

Readers' Forum

Proof Seekers

I have admired your willingness to discuss Book of Mormon origins in some recent issues. Underlying much of the growing neo-scholasticism among Mormon "scholars" is what I consider to be a crude attempt to *prove* their religion. This attempt is crude not only in its methods, but in its motives as well, for a "proven" religion is a frightening thing indeed. I cannot escape the suspicion that what the proof-seekers are really looking for is a stick with which to beat others. Once this stick is in hand, the unfaithful can be beaten into faithfulness, the sinners into repentance, and finally, a recalcitrant, unbelieving world into conversion. Most orthodox Marxists insist that that ideology is scientifically proven, and we needn't look hard for examples of how that "proof" has been put to use. Whatever their approaches, be it word count, New World archeology, or a prettying-up of Church history, the proof-seekers generally make their conclusions before beginning their research. Whatever dedication their activities may seem to demonstrate, there is something fundamentally un-Mormon about their motives, because "proven" religions or ideologies always seek to force the human will. The basic LDS belief in free agency must extend to belief as well. God withholds certain knowledge of things in order that we may exercise such agency. Proof-seekers attempt to thwart this great wisdom. In addition, they undermine the credibility both of serious Mormon scholarship, and of Mormonism as a religion which is hospitable to unbiased, intellectual inquiry.

The origins of the Book of Mormon are shrouded in a good deal of mystery. While *academic* historians may yet find relevant material and produce much competent research on Book of Mormon origins, for *religious* purposes, it is better left shrouded in mystery. It is probably ultimately unknowable empirically whether the Book of Mormon is a genuine historical document or a pseudepigraphous document. What would an individual's religious faith lose by consigning this

question to the Real of the Unknown and Unknowable? Very little, I contend, because then it would enter the Realm of Faith by default, and that is where *religious* (not pseudo-historical or pseudo-scientific) inquiry belongs.

Roger Thomas
Bloomington, Indiana

Mormons Misconstrue Old Testament

I wish to second the excellent article on "Mormons Christianizing the Old Testament" by Charles in your issue of December last. Few could have written a more competent piece revealing the imposition of Mormonism upon the revered Torah and Prophets. As asserted, there can be no evidence in the text itself for the very strange Mormon misconstructions. The sacred text belongs to us: we have studied it all our lives: everyone, with Mormons foremost, is just trying to get on the bandwagon. When Charles writes, "The law of Moses was not given as a blessing or an aid in righteous living, but rather as a burden, an oppressive punishment," Charles correctly interprets, for the first time, such verses as Deuteronomy 11:26-27, 23:5, 30:1,19, Joshua 8:34. Usually, your people go on about messiah born as a child, a son with a government on his shoulder, to be called God the Mighty, the Everlasting Father—but this is all misapplied, since messiah was to be a righteous mortal who was to be an instrument of God, not a deity at all. God the Mighty, the Everlasting Father, can be translated any number of ways since modern psychology has conclusively demonstrated that the meaning of words is arbitrary. Certainly messiah was not to be a substitute for all men, since animal sacrifices on the altar [sic] could never signify anything of the kind. The real problem is that most Mormons show profound ignorance of the simplest notions of normative Old Testament theology, even though very few of them seem ignorant of what the Hebrew text really says.

I have read Torah all my life, and to hear what comes out of the mouth of some Mormons, excepting Charles,

would make my hasidic great grandfather grave. Charles comes to the most telling point in writing, "Perhaps the view of the conception of God is the most significant difference between Old Testament thought and the Mormon reinterpretation of it. The Israelite deity was single, not multiple." There will always be, it seems, some fanatic to counter that Eloheim is in the grammatical plural. But to say so makes absolutely no difference whatsoever—the point is impertinent and clearly unimportant to all—and there is no use in bringing forward, as evidence internal to the Masorah text, that the Mormons' translation "Gods" is proper or multiple conception of God agrees with the account. I have also taught Torah and do so agree how imperative it is that the novice translate all plurals in the plural, except this one—where ever it occurs. Thus, probably the most correct translation of the first line would be, "In the beginnings God created the heaven and the earths." Also, the Hebrew juxtaposition Jehovah Eloheim translates "Jehovahs' God." How desirable that you continue to feature such carefully written work and logically argued articles to the discredit of Mormonism and its imposition, I am sure you well enough know. Charles is without question the best normative theologian the Mormon Church has produced.

Avner Gig

Book of Mormon Difficulties

SUNSTONE is to be commended for its articles on "Defending the Keystone," attempting free inquiry into what is a very thorny problem for modern Mormonism.

Mormons, however, should also read for themselves B.H. Roberts's "Book of Mormon Difficulties." Articles about it can never hope to produce the overwhelming impression of this scholarly, objective work written by a man of knowledge and integrity.

Roberts in the manuscript itself suggested four possible responses the general authorities, his original audience, could give, none of which he thought satisfactory. The first could suggest that the Book of Mormon was about only a small part of the populations of the Americas, a response contradicted by the book itself. The second response could flatly contradict the findings of modern science, especially linguistics and anthropology, an obviously poor choice. The third was couched in a question: can we place our revealed truths against science and "calmly await the vindication we feel sure that

time will bring to the Book of Mormon?" He answers correctly that "it certainly would have no effect upon the educated class throughout the world. It would only excite ridicule and contempt in them." The fourth choice is silence, which Roberts admits is a "confession of defeat."

Several times he begs the brethren for any other answer; he is especially concerned that the youth of the church receive it soon from those authorities who have the power to ask God for it.

