Far West Record* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1983), 23.

26. “The Problematic Book of Mormon Translation: Some Obstacles and a Hypothesis,” Benjamin T. Park, unpublished manuscript, copy in possession of author.

27. *Ibid.*

28. John A. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way* (Philadelphia: W. J. and J. K. Simon, 1840), 224, 228, 230–231, in Welch, 132–133. For Joseph Smith sometimes dictating to his scribe from a separate room, see Howe, *Mormonism Unveiled* [sic], 14.

29. Truman Coe to Mr. Editor, *Hudson Ohio Observer*, 11 August 1836, in Welch, 124. An obituary for David Whitmer described differently where the translation would appear: “Smith would put on the spectacles, when a few words of the text of the Book of Mormon would appear on the lenses.” However, it is not clear that David Whitmer provided these details. Whitmer was not present during the time Smith used this instrument and appeared from his published interviews to know relatively little about it. “The Last Witness Dead!,” *Richmond Democrat* (Richmond, MO), 26 January 1888.

30. An example of one of the Masonic slides used with these lanterns (this one from the later nineteenth century) may be found in Don Bradley, “The Grand Fundamental Principles of Mormonism: Joseph Smith’s Unfinished Reformation,” in SUNSTONE, April 2006, 40.

31. I owe thanks to Benjamin Park for suggesting the analogy of visual translation to transcription.

32. As discussed below, this position has most prominently been advocated by B. H. Roberts. For more recent arguments that anachronisms in the text show Joseph Smith to have translated and influenced it, see Blake T. Ostler, “The Book of Mormon as a Modern Expansion of an Ancient Source,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 20:1 (Spring 1987): 66–123.

33. Joseph Smith to William W. Phelps, 27 November 1832, in Dean C. Jessee, compiler and editor, *Personal Writings of Joseph Smith*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret, 2002), 287.

34. The description of revelation as a “co-creation” was suggested by Blake Ostler and has been applied to the Book of Mormon by Michael Ash. Michael

Ash, "A Co-creative View of Book of Mormon Translation," <http://www.mormon-times.com/article/320/A-co-creative-view-of-Book-of-Mormon-translation>, accessed 1 October 2010.

35. This text appears in Joseph Smith's 1833 revision of his earliest written revelation (D&C 3:12). The earliest attested phrase is "right and power," but the 1833 edit changed "right" to "sight," indicating not only that he had the ability to translate, but that he did so through a visual medium.

36. Coe to Editor, in Welch, 124.

37. Each of these accounts will be discussed below.

38. Royal Skousen, "Joseph Smith's Translation of the Book of Mormon: Evidence for Tight Control of the Text," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 7:1 (1998), 22–31.

39. Jessee, ed., *The Papers of Joseph Smith*, 1:9, emphasis added.

40. Nancy Towle, *Vicissitudes Illustrated in the Experience of Nancy Towle in Europe and America* (Charleston: James L. Burges, 1832), 138–139, in Welch, 122.

41. Lucy Mack Smith, "Preliminary Manuscript," 1845, LDS Church History Library, in Welch, 163.

42. Oliver Cowdery, as reported in Josiah Jones, "History of the Mormonites," *Evangelist* 9 (1 June 1841), 132–134, in Welch, 142.

43. Pomeroy Tucker, *Origin, Rise, and Progress of Mormonism* (New York: D. Appleton, 1867), in Welch 188–189.

44. John H. Gilbert to James T. Cobb, 10 February 1879, Theodore A. Schroeder Papers, Rare Books and Manuscript Division, New York Public Library, New York, in Welch, 192.

45. "Golden Bible," *Palmyra Freeman*, August 1829, reprinted in *Rochester Advertiser and Telegraph*, 31 August 1829, in Welch, 170. (No original copies of the Palmyra Freeman article have been located.) "Golden Bible," *Rochester Gem*, 5 September 1829, 70, in Welch, 171.

46. Regarding the functions of seers, see D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. and enlarged (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), 30–65; and Alan Taylor, "The Early Republic's Supernatural Economy: Treasure Seeking in the American Northeast, 1780–1830," *American Quarterly* 38 (1986): 6–34.

47. Ezra Booth, letter, dated 29 November 1831, published as "Mormonism No. VIII," in *The Ohio Star* (Ravenna, Ohio), 8 December 1831.

48. Cowdery's only extant testimony on the actual translation process comes to us secondhand, through an 1831 newspaper account of his 1830 court testimony: "Oliver Cowd[er]y, one of the three witnesses to the book, testified under oath, that said Smith [looking into the Urim and Thummim]... was able to read in English, the [re]formed Egyptian characters, which were engraved on the plates." A.W.B. [Abram W. Benton], "Mormonites," *Evangelical Magazine and Gospel Advocate* (Utica, New York) 2:15 (9 April 1831): 120.

49. Clark, *Gleanings by the Way*, 224, 228, 230–231, in Welch, 132–133; Edward Stevenson, "The Three Witnesses to the Book of Mormon," *Millennial Star* 48 (21 June 1886): 389–390, in Welch, 136; and Andrew Jenson, editor, "The Three Witnesses," *Historical Record* 6 (May 1887): 216–217, in Welch, 137.

50. David Whitmer's testimonies to visual translation are numerous and appear in Welch's *Opening the Heavens* compilation as Documents 81, 83, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 90, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, and 98.

51. John Whitmer interview with Zenas H. Gurley, in Welch, 159.

52. William Smith, *William Smith on Mormonism*, 80, in Welch, 164.

53. William E. McLellin to "My Dear Friends," February 1870, Community of Christ Library-Archives, in Welch, 165.

54. Dean C. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," *BYU Studies* 17:1 (1976): 33–36, in Welch, 168.

55. Ezra Booth to Rev. I. Eddy, 24 October 1831, published as "Mormonism—No. III," *Ohio Star* (Ravenna, Ohio), 27 October 1831.

56. Coe to Editor, in Welch, 124.

57. Traugher, "Testimony of David Whitmer," 341, in Welch, 145–146.

58. Jessee, "Joseph Knight's Recollection of Early Mormon History," 33–36, in Welch, 168.

59. Royal Skousen, "The Book of Mormon Critical Text Project," in Susan Easton Black and Charles D. Tate Jr., editors, *Joseph Smith: The Prophet, The Man*, (Provo, UT: Brigham Young University, Religious Studies Center, 1993), 65–75.

60. Royal Skousen, "The Archaic Vocabulary of the Book of Mormon," *Insights* 25:5, available online at <http://maxwellinstitute.byu.edu/publications/insights/?vol=25&num=5&id=436>, accessed 17 November 2010. Regarding non-English Hebraisms in the Book of Mormon, see Skousen, "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon."

61. See the discussion of RLDS apostle Jason W. Briggs and biblical higher criticism in Roger D. Launius, *Joseph Smith: Pragmatic Prophet* (Urbana:

University of Illinois Press, 1995), 274–275.

62. Journal of Oliver B. Huntington, 25 February 1881, typescript, Utah State Historical Society.

63. For discussion of the Book of Mormon's underestimated literary complexity, see Grant Hardy, *Understand the Book of Mormon: A Reader's Guide* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); and Alan Goff, "How Should We Then Read? Reading Mormon Scripture After the Fall," *FARMS Review of Books* 21:1 (2009), 137–178, review of Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*; "Scratching the Surface of Book of Mormon Narratives," *FARMS Review of Books* 12:2 (2000), 51–82, review of Mark D. Thomas, *Digging in Cumorah: Reclaiming Book of Mormon Narratives*; and "Dan Vogel's Family Romance and the Book of Mormon as Smith Family Allegory," *FARMS Review of Books* 17:2 (2005), 321–400, review of Dan Vogel, *Joseph Smith: The Making of a Prophet*.

64. For grammatical errors in the Book of Mormon, see Skousen, "The Original Language of the Book of Mormon." For a critical attempt to catalog changes to the Book of Mormon text, including the correction of errors, see Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *3913 Changes in the Book of Mormon*, rev. (Salt Lake City: Utah Lighthouse Ministry, 1996).

65. Though Joseph F. Smith had in 1881 accepted David Whitmer's position that the Book of Mormon was revealed letter by letter, he may well have abandoned this position as he became aware of the numerous errors in the original translation manuscript. No other statements by him endorsing Whitmer's position are available, and he did not oppose the wide spread of B. H. Roberts's theory of conceptual translation during his presidency over the church.

66. B. H. Roberts, "Book of Mormon Translation: Interesting Correspondence on the Subject of the Manual Theory," *Improvement Era* 9 (July 1906): 706–13.

67. Heber Bennion, *Gospel Problems* (n.p., n.d. [Salt Lake City, 1920]), 8–15; and *Supplement to Gospel Problems* (Salt Lake City: The Theatre Book Shop, 1922), 16–22.

68. Twentieth century Mormon authors embracing a conceptual model of translation did not do so in ignorance of testimonies for visual translation but explicitly rejected these sources. See, for example, J. N. Washburn, *The Contents, Structure, and Authorship of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1954), 162–165; and *The Keystone of Mormonism: Early Visions of the Prophet Joseph* (Provo, Utah: Eagle Systems International, 1988), 63–83.

69. For a detailed comparison of the Book of Mormon's first three editions, see Curt A. Bench, editor, *The Parallel Book of Mormon: The 1830, 1837, and 1840 Editions* (Salt Lake City: Smith-Pettit Foundation, 2008).

70. William Smith, as reported in James Murdock, "The Mormons and Their Prophet," *Hartford and New Haven, Conn. Congregational Observer* 2 (3 July 1841):1, in Welch, 164. William Smith later reported that Joseph would "read off the translation, which appeared in the stone by the power of God" and that the translation was revealed "letter by letter." *William Smith on Mormonism*, 80; and "The Old Soldier's Testimony," *Saints' Herald* 31 (4 October 1884): 644.

71. *Evangelical Inquirer*, 7 March 1831, in Welch, 176. Far from describing a loose and impressionistic process of translation, the *Evangelical Inquirer* account describes the translation process producing an "infallible reading" of the content of the plates.

72. *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1902), 4:79. Davis's letter was written 6 February 1840 from Washington, D.C.

73. Letter from Diedrich Willers to "Reverend Brethren," 18 June 1830, in Welch, 208.

74. This may be contrasted with Joseph's perceived need for a preface in the original edition to explain the loss and replacement of the 116 pages. See Bench, ed., *The Parallel Book of Mormon*, and Douglas Campbell, "'White' or 'Pure': Five Vignettes," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29:4 (Winter 1996): 119–135. Joseph Smith's most substantive doctrinal clarification to the Book of Mormon involved changing a statement that Christ was "the Eternal Father" to read that he was "the Son of the Eternal Father" (1 Nephi 11:21). Brigham Young believed that "if the Book of Mormon were now to be rewritten, in many instances it would materially differ from the present translation" because the Saints had progressed in their readiness to receive more advanced spiritual truths. Discourse in the Tabernacle, 17 April 1870, *Journal of Discourses* 9:311.

75. Gardner, *The Gift and the Power*.

76. It is difficult to identify an original source for this widely cited quote. See Alice Calaprice, editor, *The New Quotable Einstein* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2005).

The interpretation of dreams

FULLY INVESTED

TAKING STOCK IN

UTAH COUNTY'S DREAM MINE

By Kevin Cantera

INTRODUCTION: THE COMMUNITY OF BELIEVERS

ON 14 MAY 2007, A CROWD ASSEMBLED IN THE convention hall at the Veterans Memorial Building in Spanish Fork, Utah, for the Relief Mine Company's annual stockholders' meeting. An almost festive air preceded the official meeting as about 100 investors gathered to hear the company's annual financial report about the 113-year-old mining venture. Chatter and laughter filled the hall; conversations sprang up where they had left off at last year's meeting. The majority of stockholders were older people from the surrounding area in southern Utah County, where the Relief Mine is located. A few came from farther away, some from Salt Lake City, about fifty miles to the north, others from neighboring Idaho. Nearly all were members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Many brought children and grandchildren, some of whom played tag between rows of chairs.

Since becoming available in 1909, Relief Mine stock has become something of a family heirloom, passed down from one generation to the next, and the meeting had a distinct family feel. One family had a table of books for sale, including an eschatological history of the Relief Mine. A husband and wife team moved about the crowd, striking up friendly conversation and handing out brochures describing various end-time prophecies and their imminent fulfillment. Sunburned, in well-worn jeans and dusty work boots, two old friends reclined in folding chairs and swapped prophecies about the last days.¹



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Despite the cheerful air preceding it, the official meeting was short and solemn. Company secretary Ray Koyle, a great-grandson of the man who founded the mine in 1894, conducted the day's business. The process took only a few minutes because the Relief Mine Co.—known locally as the “Dream Mine”—does little business. In fact, the company has done no actual mining for more than four decades; it has few operating expenses and brings in only a scant income. According to Koyle's review of the balance sheet and profit-and-loss statement, the total fixed assets of the Relief Mine Co. were just over \$3.5 million for 2006. Total net income for the year was about \$41,000, coming largely from rents collected on property and revenue from a small gravel pit the business operates. After his quick accounting, Ray Koyle called for the assembly to pray and on adjournment asked those “gathered here to take note of their feelings about this project. Let's focus on next year, and wait.”²

Waiting is something that Dream Mine stockholders have practiced repeatedly. In the nearly 100 years since the operation went public, shareholders have never received a dividend—the mine has never produced a significant profit. The “Dream Miners” have never unearthed a single ounce of valuable ore.³

Nevertheless, stockholders remain committed. At present, at least 706 people own stock in the Relief Mine Co., and investors seeking to purchase a stake in the mine happily place their names on a waiting list for the chance to pay \$30 to \$35 for a single share—shares with a real value, by the most generous accounting, of less than \$10 each.⁴

Stockholders willing to talk about the mine typically discuss their unrealized investment with a sense of awe and reverence, often expressing the strong tie they feel to their stake in the company. L. DeLynn “Doc” Hansen, a Utah County native, bought his first piece of the Relief Mine—100 shares—in 1980 for \$3 a share. “I was new in practice, and we were poor,” Hansen, a chiropractor, remembers. “I just pulled out the three hundred dollars and said, ‘Here you



go.' My wife didn't even question it—our last three hundred dollars to our name, and she didn't even question it."⁵

Why, despite the lack of any measurable success, does Relief Mine stock remain an object of desire? Beyond any material value, what does the mine reveal about Mormon belief? How has its meaning changed over time? For Dream Mine believers, the mine's true pot of gold exists not in a material world, but in a world yet to come.

EXCAVATING BELIEF: FAITH, FUNCTION, AND THE DREAM MINE

ON A WARM September day in 1894, John Hyrum Koyle drove a pick into the rocky soil of a cone-shaped mountain overlooking a wide swath of farmland along the southeastern shore of Utah Lake. He knew exactly where to dig. A Mormon bishop, Koyle claimed that he had received a nighttime visitation from the Angel Moroni, the same heavenly messenger who had visited Joseph Smith decades earlier in New York state, leading the boy to unearth a set of ancient gold plates that later became the Book of Mormon. Koyle said that Moroni had actually raised him into the air and brought him inside a mountain, through more than 1,000 feet of solid rock, until they came to a formation of thick, white quartz bearing an unmistakable vein of gold so accessible that it looked "like a fish ready for the frying pan."⁶ A week after the vision, Koyle and a small band of Utah County Mormons began digging into the mountain in earnest, dubbing their excavation the "Dream Mine."

Koyle left no written account of his life and claimed that he had been divinely instructed "never to make a written statement" about the mine. So the most important sources for studying the history of the Dream Mine come from two of Koyle's most ardent followers, Norman Pierce and Ogden Kraut. In his self-published chronicle of the Dream Mine, Kraut voiced the belief of many stockholders when he declared, "John H. Koyle was a man of simple faith and education, but he had a gift from God . . . His prophecies were not given for entertainment or curiosity; they were meant to convey a message of warning."⁷

As chroniclers, Pierce and Kraut reconstructed the history of the mine and its founder to echo important narratives from their Mormon faith. They crafted Koyle's history to mirror that of Mormon founder Joseph Smith. Pierce began compiling notes in 1934 for what would become *The Dream Mine Story*, a narrative he constructed from stories "repeated again and again by leading stockholders with some variations." Pierce freely admitted that "it was not always easy to pin down the true and correct version every time," but nonetheless he fashioned a story designed to mirror the founding miracles of Mormonism and thereby engender belief in Koyle's mine.⁸ Kraut knew the mine's founder only briefly and based his re-telling of the story on Pierce's book and tales related by fellow believers.

John Hyrum Koyle was the son of two Mormon pioneers: John Hyrum Koyle, Sr., and Adlinda Hillman. Born in

Nauvoo, the two made the trek westward to Utah as children, growing up in the Mormon colony of Spanish Fork. John, the couple's second child, was born on 14 August 1864. Within four years of that birth, LDS Church President Brigham Young called Koyle's family to go to the so-called "Muddy Mission," nearly 400 miles away in southern Utah, where church authorities hoped to establish a cotton colony. Life on the Muddy River was hard, and no doubt the early years of Koyle's life saw many hardships as agricultural failures and near-starvation plagued the venture. LDS authorities in Salt Lake City eventually abandoned their plan for the Muddy Mission and allowed the colonists to return home. The Koyle family moved back to Spanish Fork in 1871 with little to show for their efforts.⁹

John Koyle developed a reputation as a pious boy who often reminded his elders of their duties to the Mormon faith. By age fourteen, he had abandoned formal education and was making his living as a muleskinner, traveling throughout southern Utah County by mule and cart, selling various goods to farmers. In 1884, the year he turned twenty, Koyle married Emily Arvilla Holt. The newlyweds moved onto a farm in the lush river bottoms south of Spanish Fork, in a tiny settlement then known as Riverside and later called Leland.¹⁰

Though raised in a devout LDS household and despite his reported faithfulness, Koyle could not testify to a "burning in the bosom" about the truth of the Book of Mormon and LDS theology.¹¹ In accordance with Mormon belief, and in search of a deeper faith, the young man began to pray earnestly. He withdrew to a small grove of willow trees near the Spanish Fork River, dropped to his knees, and beseeched the Lord for the worthiness to receive, through the Holy Ghost, an unwavering testimony of faith. But when he ended his prayer, he "noticed nothing different than when he had begun to pray. No answer seemed eminent [sic], nor was any further testimony obtained."¹²

But later God did answer him. That night in a dream Pierce writes about, Koyle saw a red heifer¹³ that he had lost about three weeks earlier. In the dream, Koyle saw the heifer clearly, standing in a place he recognized, a far-off field below the Union Pacific railroad tracks. The cow faced east, its right horn broken so that the point stuck into the creature's eye.¹⁴

Koyle heard a voice ask him: "If you find your cow at this place tomorrow, will you believe that the Restored Gospel is true?"

"And unhesitatingly, John heard himself say 'Yes, sir!'"¹⁵

The next morning, Koyle rode out to the field below the railroad tracks, and as he had seen in his dream, there stood his red heifer, with its broken horn, looking at him, contentedly munching its cud.

Koyle could now claim his testimony. He was now convinced not only that the LDS gospel was true but also that God worked through his dreams. Ogden Kraut concludes: "From such a simple but marvelous beginning John H. Koyle received a special spiritual gift . . . He also made a covenant with the Lord that if He would give him [such] dreams and

visions, he would serve the Lord all the days of his life.”¹⁶

Koyle’s followers frequently measured their prophet against the founder of Mormonism. Norman Pierce unhesitatingly compared Koyle with Joseph Smith, and believed that both had been called to “establish the Church for the Millennium.” Ogden Kraut described Koyle as a “man who knew and talked with Joseph Smith, the Prophet.”¹⁷ Such ideas persist today among believers such as Fred Naisbitt, a stockholder from Ogden, Utah, some eighty miles north of the Dream Mine site, who declares fervently: “Koyle is second only to Joseph Smith in the number and accuracy of his prophecies.”¹⁸

BURIED TREASURE:

MORONI AND THE FOUNDING OF THE DREAM MINE

A FEW YEARS after the dream that confirmed his Mormon faith, Koyle served an LDS mission to the American South. We know very little about Koyle’s success as a missionary. He kept no diary, and the available sources make no mention of the converts he won. But a handful of mission-field legends help establish Koyle’s reputation as a visionary, including a story in which Koyle saved the life of J. Golden Kimball, a future General Authority.¹⁹ For Dream Mine believers, the story offers further evidence that Koyle was among God’s anointed and a vessel of divine purpose.²⁰

In 1894, his mission service complete, Koyle returned to Utah. That same year, he reported his first revelation about the mine. On the night of 27 August 1894, he received a visitation from an “exalted personage from another world, who was attired in white and radiated intelligence,”²¹ and who Koyle claimed was the Angel Moroni.

Moroni roused Koyle from his bed and led him into the chilly night and across a few miles of farmland to a mountain east of his home. With an “an eerie sort of corporeal disintegration,”²² they passed directly into the mountain, where Moroni showed Koyle a rich vein of gold within the mountain, which “would be the means of bringing much needed relief to the Lord’s people.”²³ The angel led him another 175 feet down into a cluster of nine enormous caverns hollowed into the heart of the mountain. Supported by massive pillars, the caverns contained uncounted piles of gold coins minted and buried by a group of Nephites. Dream Miners believe that the Nephites buried a number of other precious items within the mountain caverns, including the Sword of Laban, the Urim and Thummim, and the gold plates themselves. Because a large portion of the ancient record remained “sealed” by God and was never translated, Dream Miners believe that when they finally cut through the quartz and reach the treasure-filled cavern, they will be able to reveal the full dimension of the LDS Gospel.²⁴

The Angel Moroni told Koyle that God had chosen him to open the mine under the mountain, but he also warned Koyle that the gold would not “come in” and the Nephite treasure would remain buried until just before the second coming of Jesus Christ, when wars, natural disasters, and

the collapse of the American economy would create widespread suffering. Dream Mine gold would not only provide relief but also finance the gathering of Israel. One week following Moroni’s visit, Koyle and a small group of believing neighbors began digging.

SHARING THE DREAM:

KOYLE GOES PUBLIC

FOR A FEW years after Moroni’s visit, Koyle’s project remained little more than a hole in the slope of the cone-shaped mountain. With a crew of volunteers, mostly neighbors who believed in his prophetic abilities, the excavation progressed slowly. Still, as word spread that the visionary Bishop Koyle had begun his treasure quest, people joined the movement, volunteering their time and labor to be part of a project of holy possibilities.

When Koyle incorporated the Koyle Mining Company in March 1909, a decade after digging began, shares sold swiftly. The original stock issue totaled 114,000 shares, of which all but 42,000 went to Koyle and five other company officers. According to Norman Pierce, most stockholders “represented the credulous but thrifty poor among the Mormons [who] desired to help others and be an instrument of great good among his fellowmen during a time of great distress.”²⁵

The mine eventually drew the attention of LDS Church authorities, who worried that the faithful were being fleeced. In 1913, Apostle and trained geologist James E. Talmage examined a sample from the Dream Mine and declared the ore worthless. The First Presidency issued a statement in the *Deseret News* titled “A Warning Voice” that, while mentioning neither Koyle nor the Dream Mine, advised all Latter-day Saints against investing “in ventures of any kind on the specious claim of divine revelation or vision or dream . . . [and] against mining schemes which have no warrant for success beyond the professed spiritual manifestations of their projectors, and the influence gained over the excited minds of their victims.”²⁶ Five days after publication of the “Warning,” Koyle was released as bishop of the Utah County congregation he had served for more than five years. Ironically, Lars Olsen, who succeeded him as bishop, was Koyle’s dedicated follower and a laborer at the mine. In 2007, Olsen’s descendants still owned stock in the Dream Mine.²⁷

To the mine’s faithful, the Mormon Church’s opposition reflected both its fear and envy of Koyle’s power. They felt the authorities could sanction no revelation at the grassroots that had the potential to challenge their power or spark heresy. “Bishop Koyle’s prophecies and his dreams began to stir up new commotion and excitement, while faith in the spiritual powers of the Church president began to wane. This kind of embarrassment usually causes jealousy and anger,” wrote Ogden Kraut.²⁸ Though Church leadership appeared united in public, there was some division in their ranks. J. Golden Kimball was a stockholder, an LDS General Authority, and a member of the First Council of the Seventy.

Carter E. Grant, nephew of Church President Heber J. Grant, also owned stock in Koyle's enterprise.²⁹

During this same period, motivated by the promise of acceptance into America's religious mainstream, the LDS Church abandoned polygamy and began deemphasizing Joseph Smith's mystical world of miracles, magic, buried gold, holy messengers, demonic apparitions, visions, and dreams. As the Church made this pragmatic shift, Dream Miners felt marginalized, denied a role in the divine drama. However, as Kraut put it, "This opposition only proved to give new strength to the Bishop. It was clear that the Lord was sustaining him and his mission at the mine."³⁰

Church opposition and the threat of excommunication led Koyle to cease mining between 1914 and 1920. However, due to a vision Koyle claimed to have received from two of the Three Nephites, his followers and investors remained dedicated to the cause. The Nephites offered Koyle startling visions of an economic catastrophe awaiting the nation: a deflated dollar, rampant unemployment, and hunger—all harbingers of The End.³¹

During the shutdown, Koyle's believers preached his prophecies of the end times, and when the mine reopened in September 1920, work recommenced immediately. Workers pressed forward on the main shaft "as fast as miners with hand drills and powder could drive a tunnel into solid mountain rock."³² As the excavation encountered the geologic formations that Koyle had reportedly predicted, his prophetic reputation grew. Hundreds of people visited the mine to see firsthand the confirmation of prophecy, and many stayed to work in the mine, content to receive their pay in stock. Soon the main shaft descended 2,200 feet.

A CHANGE IN FOCUS: THE DREAM MINE AND ECONOMIC CRISIS

KOYLE AWOKE ONE morning in June 1929 and predicted that in precisely four months, "Wall Street will crash . . . Thousands of people on every side will be going busted."³³ When the market plunged in October, the story quickly spread that Koyle had foretold the catastrophe. Again people gathered at the Koyle farmstead not far from the mine to hear his predictions of the coming peril. He regularly updated his prophecies with new details from revelations he received while asleep.

In 1932, invigorated by the prophecies, Koyle's followers supplied money and labor to build a state-of-the-art mill, sometimes called the "White Sentinel," near the mouth of the Dream Mine tunnel to process Koyle's predicted outpouring of gold. "The money came in almost miraculously,"³⁴ remembered Pierce, who was at the Dream Mine when laborers began building the mill. With all indications seeming to point to the immediate fulfillment of Koyle's prophecies, stockholders "scraped the bottom of their Depression-worn pockets to raise the money needed to buy the equipment" that would refine the ore that would finance the gathering of Israel.³⁵ This time marked the zenith of the Dream Mine.

However, the giant mill never fulfilled the promise. Since becoming operational in 1936, it has processed only one load of ore, netting the company \$103.03. One year later, the mill shut down, and as of this printing, it stands on the mountain empty and quiet. But true believers are unshaken. In the words of Ogden Kraut: "When the Lord releases these riches, then the White Sentinel will become like an ensign to the nations for a place of relief."³⁶

Koyle, who turned 80 in 1944, kept followers' faith alive with a long list of prophecies. "Hardly a year passed without several new [dreams] being related, many of which saw rapid fulfillment,"³⁷ remembered Norman Pierce, who spent more and more time with Koyle as he grew older. Some of Koyle's prophecies failed, such as his prediction that Russian soldiers would soon overrun America. But believers drew sustenance from other revelations, such as Koyle's forecast of Japanese surrender in 1945.

In 1947, Koyle was brought before a Mormon ecclesiastical court, where he was given a choice: issue a statement denying his revelations of the Dream Mine, or face excommunication. On 8 January of the same year, the Church-owned *Deseret News* reported Koyle's decision under the headline: "John H. Koyle Repudiates All Claims Regarding the Dream Mine." The news report reproduced a notarized statement bearing Koyle's signature in which the former bishop sustained the LDS president and "appeal[ed] to all my followers to join with me in this repudiation of claims to divine guidance in connection with this mine." But within days, Koyle had repudiated the statement. He claimed that he had been forced to sign the declaration and swore that all his prophecies were true.

Koyle was finally excommunicated on 15 April 1948. He died just over a year later, at age 84. Ogden Kraut eulogized the man he considered a prophet: "Christ never saw the triumph of His Church while He lived; the Prophet Joseph Smith never saw the redemption of Zion while he was alive; and Bishop Koyle never realized the materialization of the ore deposited in that mountain. But in the Last Days, they all shall see the fulfillment of their vision."³⁹ If LDS authorities believed that Koyle's death would end the mine dream, they were disappointed. Even though no mining has occurred in decades, the dream endures.

VINDICATION DEFERRED: MODERN BELIEF IN THE DREAM MINE

AS KOYLE'S CONTEMPORARIES died, they passed their stock to a new generation of believers who could remember the Bishop only in his later years, if at all. Today's stockholders know of the Dream Mine second-hand through the yellowed stock certificates they inherited and the stories swapped among the old-timers of Utah County. Recently, the Internet has tightened the community of believers by fostering more frequent communication and interaction. Just as it always has, the Dream Mine attracts believers as an investment in the magical origins of their



Mormon faith—and in a destiny that awaits ultimate fulfillment. In the six decades since Koyle's death, his followers have continued to read the signs around them, convinced that prophecy is about to be fulfilled.

Though the LDS Church deemphasized eschatology during the years after Koyle's death, Dream Mine believers found encouragement in the religious great awakening that followed World War II when Christians, both fundamentalist and evangelical, saw signs that God had reentered history. The recreation of the state of Israel in 1948, exactly one month after Koyle's excommunication, suggested that the eschatological clock had begun to tick again. "When are the times of the gentiles [non-Mormons] to be over?" asks one Dream Mine believer in the online group devoted to Koyle and the mine. "The scriptures tell us that we can recognize it by the sign that the Jews will begin to gather in Israel. Is it just coincidence that 1948 brought about Koyle's ex[communication] at the same time that the Jews began to gather?"⁴⁰

At the center of the network of true believers is Doc Hansen, currently the Dream Mine's chief promoter. In his mid-fifties, Hansen is a devout member of the LDS Church who was raised in Utah County. As a boy, Hansen says, he was "fascinated" by the Dream Mine although he knew very little about it. "I saw the zig zag [of the road] going up the hill, and the big, white mill, and it always attracted me," he remembers. As a high school senior, Hansen finally decided to investigate. He found Norman Pierce's book in the public library and was convinced of the "truthfulness" of the narrative and Koyle's calling as a prophet. Although it would still be many years before he bought his first shares in the mine, Hansen was converted. "If you're meant to be connected with the project, the Spirit just grabs you and yanks you into the project," he says.⁴¹ Hansen has a bookshelf in his Utah County office holding dozens of titles by evangelical writers about the Last Days.

In the twenty-first century, devout Dream Miners connect in cyberspace, exchanging prophecies and opinions via a Yahoo group titled "The Dream Mine: We Are Keeping the Dream Alive." Hansen founded the e-group on 10 September 2001. In its first seven years, the group attracted close to 1,000 members and received more than 12,900 different posts. "I had about twenty people join right away, and it kept growing faster," Hansen remembers. "I have people e-mail me privately to say, 'I was led to this.' People have dreams that lead them to this group."⁴²

Although posters to the group are often anonymous, their messages offer insight into the perspectives of current Dream Mine movement members. Many posts scrutinize Koyle's prophecies in the light of current world events—wars, famines, earthquakes, and other disasters. Eager for the end of time, a 2007 poster to the group declared in reference to Koyle's prophecy of a conflict between Russia and Turkey: "Keep an eye on Turkey. Some interesting things are going on over there now . . . Climate Changes, Volcanoes, Current Events . . . Preparedness is a lot like Insurance; you have to have it before it is needed."⁴³ Koyle had predicted

that war will rage on the coastline of America, and an army of 100,000 Russians will invade North America through Canada. In the Middle East, America's armies will falter. A worldwide famine will send prices skyrocketing for basic staples like rice and wheat.⁴⁴

Postings on the Dream Mine e-group tempt believers with the recurring certainty that the end is at hand. "The mine will open up in the fall season," wrote one poster confidently in October 2001. "Will it be this fall after an economic collapse? Who knows? It has been a long hot summer. :-) Who has a farmer's almanac? What is this winter supposed to be like?"⁴⁵ That post was challenged by another core believer, who wrote simply: "The mine can't open yet. Not for 2–4 years. The parameters don't fit yet."⁴⁶

The Dream Mine prophecies, though paralleling the eschatological scenario of evangelical Christians, bear Koyle's and Mormonism's distinct imprint. Dream Mine believers predict that before the mine re-opens, the American dollar will become "worthless," and the federal government will collapse. The LDS Church will be "set in order," an enigmatic phrase about which believers regularly deliberate. An especially difficult winter will afflict Utah County the year the mine comes in, followed by spring flooding and a dry, scorching summer. With the area's weather remarkably consistent with this pattern, Dream Miners are always ready to predict that the mine is about to come in. As one poster asked in an April 2008 message to the group:

Is THIS the year? We are VERY close to the mine becoming active, and I think that Utah will be where the New Economy begins, and that the Dream Mine will help to bring back America from the brink of absolute economic devastation . . . Thank God I live in Utah, and near the mine.⁴⁷

CONCLUSION: THE PERSISTENCE OF BELIEF

TODAY, HOUSING SUBDIVISIONS sprout like wild mushrooms beneath the Dream Mine, in tracts of land which were farms in John Koyle's day. Newcomers look up at the cone-shaped mountain to the east and wonder about the odd-looking derelict building that sprawls in a cleft of the rocky mountainside. But for Dream Miners, the building is a beacon of hope. They recall that in the days just before John Koyle died, the old bishop made one final hike up Dream Mountain. On the site of the mine, squinting out over the fields where he had spent most of his life, he experienced a last vision.

He saw a "small rift in the dark clouds revealing a little spot of blue." The spot expanded, the skies opened, and "the mine and its surroundings were restored to the brilliant sunshine of a fine glorious day with all oppressiveness having vanished away."⁴⁸ True believers are certain that this final vision was God's promise to Koyle that his life had not been in vain, an assurance extended to their own lives. They remain, as Koyle's

faithful follower Norman Pierce declared, “prepared, mentally and spiritually, to be steadfast in watching and waiting for a glorious vindication that they know will come.”⁴⁹

NOTES

1. The 14 May 2007 meeting was open to the public and attended by the author, who took notes and conducted several spontaneous, casual conversations and interviews with attendees. The stock first sold in 1909 under the name Koyle Mining Co.; the company reorganized in 1961 as Relief Mine Co., allowing existing shareholders to transfer their stock.

2. Relief Mine Co. annual stockholder meeting, 14 May 2007, Spanish Fork, Utah.

3. Officers in the company as well as a number of stockholders would dispute this point. At various times in its history, the company has published assays showing moderately valuable deposits of gold and platinum ore. However, several independent analyses of samples from the mines have uniformly contradicted those tests, showing negligible amounts of valuable minerals. To examine the assay tests done of Dream Mine samples, see James P. Christianson, “An Historical Study of the Koyle Relief Mine” (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1962), 124–127.

4. Because the stock that has not been registered with the company is typically not counted in the official tally, it’s difficult to determine the exact number of stockholders who have bought and sold shares since the company went public in 1909. The above number of stockholders in 2007 comes from figures that Ray Koyle, company secretary, cited at the May 2007 stockholder meeting. The actual number of people who possess shares is thought to be considerably higher, perhaps closer to 2,000. According to company records, 463,000 “active” Relief Mine shares are outstanding. With a net worth of \$3.5 million, the one-to-one “real” value of each share is \$7.56. In fact, according to numerous sources, including Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” ix, the total number of shares in circulation is likely closer to 700,000.

5. L. DeLynn “Doc” Hansen, interview by author, 26 October 2007, Orem, Utah, tape recording.

6. Norman C. Pierce, *The Dream Mine Story* (Salt Lake City: Privately printed, 1972), 12. This is Pierce re-telling the story “as [Koyle] told it to hundreds of us so many times,” 8. Though referred to as “dreams,” Koyle’s nighttime visitations and experiences are taken as literal events by believers. Over the years, a joke developed among some of Koyle’s detractors, who said that on nights Koyle’s wife served liver and onions, he would have a new “dream” or revelation; see Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 31.

7. Ogden Kraut, *John H. Koyle’s Relief Mine* (Dugway, Utah: Kraut’s Pioneer Press, 1978), 186.

8. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, i–ii.

9. Pearson Starr Corbett, “A History of the Muddy Mission,” (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, 1968). See also W. Paul Reeve, *Making Space on the Western Frontier: Mormons, Miners and Southern Paiutes* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2006), 86–90, and Henry B. Eyring, “Remembrance and Gratitude,” *Ensign* (Nov 1989): 11. See also Jack Worlton, “The Muddy: A Mission Too Far?” 2001 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium Session, SL01314.

10. Information about Koyle’s youth comes from a Christianson interview with Ellen Rose Fillmore, younger sister of John Koyle, conducted in 1957, as well as his personal correspondence with Eveline K. Stout, of Burley, Idaho, Koyle’s daughter. See Christianson “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 16–18.

11. A testimony of the truth of the Mormon gospel, through the Holy Ghost, is an experience often called a “burning in the bosom.” This phrase is from a passage in Doctrine and Covenants (D&C), a book of Joseph Smith’s collected revelations and part of the Mormon canon: “Study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore you shall feel that it is right.” D&C 9:8. See also Luke 24:32; and Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2d Ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 785.

12. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 27. This story also appears in Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 5, and Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 47, who cites the personal memoir of C.F. Weight, a laborer at the mine.

13. The “red heifer” carries Biblical significance as part of a Judaic purification ritual in which a special cow is sacrificed and reduced to ashes, then used to cleanse anyone who has had contact with a corpse; Numbers 19: 1–13. Certain modern millennialists believe that the discovery of a red heifer will precede the building of the third temple in Jerusalem; see, for example, Rivka Gonen, *Contested Holiness: Jewish, Muslim, and Christian Perspectives on the Temple Mount in Jerusalem* (Jersey City, N.J.: KATV Publishing House, 2003), 160. However, neither the Dream Mine chronicles nor the oral traditions mention any Biblical connection.

14. Some believers say that Koyle had shown glimpses of his “dreaming”

ability as a child: see Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 3, but most seem to agree that the “red heifer dream” is the first example of Koyle’s gift of prophecy.

15. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 2; despite his use of quotation marks, this is a re-creation Pierce first recorded in the 1930s, later included in his self-published history.

16. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 28. Stockholder Mary H. Frandsen, also recounted the story of the “Red Heifer Dream” in Mary H. Frandsen, interview by Janet W. Hales, Winter 1974, Springville, Utah, interview No. BYU-110, transcript, Fife Folklore Archives, Special Collections and Archives, Utah State University Libraries, Logan, Utah.

17. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 69, and Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 178–179.

18. Fred Naisbitt, letter to author, 7 June 2007.

19. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 33. The story about Koyle’s saving the life of the beloved J. Golden Kimball does not appear in any of the common sources on Kimball. For a version of the story, see also Graham, “The Dream Mine,” 234.

20. In addition to Pierce and Kraut, this view is expressed in various internet news-group postings at “The-Dream-Mine: We Are Keeping the Dream Alive,” <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine>. See, for instance, message 12484.

21. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 6.

22. Zeese Papanikolas, *Trickster in the Land of Dreams* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1995): 63.

23. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 36.

24. Christianson cites a personal interview with Dr. Allen Brooksby in 1960, in which Brooksby, a mine assayer, offered his “firm belief” that one of the nine caverns beneath the Dream Mine contained the original gold plates, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 16.

25. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 14–15.

26. “A Warning Voice,” *Deseret News*, 2 August 1913. The original printing of this First Presidency message was signed by LDS President Joseph F. Smith. It was reprinted as: “A Renewed Warning to Members of the Church,” *Deseret News*, 29 December 1945, signed by President David O. McKay. For a thorough examination of the Church’s opposition to the mine between 1913 and Koyle’s death in 1949, see Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 21–30.

27. See Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 60; Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 35; also, a personal interview by the author with a descendant of Lars Olsen who asked to remain anonymous, 17 December 2007.

28. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 59. Both Kraut and Pierce discuss the specific visions, as do various personal interviews in Graham, “The Dream Mine.” The vision given the most weight is one in which Koyle predicted that a proposed LDS Temple in Mexico would never open, contrary to a public statement by President Joseph F. Smith. Koyle claimed he had been right when the Saints fled Mexico in 1912, and he pointed to this fulfilled prophecy as a source of “jealousy” on the part of the First Presidency. See Fife, *Saints of Sage and Saddle*, 282, and Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine.”

29. Thomas G. Alexander, *Mormonism in Transition: A History of the Latter-day Saints, 1890–1930* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1986), 296, describes the General Authorities’ investments in the Dream Mine.

30. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 77.

31. Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 42.

32. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 33.

33. Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 11, quoting the recollection of Carter Grant, from an interview in 1959.

34. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 70.

35. *Ibid.*, 66.

36. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 141. Later, some stockholders alleged that an engineer eager to sell his equipment to the mine had “spiked” the sample to show artificially elevated levels of selenium in the ore: see Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 73, and Christianson, “Historical Study of the Relief Mine,” 35.

37. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 88.

38. “John H. Koyle Repudiates All Claims Regarding Dream Mine,” *Deseret News*, 8 January 1948, 1. Pierce calls this episode the “most difficult test of [Koyle’s] lifetime, for he had often sincerely said that he valued his membership in the Church more than all the gold in the world.” *Dream Mine Story*, 93.

39. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 179.

40. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine/message/7686>

41. L. DeLynn “Doc” Hansen, interview by author, 26 October 2007, Orem, Utah.

42. *Ibid.*

43. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine/message/11841>

44. Kraut, *Relief Mine*, 190–191.

45. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine/message/283>

46. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine/message/294>

47. <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/The-Dream-Mine/message/12778>

48. Pierce, *Dream Mine Story*, 52.

49. *Ibid.*, 102.

Dialoguing toward understanding

EUGENE ENGLAND'S CALCULATED RISK: THE STRUGGLE FOR ACADEMIC FREEDOM AND RELIGIOUS DIALOGUE

By Charlotte Hansen

IN A RECENT LECTURE AT THE UNIVERSITY OF Utah, Krista Tippett, host of the NPR radio show, *Speaking of Faith*, argued that religion needs a place in the public university. During the twentieth century, most people practiced their religions privately, she said, not imagining that intelligent public religious discussion could occur without proselytizing.¹ But academia is now beginning to recognize religion and spirituality as an essential part of any discipline, and religious studies programs are being established in many U.S. universities. This new development is one that Eugene England envisioned in the 1960s when he began to see how fruitful a dialogue between the secular and spiritual could be.

England was an influential professor of English and Mormon literature who taught at Brigham Young University from 1977 to 1998, and at Utah Valley State College (now Utah Valley University) from 1998 to 2001. He was a pioneer in Mormon literature studies, responsible for many important publications, a teacher of numerous Mormon studies classes, and a founder of academic religious studies programs.

Of the many issues that England emphasized in his writings and lectures, the theme that united them is the importance of dialogue. He often quoted Joseph Smith as saying “By proving contraries truth is made manifest.”² He believed that in exploring opposing ideas and questioning assumptions, seekers can better understand each other, themselves,

and God. Though England made a strong case for the importance of dialogue, he met opposition, perhaps aptly, at both secular and religious universities.

Influenced by prominent contemporary scholars—including Lowell Bennion, Sterling McMurrin, and Jack Adamson—England began developing his interest in dialogue when he attended the University of Utah during the 1950s. In 1964, while he was a graduate student at Stanford, the U.S. headed into the Vietnam conflict, and the civil rights movement became a national phenomenon. England became politically active, helping organize anti-war rallies and petitioning for fair-housing laws. He felt his actions and the relatively liberal views driving them were aligned with core Latter-day Saint doctrines. However, administrators at the LDS Institute, where he taught, warned him that if he wanted to keep teaching, he was not to lead discussions on the ethics of violence. England wrote later,

I saw more and more how relative are the terms liberal and conservative. I found I could change from one to the other simply by walking across Stanford Avenue from the university to the Institute building. On campus, among graduate students and anti-war and civil-rights activists, I was that strange, non-smoking, short-haired, family-raising conservative; at the Institute, I was that strange liberal who renounced war and worried about fair-housing and free speech.³



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By 1965, instead of trying to fit either stereotype, England began to create his own path. Recognizing a need for a space where Mormon intellectuals could publish and engage with their questions, he co-founded *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* with several other graduate stu-

dents. Though the journal was widely considered a liberal publication, England saw himself as basically conservative. He said he helped to start *Dialogue* “for the express purpose of helping young LDS students, like those [he] taught each day at Stanford, build and preserve their testimonies.” He saw exploration as a necessary part of building and preserving one’s testimony: “The very principles I accept as definitive of my life warn me to be continually open to the revelation of new possibilities for my life from both God and man.”⁴

In his first *Dialogue* editorial, England acknowledged that though important, faithful questioning also carries a risk. The best way to encounter that risk is to engage in skillful dialogue with others. “Dialogue is possible if we can avoid

looking upon doubt as a sin—or as a virtue—but can see it as a condition, a condition that can be productive if it leads one to seek and knock and ask and if the doubter is approached with sympathetic listening and thoughtful response.”⁵

THIS IDEA OF dialogue is what motivated England to champion academic freedom; only through an honest and charitable exploration of opposing opinions can truth be found. England concluded his first editorial:

My faith as a Mormon encourages by specific doctrines my feeling that each man is eternally unique and god-like in potential, that each man deserves a hearing and that we have something important to learn from each man if we can hear him—if he can speak and we can listen well. Dialogue is possible to those who can. Such a dialogue will not solve all of our intellectual and spiritual problems—and it will not save us; but it can bring us joy and new vision and help us toward that dialogue with our deepest selves and with our God, which can save us.⁶

As one who knew the difficulties of being both academic and religious, England wanted to help students gain a constructive vision of how to be a Mormon intellectual. In an address to Brigham Young University students in 1974, he stated:

I use [the term intellectual] in an essentially neutral way, as descriptive of your gift from the Lord that makes you delight in ideas, alive to the life that goes on in your mind as well as outside it, that makes you question set forms and conventional wisdom to see if they really are truth or only habit . . . I use the term intellectual to refer to the gift from the Lord that makes you curious about why as well as how, anxious to serve Him by being creative as well as obedient.⁷

President Hugh B. Brown, one of England’s mentors and an unwavering *Dialogue* supporter, had likewise encouraged intellectual students to use this gift:

We call upon you students to exercise your God-given right to think through on every proposition that is submitted to you and be unafraid to express your opinions, with proper respect for those to whom you talk and proper acknowledgment of your own shortcomings . . . We are not so much concerned with whether your thoughts are orthodox or heterodox as we are that you shall have thoughts.⁸

However, England also pointed out the responsibilities that come with such a gift:

Those who think they see something wrong with an institution—such as the Church—are the ones who



All Images Courtesy: The Eugene Engl. And Foundat.ion

“I saw more and more how relative are the terms liberal and conservative. I found I could change from one to the other simply by walking across Stanford Avenue from the university to the Institute building.”

bear the burden of doing something about it, something effective, something that takes cognizance of their responsibility to other people and how they can respond to them; that they have no right to withdraw and throw rocks.⁹

IN 1977, WHEN England started teaching at BYU, he was delighted to find a unique and invigorating type of academic freedom: the freedom to talk positively about one's religious beliefs—to integrate them unapologetically into academic discussion. He believed that if BYU could take its motto seriously—enter to learn, go forth to serve—it could be the greatest university in the world. England said he felt a deep shock of recognition at BYU: it was home.

To begin with, BYU met England's high expectations. The first bumps in the road came when his application for tenure to full professor was delayed because English department colleagues didn't value his work in Mormon literature. Instead of focusing only on American literature and Shakespeare, he had spent much of his time promoting in-depth study of Mormon literature, which he saw as BYU's unique responsibility.

In 1989, in response to a growing number of academic freedom controversies at BYU, England wrote articles about the issue for the *Daily Universe*, the official campus paper, and the *Student Review*. "Recently a chill has come over my heart," he wrote. This chill began when he read in BYU's 1986 accreditation report that administrators were advised not to publish in *Dialogue* nor participate in Sunstone Symposia. The directive seemed to imply that these publications and forums were more dangerous than even non-Mormon publications with openly anti-Mormon content. He was also bewildered about why the *Student Review* could not be placed on stands on campus when one could easily pick up "newspapers that openly attack our values and sometimes BYU and the Church." If BYU was not willing to confront these issues, England admitted he had a "doubt, small but chilling, whether BYU, the Christian university [he] chose twelve years ago, is yet as Christian or as much a real university as our prophets hope for us."¹⁰

He worried that BYU was fostering an atmosphere where people's integrity and loyalty were judged according to specious evidence, where people were held prisoner by isolated actions or words:

Human beings cannot be reduced to an action, a political or intellectual position, a quotation in a newspaper, an essay or story they have written. Each of those, even if clearly and fully seen (which is impossible, since we always see only partially, from a particular point of view), is still only part, a static part, of what is a constantly dynamic, complex, failing, and repenting potential god. We are never less—and actually much more because of our infinite potential—than the complete sum of our his-



"The proper model for opposition in all things is . . . an open marketplace of ideas, where we seek out those who disagree with us as best helps in improving our research and thinking, where we constantly create opportunities for public clash of ideas."

tory, our stories, a sum which is constantly increasing, changing, through time.¹¹

"The proper model for opposition in all things," England wrote, "is . . . the educational ideal provided by Lehi and Milton and Lippmann—an open marketplace of ideas, where we seek out those who disagree with us as best helps in improving our research and thinking, where we constantly create opportunities for public clash of ideas through debates, open forums, independent publications and seminars, etc."¹²

In 1990, England was asked to not write for the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* because one of "the Brethren" objected to his contributing. Then general memos circulated

through BYU asking professors to contribute to official Church magazines, but not to *Dialogue* or SUNSTONE. In response, England wrote:

We are given numerous signals, sometimes direct commands, which suggest that those [non-official] publications and the people who write for them are singled out for special disapproval—although it is not at all clear who disapproves nor why. There are mixed signals and what seems a double standard.¹³

In 1992, during a Sunstone Symposium session, England learned about the Strengthening Church Members Committee. He was aghast at this information and told the audience that members of the LDS Church should object to such a committee. Later, he learned that some apostles sat on the committee. He immediately and personally apologized for unknowingly “criticizing the Brethren.” However, the incident had lasting damaging effects.

In 1998, England was asked to retire from BYU without protest though he was given no justification for this action. Six months before England retired from BYU, he gave an address to the English department, calling for reconciliation. He told the story of his life, explaining that when he applied to teach at BYU in the 1970s, he was often seen as being too liberal, but because he promoted Mormon literature, he was also branded a conservative.

Now, twenty years later, I find myself labeled as a liberal, publicly attacked and privately punished, not for violating the academic freedom document prescriptions against criticizing Church leaders or opposing Church doctrine, but for violating cultural taboos that are mistakenly made into religious issues: for publicly opposing war, for exposing my own and other Mormons’ racism and sexism, even for teaching nationally honored but liberal Mormon writers.¹⁴

In this last attempt at reconciliation, England asked, “Why are we shaking ourselves apart over something so relative and relatively insignificant—differences between us that could actually be a source of strength if we could combine them positively and learn from each other through dialogue?”¹⁵ England expressed his love for his colleagues, even those who had publicly attacked him, and he also asked for forgiveness from the very people who had led to his forced retirement. Then, he finished by giving a Samoan repentance and reconciliation blessing.

S OON AFTER RETIRING in the spring of 1998, England began to teach at Utah Valley State College (now Utah Valley University). Named as the school’s first Writer in Residence, he began teaching Mormon literature and English classes while helping develop programs for the college’s Center for the Study of Ethics. He was also in-

strumental in creating a Mormon studies program, one of the first in the nation. England participated in ecumenical dialogues, promoted discussions on postmodernism and feminism, and began publishing in *Dialogue* and SUNSTONE again.

In two short years, his programs at UVSC were well established and even began receiving grants. He continued to argue in media outlets for freedom in Utah higher education.¹⁶

In his final Sunstone Symposium address, “Calculated Risk: Freedom for Mormons in Utah Higher Education,”¹⁶ he argued that the University of Utah was the institution with the greatest academic freedom in Utah during the 1960s; BYU took over that title in 1980; and in 2000, UVSC “may be the place both faculty and students have the greatest opportunity for genuinely free and productive intellectual inquiry.” Pointing out that the majority of the University of Utah student body is LDS, England encouraged the students and faculty to foster healthy discussions that address Mormon culture and history. He also lamented that despite BYU’s “golden age” in the 1980s, many of its faculty and administration were defeated by the culture wars of the 1990s.

He acknowledged that academic freedom is a risk, but a necessary one:

Academic freedom is not an inherent natural right, nor a basic Constitutional right protected under the First Amendment. It is a calculated risk, a privilege granted by society, which pays the taxes and gives the contributions which make possible our very expensive higher educational system, a risk taken because society has come to accept that academic freedom serves the long-term best interests of society. Both academic freedom and tenure have been recognized by most thinkers to have serious disadvantages, but most also believe the benefits accrued to society are well worth those disadvantages: it is a calculated risk and always fragile, in danger of being misused or diminished.¹⁷

While quoting from Walter Lipmann’s essay, “The Indispensable Opposition,” England grew emotional. His voice wavered—one of the few times in all his recorded presentations where this occurs. The brain cancer that caused England’s death not long after was probably affecting his emotions, but I also think his response shows how important this subject was to him:

We must protect the right of our opponents to speak because we must hear what they have to say . . . [Pauses] . . . Because freedom of discussion improves our own opinions, the liberties of other[s] are our own vital necessity . . . Freedom of speech . . . may not produce the truth . . . But if the truth can be found, there is no other system which will normally and habitually find so much truth.¹⁸



“Why are we shaking ourselves apart over something so relative and relatively insignificant—differences between us that could actually be a source of strength if we could combine them positively and learn from each other through dialogue?”

England worried that contemporary Mormons were failing their heritage because of their unwillingness to take the calculated risk of “free exploration and expression which Mormon theology itself claims is necessary for individual salvation—and which existed, even at the highest levels, in earlier times.”¹⁹ He shared his hope that the faculty at UVSC could navigate “the Scylla and Charybdis that we must pass between” to find a working balance of faith and reason in their studies. And to the students, he said:

Assume that college will challenge [your] thinking

and cause [you] to reassess [your] culture values, because that is precisely what higher education is for. It is to move us from being provincial to being citizens of the world...Otherwise, our world and even our Utah society are condemned to continue in prejudice and discrimination and even violence.²⁰

Within a year of this lecture, England died from brain cancer. Even though he has been gone for almost ten years, his words and example remain influential. We should continue to fight for what England risked so much to defend: the calculated but valuable risk of dialogue and academic freedom on our college campuses and within religious institutions. All voices and cultures should have an equal opportunity to be analyzed and integrated. Our cultural assumptions need to be challenged. Only through this process can we gain the type of education that will help us live in our diverse world. Mormon intellectuals have an important responsibility in moving these improvements forward. Through struggling to express and understand our core beliefs, and through struggling to understand one another, we can come closer to creating the fruitful learning environment that England envisioned on university campuses—both religious and secular.

NOTES

1. Krista Tippett, “Speaking of Faith,” Sterling M. McMurrin Lecture, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, 10 November 2009.
2. *History of the Church*, 6:428.
3. Eugene England, “‘No Cause, No Cause’: An Essay Toward Reconciliation,” *SUNSTONE* 121 (January 2002), 33.
4. Eugene England, “The Possibility of Dialogue,” *Dialogue* 1:1 (Spring 1966), 9.
5. *Ibid.*, 10.
6. *Ibid.*, 11.
7. Eugene England, “Great Books or True Religion? Defining the Mormon Scholar,” *Dialogue* 9:4 (Winter 1974), 37.
8. Quoted in Eugene England, “‘No Cause, No Cause’: An Essay Toward Reconciliation,” *SUNSTONE* 121 (January 2002), 34.
9. Eugene England, “Dialogue—The Idea and the Journal,” address given at the Salt Lake Institute of Religion, 30 September 1966, 8. Manuscript at L. Tom Perry Special Collections, Brigham Young University.
10. “Reflections on Academic Freedom at BYU: Prior Restraint and Guilt by Association,” *Student Review*, 12 April 1989, 9.
11. Eugene England, “On Spectral Evidence, Scapegoating, and False Accusation,” *Making Peace* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1995), 27.
12. “Opposition in All Things—Even at BYU,” *Student Review*, 13 April 1990, 8, 10.
13. Letter from Eugene England to Rex D. Pinegar, 6 May 1991, Eugene England Papers, J. Willard Marriott Library Special Collections, University of Utah.
14. Eugene England, “No Cause, No Cause,” 35.
15. *Ibid.*, 37.
16. This Sunstone presentation, which was given in August 2000, has never been published. Notes for this presentation found in Eugene England Papers, J. Willard Marriott Library Special Collections. You can listen to the audio recording of this presentation by going to the *SUNSTONE* website, sunstonemagazine.com.
17. *Ibid.*, 13.
18. *Ibid.*, 14.
19. *Ibid.*, 16.
20. *Ibid.*, 18.

Fiction

ANGINA

By Helen Walker Jones

AFTER MAGNUM, P.I., MYRNA KAUFUSI WALKED upstairs to her bedroom. Originally designed as a maid's room, it wasn't much bigger than a walk-in closet. She pulled open her dresser drawer, found her old orange bikini, and laid it on her new quilt with its puffy, three-dimensional blocks. Watching that old T.V. show had stirred her memories of Polynesia: surf, palm trees, plumeria, and dark-skinned men with perfectly white teeth

The old, two-piece suit definitely covered the subject, Myrna thought, staring. No one who knew how to Tivo their favorite sitcom would ever have described that bathing suit as a bikini. It was, after all, forty years out of fashion, with a heavily-padded top in which the foam rubber had hardened, plus substantial shorts riding high at the waist, and cuffed at the bottom to avoid showing even the slightest shadow of buttocks.

She had bought it at Penn's insistence all those years ago. He had told her, "You've got a nice body. You should show it off."

She thought of the way her ex looked now, with his graying hair coaxed back into a pompadour.

When Myrna had first met Penn, a cigarette dangled from the corner of his mouth and his biceps bulged with the weight of gleaming barbells. He had been "lifting" on his front lawn in full view of the neighbors. Myrna, passing by on her way to pick up a dozen eggs and a gallon of milk from the shoebox-sized mini-mart down at the corner, had fallen in love with him on the spot, watching him grunt and grimace, his powerful arms trembling as he struggled to hold the bar elevated before resting it gently in its cradle. It was a bonus that they only lived a block from each other.

But that had been forty years ago. Now she doubted Penn could lift more than a small child. According to her visiting teachers, he had a hard time catching his breath in

the pulpit as he preached about the wrath of God. Maybe his lungs were disabled, from back in his smoking years.

Myrna slipped out of her clothes.

During last month's visiting teaching message, Sister Green, seated next to Myrna on the couch, had leaned close and confided, "Did you know that Bishop Penn Kaufusi was released last Sunday? They turned him out to pasture." Sister Green's tinkling laughter made Myrna queasy. "He needs someone to check on his health. And who better than an ex-wife to bring him a bowl of chicken soup or a loaf of oven-fresh wheat bread?" She nudged Myrna's elbow. "A nice young fellow with his wife and six kids moved into the old Parker house, and they called him as a replacement."

"Thanks for the update," Myrna said half-heartedly. She had heard rumors about Penn's release but had poo-pooed them. This was confirmation.

Myrna's fingers tingled and the veins in her hand stood up in blue ridges as she touched the orange fabric. She feared her ancient bathing suit would serve more as a fortification than an enticement.

Still she slipped into the bra. Then, Myrna hesitantly ran her fingers over the curves of her foam-covered breasts. She assured herself that she looked good for her age, weighing only six pounds more than she had in her twenties. Her breasts were still full and nicely-shaped because, as her sister had reminded her, "You've never had a teething brat dangling from your nipple." Myrna hadn't responded, but she wanted to blurt, "I would have traded my youthful shape in a heartbeat for the privilege of becoming a mother."

Adjusting the bra of the bathing suit at her armpits, Myrna pictured drops of beer distilled on Penn's sparse moustache. He had been sober for decades and had been bishop for the past several years. When Myrna had been a teenager, there were no divorced or single bishops, but apparently times had changed. The scuttlebutt in the ward was that, even with his scandalous past, Penn was the only high priest in their economically-depressed ward who wasn't too elderly to function in that capacity. According to Sister Green, that was also why the powers-that-be had



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made an exception and let a widowed man stay in the position after his wife's death ten months ago.

Myrna tugged the shorts of the bathing suit into place. During the refurbishing of her room, she had installed one of those electric fireplaces with the eternal flames and logs that never burnt themselves up. When turned on, the coals looked authentic, glowing with remote, yet comforting heat. But the fireplace was shut off now, so she glanced at her rear view in its pane of glass. Gravity had taken its toll in those four decades, and admittedly, the curves of her bottom were long gone, but at least she was still slim.

Trying not to think of the way her thighs jiggled a bit, she pulled a cotton housedress over the bikini, then zipped her leather coat over the whole ensemble.

When Myrna stepped back into the hall, her knee-length coat pulled snugly around her, she could hear a high-pitched buzzing from Mama's room. "Turn down your hearing aid," Myrna called as she opened the old woman's bedroom door. The mauve organdy curtains were blowing across her mother's chest, beading her flesh with raindrops. Myrna swept the curtains out of the way and slammed the window.

"I've had a bad day, Honey." When Mama stretched her bare arm toward Myrna, the skin hung down like a decrepit rudder and smelled of barnacles. "My toenails need cutting." Mama stretched her leg sideways from beneath the blanket, trembling with the effort. "Has your sweetheart been by today? The one who brings bon bons?"

Earlier that week, a candy company had delivered free samples of their soft-centered milk chocolates as an advertising gimmick. "We're out of bon bons," Myrna said nonchalantly, taking the manicure set from the bedside table and sitting on the mattress. Her mother rolled toward her without trying to. Myrna grasped her mother's purple-veined foot and concentrated on making straight-across cuts with the clippers. "Beth and Cleo called again." Myrna

kept quiet about the suggested nursing home.

"Don't let that young man hug and kiss you till you're engaged." Mama thumped her fingers on the back of a cardboard heart. "That will mean the end of the chocolates." She flapped her hands as though swatting flies.

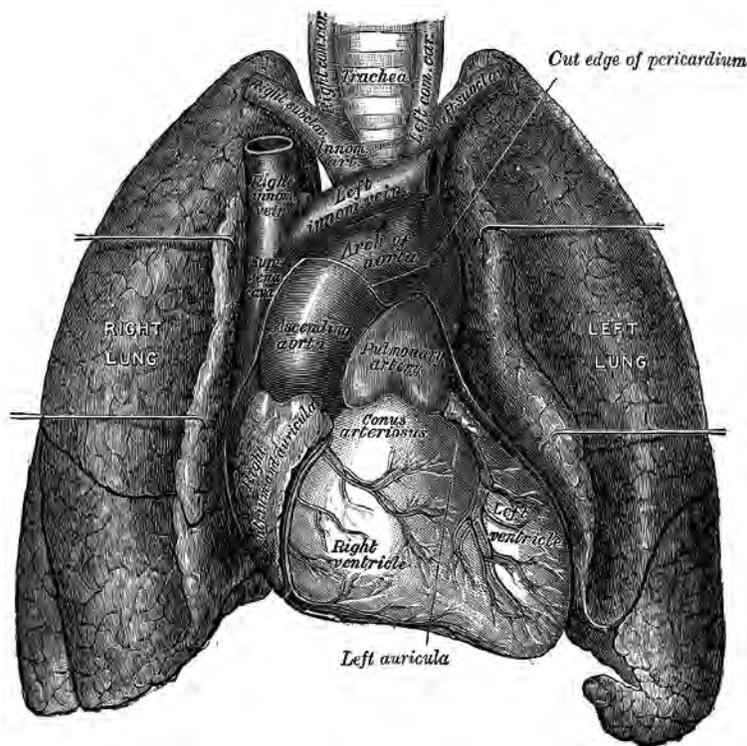
Sitting in the easy chair beside her mother's bed, Myrna reached into the pocket of her coat and touched her hand-knit mittens. They were folded into a clump, like Mama folded socks. Deep in the pocket beside them was a sheaf of letters from the mailbox on the porch. Myrna had forgotten to look at them earlier that day.

She slipped the rubber band off the bundle of mail and saw that her check was on top. Her Aunt Myrtle—the executrix of Papa's estate—sent what she called a "tidy sum" each month. Myrna had, in fact, been named for Aunt Myrtle but, by the second grade, she'd come to regard the name as dowdy and musty, like the smell of mothballs, so she'd started called herself "Myrna." after Myrna Loy in those Nick & Nora movies.

Myrna set the mail at the foot of her mother's bed. The only other letter addressed to her in the batch was an invitation to a party at the church. "Live Music!" it said. "Special Luau to Follow! Authentic Polynesian

Food! Come and honor outgoing Bishop Penn Kaufusi." The exclamation points alone inspired Myrna to toss the invitation into the trash. It reminded her of the Sunday-dress church dances when she was a teenager, or—most embarrassing of all—when her parents (the stake dance directors) had hired a square-dance caller, offered do-si-do lessons, and made Myrna and her peers line up for the Virginia Reel. Her mother had worn yards and yards of net petticoats and a skirt that showed her thick knees.

As a teenager, Myrna had hated those dances until Penn Kaufusi moved into the ward. He rarely attended church but never missed a party. Even after they were engaged, she anticipated every dance, knowing he would be there. And



"He needs someone to check on his health. And who better than an ex-wife to bring him a bowl of chicken soup or a loaf of oven-fresh wheat bread?" She nudged Myrna's elbow.

one night, Myrna's mother had talked him into putting on a real Polynesian floor show.

After the opening prayer, the audience had been instructed to take a seat on the folding chairs lining the walls. The lights dimmed and, just as she'd anticipated, Penn entered, blazing torches illuminating the wide bones of his forehead and cheeks, the outline of his Afro like a back-lit halo. He was naked above the waist, the low throb of drums accompanying the sound of his bare feet stomping on the hardwood basketball court: It was the Fire Dance, accompanied by tongue-thrusting and blood-curdling screams, historically intended to ward off enemies. He twirled torches fearlessly—like a drum major in front of a marching band. He tossed them high in the air, capturing them as they fell, never missing a beat. Myrna thrilled every time she saw him do it. She actually felt a shiver in her pelvic area (a part of the anatomy Myrna absolutely refused to refer to by its Latin name).

Remembering the heat Penn had given off, and the way the crowd had cheered as he exited the Rec Hall, Myrna poured her mother some hot chocolate from the insulated pitcher on the nightstand. She even drank a cup herself, though she preferred coffee.

In those days, with so many Polynesians in their stake, the members had been accustomed to provocative native dancing, accompanied by ukuleles and bongos. Swivel-hipped women in grass skirts, strapless flower-print bras and orchid leis swaying between their breasts were a fixture in every roadshow, so Penn's half-naked performance hadn't raised eyebrows, but it certainly had elevated her blood pressure. She recalled the first time he had kissed her, when he warned, "Baby, you're playing with fire."

MYRNA CAREFULLY BRAIDED a single plait over the old woman's shoulder.

"Where are my babies?" Mama whimpered, "My little girls? I've got to find them." Most days, her mother thought Myrna was still seventeen, with plenty of boyfriends wearing flat-top haircuts and white buck shoes, but evidently today she had regressed even farther.

"I'm your baby girl," Myrna said, smoothing her hair, "and Beth and Cleo are grandmothers now. In fact, Cleo's going on Medicare soon. Jerry's selling his practice to a young doctor just out of his residency. I'll be fifty-nine next birthday." Then, under her breath she muttered, "Hardly the bikini-wearing teenager anymore."

But her mother heard, pressed her face into the pillow and shook her head until her hair stood up like a Mohawk. "Oh, that bathing suit," she said. "I wish you'd burn that darn thing. It's nothing but trouble. Flaunting your figure—so much bare skin. I won't have it. Beth and Cleo are always so modest. They only wear the once-piece kind, with the little skirts."

Myrna felt her cheeks flushing at the thought of the forbidden swimsuit beneath her coat.

She glanced at the calendar above Mama's nightstand; "October" it said, above a field of dead corn and pumpkins. She had lost two months somewhere. She flipped the sheets to December, where Santa held a Coca-Cola and said, "Zing! What a taste!" The exclamation marks made her wonder if a Mormon had written the advertising copy.

Suddenly, the phone on Mama's nightstand gave one short ring, and Myrna grabbed it before her mother could launch into some nonsensical tirade at the caller. It was Sister Green, doing her duty, checking on their welfare.

"Your sister Cleo called me," Sister Green said, proud of being in the Inner Circle. "She said big changes are coming. She's investigated Verdant Meadows and a few of those other assisted-living spots, huh? I'll bet you're relieved."

Myrna's mother waved both hands as though swatting flies and cried out, "Who is it, honey? Let me talk to them. I know it's for me."

Myrna ignored her. "Well, actually . . ." she started to say, but Sister Green interrupted her. "It will be so nice for your mom, and for you, dear. I'm so happy for you that it's happening right away."

Not only had Penn been released as bishop, but now her sisters were campaigning to put Mama into a home, fast. Myrna felt a rush of adrenalin. She had no options left.

She hung up the phone, fluffed her mother's pillows, turned the TV onto a *Matlock* re-run, and closed the door silently behind her, listening to her mother's thick snores.

OUTSIDE, IN THE cool, blank night, elongated shadows swaddled her on both sides as she walked down the driveway. She imagined evil men lurking in the brambles, waiting to grab her. Penn's house was just over a block away. She whistled "Catch the Sunshine" for courage and concentrated on the street light in front of his house. Though unseasonably warm for December, it was still chilly.

Although she now considered herself a Mormon in name only, she wondered why Penn hadn't at least dropped by a few times during his term as bishop to see if she or Mama needed anything. He and his second wife had been childless, too. And in the Polynesian culture, that was considered one of life's greatest tragedies, but it also meant he'd had plenty of time to care for his little flock of ward members.

Myrna felt certain Penn couldn't remember their honeymoon, their dingy apartment in his parents' basement, or even kissing her in a quiet corner of a State Street bar, the smell of beer reeking from him. Did he remember their married life at all, she wondered, having lived most of it in a boozy haze?

Lately—since his wife's death—Myrna had taken to spying on Penn. After sunset, she'd loiter on the sidewalk across from his house, wearing her shapeless raincoat with the collar turned up and a battered fedora from the hall closet. She called it her Columbo disguise, and she always carried an umbrella in case she needed to obscure her face

from view. She stuck close to the shrubbery and took cover when necessary.

Sometimes she had followed him at a discreet distance—either on foot or in Mama’s old Buick. He had his hair cut at the six-dollar shop on the corner, bought copies of *Field and Stream* from the news vendor down on Main, and after supper he liked to sit out front on his concrete stairs, reading the newspaper. He apparently had traded in his mini-van for a mustard-colored pickup.

On each of her surveillance nights she wound up back across the street from his house. Blue and red triangular banners stretched from the roof of his house to the vine-covered tree on the boulevard. A sign, hung on wires from the eaves, said “Hair Removed” in letters burned into the wood. A plaque over the door read, “Boarders Welcome.” She saw the men going in and out. The word on the street was that, following his second wife’s death ten months earlier, Penn had turned his residence into a half-way house for recovering drunks. They said he ran meetings at least three times weekly, announcing “My name is Penn Kaufusi, and I’m an alcoholic.”

Thinking of him alone in his shadowed bedroom, Myrna slid through the night like a ship through dark waters, with poor circulation to her feet, her hands cold and numb – but heated-up by her mental image of Penn, breathlessly admiring her still-trim body in the ancient bikini.

Tonight, wearing her bathing suit, she spotted him from fifty yards away, sitting on his front stairs, reading the paper by a dim light on the porch, a thermal blanket draped over his shoulders. She approached him and her voice turned wooden. “Good evening,” she said, fingering her leather lapel.

“Hi there,” he said. His voice held no trace of an accent except when he pronounced Polynesian names. Then it became rich and liquid.

Up on the porch, one of the boarders laughed and launched into rapid Spanish. Myrna shifted her weight to the other foot. “It’s such a brisk evening, I couldn’t stand being in that stuffy house.”

“Yeah, it’s kinda cold.” He held a rolled-up sports page in his left hand. Myrna stared at his tan trousers, then down at his thongs. During their marriage, he’d worn them year-round and on all occasions, except in church. He called them “slippers,” and the kids these days called them “flip-flops.” They associated the word “thong” with those crazy panties that were nothing more than an eye patch attached to a T-shaped cord. Myrna didn’t even like to think how those skimpy things must feel while you were wearing them. And now, just looking at his thonged feet made her shiver. The stiff fabric of her bikini bra chafed at her armpits.

“The days are so short now,” she said. “I’m rather frightened of the dark.” One of the guys on the porch had a lit cigarette between his lips, and she gazed at the swirling smoke as it drifted in her direction. “Do you think you could see me home, Penn?” She felt the color

rise in her cheeks.

“I could do that,” he said, “for a member of my ward.”

“For a former wife,” Myrna reminded him, but there was no response except a casual intake of breath. She was stung by his indifference, yet she said nothing. Her only consolation was that she still had his name. It was a badge of honor, a sign that she had once been desirable enough to cause a man to sacrifice his independence, if only for a short time; and even though the marriage had ended in violence and shame, being called “Mrs. Kaufusi” certified to the whole world that she was *not* an old maid.

Penn stood and shuffled along beside her. It felt odd, yet sweet, walking next to him again, his scent reminding her of a bedroom with the door shut. In the days when she had folded his bright cotton clothing at the laundromat, she was always amazed that he never wore socks or underwear. The laundry was a breeze. The underwear part certainly had to have changed when he became a bona fide, church-going Mormon.

They walked under the banners, past the caragana hedge. When they reached her walkway, Myrna said, “Would you like to come in for pie and coff – I mean, hot chocolate?” She touched his elbow with her fingertips.

“Sounds good.” The second wife had been a notoriously bad cook—rare in that culture. She was skinny, too, and refused to even taste crispy pig skin after it was roasted in a pit.

MYRNA UNLOCKED THE door and went in ahead of him. In the white-walled kitchen with its ballerina-stenciled wallpaper borders, they ate apple pie with little wedges of cheddar cheese on top. Out of deference to him, she drank hot chocolate, too. He stared at the kitchen table but didn’t seem bothered by anything, unaware that Myrna had meticulously ironed the linen cloth, scrubbed the floor and polished the brass door-knobs, in preparation for his visit. Feeling a bit self-conscious, Myrna kept her coat on, and even left it zipped as she sat across the table from Penn, sipping her drink.

Myrna regarded his graying hair, slick and well-oiled, with an off-center part. He glanced around the room nonchalantly. “Myrna,” he said. “I never apologized to you for the way I acted when I was drinking. Striking a woman—it’s just disgusting. I can’t believe I hit you. I’m a changed man.”

Myrna smiled and toyed with a tiny mole at the base of her throat. “I know you are,” she said. “I forgive you.”

Quickly, he changed the subject. “Did you hear I was released as bishop?”

“Sister Green told me. What will you do with your free time?”

“Oh, I have my hobbies—watching sports on television, doing genealogy. You know.” They sat in awkward silence for a moment till Penn said, “I like these old houses.”

“Me, too. We have a dumb waiter, remember? And a balcony. A wonderful balcony.” Myrna glanced over his head at the girls toe-dancing across the wallpaper. “My room’s

been re-done. It's really lovely. You should see it."

"I wouldn't want to disturb your mother," he said, crossing his legs at the knee and flapping one thong against the ball of his foot. She looked at the way the pigment faded to pink on the side of his big toe. "It must be terrible to be bedridden," he said.

Myrna pictured an elderly woman with a mattress on her back. "She's perfectly healthy, but she eats eggshells and fights me for her bedpan and cries for her baby girls."

"You poor kid," he said and Myrna flushed. "Sister Green tells me how hard you work, taking care of your mom. I should have checked on the old gal—I mean on Sister Nish—more often. And you never get a day off. Nobody to relieve you. I really neglected this family while I was bishop. I didn't want to embarrass you. Or myself. I was ashamed."

"You could see her now," Myrna suggested eagerly. "She may be going into a nursing home soon. I don't know. It's not my choice, apparently."

"But you're her caretaker."

"My opinion doesn't count," she said, then regretted the tone of self-pity. "Maybe it's for the best. Who knows?"

When they opened the door to the old woman's room, though, she was sound asleep, her wool cap awry, her television rumbling through the weather report, the remote control lying on her stomach.

Penn shut the door quietly. "Don't wake her," he insisted.

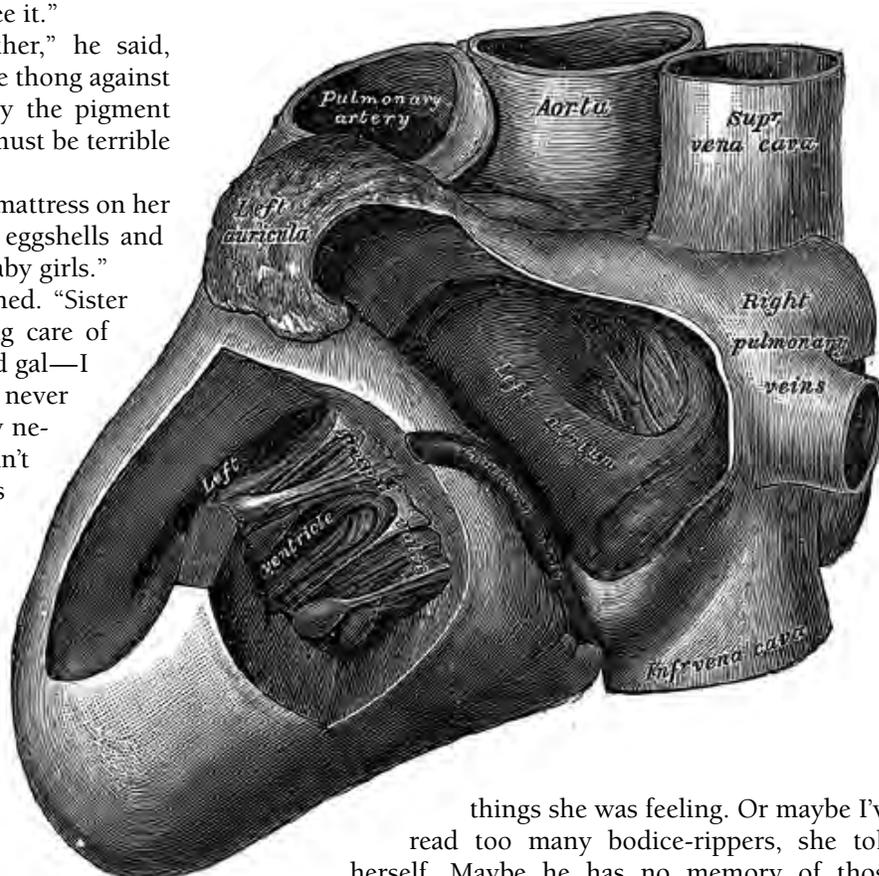
In the dark hallway, Myrna raised her hands to his shoulders, stood on tiptoes, and swiftly kissed him. Penn cleared his throat and wiped his lips with the back of his index finger, but the kiss had changed him somehow. His breathing was not just rapid but on the verge of panic. Yet Myrna was confident he would do whatever she asked him, so she touched his arm and felt a flash of static electricity from the rug.

"Oh my," Penn said. Myrna couldn't judge whether he was upset or simply excited. When he laughed nervously, she was positive he was warming up to the idea.

She slipped her fingers around his wrist and tried to steer him toward her room.

He resisted, hanging back, dragging his feet in the rubber slippers.

Turning to face him, she said, "What's the problem?" She looked for a tinge of fear in his eyes, but saw none. So it must be intense passion and physical desire—the same



Penn entered, blazing torches illuminating the wide bones of his forehead and cheeks, the outline of his Afro like a back-lit halo.

things she was feeling. Or maybe I've read too many bodice-rippers, she told herself. Maybe he has no memory of those flaming torches or the feel of his bare soles against the hardwood floor, or the way we made love in the front seat of his *Fury*, parked beside the road on the way home from the Valentine's party, with the engine still running, because we couldn't restrain ourselves until we were married.

"This thing with my chest happens a lot," he said, tapping near his breastbone. "Nothing to worry about."

Myrna caught her breath, encouraged by his answer. "I could call my brother," she offered. "He's a heart doctor." Penn shook his head, but his beefy hand enclosed hers now, and their thighs brushed together, accidentally, in the hallway. Her lips were inches from his still-powerful chest as she turned the doorknob of her bedroom. He was still exactly one foot taller than she was: 6'3" to her 5'3". The room swirled with memories of late-night kissing, touching, hurried fumbling, and blessed nakedness. She felt she was seeing her bedroom for the first time in decades—it was so different, like walking into their honeymoon hotel room and setting her suitcase on the bed and opening it and taking out her toothbrush and a nightie and her diaphragm.

Sweat had turned Penn's shirt collar dark. He breathed with his mouth open. Myrna wondered if she should grab a paper bag for him to blow into.

"Nice handwork," he said, dropping heavily onto the

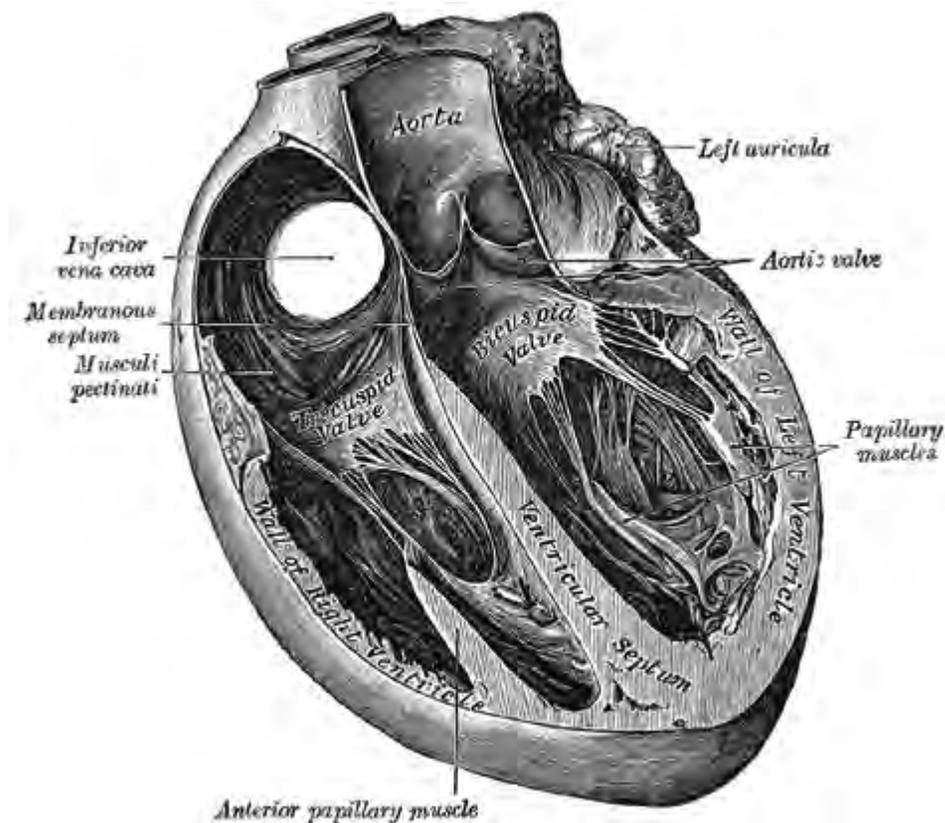
clothes on. You know this is wrong. And besides, I'm having some minor chest pains, in case you hadn't noticed. The last thing I need is more stimulation." But his protests didn't ring true; she knew he was staring at her body.

"You've been released as bishop," she said. "Don't forget that." He closed his eyes and attempted to speak but apparently thought better of it. The sweat from his collar had now spread to the front of his chest so that she could see the outline of his garments under his shirt.

She paused on the third button down. "Do you need the paramedics?" she asked.

"Nothing like that," he said. "I just need to rest a minute." Assured he was okay, Myrna stepped out of the dress in a fluid, slow motion that rivaled baseball game replays. He looked at her and laughed in that silent way he had, where his belly shook. "Your old orange bikini," he said with a broad grin. "No kidding."

Myrna stared at him. Did he think this was just a joke—that she was performing for him in that old roadshow fashion? Didn't he know how much this



***"I could do that," he said, "for a member of my ward."
"For a former wife," Myrna reminded him***

quilt, his back against the headboard. "I like the hibiscus. And those pineapples on the bedposts—where'd you come up with that idea? Is this your island fantasy?"

Myrna cupped her hand around one of the pineapples, which fit into her palm like a tiny treasure. There was a long silence as she debated how to answer that question.

Finally Penn said, struggling to breathe, "You're a pretty woman, Myrna. You always were."

She knew it was a flat-out lie. Beth had been the beauty of the family, with Cleo as runner-up. And then there was Penn's gorgeous Polynesian wife—the raven-haired beauty to whom Myrna could never possibly compare. She looked like the temptress who caused Gauvain to abandon his wife and family.

"That's a song—'Pretty Woman,'" she said. "From back when we were kids. Roy Orbison, I think. Remember?" Penn just stared at her as though he had been bewitched.

"I have something to show you," she said, slipping her coat off. She draped it over a chair and began undoing the buttons on her housedress.

"That's not a good idea," he said, struggling to raise himself up from the bed. Then he dropped back against the pillow and heaved a sigh. "Myrna, please leave your

was costing her? She fought to remain dignified, in case he rejected her. She remembered her mother's advice about maintaining composure: Pretend there's a book lying flat on your head and you must keep it balanced. Myrna held her back as straight as possible and stared intently at Penn's heaving chest.

"You never could laugh at yourself in the old days," he said hesitantly, "but then, who could blame you, when I was soused all the time, beating on you?" His voice softened. "You were a good kid, and a good wife to me. I was a rotten husband." He pressed his hand against the left side of his chest and held it there as if trying to stop the pounding of his heart.

Myrna could see he was fighting tears, as she was. He had always been emotional about family weddings and pets dying and friends moving away. She was glad life hadn't hardened him. "Come here," he said.

Myrna pressed one knee tentatively into the mattress and leaned against his chest, frightened of her own reserve. His breaths were shallow, like a dog's after a long walk. She pressed her cheek against his, finding it smoother than any man's she had ever touched. Penn had never been able to grow a beard, ever. He stood up slowly,

his bones creaking, raising her with him, his arms around her.

“What happened to the ring?” she asked, surprising herself.

“Buried with her,” he said.

Myrna drew in her breath, insulted. “I didn’t mean *that* one,” she said. “I meant my own wedding ring—the plain, cheap silver band that I left on the kitchen window sill the day I walked out on you.”

“Sorry, I don’t remember,” he said, holding her for a minute or two, their bodies pressed against each other, full length, her forehead touching his clavicle, his hands clasped around her waist. She felt parts of his body that she knew should be reserved for the marriage bed, but it didn’t bother her. It was nothing new. He was her former husband, after all.

She wondered if he could sense that she still loved him, or if he ever thought about the day she left him. One summer morning, three months after their marriage, after being on the receiving end of his fist—twice—Myrna climbed the steps from their basement apartment, dragging her trunk. Penn was in the driveway, washing the *Fury*, wearing a red flowered lava-lava, cut high over the thighs, and nothing underneath. She stumbled down the sidewalk, dragging the small blue metallic trunk, then hefted it into the backseat of her VW bug. Penn flipped the hose in the air, drenching her blouse and treading pants in the waterfall. He laughed, with his head tilted back, his perfect white teeth gleaming through the spray of the water. She never looked back.

Decades had passed since then. Now here he was—once again in her bedroom, holding her in his arms. At one point, she felt something wet on her scalp and when she drew her head back and looked at him, he had tears gleaming in the deep furrows beside his mouth.

Finally, he let go of her and said, “Don’t take this wrong, but I need to lie quietly, alone, just for a minute. I don’t want you to touch me or anything. I just need to. The chest pain’s getting worse. Put your dress back on, please, Myrna.”

Her cheeks burning, Myrna slipped back into her housedress and buttoned it up. She watched him for awhile. His head made a deep indentation in the pillow sham. “Are you sure you don’t want an ambulance?” she asked. He lay there on her flowered quilt, panting, but then he seemed to fall asleep. To see if he was still alive, she pulled a clean handkerchief from her pocket and draped it ceremoniously over Penn’s face. There was a muffled intake of breath; then he lifted the hanky slowly and just stared at the ceiling, breathing out with great effort, making Myrna wonder if he was about to have a heart attack like her father had done.

“I get these pains sometimes. It’ll pass.” She pictured reporters in her bedroom, and photographers, and the entire Relief Society scandalized as they appeared with their bread loaves and casseroles. But nothing else happened.

Myrna sat silently on the bed beside him, caressing his

big toe as she stared at the yellow throats of the hibiscus flowers on her quilt.

He got up, handed the hanky to her, and said in a quiet voice, “A touch of angina. But it’s passed now.” He trudged down the hall with his slippers flapping, not saying a word of farewell or acknowledging her at all. He was no longer lithe and agile like the athlete he had been in his youth.

Myrna called after him, “This night was about as long as our marriage,” but he didn’t answer. She leaned over the stair rail and shouted, “You stole my faith from me. How could I go on believing in anything, when they made you my bishop? A drunk and a bully.”

She heard the door slam downstairs, then ran to the balcony and saw him weaving behind the hedge and down the street toward his house, his rubber slippers flapping. He plodded like an old man with sore feet.

Back in her room, she tore off her dress and undid the bikini bra. She slid the bottom of the bathing suit down around her ankles, and tossed both pieces onto the bureau. The rubber pads of the bra stuck straight into the air. *Oh, Pretty Woman*, Roy Orbison was singing somewhere out the window, maybe on the balcony, maybe across the alley, maybe in the ward’s recreation hall under crepe paper streamers.

Likely, Penn had forgotten dancing with her, kissing her, buying her coffee, necking with her through all those Steve McQueen movies. They were decades past the pathetic hovel where they had first lived together as husband and wife. In that basement bedroom he had blackened her eye because she’d talked to another man at the grocery store. Right before he had punched her, he shouted, “You’re my wife, and my wife does not ever, ever talk to another man without my say-so. Got that?”

MYRNA TURNED DOWN the covers on her bed, running her tingling hands over the cold yellow sheets. She could feel the contracture of the nerves in her wrists. No blood was getting to her hands. Thinking of Penn lying there on her quilt, asking her to put her clothes back on, she felt humiliated. But then she told herself, I made his heart flutter or beat faster, or caused it to set off little explosions of blood somewhere deep in the vessels. I affected his heart so much that he had to lie down until the feeling passed. Even better, maybe one of the “Insiders” saw him stumbling home in the dark, staggering like a drunkard, his mind confused and disturbed by the passion he had felt.

When Myrna awoke an hour later, her hands were completely numb. She had to shake them from the wrists for a full minute to get the sensation back. She opened her mouth to shout, “Mama, Mama,” then closed it slowly. Her eye caught sight of the ridiculous bright bathing suit resting on her dresser, as she glanced sheepishly around the room, afraid that someone had heard and understood her foolishness.

Journalist, novelist, poet

LINDA SILLITOE

IN MEMORIAM

A Tribute to Linda Sillitoe

by Levi S. Peterson

LEVI S. PETERSON is a former editor of *Dialogue* and author of novels *The Backslider* and *Aspen Marooney*, short-story collections *Canyons of Grace* and *Night Soil*, and autobiography *A Rascal* by Nature, *A Christian* by Yearning. He lives in Washington with his wife Althea.

THE FIRST THING TO SAY IS THAT LINDA WAS competent, and the next thing is that she was determined. Whatever she did, she did well, and she could drive herself with a relentless will. There was a personal magnetism about her, a quiet drawing power that elicited attention and respect. She was of medium stature and had a clear, clarinet-like voice. She had a round face and dark, deep-set eyes. Her personality was characterized by intelligence, irony, and a scorn for hypocrisy—qualities that her role as an investigative reporter honed to a fine edge. In that role, she insisted on evidence and went to great lengths to procure it, which is to say that the faculty of reason was well developed in her. But she also relied on intuition and was sensitive to spiritual emanations from both physical objects and persons.

Born a Mormon, Linda presumably grew up satisfied with the traditional notion that the role of women was not inferior to, but simply different from, that of men. Men were to earn money and make decisions; women were to keep house and nurture children. Eventually, however, Linda changed her mind on the matter. The feminists were right. The traditional role of women was, if not inferior, at least unduly restrictive, and Linda chose not only to keep house and nurture children but also to earn money and make decisions. By the mid-1970s, she was an experienced reporter and a budding freelance writer. But she was also becoming painfully aware that the all-male leadership of the LDS Church opposed the aims of feminism.

In June of 1977, Linda was assigned to report on Utah's convention celebrating International Women's Year. This proved to be a watershed event for Linda, opening her eyes to the male-dependent character of the average Latter-day Saint woman. The organizers of the convention had prepared a productive, educational agenda for an anticipated crowd of two

to three thousand women of various religions. To their astonishment, the convention was pre-empted by nearly 14,000 Mormon women, who had been marshaled by their male priesthood leaders. This horde of angry, poorly-informed Mormon women interpreted the prepared agenda "as an attack on the family and vigorously voted down such resolutions as equal pay for equal work" according to a report in the Spring 1998 issue of the *Mormon Women's Forum*.

A year later, Linda reported on another eye-opening event, the excommunication of Sonia Johnson for having criticized the Church for its opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. In state after state, Mormon women lobbied their respective legislatures, urging the defeat of the amendment. Linda refused to believe that the top leadership of the Church endorsed the lobbying efforts of local leaders until a phone call to the press secretary for the Church verified that they did. Reporting on her disillusionment in an article in *SUNSTONE*, Linda pondered whether being a Mormon meant adopting not only the spiritual beliefs but also the political views of the top leadership: "Can members do otherwise without becoming goats in a fold of sheep?" she asked. "How do we heal the splits in families and ward families? How do we still the anguished questions, 'Do I belong?' and conversely, 'Do you belong?'"

Early in 1982, Linda and John joined Althea and me and two other couples in a writing group, which met monthly for dinner and a friendly critique of one another's writing. When it came my turn to present a manuscript, I could count on Linda to offer helpful observations. When a chapter from *The Backslider* was under critique, Linda protested, with an edge of humor, against what she called "Levi's God," by which she meant the stern, punitive deity in which the protagonist, Frank Windham, believes. Although I remained uncertain for almost another year as to how to end this novel according to Linda's stipulation, eventually I did arrange character and plot in such a way that Frank arrives at a faith in a kinder, more forgiving deity. Obviously, that was the sort of deity in which Linda believed.

It was with considerable dismay that, on the last day of 1990, Althea and I received a letter from Linda announcing her withdrawal from the group—which implied John's withdrawal as well. She cited stress and lack of time to be herself as her reasons for retreating from what she called "the war



zone,” which meant, as she went on to explain, “investigating, writing, or speaking about Mormon issues, or anything particularly dark.” Why should this require withdrawal from the group? “For one thing, the [writing] group lives within the war zone both in writing and real life.”

The term “war zone” refers, of course, to such publications as *Dialogue* and SUNSTONE and to such gatherings as the annual Sunstone symposium, venues where liberal Mormons urge change upon the Church—a risky business since there is no easy way to predict the point at which the Church has reached the limits of its begrudging tolerance for vocal liberals. Showing it had reached those limits following the Sunstone symposium of 1991, the Church issued a statement against attendance at symposia and other unauthorized meetings, a policy that it proceeded to enforce through the ominously named Strengthening Church Members Committee. This group sent samples of suspect writings to stake presidents and asked them to interview authors regarding their attitude toward the Church. To my surprise, Linda’s stake president summoned her to an interrogation, an invitation she declined. Instead, she submitted a letter of resignation from the Church. For reasons I do

not entirely understand, Linda had chosen to re-enter the war zone. I am not certain of the precise publication that got her into trouble, but an article published in the Fall 1992 issue of *Dialogue* could have easily been the one. Originally delivered orally at the B.H. Roberts Forum in 1991, the article praises the unorthodox spirituality of the excommunicated Elder George P. Lee, a Navajo Indian who had served as a member of the First Quorum of the Seventy.

Linda was attracted to Native American spirituality as early as 1982, when she began to research and write about Utah’s Indians as a reporter for the *Deseret News*. It is not entirely inaccurate to say that she underwent something of a conversion experience. At least, she discovered that her own instinctive spirituality accorded closely with a traditional Native American spirituality that she found to be very much alive and in good health among both the Navajos and the Utes.

Linda ended her novel, *Sideways to the Sun*—which our writing group critiqued in manuscript form—with an episode set at a Navajo powwow in Four Corners country. Also while a member of the writing group, she did extensive interviews with a Ute shaman, Clifford Duncan, which have been published by the University of Utah Press. On at least one occasion, Clifford performed a healing ritual on Linda’s behalf. In June of 1991, Althea and I met Linda, John, and Cynthia at Window Rock, Arizona, and toured the Monument Valley area for a couple of days. As I wrote in my diary, “Linda was very happy that we could at last see this place so close to her heart, her emotional home.”

I will say of the past fifteen years or so only that Althea and I have continued to count Linda and John among our closest and dearest friends. During this period, I have often pondered why Linda would choose in 1991 to re-enter the war zone in which she said our writing group existed. It was indeed a risky business. Certainly she knew that by publishing her article on George Lee, she was throwing down the gauntlet before the Church.

In June of 1981—almost thirty years ago—Linda wrote a brief, poignant poem for her friend Lavina Fielding Anderson, who had just been fired from the staff of *The Ensign* for providing Peggy Fletcher, editor of SUNSTONE, with a talk which Hartman Rector had prepared for General Conference but was not allowed to deliver. The poem has no title, but it could appropriately be titled “For Lavina.” It reads:

One by one
they throw us from the tower.
And we spread our wings
and fly.

And that’s what Linda did. The ultimate testament of her life is that like Lavina and many, many other courageous women, she spread her wings and flew.

Fact of Her Life

by Paul Swenson

PAUL SWENSON has been a journalist for the *Deseret News*, an editor for *Utah Holiday Magazine*, and most recently author of *Iced at the Ward, Burned at the Stake: And Other Poems*.

IN JUNE 1977, ABOUT 14,000 UTAH WOMEN OCCUPIED the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City for the International Women's Year (IWY) state conference. Afterward, when I realized what had happened there, I as editor of *Utah Holiday* magazine, launched a search for someone who had attended and could write about it.

When I met Linda Sillitoe and John Sillito (she, but not he, used the final "e") in the 1970s, Linda was a poet and a fiction writer with a quick mind and a ready wit. Although she hadn't trained as a journalist, she had been at the conference and seemed a likely choice to report and analyze what she had seen and heard.

Within a week, she had organized everything on 3 x 5 index cards and proceeded to put together a clear, bold, and incisive story, which we published that summer. Her story disclosed how thousands of Mormon women, assigned by their ward Relief Society organizations as conference delegates, had helped to vote down dozens of propositions supporting equal rights for men and women. Linda reported that men with walkie-talkies patrolled the aisles instructing their charges how to vote.

Her work on this watershed event—more nuanced and in depth than any Salt Lake City newspaper coverage of the conference—launched a career. Almost immediately, Linda Sillitoe emerged as one of this state's most skilled and important investigative reporters—a writer of passion and power with instincts for thorough and meticulous research.

Recently I mentioned IWY and Linda's part in it to my friend and fellow writer Amelia Graehl; she immediately remembered how the IWY conference and Linda's reporting had impacted her.

"I was there too at IWY," she told me. "I had stood in fast and testimony meeting in my ward and told my sisters not to be afraid of equality. There had been some real fear. I wasn't assigned as one of the 10 women chosen from my ward, but that was okay. I was planning on being there anyway.

"I was so moved that Linda's story could capture the feelings of people like me. When it came out in the magazine, I locked myself in the bathroom with a bottle of cooking wine and read it start to finish. It did for me what I think it must have done for a lot of Mormon women."

Another of my favorite Linda stories: On a mid-afternoon in the 1980s, when her reputation as a feminist and award-winning journalist had reached the attention of not only thousands of ordinary Utahns but also several General Authorities of the LDS Church, she heard a knock at her kitchen door.

On her threshold stood John Carmack—not the well-known software programmer, but the member of the LDS First Council of the Seventy, accompanied by Linda's stake president. Had they come to take her membership? Or were they perhaps seeking further light and knowledge about their Mother in Heaven?

Neither, as it turned out. After Linda had invited them to come in, they asked if she might be willing to tell them anything she had learned about a young document dealer named Mark Hofmann, who had recently been charged with murder.

Then they noticed their fearsome feminist hostess was wearing an apron, and the room was filled with the aroma of fresh baked goods. So at the kitchen table, Linda served her visitors cookies and milk while they picked her brain about forgery and murder.

Feminism, food, fiction, poetry, a female deity, and good reporting—they were all part of the same mix for Linda. They all personify how naturally she could blend opposites and complexities in her poem, "Fact of My Life," a favorite of mine.

FACT OF MY LIFE

My job was once threatened if I published a poem.
I lived in another place
but in America and knew my rights.
I let the poem wait. Oh, I read it aloud once
and silence swelled in the room like fog;
then someone said, read it again.

My job was once threatened if I published a poem,
a fact of my life I forgot,
one my children don't know.
A journalist, sworn to truth, nothing but,
I wrote it at city desk
unassigned to the story.

My job was once threatened if I published a poem
for a public figure, no libel there,
nothing false or obscene, only love
and anger, dignity and crumbs.
The second time I read it, silence rose
and his relative, who questioned me later.

After I left my job I published the poem,
then left the place and forgot
the threat. Remembering, I ponder
the knots lodged under my shoulder blades,
asking if one truly can leave a place
where poems hold such power.

—LINDA SILLITOE

IN RIVERDALE

We returned to our beginnings
 in August, with its crayola green
 trees and grass, blue sky,
 and yellow light so certainly imposed
 that desert light and night and hues
 wavered within us.

We settled near the mountains,
 opening our windows
 to crickets wooing a canyon breeze.
 We tried to believe
 we can fit this time among our dearest
 and darkest demons. We unpacked and sorted
 our souvenirs and tales

of treading the back trails we tread still
 even as we merge into traffic.
 People don't request those stories.
 they say, Welcome back
 (to this, the right place).
 Crickets translate:
 About time.

—LINDA SILLITOE

Recapturing Linda

by Phyllis Barber

PHYLLIS BARBER is the author of many books, including *How I Got Cultured: A Nevada Memoir*, and, most recently, *Raw Edges: A Memoir*.

MANY YEARS AGO, LINDA AND I BOTH WROTE for *Utah Holiday*, both fledgling writers. We often had stories appearing in the same issue of the magazine and brushed against each other in the doorways to *Utah Holiday* as we delivered our manuscripts. We both had an exceptional editor in Paul Swenson, who possessed a great deal of faith in the writers who came to him with I-want-to-be a writer stars in our eyes, our unique/never-heard-before (or so we thought) ideas, our hopes for publishing some of our precious words, our pie-in-the-sky aspirations. We ate canapés at *Utah Holiday* Christmas parties and exchanged a few bits of information about our lives.

Those were the days before our paths diverged: I going off to study fiction at the University of Utah and at the Vermont College of Fine Arts MFA in Writing Program; and Linda to write for the *Deseret News*, to set out toward a Ph.D. at the University of Utah, to write her novel, *Sideways to the Sun* and to investigate, with Allen Roberts, the story of Mark Hoffman in *Salamander: The Story of the Mormon Forgery Murders*.

When I think of Linda Sillitoe, I remember dark eyes, a

quiet, measured presence, a sense that here was a woman who had a great deal of internal debate and wondering that jostled with each other at all times of the day. I wish I would have taken more time to understand who she was, what mattered to her on a daily basis, what she cared for above all else. As I think of those eyes and what they said about her soul and her interior world, I wish I could recapture those moments when we were together; I wish I could recapture Linda.

But, in the way of writers, we leave words behind, words that we've manipulated, crafted, stretched, examined, tossed and turned with at night, words that we tried so hard to lasso, to make them say what we so deeply wished to say. There are the magazine articles, newspaper articles, the books, the poems, that collection of words that we've employed to hold the dam of the self, to collect together the chaos of being alive and to bring sense of it. The trying to understand what it's all about and why we are here doing what we are doing and whether or not there is something beyond our mad scrambling for the right words at the right time and place.

AN EARLY ELEGY IN LOWER CASE

i pay my respects by saying what's true
 in love and anger

you served us crumbs, you see, and we hungered
 for our own bowls
 of bread and milk

love your silvery chains, my sisters
 we did we do
 for they are your redemption

oh it is not so simple says my brain
 he let sisters too
 gowned in white into those clean chambers

american brothers too are yoked unequally

but it is too late now for anything
 but the oversimplification from my heart

in this lush room where we keep prophet ghosts
 i want to fold you in
 like a child too sleepy to trust in slumber

but say instead goodbye hopeflicker goodbye

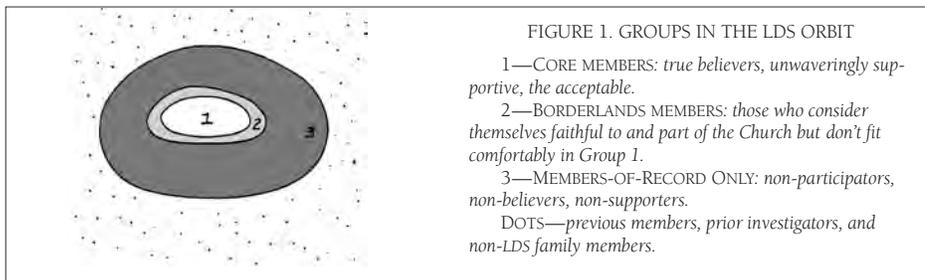
for my brothers' sake i weep at your death
 for my sisters i keep my seat as you pass

—LINDA SILLITOE

BRAVING THE BORDERLANDS . . .

CONDUCTING A SELF-ASSESSMENT

by D. Jeff Burton



Know thyself.

—GREEK APHORISM

To thine own self be true, and [you cannot] be false to any man.

—SHAKESPEARE

AT THE 2010 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (Session 124, 5 August SL10124), John Dehlin and I hosted a spirited discussion with about a hundred attendees about their individual Borderlander experiences. We primed the discussion with a short questionnaire. A small but representative group of attendees returned copies of their completed forms for compilation purposes. I have summarized the discussion and participant results below in hopes that other Borderlanders can see their own experience in a larger context. How do most Borderlanders begin their journey to the edges of Mormonism? What experiences do they go through? How do they often end up?¹

As you go through these questions, conduct your own self-assessment. But make sure to keep these points in mind:

- This questionnaire is intended to compare your intellectual beliefs with your church activity, not your faithfulness with church activity.

- This questionnaire asks you to probe your innermost feelings and thoughts.

Because they often concern normally private items, you may never have asked yourself these questions before. You'll need to be thoughtful and honest as you answer.

- There are no right or wrong answers to this questionnaire. Also, there are no definitive outcomes or conclusions that will apply to everyone. We'll offer a few observations for you to think about below, but how you interpret your results is strictly up to you.²

QUESTION 1. *In which group(s) in the "Borderlands" model would you categorize yourself?*

- Group 1 = 5%
- Group 2 = 78%
- Group 3 = 17%
- Dots = 0%

Given that our session was devoted to Group 2 experiences, we expected this result.

QUESTION 2. *How much do people know about your Borderland status and your actual beliefs, outlooks, questions, issues, or problems? For example, how much does your spouse actually know about your situation?*

- Averages:
- Spouse = 80%
 - Children and/or parents = 80%

- Close friends = 60%
- Ward/stake leaders = 45%
- Other relatives = 40%
- Ward members and neighbors = 40%

A hopeful sign, these numbers turned out generally higher than in similar polls conducted in the past. In a 2008 poll, for example, respondents reported about 50–60% when stating how much their spouses knew about their questions.

QUESTION 3. *At about what age did your questions seriously begin? At about what age did you feel you actually left "Group 1" status? How many years have passed since then?*

- Age when serious questioning began:
- 10-30 years old = 60%
 - 30-50 = 40%

- Age at which left Group 1:
- 10-30 years old = 60%
 - 30-50 = 40%

- Number of years since leaving:
- 10-30 years = 60%
 - 30-50 = 40%

The way you answer these two questions can suggest possible outcomes for you. For example, those who leave Group 1 at an early age often have more choices and more time to work through their questions. Early leavers are also less likely to destabilize a marriage or family. On the other hand, those who leave at later points of life often have the wisdom and experience to deal with the fallout better.

QUESTION 4. *Were you ever a "true believer?"*

- Yes = 78%;
- No = 22%.

True believers who move out of Group 1 usually carry more baggage than those who were never true believers (like me) who may simply be relieved to finally be finished with their fruitless quest for a testimony.

QUESTION 5. *Has your Borderland status adversely influenced your personal relationships and other aspects of your life? If so, how much on a scale of 1 to 5?*

- Marriage/Dating—Yes, 80%;
- How much? = 2.1

D. JEFF BURTON is an author and a former member of the Sunstone Board of Directors.

Children/Parenting—Yes, 33%
How much? = 3.3

Friendships—Yes, 100%
How much? = 2.1

Job/Income—Yes, 22%
How much? = 1.5

Mental health—Yes, 45%
How much? = 3.0

Physical health—Yes, 40%
How much? = 1.0

Adverse effects on relationships appear universal for Borderland members. Knowing this can help you plan for these upsets and deal with them constructively.

QUESTION 6. *On a scale of 1 to 5, rate your success as a “Borderlander.”*

1 or 2 = 10%
3 = 45%
4 or 5 = 45%

This high success rate is good news for new Borderlanders. If, however, you score yourself as having “little success,” getting a hold of books like *For Those Who Wonder* or seeking professional counseling may help you on your journey. If you rate your success as “high,” you might share your approaches with others in person, in online forums, or through this column.

QUESTION 7. Following James Fowler’s book, *Stages of Faith*, in which faith stage(s) would you place yourself?

Weighted averages:
Stage 1 or 2 = 1%
Stage 3 = 8%
Stage 4 = 62%
Stage 5 = 25%
Stage 6 = 3%

Having a religious “Borderland” experience is not unique to LDS people. In fact, according to Fowler, healthy curiosity and even skepticism about certain religious claims can lead you to higher stages of faith. Note also that it is not unusual to be in more than one stage at a time.

QUESTION 8. *Rate your belief in unique LDS tenets (0 = don’t believe, 3 = don’t know, 6 = know it to be true.)*

Average = 2.8

QUESTION 9. *Rate your belief in general Christian tenets. (Same rating scale as #8).*

Average = 4.5

Questions 8 and 9 can be constructively related and compared. Note that Borderland members attending this Sunstone Symposium session were much more likely to believe in Jesus and Christian principles than in the unique claims of Mormonism. If you have a similar result, then you have a “testimony” of the “truthfulness” of Jesus and Christian principles (using LDS parlance). Knowing your actual belief situation in different realms can help you deal with the issues and problems you face.

QUESTION 10. *Do you feel you must, or want to, stay active in the Church? If yes, how much? (1 = a little, 5 = a lot.)*

Yes = 89%

The average score of those who answered “yes” was 3.5, and over 50% answered “a lot.” If your own answer is “yes,” you can work on finding ways to stay involved in the Church at a comfortable level of activity. If your answer is “no,” you can begin to explore healthy ways of moving on that are not too disruptive to yourself or your family.

COMMON BORDERLANDS QUESTIONS

OCCASIONALLY I am invited to join a group for lunch or to attend a party, study group, or other gathering at which I am typically asked questions such as the following. My answers may assist you as you conduct your self-assessment.

• *What generally happens to those who suddenly find themselves in the Borderlands?*

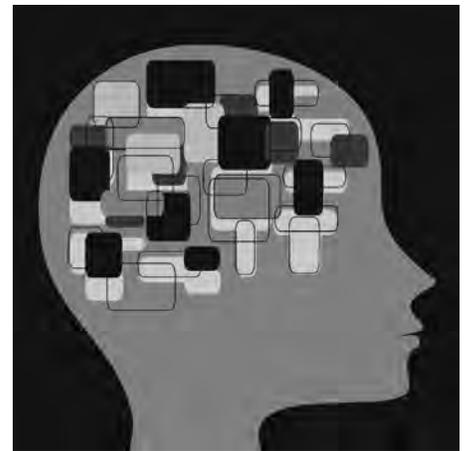
My experience is that they are likely to experience a lot of frustration, anger, fear, and anxiety; they often have feelings of loss, helplessness, loneliness, and alienation, though there may also be a feeling of relief. But not many new Borderlanders understand what to do next. They often make destructive choices in the heat of the moment such as quitting the Church too soon or “dumping” on family or friends. I usually suggest giving this “loss” experience six months of processing time before making any decisions.

• *After you find yourself in the Borderlands, how likely are you to stay in that state? Can you be in more than one group?*

Some people find themselves simultaneously living in two or even three groups, depending on circumstances. For example, people may be very Group 1 when it comes to supporting the Church’s youth programs and service activities but be Borderlanders when it comes to Church history. Or people may find that they move back and forth between Groups 2 and 3, depending on, for example, whether or not a close relative is getting married in the temple.

• *How long do people usually stay in the Borderlands?*

In my experience, most sojourn a few months to several years in Group 2 then move on to Group 3, sometimes with subsequent movement back and forth between Groups 2 and 3. As reported in the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, the Church’s own statistics suggest that about 80% of baptized members worldwide eventually go into inactivity or leave the Church (move into Group 3 or beyond). But



Having a religious “Borderland” experience is not unique to LDS people. In fact, according to Fowler, healthy curiosity and even skepticism about certain religious claims can lead you to higher stages of faith.

some people I have known have stayed in Group 2 over their lifetimes with varying degrees of comfort and success. (I count myself in this number). But remaining in Group 2 requires a conscious decision to do so followed by continual effort.

• *Is leaving Group 1 reversible?*

Reasons for leaving Group 1 vary widely. No two people experience this movement the same way. Those who leave Group 1 for faulty reasons (imagine someone catapulted into Group 2 because they read on the internet that “Joseph Smith was a convicted horse thief”), can safely return to Group 1 when they get the facts straight (“No, he wasn’t a horse thief.”). However, more typically people leave Group 1 because they have questions that cannot be fully explained to their satisfaction, such as issues related to Book of Mormon historicity, the discovery of Joseph Smith’s colorful history, the Masonic roots of the temple ceremony, the origins of LDS scriptures, the treatment of sexual orientation in the Church, the priesthood, or family issues. The Church’s Neal A. Maxwell Institute and FARMS provide a body of apologetic work and should be studied as thoroughly as other information, but many people find this apologetic work lacking.

• *What if you are in the closet about your issues and to all outward appearances seem to be a full-fledged member of Group 1? Which Group would you be in?*

The way I define it, Group 2 status is determined by your mind, not by your behavior. Many Borderland members are fully active temple-recommend holders, but in their minds, they know they don’t belong with the “true believers” of Group 1.

• *Who determines a person’s group status?*

We must each do this for ourselves. The self-assessment can help one decide.

• *Is it rare to be a Mormon Borderlander? How many Borderland members are there in the Church?*

During the 1980s, the Church Correlation Department conducted an unpublished study among English-speaking members which suggested that about 5% of active members were actually disbelievers

and that another 20–30% had unresolved questions and issues. If these statistics are still accurate, that would suggest that a lot of people sitting in church on Sunday are, at least in part, members of a closeted Group 2. Given the impact of the Internet since the 1980s, I would guess that the phenomenon of the Borderland member is probably more widespread than it was in the 80s.

• *What could the Church do to address this “Borderland member” phenomenon?*

In my mind, the best approach is for the Church to expand the boundaries and acceptability criteria for Group 1 membership to encompass Group 2 members. Let it be okay, for example, for a faithful member who happens to not fully believe in Joseph Smith’s prophethood to obtain a temple recommend and to participate fully in every aspect of active Church life. This would require changing policies related to testimony, temple requirements, and other acceptability issues that drive people into the Borderlands.³

• *Do you detect any Church movement in that direction?*

My personal perception is that the Church at the general level has been moving in a liberal direction for several years. According to a recent *Salt Lake Tribune* article, what missionaries and others write or say about the Church on the Internet “need not be corrected” by Church authorities if it represents the person’s personal beliefs. This policy seems to say, “What you believe is your own business,” and that seems hopeful to me. The Church has also sponsored a TV ad campaign that emphasizes the diversity of Church members. The Church seems also to be emphasizing the important role of faith as opposed to gaining a testimony. These developments suggest a slow expansion of acceptability criteria which someday could incorporate many Group 2 members. Unfortunately, it sometimes takes years for subtle changes at the top to trickle down to the local level.

• *Is Group 2 or the “Borderlanders” a real group? Can I join?*

No, we have no official membership structure, as such. Most of us have enough to do dealing with our Church memberships. We don’t want to appear to be competing with the Church.⁴



Given the impact of the Internet since the 1980s, I would guess that the phenomenon of the Borderland member is probably more widespread than it was in the 80s.

NOTES

1. In our model, we have defined a “Borderland” member (Group 2) as “a Church member who maintains ties to the Church but who may have a different understanding of faith and belief, lack of a standard LDS ‘testimony,’ a different view of LDS history, open questions about some aspect of the Church, reduced or modified Church activity, feelings of not meeting traditional Group 1 norms or acceptability criteria.”

2. A more comprehensive self assessment is found in my book *For Those Who Wonder*, which is available free at FORTHOSEWHOWONDER.COM.

3. Several years ago, during a lesson I was teaching, I told my high priest group that I was not yet a true believer in the Restoration but that I was fully supportive of the Church and its missions, and that I had a testimony of Jesus. A week or so later, our high priest group leader appeared at my door and announced that because I didn’t have a testimony of the Restoration, I would no longer be permitted to teach the high priest group. The justification for this action came from the Church’s Handbook of Instruction which stated a policy that a priesthood teacher should have a strong testimony. Unfortunately, this kind of deliberate local marginalization is not an unusual experience for those who are open.

4. This is my 38th column. All columns are available for free download at FORTHOSEWHOWONDER.COM.

Please send me your experiences from life in the Borderlands.

*D. Jeff Burton,
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THE FAMILY FORUM

SANCTUARY TRAUMA

by Michael Farnworth Ed.D.

For too many of us, our parenting springs from one of two attitudes: Either we didn't mind how we were treated growing up and therefore repeat with our children whatever happened to us. Or we hated how we were treated and parent in the opposite way. Both options are reactionary role-plays—the very thing our children do not need.

THIS IS THE first of a series of columns dedicated to understanding and improving the dynamics of Mormon families. My premise is that we suffer from an exaggerated case of lip service and don't actually afford the family as much devotion as we claim. Sure, in our church meetings, we talk about how important the family is and pass out recipes for happy families. But our actual family lives typically don't fare any better than those of other middle-class Christian groups.

Certainly there are differences. Tim Heaton, a sociologist at Brigham Young University, has found that Mormons don't fool around sexually as much as others do before marriage. Mormons get married more often. Mormons have more children. And Mormon men rank higher in chauvinistic attitudes and behaviors. But in the really important ways, our marriages are not any happier, and our children are no more successful than others'. We experience just as much stress, conflict, and disagreement as do other families; we experience just as much family violence. And all those television ads to the contrary, we don't spend an above-average amount of time with our children. In other words, we are no better or worse than other dysfunctional folk.

But before we can understand our family dynamics, we have to understand our marriage patterns. And before we can understand those, we have to understand why we were drawn to marry our spouse in the first place; and before we can do that, we have to reclaim and understand our own selves. And that is a most difficult task.

LEARNING HOW TO understand ourselves is a challenging spiritual process. How do we start? First, we learn how to be honest. Honesty is often regarded as something straightforward. We just do the right thing, or stand up for what's true, or take back to the store the pack of gum we stole and pay for it. But we're heading into a realm where dishonesty is well hidden, where we can easily—even habitually—misidentify dishonesty as honesty. I'm not talking about the outward, in-your-face kind of dishonesty cheaters and cons use. I'm talking about the subtle inner dishonesty of hiding and pretense—the most dangerous dishonesty we're capable of.

We begin our lives unable to do anything but behave honestly. Children naturally cry, throw temper tantrums, express joy, and spontaneously forgive and forget.

At first, the adults around us, especially our parents, may find this candor endearing, but only because our inner persona—our real nature—isn't making demands on their lives yet. As we get older, our idiosyncratic souls start to become inconvenient. They often run counter to the acceptable values of our culture, which frightens our parents, motivating them to take steps—subtle and not so subtle—to bring us in line with social expectations.

Those expectations grow from our Western Christian past when children were seen as having the devil in them. I am willing to bet that the phrase *beat the hell out of them*, didn't originate in a bar room brawl but in the churches. Children were seen as naturally evil and needing to have their wills broken. Hence the adage “spare the rod and spoil the child”—an attitude still strong within many of us. We have inherited a long, sad history of abandonment, abuse, and violence, all in the guise of socializing children.

According to our Western culture, children should be trained much like a factory worker. Good children, like good workers, are obedient, dutiful, loyal, conforming, passive, respectful and submissive before authority figures but competitive and thus judgmental toward peers. Good children are obedient, have few needs, and make few demands on their caregivers. Bad children do things their own way and make many demands on caregivers, all the while enjoying the attention they receive for this behavior.

As children living in this culture, we begin to understand that putting on an appropriate appearance is more important than expressing our inner reality. We soon learn that telling our parents “no” and disobeying them results in punishment. We are constantly being socialized to obey the adults in our lives. This becomes a problem if, as usually happens, we unintentionally learn to ignore our own sacred center in the process. In gospel terms, the sacred center is the Light of Christ—a divinely appointed feedback system. It helps us know who our essential self is, when it is being violated, and when we are straying from it. Our sense of the sacred center is overtaken by a relentless *role-play* reinforced and promoted by our parents, leaders, and culture. No child could hope to stand up to this socializing pressure, and those who try are treated as disobedient, bad children. The result is a socialized dishonesty—a move away from our sacred center—well described by the phrase “sanctuary trauma.”



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French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas describes sanctuary trauma as occurring when we are made to play roles in which we no longer recognize ourselves. We grow up replacing our own sacred realities and values with those of the dominant culture, eventually becoming adults lost in—yet one with—a world of appearances and pretense.

Then we become young adults; we marry, have children, and the process repeats. But now, instead of being the victims of sanctuary trauma, we become its perpetrators. For too many of us, our parenting springs from one of two attitudes: Either we didn't mind how we were treated growing up and therefore repeat with our children whatever happened to us. Or we hated how we were treated and parent in the opposite way. Both options are reactionary *role-plays*—the very thing our children do not need. And like us, our children sacrifice their inner realities to gain their parents' conditional love. What children need is access to their parents as genuine human beings. But we can't offer them our real selves if we never know who we are. We must reclaim our inner sanctuary. We need to awaken from our cultural trance and confront the trauma that caused us to leave our inner sanctuary so many years ago.

LEARNING OF THIS awakening paradigm, many of us turn away because it is inconvenient and questions our self-concept. It seems to argue that we're like Jason Bourne, the hero of Robert Ludlum's *Bourne Trilogy*, suffering from a past lost to us, chased by inner villains for actions we can't remember committing, finding ourselves capable of atrocious acts. It is easier and much more comfortable to maintain our current idea of ourselves, supported as it is by our culture. However, I am convinced that we do the greatest damage when we are unconscious of our wounds. We are most dangerous when asleep—our potential for hurting others exponentially increases.

We need to awaken to the notion that the spirit of the divine resides within us, not outside of us in yonder heaven. For good reason did Jesus say, "The kingdom of God is within you." Until we awaken to this spiritual truth, nothing else can change. Until then, we will treat our children and ourselves with an air of disassociated objectification. We will ignore the spiritual feedback system in favor of our

culture's agenda. We will barricade ourselves against the compassion that could seep into our heart after we commit yet another inappropriate disciplinary tactic in the name of teaching our children obedience.

HOW CAN we rediscover this sacred center so long hidden? The psychologist Carl Jung provided us with some excellent tools. He identified the major players in our life as our ego, shadow, and Self. In order to start the rediscovery process, we must deal with each of these.

The ego is our conscious control center. It navigates us through our culture. It was the entity that first noticed our parents' and culture's disapproval and approval and worked to keep everything running smoothly by creating checklists and recipes of appropriate behaviors. It encouraged us to suppress the parts of ourselves that didn't fit into the surrounding culture. Our ego marinates in vanity: it sees itself through either the eyes of grandiosity or loathing, two sides of the same coin.

The part of us that our ego suppressed—the underbelly of our personality—is called the shadow. Jung understood the shadow as a moral problem challenging the whole ego personality. Becoming conscious of the shadow requires moral effort and courage. Unacknowledged, the shadow gains strength and perversity, increasing its potential for all kinds of mischief. Most of us live as a house divided. When the shadow sneaks past the ego to make itself known by engaging in yet another repetition of a shameful, secretive behavior we had promised we would never do again, we too often blame a force outside us (i.e. the devil). However, our shadow is an essential part of us. We cannot escape the shadow through good behavior. The opposition that is necessary in all things is found within us. That is the reason we need a Savior.

The shadow can be marshalled for our good if we learn to make peace with its volatile energies. To taste a part of your own shadow, make a short list of really irritating things that other people do (especially spouse and children). For example, I detest self-righteous people. So guess what that says about me? The more unconscious we are of our shadow, the more we project it onto others. The stronger the energy of the shadow, the less able we are to see those traits in ourselves. Your short list could

provide some challenging fodder for self-exploration. When we start to become aware of our own shadow side, we will not be so quick to project, judge, or condemn others for things we are unwilling to confront in ourselves. We begin to integrate our shadow by becoming aware of its presence and by consciously and compassionately observing it in action.

Even though we may be frightened of its paradoxical powers, the shadow has many gifts of insight to offer. I believe the most wonderful one is mercy towards ourselves and others when we awaken to the nature of our own underbelly. For help in understanding the nature of the shadow, read *The Dark Side of the Light Chasers* by Debbie Ford.

In the second movie of the *Star Wars* series, *The Empire Strikes Back*, Luke Skywalker, a budding Jedi, enters a cave where there is great evil. He takes his lightsaber, even though his trainer, Yoda, tells him he won't need it. In the dark cavern, Luke meets his nemesis Darth Vader. Scared for his life, Luke engages Vader in battle, winning the confrontation by severing Vader's head from his body. Then, as Luke watches, Vader's mask dissolves to reveal Luke Skywalker's own face. Luke has just done battle with himself, but he missed the chance to learn a valuable lesson in the ways of the Force. We need to integrate the shadow back into our lives instead of hiding from or fighting it.

IF WE CAN manage to make peace with our shadow—engaging it fiercely and authentically, with passion and compassion, and then integrating it with our ego—we can reclaim what Jung called the Self. The Self is the element of our divine nature that Jung saw fit to capitalize in deference to its sacredness. The Self is all our parts brought into a synergistic whole. When the sacred Self is re-enthroned as the personality control center, we can surrender our self-loathing and learn to accept our woundedness as a necessary condition of life. We learn to say yes to all of it. We relearn to trust the sacred center of our being and commune with the Divine in the inner chambers of our soul.

In a Sufi story found in Idries Shah's *Tales of the Dervishes*, royal parents tell their young prince that he must journey from his homeland to alien shores and there find a precious jewel guarded by a monster. The journey requires that he achieve a degree of awareness and enlightenment that he can attain only by making

this journey. After providing him with a special food to sustain him during his exile, the king and queen send their son on his way. But when he arrives at his destination, he falls into a trance that affects just about everyone else as well in this strange, dream-like land. Donning the garb of the country and engaging in an occupation befitting a good citizen, he forgets his true home and mission. The young prince never wins the precious jewel of his true royal Self.

Like this young prince, we sometimes we fall into a trance and get pushed off the path of Selfhood. Sometimes we absorb another person's life and agenda by ignoring our own dreams and desires—and then later wonder why we feel empty inside. If we want to reconnect to our sacred center, we must embrace the vulnerability, fear, anger, sadness, shame, disgust, humiliation, contempt, hurt, and pain of childhood.

This is difficult to do, so I will give you a starting place. Write down some memories from your early childhood. In my parenting class, I required a twenty-two-page paper of each student's memories of the first seven years of life.

The students were predictably resistant, saying there was no way they could gather so many memories. But I promised that as soon as they began the assignment, their body and brain would start restoring the memories—a “write it and they will come” phenomenon. Guess what? The papers often ranged in the end from twenty-five to fifty pages. If you're interested in reading some of these papers, visit the First Seven Years Paper at MFARNWORTH.COM. Click on “Stewardship Parenting,” and then on “First Seven Years Paper.”

You can also engage the remembering process just by making a determination to do so and then writing the memories that arise as you go about your daily life. You



Sanctuary trauma occurs when we are made to play roles in which we no longer recognize ourselves. We grow up replacing our own sacred realities and values with those of the surrounding culture.

may be surprised at what surfaces. Reading some of the First Seven Years Papers can also help trigger memories. As you freeze-frame some of your earliest memories, focus on the feelings attached to them. They won't always be pretty. I am reminded of a *Calvin and Hobbes* cartoon strip in which Calvin is in the school yard playing with a ball. A bully shoves him down in the dirt, calls him a weenie, and goes off laughing. Facedown in the dust, Calvin murmurs to no one in particular, “People who get nostalgic about childhood were obviously never children.”

Reconnecting with childhood energies is not an easy process and will take some time. But these early memories with their

accompanying energies are most important in helping you unlock the door to your sacred center. In cases of childhood abuse, you may need to seek professional help. For a jump-start in understanding the dynamics of childhood trauma, get *The Drama of the Gifted Child* by Alice Miller, a short and potent read.

None of us can go back and change our past, but we all have the ability to suffer and forgive. Suffering our sanctuary trauma will change us and heal us, enabling us to forgive those who injured us and ask forgiveness of those we have hurt with our dysfunctional attempts at love. It will make us better partners and parents because it will make us better people.

BOOK REVIEW

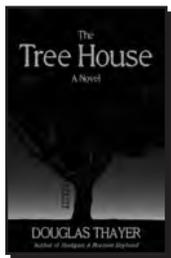
FAITH AND THE AS IF FACTOR

THE TREE HOUSE

By Douglas Thayer
2009

384 Pages, \$16.95
Zarahemla Books

Reviewed by Levi S. Peterson



That's what The Tree House is about—the benefits of living as if Mormonism is true even without knowing that it is.

AT 80, DOUGLAS Thayer goes on writing impressive fiction, as this latest novel shows. Cast in short, simple sentences and concentrating on the concrete instead of the abstract, *The Tree House* not only captures the rhythms of Mormon life in Provo during the mid-twentieth century but also figures forth the tensions inherent within the Mormon concept of testimony.

Having a testimony—a witness of the Holy Spirit confirming the truthfulness of Mormonism—is more or less obligatory among the Mormons. Members assume there's something wrong with anyone who doesn't have a testimony. Nonetheless, anecdotal experience tells us that a considerable number of earnest Mormons don't have one. Furthermore, these less fortunate Latter-day Saints will often be found keeping the commandments just as carefully as do their more self-assured confreres. Some will even get up in testimony meeting and say they hope to get a testimony sooner or later. Mormons of this sort lack the com-

fort of being certain there is life after death. But they hope there is. And that kind of hope is the essence of faith. It causes doubters to live as if they do know. That's what *The Tree House* is about—the benefits of living as if Mormonism is true even without knowing that it is.

THIS novel is a considerable mingling of autobiography and fiction. The experiences of Harris Thatcher, its protagonist, parallel a good many experiences Thayer attributes to himself in *Hooligan* (2007), a memoir of his boyhood. That fact should come as no surprise. Numerous authors acknowledge an adaptation of their own experiences to their fiction.

Furthermore, Thayer's characterization of the youthful Harris—he is an exceptionally obedient, dutiful boy—is to be found in many of Thayer's stories and novels. Over and over, Thayer has written about life in Provo as seen through the eyes of an innocent Mormon adolescent during the

late 1930s and 1940s.

When I speak of an innocent Mormon adolescent, I mean innocent in both naïveté and conscientiousness—the first term implying freedom from the care and worry that come with experience, the second implying a vigilance against wrongdoing and sin. Furthermore, I mean an exceedingly innocent Mormon adolescent. Any one of Thayer's adolescent characters would stand out even among a whole quorum of good Mormon boys.

However, Harris's freedom from care and worry in *The Tree House* lasts only through the first chapter, which ends with his approaching high school in happy anticipation of the future: "He knew there were a lot of things he had to figure out, but he looked forward to his life and all the great things that would happen to him" (16). And many great things do happen to him as the novel advances. But many bad things happen, as well. By the time the first section of the novel ends with Harris's high school graduation, he has been staggered by the deaths of his father and the girl he irretrievably loved. These losses intensify his need to know that Mormonism is true. That need becomes one of his major preoccupations throughout the remainder of the novel. Harris ardently desires a sure conviction, prays for it, envies his best friend Luke's possession of it, and keeps the commandments meticulously in the expectation that someday his insecure faith will transmute into certain knowledge.

Hence, he responds to a mission call from his bishop and, in the second section of the novel, finds himself in war-torn Germany, where Thayer himself was stationed with the U.S. Army of occupation immediately following World War II.

Harris is a model missionary in all senses of the word, as Thayer must have been when, following his army experience in Germany, he returned as a Mormon missionary. But even as a missionary, Harris does not achieve the sure knowledge that he seeks. Undermining his search for the hand of a benign deity in human affairs is the immeasurable destruction everywhere visible in a war-destroyed Europe. His cynical German landlady sees faith in Christ as a cop-out, a refusal to accept the grim fact that human nature is inevitably violent and warlike. "I do not believe a Christ can pay for all of this evil," she says bluntly. "Forty, perhaps fifty or sixty million people died in the war. There were so many that no one knows. Think of the suf-



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fering, the wounded, the families destroyed, the vast destruction of whole cities. How can a Christ pay for that?" (143–144). With war's devastation around him, the closest the innocent, idealistic Harris can come to a conventional Mormon testimony is to tell his fellow missionaries: "The gospel does change lives. It gives people hope. It teaches them how to love each other. I know my testimony is growing. I am grateful for that and grateful to serve in Germany" (147–148).

THE final third of the novel rounds out Harris's perception that mortal life is a series of tragic losses—and that warfare is normal and peace only intermittent. As Thayer frequently points out in *The Tree House*, that is a perception that the Book of Mormon reinforces well. Returned from his mission, Harris is drafted, sent to boot camp, and then assigned to combat duty in Korea, where he kills Chinese and North Korean soldiers, mourns the death of his best friend Luke in combat, and is himself seriously wounded.

Although his body slowly mends, his spirit atrophies. Amidst the horrors of combat, what little belief in Deity he has evaporates entirely. Like his German landlady, he finds untenable "the idea that Christ took upon himself all the suffering, pain, and sorrow of mankind down through all the ages." Hard on the heels of that thought comes his recognition "that he had no faith, perhaps never had, that he'd been fooling himself" (345). Moreover, as if the post-traumatic stress disorder from which Harris now suffers were not enough, he returns home to Provo only to suffer a severe additional loss when his mother and brothers are killed by a fire that guts his childhood home. Although he resists thoughts of suicide, Harris quite understandably falls into long-term despondency. He has lost the incentive to live ac-

ording to even the *as if* factor.

Nonetheless, the novel ends with a glimmer of hope. During the final few pages, Harris is salvaged by the love of a nurse, Jennifer, who cares for him when he undergoes an emergency appendectomy. Considering the Job-like losses Harris has suffered, some readers will find this an abrupt and unconvincing ending. However, Harris and Jennifer marry in the temple and plan on having children. It is apparent that Harris will live the life of an active Mormon and therein will find a kind of contentedness. His incentive to do so has been restored. Encouraged by his believing wife, he will continue to live, as he always had, as if he possesses a sure testimony of the truthfulness of Mormonism.

In fact, the *as if* factor is reinforced eloquently when Harris and Jennifer attend a memorial service for Harris's buddy Luke, whose body has been shipped home from Korea. Luke's mother says passionately, "Oh, Harris, we'll see him again on resurrection morning! Our boy will be so beautiful, so beautiful. We'll all be here together once more, won't we, Harris?"

After a moment of hesitation, during

which he thinks of war, destruction, and the universality of death, Harris answers:

"Yes, yes," he said, which was what he had to say, wanted to say, had enough faith for. Otherwise there was nothing, and there could not be that. And the suffering and pain had to be paid for too, somehow, the incredible loss, the waste, the incalculable stupidity, the hate, the greed. And there had to be mercy, justice, grace, redemption, but mostly redemption because, oh, sweet Jesus Christ, how the world needed to be redeemed! (371–372).

I for one respond to Thayer's desire for redemption with much greater emotion than I could ever respond to an expression of his certainty of it. The *as if* factor means a great deal to me. I predict many other readers will respond to *The Tree House* in the same manner. It may not appeal to those who "know beyond the shadow of a doubt." But for the uncounted numbers of those who just wish they knew, it should be a solace and strength.



Welcome to my part of the Primary Program. Instead of delivering the lines my mom worked with me for hours to memorize, I will now stand frozen a moment before bursting into tears.

BOOK REVIEW

OK, MORMON

THE TREE HOUSE

By Douglas Thayer

2009

384 Pages, \$16.95

Zarahemla Books

Reviewed by E. George Goold

Job emerges from calamity without the certainty that his death will make everything okay, but with the power to create his own meaning from his suffering

EVERYONE FAMILIAR WITH Mormon letters knows Douglas Thayer. The veteran Brigham Young University English professor established himself with the landmark short story collection *Under the Cottonwoods*, built a long, distinguished career with novels including *Summer Fire* and *The Conversion of Jeff Williams*, and delighted audiences with his memoir, *Hooligan: A Mormon Boyhood*. He is referred to by many critics as “the Mormon Hemingway” because of his straightforward, embellishment-free style. Thayer’s latest novel is *The Tree House*, from Zarahemla Books.

Thayer’s hero, his autobiographical avatar, is Harris Thatcher, your typical Mormon young man growing up in World War II-era Provo.

Life is pretty simple for young Harris. He ponders questions of religion now and again but doesn’t stress about finding answers. “Harris had begun to wonder why some families were more religious than

others, what God was really like, and what he wanted you to do. But he didn’t worry about it. He was just curious.”

Then dad dies. Harris is struck a blow, but he eventually gets over it and steps into his new role as man of the family. He takes a job at the local diner and learns to make pies. He is befriended by kindly diner owner, Mrs. Hardy, and the disgruntled, beer-guzzling cook, Jack. He finds an outlet for love in Abby, his high school sweetheart.

But then she dies. Harris doesn’t think he’ll ever be able to love again, but he goes on a mission to Germany where he learns about a different kind of love. He builds a strong testimony and isn’t ashamed of outward displays of religiosity such as kneeling in prayer and wearing his garments. He returns home to Provo a changed man. “After two-and-a-half years in Germany hearing all the stories about the war and seeing the destruction, he didn’t feel protected in Provo anymore. He knew it was possible that bombs could drop on Provo someday, tanks

roll through the streets. His house could burn, Luke’s house, the whole block, a vast pall of smoke rising thousands of feet into the air. This understanding surprised Harris and made him somewhat apprehensive.”

His apprehension grows when both he and stalwart Luke, who just got back from a remarkably successful mission in Mexico, are drafted to fight in Korea. As he excelled at being a missionary, Harris excels at being a soldier. He knows how to follow orders; he kills with precision and without doubt. But along the way, things like praying and wearing garments don’t seem as important as they had on his mission. Harris has time to prove his heroism and fulfill his duty well beyond expectation before he is shot twice and drastically wounded.

In his hospital ward, he finds a soldier from Luke’s outfit, who informs him that his saintly friend Luke had died in a horribly tragic yet heroic and virtuous way. Harris’s experiences in Korea shake the foundations of his belief, and he finds absolutely no solace in the promise of the atonement. “How could Christ do that? Harris didn’t have the faintest notion and understood finally that he had no faith, perhaps never had, that he’d been fooling himself.”

Harris is honorably discharged and returns to Provo. He misses his dead friend, his dead dad, his dead girlfriend. He resumes work at the diner and returns to his old lifestyle. Then a house fire kills his mother and his two brothers. So now he misses them too. He goes into a state of walking shock, speaking only when spoken to, thinking about becoming like his old buddy Jack, drinking beer and staring at the wall. Instead he gets acute appendicitis that nearly kills him.

He wakes up in the hospital and meets Jennifer, who not only went to high school with Harris but even knew his first love. Jennifer nurses him back to health and restores his hope. They start dating. Over malted milks, he tells her the part he played in killing Chinese soldiers. The indomitable Jennifer responds, “Oh, Harris, that’s terrible. But, Harris, that’s what the atonement is for. Don’t you know that?”

Jennifer reminds Harris that the Book of Mormon is nothing but a history of war. The sons of Helaman were a bunch of kids, like Luke and Harris and all the other cannon fodder in Korea. “What do you think they felt like, seeing all the men they killed? They went on with their lives as far as we know. Don’t you think they went back home and got jobs, fell in love, married their girlfriends, and started families?



E. GEORGE GOOLD is a former sports journalist who worked for newspapers in Kansas, Alaska, and South Carolina. His personal essay “You Don’t Know Jack,” was published in issue 157 of SUNSTONE.

Their moms must have taught them about the atonement.”

Jennifer's pep talk, along with a shot in the arm from Mrs. Hardy, restores Harris to action and eventually he and Jennifer marry. Harris decides to be a lawyer. He walks into his former ward with his wife on his arm, redeemed.

STYLISTICALLY, Thayer follows Hemingway. Thematically, he must have gotten his material from the book in the Bible between Esther and Psalms. In other words, Harris Thatcher is Thayer's Job. He loses everything. Every single immediate family member, his best friend, and his high school sweetheart all die. The challenges and obstacles facing Harris form a litany of loss and pain that verges on the absurd. But, oddly, never once, not one single time, did I ever feel any sympathy for Harris. Why? Because again and again throughout the novel, I got the feeling that he's going to be okay. I just knew that things would work out for him.

Harris is still going to get his great reunion in the sky. He'll get to see his family again, and he and Luke will hunt deer in the Celestial Kingdom. As Luke's mother says at her son's funeral, "Oh, Harris, we'll see him again on resurrection morning! Our boy will be so beautiful, so beautiful. We'll all be here together once more, won't

we, Harris?" That idealized notion of the triumphant family reunion, the one that fuels the desire of all Mormons, is still a reality for Harris. As it is for all believing Mormons. Thus, in *The Tree House*, we witness what happens with 99 percent of so-called Mormon literature. Any dramatic tension, any suffering that Harris may endure, is undercut because of the lingering certainty among Mormon readers (and clearly, authors) that his belief in the atonement will save him.

Perhaps this is the distinguishing trait of Mormon literature: it is optimistic to a fault. The great hope the atonement offers will always prevail. No matter how many people die around the hero, no matter how many people the hero kills with his own two hands, some hot little nurse will always come along to save him and remind him that the atonement makes everything okay.

The comparison to Job goes further. The meat of Job is his suffering and his insistence on justice. Even though his dead children and riches are all replaced, Job gets no answers from God. The narrative imposes no meaning on his suffering. Job emerges from calamity without the certainty that his death will make everything okay, but with the power to create his own meaning from his suffering—God having abdicated that function. But Harris is merely a victim of fate, passively accepting life and death according

to the atonement. Whether he lives or dies doesn't matter; he's still saved. Job's struggle is far more compelling: going on with life in the face of an inscrutable God who provided no shining bedside nurse to remind him that he knew the answers all along.

Is there a Mormon literature dealing with what happens when Jennifer never comes? What is a man to do when no shining young woman reminds him that the atonement makes everything okay? What do we do when there's no Jennifer to tell us what the atonement even is? There is no such literature, because any book that doesn't express belief in the healing power of the atonement can't really be called Mormon.

While a good map for beginning writers to follow, *The Tree House* is ultimately unsatisfying and almost irrelevant compared to other much more compelling books specifically about war, if not death generally. If you want to read about what happens when soldiers see what war is, when they stack dead bodies, see friends get legs blown off, and experience a world where "right and wrong" mean absolutely nothing, read the recently released *Matterhorn* by Karl Marlantes. He's not Mormon (nor was Job, I believe) but his book deals with true suffering and its consequences in a way that provides comfort far beyond the empty rooms in *The Tree House*.

Salacious, sweet, sad ...

insightful

insulting

quirky-faithful

and funny.

D. Michael Quinn

JOHNNY TOWNSEND
Gods
GARGOYLES

For years, Johnny Townsend has been publishing award-winning Mormon fiction in many national magazines including *Glimmer Train*, *Sunstone*, and *Dialogue*. Now his work is gathered into seven compelling collections. Find them at Amazon or:

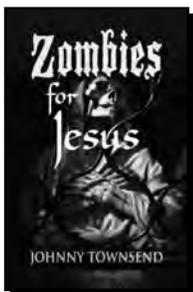
JohnnyTownsend.com

INTERVIEW

MAKING OURSELVES VISIBLE

A Conversation with Author

JOHNNY TOWNSEND



Mormon literature can never be a mature art form til LDS writers focus on the humanity of our position instead of on our “chosen” status. If our literature is going to resonate on a larger scale, the truthfulness of the Church, or lack thereof, can’t be a relevant topic.

If you’ve been reading *SUNSTONE* and *Dialogue* for the past five years, you’ve run across multiple examples of Johnny Townsend’s work. One of Mormonism’s most prolific short story writers, he is constantly putting out fiction that is, as D. Michael Quinn puts it, simultaneously “insightful, insulting, quirky-faithful, and funny.” Townsend grew up in New Orleans and served a mission in Rome before coming home, earning four degrees, and starting to publish in magazines such as *Glimmer Train* and *The Massachusetts Review*. A Hurricane Katrina refugee, he now lives in Seattle with his partner, Gary Tolman, who also served a mission in Italy. His most recent collection is titled *Zombies for Jesus*.

SUNSTONE: How do you approach writing about Mormons?

JOHNNY TOWNSEND: I once heard a prominent LDS writer say that only mainstream Mormons are worth writing about. I find that attitude thoroughly appalling. My father is a high priest and was on the stake high council for years. He is also now married to his fourth wife—not mainstream of him. My aunt was Relief Society president for her ward, all the while married to a gay man. My cousin, married to a returned missionary in the temple, had to adopt children because she couldn’t physiologically bear any. We are all non-mainstream,

and all of us have stories worth telling—and, just as important, worth hearing.

People have read some of my stories and have said, “Mormons wouldn’t do that.” I’m not writing about *Mormons* as a whole. I’m writing about this individual Mormon, or that one. Individual people might do anything, and those possibilities should be explored. We can’t write only about generic public-relations-friendly Mormons. We have to write about the complex characters who really exist.

SUNSTONE: What do you think needs to happen before Mormon literature can come into its own?

JOHNNY: The problem with a lot of Mormon writing is that the writers are trying to prove some doctrinal point. The stories are vehicles for proselytizing in one form or another. In that sense, they are very much like “art” from the former Soviet Union that is really just propaganda. Mormon literature can never be a mature art form until LDS writers focus on the humanity of our position instead of on our “chosen” status. If our literature is going to resonate on a larger scale, the truthfulness of the Church, or lack thereof, can’t be a relevant topic.

Isaac Bashevis Singer is a good model for Mormon writers. He writes tales that, rather than proclaim Judaism the true reli-

gion, simply tell human stories from a Jewish perspective—well enough to win a Nobel Prize for literature. There are Jewish books and magazines with stories critical of Israeli policies or Jewish practices. There are gay magazines with writing critical of gay attitudes and behaviors. Until we as Mormons can handle opposition in our own discussions amongst ourselves, we will be relegated to articles and stories that are nothing more meaningful than the pastor preaching to the choir.

At the same time, my goal as a gay Mormon writer can’t be to go out and convince Mormon readers that gays are really all right and that the Church should change its policies and doctrines to accommodate us. That would be proselytizing, too. I certainly try to move my readers, and if moving them means the readers feel favorably toward gays, I think that is a good thing. But I have gay characters make unwise choices and do things that aren’t necessarily praiseworthy. Some of my characters are admirable, and some make big mistakes. But with all of the stories, I try to bring some small illumination to the human condition, as trite as that sounds.

SUNSTONE: How did you get into writing gay Mormon fiction?

JOHNNY: My first missionary story was “Bus Surfing,” about a missionary being separated from the only companion he’s really liked. It received moderate acclaim in my writing workshop, but even when I was on the staff of the university literary magazine, I couldn’t get it published. After I came out, though, I revised it into a story about a missionary being separated from his first love. He can never reveal his true feelings to his companion, who will never know what he means to this elder, and who the protagonist will likely never see again in his life. At that point, it was published in *Christopher Street*, a prominent gay magazine.

Other stories underwent a similar transformation. “Washing Dishes” went from being about a missionary who can’t get along with a zone leader to being about a choice between eternal damnation and forgiveness. If this elder can’t forgive his mean zone leader, will God deign to forgive the missionary for his homosexuality? All of eternity rests on the answer. “Pissing in Peace” went from being about a guy with a shy kidney to being about the invasiveness of the Church, choosing our very underwear and even who we can allow ourselves to



"You really need to get some more pea-shooters out, Bishop."

love. The stories took on added dimensions, and weightier ones, once I decided to deal with those issues on a personal level and risk including them in my stories.

SUNSTONE: "Gay Mormon writer" is a charged role to play in our culture. How do you find yourself affected by it?

JOHNNY: It's true that the rest of gay literature has actually moved into a "post-gay" phase, where it is simply a given that the character is gay, making the character's orientation not at all the focus of the story. We need more of that in Mormon literature, too. As gays and lesbians with some understanding of the craft of storytelling, we need to make ourselves seen and heard and understood. Mainstream Mormons wish we didn't exist. They wish we would just go

away and leave them alone. We need to write gay stories so that we make ourselves visible, make ourselves noticed, so that no one can forget we are here and that we must be acknowledged.

Every writing teacher says, "Write what you know." What we know is the Mormon experience—and more specifically, the gay Mormon experience. We can move beyond our individual histories, of course, but we are most likely to write something truly worth reading if we focus on what we know best. So, I write stories such as, "Splitting with Elder Tanner," where a gay returned missionary decides to serve a second full-time mission because having a missionary companion is the closest he can morally get to marrying another man.

I would say, though, that I write more non-gay Mormon stories than gay ones,

and some of these are among my strongest stories, I think. In all of my stories, however, my main goal has to be simply to tell a good story, to create something that makes the reader feel more alive, more human, more compassionate for having read it. I think there are millions of Mormon stories of all kinds to tell. There will always be gay Mormons, of course, so there will always be worthwhile gay Mormon stories to tell.

SUNSTONE: Many people would wonder, considering the Church's recent political action, why you are so willing to continue interacting with Mormonism.

JOHNNY: I have an atheist friend who is mystified that I insist on writing Mormon fiction.

"I don't feel any need to write Baptist fiction just because I was brought up Baptist," he once told me.

"Then you probably shouldn't write any," I said. "But I *do* feel connected to the Mormon community, even if most Mormons don't want to have anything to do with me. It's a little like an Italian man leaving Italy at age 26 to make a new life in America. No matter how much he might love his new country, he can't erase 26 years of his life. And what if he still has friends and family back in Rome? Can he not care what happens to them, to the Italian government? Can he not care what happens when there's an earthquake in Naples? Does he never want to see a Sophia Loren movie or watch old classics like *La Dolce Vita* and *The Bicycle Thief*? He has a continuing connection to that country no matter how 'naturalized' he becomes."

My friend didn't buy it, feeling I should shun everything Mormon. But I pointed out that Mormons also have a lot of power politically and that to ignore that fact was foolish and short-sighted. Whether I *like* Mormons or not, or whether I feel particu-

larly Mormon myself after two decades of excommunicated life, Mormons and Mormonism are a part of my life every day. And the fact is, despite everything, I do still feel Mormon. I'm not a "log cabin" Mormon, supporting Mormon political agendas against my own best interests. I simply believe what I believe, and part of that includes some of the things I learned at church.

 **Pontius' Puddle**

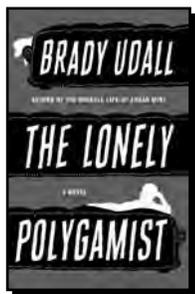


INTERVIEW

FAITH BY PROXY

A Conversation with Author

BRADY UDALL



I'm not naturally a religious or spiritual person. So it's a bit ironic or contradictory for me to say that we need more God and religion in our literature. But the most important thing to deal with is how God influences our lives.

If we exclude science fiction and vampire authors, Brady Udall is currently Mormonism's brightest literary star. Breaking onto the scene with his short story collection *Letting Loose the Hounds* (1996), Udall has been characterized as a contemporary Charles Dickens. His first novel, *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint* (2002), tells the sprawling story of a Navajo boy who converts to Mormonism and winds up living with a Mormon family in the Church's Indian placement program. Udall's most recent novel, released May 2010, is *The Lonely Polygamist*. Weighing in at more than 600 pages, the book follows Golden Richards, a Mormon fundamentalist with four wives and 28 children, as he navigates his increasingly complicated life.

One of Udall's trademarks is his provocative opening lines. From *Edgar Mint*: "If I could tell you only one thing about my life, it would be this: when I was seven years old, the mailman ran over my head." From *The Lonely Polygamist*: "To put it as simply as possible: this is the story of a polygamist who has an affair."

STEPHEN CARTER: At the beginning of *The Lonely Polygamist*, I was hyper aware of just how much was going on literarily at any one point: the metaphors, the humor, the descriptions, the characterizations—and the great thing is that you kept that quality up. It must have taken you ten

years to write this.

BRADY UDALL: It took ten years in the thinking, researching, and writing. The writing itself took six to seven years. I'd stop for a while now and then, when I didn't know I was doing, and then start again. But that's what I try to do: something with the language and the story, but without being too obtrusive.

STEPHEN: A *Salt Lake Tribune* article quotes you as saying, "I'm not sure I believe in God on most days, but the search for God is the most important human endeavor there is, and most writers won't even take the subject up." This seems to imply that you are attracted to questions of God.

BRADY: Well, yes and no. I'm attracted to them, but I don't feel qualified as a person or writer to address them very well. I'm not naturally a religious or spiritual person. So it's a bit ironic or contradictory for me to say that we need more God and religion in our literature. But the most important thing to deal with is how God influences our lives.

See, I'm not a believer. Ever since I was a little kid, I've doubted. Sitting in Sunday school, 7 or 8 years old, we'd be learning about Adam and Eve, and I'd raise my hand and ask about dinosaurs and cavemen. The contradictions drove me crazy.

I see my unbelief as a weakness. I think I would lead a better, more fulfilled life if I could live beyond my intellect. What I do is write about characters who *do* believe in God, and I try to understand them. Maybe the people I'm writing about are the people I wish I were. In *The Miracle Life of Edgar Mint*, Edgar believes in God without question, even though he's been through horrible experiences. His faith never flags. I know there are people like that. I've met them, and I'm always deeply impressed.

I do believe in some things. I believe in my wife and children. I believe in beauty, and the goodness of people, as corny as it may sound. Just because I don't know if I believe in an afterlife doesn't mean I'm depressed about things.

STEPHEN: What was it like being on a mission while not being in the spiritual "groove?"

BRADY: When I was 18, I decided that I wasn't going to go on a mission. I was sure my parents were going to be very, very upset. But I made it a point to go home and tell them about my decision. Instead of disapproval, they just said, "We support you." That was about the worst thing they ever could have said because it meant that I had to make a choice instead of just react to everyone else. Everyone around me was a believer. It was the first time I made my very own choice. My mission was my last attempt at faith. That's how I saw it.

And my mission turned out to be one of best experiences of my life. I emerged from it with a certain faith in the meaning of the Church in people's lives that I hadn't seen growing up. That doesn't mean I fully believed in the Church, but I felt closer to something real and spiritual.

STEPHEN: What kind of missionary were you: the leadership type or the type like me who was always being assigned to trunky companions?

BRADY: I wasn't what you'd call a successful missionary. I wasn't convinced myself, so how could I convince others? I would say, "You really don't have to do this, you know." People would get baptized in *spite* of me. I introduced the subject, and off they went.

STEPHEN: So what's your relationship with the Church right now?

BRADY: I go to church—though not all the time—to be with my family. I like a lot of it. Some things I have a hard time with, which is why I still avoid much of it. But I like the sacrament, singing hymns, listening to testimonies. I just always hope there's a place for me there.

STEPHEN: Is there?

BRADY: My ward in Boise is the most wonderful ward. It's an urban ward, so it has all kinds of different people. People with lots of money, people with none, people with and without an education. People don't look down their noses at me. I've never felt so at home in a ward.

STEPHEN: So when you "came out," so to speak, about your faith, did it make a difference in your writing?

BRADY: I "came out" after I got married, but I was always the questioning type; people could tell I wasn't toeing the line, though I never openly rebelled. In my early 20s, I decided that I couldn't pretend anymore—I couldn't put up the illusion of faith. That was a very good decision for me, very freeing. I don't know if it affected my writing much, though. If you write about the subjects I do, you can't care too much what people think about you.

STEPHEN: Even what your family thinks?

BRADY: Well, yeah. Having this book come out is uncomfortable. It's hard on my relatives. I did a reading in Salt Lake; several of my brothers and sisters and my mother-in-law came. They're always supportive, but I really worried about what I would read that night. I had huge anxiety about it. I kept thinking, "Maybe I should censor all this and make it nice." But I didn't . . . well, maybe a little here and there.

STEPHEN: How large is your audience in mainstream Mormonism?

BRADY: I don't think I have a very big readership, but it is a broad one: some Mormons, some Jack Mormons, some who have never heard of Mormons. That pleases me. I'm not writing for any one group of people, that's for sure. I just hope someone out there will be moved by what I write. That's what I'm writing for: a true emotional experience. Not an intellectual or theological one. That's what I think fiction is. As Faulkner said,

"It's all about the human heart in conflict with itself."

STEPHEN: You teach creative writing at Boise State University. Do you have many Mormon students there? Do you find yourself treating them any differently than you do your other students?

BRADY: At any one time, we usually have two or three Mormon students in our program, and they're all quite talented. But I don't foster them any differently. Occasionally they will ask me, "How should I handle this?" and I give whatever advice I can. But there's not much difference in how or what they pursue in their writing. Occasionally they'll use Mormon elements, but I guess I just never think of Mormonism as deserving special treatment.

STEPHEN: While in my creative writing program, I wrestled a lot with how to portray Mormonism. I had to overcome the idea that there were only two ways to tell a Mormon story: the General Conference way or the anti-Mormon way. I always felt the bishop was reading over my shoulder.

BRADY: I've had friends and students who have the same problem. You just have to let the bishop go, even though it's hard. I did that at an early age. I was more interested

in everyone else. Not my mother, not the bishop. I've never liked either side—General Conference or anti-Mormon. I just want to use everything in my experience to make my fiction.

STEPHEN: Which authors would you point to as fulfilling your wish that American literature would take God and religion more seriously?

BRADY: There are very few, especially in the last 50 years or so. I have no one to point to.

STEPHEN: Most people would probably think that scriptural commentary would be most helpful in the search for God. Obviously fiction works better for you. What qualities make it so effective for you?

BRADY: Fiction is very specific. It focuses on the individual and doesn't usually work well with generalities, with groups. There's something very personal and intimate about good fiction, and I guess this strikes me as a better way of understanding God's relationship with man.

STEPHEN: Are you willing to give us a hint about your next project?

BRADY: I am thinking about a young adult novel that is, in some ways, an investigation of the afterlife.

Congratulations to this year's winners

Brookie and D.K. Brown Fiction Contest

Sunstone Award
JACK HARRELL
"The Prophet Claude"

Moonstone Award
LARRY MENLOVE
"A Season in the Wilderness"

**Watch for them in future
issues of SUNSTONE**

Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest

First Place
MICHAEL PALMER
"Pioneer Spirit"

Second Place
STEVEN L. PECK
"Reverencing Creation"

Third Place
KATE M. HERRICK,
"Sacred Space, Strong
Women, and Climbing Vines"

N E W S

PRESIDENT PACKER'S SPEECH PROMPTS NATIONAL CONTROVERSY, REVISIONS

A GENERAL CONFERENCE sermon in which Apostle Boyd K. Packer defended the LDS role in Proposition 8 and denied that homosexuality is inborn ignited a national controversy, triggered a massive demonstration at Temple Square, and prompted a rare revision in the published version of the speech.

Elder Packer, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, said that confusion among young people can lead to spiritual danger, focusing his remarks on pornography and sexual immorality.

"Some suppose that they were pre-set and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn tendencies toward the impure and unnatural," Packer said during the 3 October morning session of General Conference. "Not so! Why would our Heavenly Father do that to anyone? Remember he is our father."

Elder Packer's remarks appeared to refer to homosexuality. He added that the Proclamation on the Family "qualifies according to scriptural definition as a revelation" and condemned "laws against nature"—which seemed to be a reference to same-sex marriage.

"If we are not alert, there are those today who not only tolerate but advocate voting to change laws that would legalize immorality, as if a vote would somehow alter the designs of God's laws and nature," said Elder Packer. "A law against nature would be impossible to enforce. For instance, what good would a vote against the law of gravity do?"

"Regardless of the opposition, we are determined to stay on course," Elder Packer added. "We will hold to the principles and laws and ordinances of the gospel. If they are misunder-

stood either innocently or willfully, so be it. We cannot change; we will not change the moral standard. We quickly lose our way when we disobey the laws of God. If we do not protect and foster the family, civilization and our liberties must needs perish."

Elder Packer's speech came two weeks after Apostle Dallin H. Oaks delivered a speech in the Tabernacle asserting that "laws governing marriage and family rights and duties are state laws," which federal courts and the federal government ought not to supersede. Oaks warned that "if the decisions of federal courts can override the actions of state lawmakers" on issues such as marriage and adoption, "we have suffered a significant constitutional reallocation of lawmaking power from the lawmaking branch to the judicial branch and from the states to the federal government."

Elder Packer's denial that homosexuality arises from "inborn tendencies" resembles the position affirmed by Bruce C. Hafen of the First Quorum of the Seventy in a 2009 speech. Speaking to a conference of Evergreen International, an organization for same-sex attracted Mormons who desire to remain chaste, Hafen rejected the notion that same-sex orientation is inborn and therefore cannot be changed. Hafen maintained that in the early 1970s, American psychological and psychiatric associations capitulated to pressure from gay activists and ceased to identify homosexuality as a disorder, "not because of any change in actual medical findings."

RESPONSES

ELDER PACKER'S ADDRESS

triggered a variety of responses, from expressions of support to disappointment and condemnation.

Author Carol Lynn Pearson and blogger Laura Compton, both Californians who have advocated acceptance for gays and lesbians in the LDS Church, are two of the Church members who publicly responded to Elder Packer's remarks. Pearson called Packer's speech "an anomaly" which "hurt my heart, because I receive all the time emails from young gay Mormons who feel so diminished and defeated." Pearson recently launched Proposition Healing (PROPOSITIONHEALING.COM), an initiative to reconcile LDS members and the gay community; the project is based on her earlier experience bringing Mormons and homosexuals together to share a meal and listen to one another during the LDS campaign in support of Proposition 8.

Laura Compton, who two years ago organized LDS opposition to California's Proposition 8, said she was troubled by Packer's remarks. "So many Mormons have worked hard to increase understanding of what homosexuality is and what it means to be faithful," Compton told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "Now we have this [anti-gay] message coming from the pulpit in General Conference by the President of the Quorum of the Twelve. It seems like hitting a brick wall. Hopefully, this won't make people stop and say, 'It wasn't worth it.'"

Elder Packer's remarks also attracted attention from outside Mormon circles. Bloggers tarred Packer as "a closet case," "a dinosaur," and "one more school yard bully harassing gay kids."

"Certain opponents of same-sex marriage feel emboldened to unleash harsh rhetoric," Margaret Talbot wrote in the *New Yorker* magazine as part of an editorial addressing a range of current gay-related issues. "On October 3rd, Boyd K. Packer, who, at eighty-six, is the second-highest leader in the Mormon Church, proclaimed, 'Some suppose that they were born preset and cannot overcome what they feel are inborn tendencies toward the impure and unnatural.'"

"Beware the hatred-licensing power of words like 'impure' and 'unnatural,'" Talbot added editorially.

LGBT organizations were incensed by the timing of Elder Packer's speech, which came in the midst of a string of suicides of young gay people, some of them triggered by acts of bullying across the U.S. Among the suicides were Todd Ransom, 28, who killed himself in Battle Creek Canyon, Utah, near Pleasant Grove on 19 July, and Colt David Hansen, 28, who died in Salt Lake City on 3 November. Ransom and Hansen are two of forty gay Mormons now listed on an online suicide memorial sponsored by Affirmation: Gay & Lesbian Mormons.

PROTESTS IN UTAH

ON 7 OCTOBER, gay activists organized a demonstration destined for Church headquarters. "We are every color of the rainbow," organizer and former LDS member Eric Ethington told the crowd gathered at City Creek Park. "And we are tired of watching our children die."

"We are who we are," Ethington said. "We cannot change, and you [Elder Packer]

cannot change us. The more you say this, the more dead bodies you leave behind.”

“To the youth of the Church who watched [General Conference],” Ethington added, “we love you. You are beautiful and perfect just the way you are. Do not listen to others who do not love you for who you are.”

Protesters walked to Temple Square and silently lay down on the sidewalk head-to-toe, completely encircling the two blocks of Temple Square, with people lying four deep in some sections. Organizers estimated a crowd of 4,500 people, while LDS-owned KSL.com reported that “little more than 600 people” showed up. The *Deseret News* estimated between 2,000 and 3,000 protesters.

Two smaller demonstrations were held during the same week elsewhere in Utah. In Ogden, several hundred people marched from the Marriott Hotel to the Ogden City Municipal Building. Organizer Theresa Novak, a Unitarian minister, told the crowd that “our young people in particular need to know that they are worthy of love, care, dignity, and respect, no matter who they are or who they love.”

In St. George, some 60 people gathered for a rally in Vernon Worthen Park.

NATIONAL LGBT LEADERS LAUNCH PETITION, CONVERGE IN UTAH

THE HUMAN RIGHTS Campaign, the largest U.S. organization lobbying for gay rights, issued a statement on 4 October calling Packer’s sermon “inaccurate and dangerous,” adding that statements like his “fuel anti-LGBT violence and teen suicides.”

“Words have consequences, particularly when they come from a faith leader. This is exactly the kind of statement that can lead some kids to bully and others to commit suicide,” wrote Joe Solmonese, president of

HRC. “When a faith leader tells gay people that they are a mistake because God would never have made them that way and they don’t deserve love, it sends a very powerful message that violence and/or discrimination against LGBT people is acceptable. It also emotionally devastates those who are LGBT or may be struggling with their sexual orientation or gender identity. His words were not only inaccurate, they were also dangerous.”

The Human Rights Campaign set up an online petition asking Elder Packer to recant his statements. In response, Latter-day Saints launched a grassroots Facebook initiative entitled “WE LOVE YOU—President Boyd K. Packer,” with the goal of sending Packer 100,000 letters of support. Marishia Hannemann told the *Salt Lake Tribune* she was sending Packer a supportive letter because she knows he’s right. Hannemann, 49, described herself as a lesbian but explained that she stopped having sexual relations with women when she

rejoined the church 14 months ago. “I pray about it, and I pray that I will be blessed with a good man to marry and marry in the temple,” Hannemann said.

On 11 October, a group of national and local LGBT leaders gathered in Salt Lake City to deliver the online petition, which by then had gathered 150,000 signatures. A press conference featured Human Rights Campaign president Joe Solmonese, WordPerfect founder and philanthropist Bruce Bastian, Affirmation president David Melson, and health care and social work professionals.

LDS spokesperson Scott Trotter waited for the delegation outside the Church Office Building on Temple Square. Surrounded by a large crowd of reporters, photographers, and LDS security personnel, Trotter shook hands with Solmonese and received the 800-page petition.

OFFICIAL LDS RESPONSES

FIVE DAYS AFTER General

Conference, the LDS Church posted to its website a modified version of Elder Packer’s remarks. His statement that the Proclamation on the Family “qualifies according to scriptural definition as a revelation” was removed. Elder Packer’s denial of “inborn tendencies toward the impure and unnatural” was changed to a denial of “inborn temptations toward the impure and unnatural”—a revision that seemed to leave open the possibility that homosexual attractions might in fact be caused by inborn “tendencies.” The rhetorical question “Why would our Heavenly Father do that to anyone?” was removed.

LDS spokesperson Scott Trotter minimized the importance of the changes, maintaining that “Elder Packer has simply clarified his intent.”

The video and audio versions of Packer’s remarks were left unedited.

On 10 October, the LDS-owned *Deseret News* issued an editorial titled “A Call for Civility Following Mormon



“I am shocked and outraged that an elder of the Church would reiterate a position the Church has been preaching for as long as anyone can remember!”



"I'm just getting ready for the next General Conference."

Apostle Boyd K. Packer's Address." The statement strongly condemns "activists [who] began this week with a grossly misguided caricature of the LDS Church's support of traditional morality." "The tactic is now all-too familiar," the editorial read. "Take a statement out of context, embellish it with selective interpretation, presume hostile intent, and then use the distortion to isolate an entire group, in this case, a church."

The editorial affirmed the Church's "shared condemnation of hate and violence toward gays and lesbians, its mutual support of anti-discrimination laws for gays and lesbians, and its compassionate ministry to LDS Church members who have same-gender attraction."

"Perhaps the focused attention has come because the LDS Church continues to assert principled opposition to same-sex marriage, a view shared by most

Americans," the editorial added. "For activists in the LGBT community who reject what Latter-day Saints and members of other faith traditions believe to be the divine origins of marriage between man and woman, there may simply not be room for agreement on this important issue."

On 11 October, hours after national LGBT leaders delivered their petition to Temple Square, Michael Otterson, managing director of public affairs for the LDS Church, read a statement condemning anti-gay bullying. The statement was unusual in that it used the word "gay," which the Church normally avoids.

"We have all witnessed tragic deaths across the country as a result of bullying or intimidation of gay young men," Otterson read. "We join our voice with others in unreserved condemnation of acts of cruelty, or attempts to belittle or mock any group or individual that is different—whether those differences arise from race, reli-

gion, mental challenges, social status, sexual orientation, or for any other reason."

Gay activist Eric Ethington challenged the LDS Church to give the anti-bullying statement the same prominence as Elder Packer's speech. "Millions of church members watched, listened, or read Boyd K. Packer's speech given during their general conference 10 days ago," Ethington wrote on his blog, "and by comparison, very few will hear this statement the Church released yesterday."

"If the LDS Church is truly serious about doing its part in ending this seemingly endless stream of youth suicides," Ethington added, "we ask that they prove their words by having their statement read in a similar manner across the pulpits of every Ward, Stake or Branch in the United States."

On 24 October, Dieter F. Uchtdorf, second counselor in the First Presidency, delivered

remarks at a regional conference that seemed intended to further meliorate the tone of Packer's speech. "Many questions in life, however, including some related to same-gender attractions, must await a future answer, even in the next life," Uchtdorf said via satellite to more than 200,000 Utah Mormons. "Until then, the truth is, God loves all his children, and because he loves us, we can trust him and keep his commandments."

Emeritus BYU professor Bill Bradshaw is pleased with Uchtdorf's remarks. "I totally agree that no matter what the cause or what we eventually find out is the definitive explanation," Bradshaw told the *Salt Lake Tribune*, "it doesn't alter our opportunities nor obligations to treat our gay brothers and sisters like everyone else—with Christian kindness." Along with his wife Marge, Bradshaw co-chairs Family Fellowship, a support group for LDS parents of gays and lesbians. As a microbiologist, Bradshaw favors a biological explanation of the causality of homosexuality.

"I have spent a long time investigating the published evidence from empirical studies, and I know that the overwhelming evidence strongly favors the position that sexual orientation is programmed by biological mechanisms," Bradshaw added. "The evidence that it's a choice or that it's programmed by social or psychological forces is lacking."

According to a recent the *Salt Lake Tribune* poll, 44 percent of Utahns believe that it is possible for those with same-sex attraction to change it, while 25 percent said they aren't sure. Among Utah Mormons, 55 percent believe same-sex attraction can be changed, while 30 percent said they aren't sure. According to a recent poll, 65 percent of Americans believe that religious messages are connected to rising rates of suicide among gay youth.

UPDATE

HEY, DUDE, I'M A MORMON

A PROFESSIONAL SURFER HAPPILY GUIDES HER board over Pacific waves. A couple handles important affairs at the Washington D.C.-based companies they work for. A young man describes his love for professional skateboarding and tries fancy tricks on his board.

These are three of the slick, urban, fast-paced stories included in the “I’m a Mormon” ads that the LDS Church aired beginning last August in nine American markets, including the Twin Cities, Baton Rouge, Rochester, and Tucson.

The campaign resembles the “Meet a Scientologist” campaign launched on YouTube in August 2009, which likewise shows young, successful, urban folks sharing fast-paced testimonials about a happy and fulfilling life.

But while the Scientologists’ ads begin by presenting their subjects as Scientologists, explaining directly how Scientology leads to a happier life, the new Mormon campaign is subtler. Not until the punch line—“and I’m a Mormon”—do we discover exactly what has made these individuals so self-confident and content.

Despite a preponderance of white, middle-class professionals, one ad tells the story of Valentin, a young Mexican-American who lives in a barrio and works in lawn maintenance. “There’s happiness in my future now,” says Valentin, whose conversion coincided with his recovery from alcoholism. “My name is Valentin, I’m sober now, and I’m Mormon.”

BYU professor of journalism Joel Campbell told reporter Liz Goodwin that the ads respond to a decline in Mormonism’s public image in recent years. “The Church’s desire here is just to tell people who have no opinion or a negative opinion of Mormons to say, ‘Look, we’re not a

bunch of polygamists who wear weird clothes and have a compound in Texas. That’s not us, we’re just regular folks,’” Campbell said.

Historian Jan Shipps believes that the new campaign attempts to correct the perception of Mormons as impossibly “squeaky-clean.” “For a long time, their image was perfect, that they had all of the Boy Scout virtues and none of the American vices,” Shipps told the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*. “I think maybe there’s been a conscious decision that the goody-goody image was too goody-goody.”

Unlike a number of previous Church media campaigns, the new “I’m a Mormon” campaign does not promote the Book of Mormon, faith in Christ, nor even the promise of a happy family. Rather the ads project a more generic image of contented living. The campaign’s de-emphasis on Mormon distinctiveness has made it easy for critics of the Church to appropriate the style—critics such as Robert (no last name given), who posted his own video narrative on YouTube in reaction to the Church campaign.

A Canadian who served a mission in Japan, Robert explains that he lives a happy life: footage shows him wakeboarding, playing chess, and rollerblading with his girlfriend. As the video progresses, Robert explains, “I was always told when I was thinking of leaving [the LDS faith], ‘Oh, you’ll be unhappy, you’ll be miserable.’ It’s not true. I’ve never been happier.”

“My name is Robert,” he concludes, “And I’m an ex-Mormon.”

To see the new “I’m a Mormon” campaign, visit <http://www.youtube.com/mormon>. For Robert’s response, follow the link at <http://latterdaymainstreet.com/?p=2780>.



LDS CHURCH ISSUES STATEMENT ABOUT IMMIGRATION

ON 11 NOVEMBER, AS SOME UTAH LEGISLATORS prepared to follow Arizona's lead in enacting tough immigration laws, the LDS Church issued a statement that, while acknowledging "that every nation has the right to enforce its laws and secure its borders," also proclaims love for one's neighbors and laments the breakup of undocumented families.

The cautious wording of the statement was accompanied by explicit Church support for the Utah Compact, which asks for "a humane approach" to the realities of immigration in Utah. The Utah Compact is supported by a range of religious, political, and civic leaders, including Catholic Bishop John C. Wester, Episcopal Bishop Scott Hayashi, Utah Attorney General Mark Shurtleff, and *Deseret News* CEO Mark Willes.

The Utah Compact is widely viewed as a reaction to Utah state representative Stephen Sandstrom (R-Orem), who has decried "the influx of illegals" and proposes tough enforcement laws to control illegal immigration in Utah. Last year, Sandstrom, who is LDS, praised the role of Senator Russell Pearce, also LDS, for sponsoring Arizona's SB1070, one of the broadest and strictest anti-immigration laws in the country (SUNSTONE, June 2010: 71–72).

Even though LDS Church support of the Utah Compact effectively kills the chance that Utah's legislature will pass a law like Arizona's SB1070, Sandstrom told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that he will press ahead with his bill. "I think this is going to open up a huge division," Sandstrom said, adding that he has already been "bombarded with emails" from people "telling me to not back down."

Tony Yapias, a Mormon and the director of Proyecto Latino de Utah, said the Church's statement is "an answer to our prayers" and what he has been waiting for.

NEW CHURCH HANDBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS LEAKED BEFORE OFFICIAL RELEASE

THE 2010 CHURCH HANDBOOK OF INSTRUCTIONS, which establishes guidelines on how to lead LDS congregations, handle Church affairs, and administer ecclesiastical discipline, was posted in its entirety on the web three days before its official release. The person who posted it, going by the pseudonym of Martin Luther, wrote a long essay decrying LDS correlation and the Church's hierarchical structure, calling the book "a 403-page monstrosity." "We do not need another handbook or manual," the blogger concluded. "What we need in the Church is the Spirit."

The posting caused a sensation among LDS bloggers. Even though Martin Luther's site was shut down three days after its launch, on that same day an improved scan of the handbook, with a search function, began to circulate.

The Church maintains that the contents of the handbook are confidential. "This handbook has been prepared solely for use by general and local Church officers to administer the affairs of the Church," the new handbook warns. "It should not be duplicated or given to any other persons."

Members such as LDS lawyer Nadine Hansen feel that such a proscription is unfair. Says Hansen: "The handbook contains the rules for Church members, the violation of which can lead to Church discipline, but the manual is kept from them. A parallel would be if the laws of the state were kept secret, but you could still be prosecuted for violating the laws. It's ridiculous—not to mention that it is laughable for Church leaders to think they can keep anything secret in the age of the Internet."

Previous editions of the handbook have circulated online since the early days of the Internet—despite legal efforts by the Church to control access to the document. In 1990, the Church pursued a lawsuit against Jerald and Sandra Tanner over the handbook, going so far as to demand that the Tanners remove from their website a link to an Australian site where the handbook had also been posted. The case received national media attention because of its ramifications for freedom of speech on the Internet (SUNSTONE, December 2002: 42–44).

RICHARD VAN WAGONER DIES

SUNSTONE FRIEND AND CONTRIBUTOR RICHARD Van Wagoner died unexpectedly 10 October at age 64. A clinical audiologist by profession, Richard will be remembered as an insightful and prolific writer on Mormon history. The co-author of *A Book of Mormons*, Richard also authored *Mormon Polygamy: A History*, *Lehi: Portraits of a Utah Town*, *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*, and *Pioneering*



Richard Van Wagoner

Lehi City: A 150-year Pictorial History.

“Richard was a great friend and colleague,” reads an announcement posted on the website of Signature Books. “We admired him as a trailblazer in Mormon studies. His award-winning *Sidney Rigdon: A Portrait of Religious Excess*, will remain the definitive study of Rigdon for years to come. A member of our editorial board, Richard was an engaging, caring, inquisitive, beautiful individual. We will miss him dearly.”

Lavina Fielding Anderson, also on the editorial board of Signature Books, wrote that “Richard was both a rare historian and a rare human being. His scholarly output over the years, starting with *A Book of Mormons*, co-authored with Steven Walker, is a classic work. Richard broke new ground with his one-volume history of polygamy and his biography of Sidney Rigdon. I’m reading his five-volume compilation of *The Complete Discourses of Brigham Young* and learning an amazing amount of information about

Brigham. I edited an early draft of his biography of Joseph Smith in New York. I thought there wasn’t much new that could be said about that period and was amazed at what Richard found.”

Scott Kenney, co-founder of Signature Books, wrote that “Richard will be sorely missed, not only by the Mormon history community, but by the residents of Lehi he served and family members who relied on him to nurture and effectively help raise grandchildren. I will always remember the last time he visited—to loan me his Sidney Rigdon papers. While we chatted, an eight-year-old grandson who lived with him called to see when he was coming home. Richard was so gentle and reassuring. I don’t remember the first time I met Richard, but he was an enthusiastic member of Signature’s first board of directors. It was a joy to be with him. For more than thirty years he was a generous, supportive friend and colleague. His passing saddens me thoroughly.”

People

At Large. TWO ANONYMOUS PARACHUTERS who BASE jumped from the top of the Church Office Building on 12 November. According to Church employee Annie Beer, the two men landed in a parking lot across the street. By the time police arrived at the scene, the jumpers had sped off in a silver SUV. “It must have been on their bucket list or something,” Beer told the *Deseret News*.

Died. Former Relief Society President BARBARA BRADSHAW SMITH, 88, of pulmonary fibrosis. Smith led the Church women’s organization between 1974 and 1984—a period marked by national debate about the Equal Rights Amendment. Appointed by President SPENCER W. KIMBALL, Smith took an active role in fighting the ERA, championing traditional gender roles across the nation, and debating pro-ERA campaigner SONIA JOHNSON on the *Phil Donahue Show*. Smith also played an active role in the controversial International Women’s Year Conference, held in 1977 in Salt Lake City (see pages 50 and 52).



Published. The biography of LDS President THOMAS S. MONSON, 83, by Deseret Book. Titled *To the Rescue: The Biography of Thomas S. Monson*, the volume chronicles President Monson’s rise from boy to prophet and includes many little-known pictures. For the project, President Monson handpicked HEIDI S. SWINTON, an author and screenwriter who is the stepdaughter of LDS historian LEONARD ARRINGTON.

Died. LDS artist ARNOLD FRIBERG, 96, of complications related to a hip injury. The conceptual artist for CECIL B.

DeMILLE’s 1956 film *The Ten Commandments*, Friberg will be remembered for his 1975 painting *Prayer at Valley Forge*, for his bodybuilder-like representations of Book of Mormon heroes, and for his dramatic, richly colored Book of Mormon scenes, which the LDS Church reproduced by the millions. Fiercely independent, Friberg had an uneasy relationship with the Church. LDS leaders disapproved of his 1963 painting *Christ Appearing to the Nephites* (later renamed *The Risen Lord*), which showed Jesus’s bare left breast. In the 1960s, the LDS Church hired illustrator HARRY ANDERSON instead of Friberg to create some of its most iconic representations of Jesus. Despite the rare honor of being memorialized with a funeral at Temple Square’s Assembly Hall, Friberg chose to be buried in a Royal Canadian Mounted Police uniform instead of in temple clothes. Clifton Holt Jolley’s tribute to Friberg appears in SUNSTONE issue 160 (September 2010: 81–83).



Died. Excommunicated LDS leader GEORGE P. LEE, 67, the first and only Native American thus far to become a General Authority. A gifted student and teacher, Lee was called to the First Quorum of the Seventy in 1975, at age 32. In the mid-1980s, after SPENCER W. KIMBALL’s death, Lee clashed with other LDS leaders over the termination of several Church programs for Native Americans. Lee accused LDS leaders of “turning your backs on the Lamanites, the very people on whom your salvation hangs.” LDS sociologist Armand Mauss has called Lee “one of the truly tragic figures in modern Mormon history.”



AN OLIVE LEAF

THE WORD OF KNOWLEDGE

By Eugene England

In March 1975, Eugene England presented “Great Books or True Religion: Defining the Mormon Scholar” as a speech to members of the BYU Phi Kappa Phi Honors Society. This excerpt, taken mostly from early in England’s remarks, affirms an intellectual inclination as one of the gifts of the Spirit, but also offers important advice for avoiding some of the temptations and pitfalls that often accompany this gift. This essay, and most of England’s other published works, are now easily accessible through the new website of the Eugene England Foundation: EUGENEENGLAND.ORG.



I SHOULD REMIND US all who have been honored in various ways for our intellectual gift that it is just that—a gift—and it is only one of the many different gifts that the Lord enumerates in the 46th section of the Doctrine and Covenants (in addition to organizational ability, good judgment, spiritual receptiveness, etc.). He reminds us there that our intellectual gift—what he calls “the word of knowledge”—does not make us better than others, but only possessed thereby of a way and a special responsibility to be of service—“that all may be taught to be wise and to have knowledge,” he says, “that all may be profited thereby.” But nevertheless you should be honored for accepting and using your gift. . . .

Perhaps some of you flinch at the label, “intellectual”; it isn’t always a complimentary term in our society—or even in the Church. I use it in an essentially neutral way, as descriptive of your gift from the Lord that makes you delight in ideas, alive to the life that goes on in your mind as well as outside it, that makes you question set forms and conventional wisdom to see if they really are truth or only habit, whether they endure because right or merely because of fear or sloth; I use the term intellectual to refer to the gift from the Lord that makes you curious about why as well as how, anxious to serve Him by being creative as well as obedient. . . .

My call to you . . . [is] both to affirm your gift with courageous integrity and fullness of heart and to develop and manifest your loyalty to the gospel and the Restored Church in such a whole-souled and creative way that you can have that measure of acceptance you need—it will never be total, of course, given the critical edge of the intellectual enterprise—enough to allow you to serve the Lord

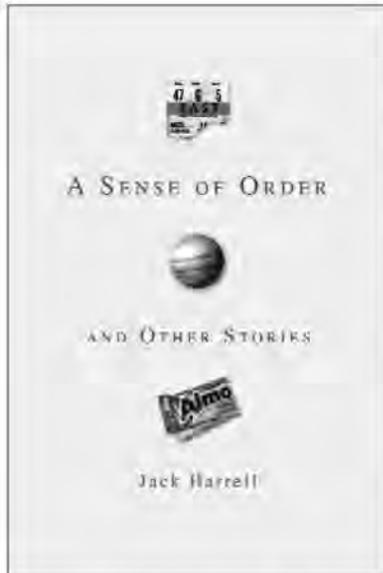
as he intends with a minimum of apology, of being on guard. I call you to be loyal to true religion, not merely great books, especially when it comes to a choice, as sometimes it does.

Since the intellectual endeavor is always easy to misunderstand and tends by its very nature—its emphasis on analysis, criticism, on ventures into the unknown—to threaten and alienate, you must find ways to show that, in the great phrase from the 121st section of the Doctrine and Covenants, “your faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death.” Your gift will make you inescapably aware of problems in the Church, and thus the burden of change will be on you, because

others, often those committing the errors, can’t see what is “wrong.” What you can do about such problems is not leave, desert, turn the Church over to those who in your point of view are perverting it, nor to remain within only to withdraw spiritually through self-righteousness. You must reach out in love, trying to help—and also trying to learn through your cooperation and common service, from the perspective and commitments of others with different gifts than your intellectual gift, including learning to see your own faults, such as lack of courage, perhaps, or lack of whole-souled commitment, failings which may be, in the long run, more destructive than the ones you naturally see in others. . . .

OUR history, our theology, our present selves do not need to be censored or dressed up in false clothes or cosmetics. Remember your own inclination to sin, to arrogance, to lack of proper appreciation of the different but equally valuable gifts of those who aren’t intellectuals. Remember the scriptural warning about milk before meat and not leading the innocent astray; remember the Apostle Paul’s humble example of not eating the food offered to idols, not wanting to do anything that might offend his brother who might not understand, even though he knew it was something harmless for himself. And remember the simplest, clearest and most effective formula for balancing faith and reason, given by Elder Marion D. Hanks, an intellectual who knows from experience—search the scriptures, seek the Lord in mighty prayer, and serve faithfully in whatever Church calling comes to you.

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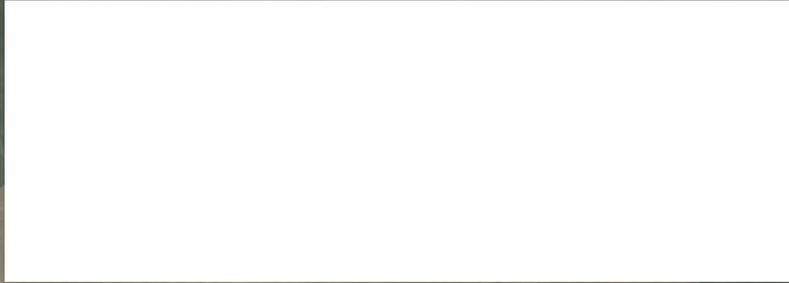
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