What was the response, and has been the continuing response for almost sixty years? George Smith Jr. quoted Grant Ivins saying, "Church authorities would not sanction its publication."

They chose silence.

Adrienne Morris

Proof texting the Restoration

With all of the current praise of your magazine at both the local and national level, I'm sure the last thing you are in need of is a letter of commendation. However, I was so impressed with the past issue that I couldn't allow myself to pass up the opportunity to say thanks! In particular I found the "Sunday School Supplement" to be both timely and rewarding (a survey of Lowell L. Bennion's book *Understanding the Scriptures*, 1981).

As a Sunday School teacher (and student of the scriptures) I am greatly concerned about the approach and application of scripture within the Church. It seems to be a general consensus of most that our church and people have suffered a steady decline in matters pertaining to the scientific study of religion and the scriptures. This decline has been accompanied by and perhaps supported through the development of unwarranted scriptural fundamentalism. Fortunately through the efforts of a growing nucleus of scholars committed to the Church and the "scientific method" we are seeing the development of a new scriptural-consciousness throughout the church. It is the efforts of scholars like Brother Bennion that is making this development possible.

The most difficult task of the Sunday School teacher is to motivate and teach the class to read the Old Testament (and all scripture for that matter) with a more critical and historical attitude. Too often in the Church we get so involved in trying to "liken the scriptures unto ourselves" that we forget to whom the scriptures

were originally written. As a people we must begin to think of the Old Testament in its own perspective, to read the Old Testament for what it is and not what we *think* it is. The Old Testament is not just a book of moral and ethical teachings nor is it just source material for proof-texting the restoration of the gospel in modern times. It is rather, an immense history or narrative of the Hebrew people and is far removed historically, culturally, linguistically, and philosophically from our own people—hence the difficulty that arises from its mere reading. I think in the long run that if the Old Testament is going to have any real meaning for us as Latter-day Saints it will only be made possible as we apply the principles Brother Bennion has so beautifully taught us—and as we become better readers and students!

Randal L. Hepner
Huntington Beach, California

More on Joseph III Blessing

Permit me to further clarify Richard Howard's comments concerning the RLDS acquisition of the Joseph Smith III blessing (*Sunstone* 6:3).

On 24 February I wrote to Mr. Howard's office offering to trade the blessing document for a Book of Commandments. I stated that I would consider this trade offer binding on myself until 8 March and requested that the RLDS Church let me know one way or the other as soon as possible, "because there are a few other interested parties whose offers I do not want to put off for long."

When Howard and I met on 2 March he indicated that it would be impossible to make such an exchange by my self-imposed deadline of 8 March. I was told that extensive laboratory tests of the document would have to be conducted before the RLDS Church could even consider my proposition. Howard also told me that he thought my price (a Book of Commandments) was too high, and he asked me what else I might consider when the time came to negotiate a trade. Because of Howard's statement that it would be "impossible" to make an exchange by 8 March, I considered myself ethically free to sell the blessing elsewhere.

In our telephone conversation of 3 March I did *not* agree to go to Independence on 17 March for a handwriting analysis of the blessing document. Actually, I was quite vague and careful not to commit myself. I told Howard that I would talk with him in a few days.

In his letter to *Sunstone* Howard states that the LDS Church was "chagrined" with the circumstances surrounding their acquisition of the blessing document. Actually, no one from the LDS Church has ever given me any indication of displeasure with my handling of this affair. Indeed, the LDS Church not only knew that I had a tentative agreement with the RLDS Church, but encouraged me to try to get out of it. (Let me emphasize, however, that the decision that my conditional agreement with Howard had been abrogated was entirely my own. The LDS Church did not know, nor did they inquire into, the specific terms of my agreement with the RLDS Church.)

I am glad that in the end things have worked out so well for both Churches: The LDS Church was able to demonstrate their disconcern for the blessing by magnanimously giving it to the RLDS Church. This highly publicized event also contributed an air of veracity to the document which has made it difficult for LDS Church members to discount its authenticity—much more so than if the RLDS Church had acquired the blessing document directly from a private collector/dealer.

Mark W. Hoffman
Sandy, Utah

Amniocentesis Justified?

The divergent views published in "Abortion, Politics and Policy" were thought provoking and mind expanding. By the time I finished reading the articles, I felt confident that I do have a conviction, that I know where I stand on one of the most critical issues of the day. Thanks to you and to the authors of each viewpoint.

In that I agree with Richard Sherlock's premise, I considered not calling attention to a small but serious misstatement in his first paragraph. Dr. Sherlock refers to amniocentesis as "a procedure justified only if a woman will consider abortion for a fetus that is defective." Many have tried to label amniocentesis as a "search and destroy" tactic. Such is not the case. Amniocentesis can be the *analysis* necessary prior to *treatment*. On April 26 of this year, a University of California medical team performed the world's first known successful surgical treatment of an unborn child. Other successes have been brought about since that date. What better place can be found than the mother's womb for an infant to heal after surgery? In recent years we have seen much advancement in the repair of

defectively born infants. We can look forward to the correction of many more defects now that it has been proven that such work can be done in utero.

A mother with reason to suspect a prospective defective birth might surely justify the minimal risk of amniocentesis, ultra-sound scans, etc. in an effort to know, to prepare for, and in some cases to correct before birth the condition of her infant.

Stanley R. Brewer
Salt Lake City, Utah

Stone in Bottomless Well

Writing to Sunstone readers is like dropping a stone into a bottomless well, then waiting for an echo. What should be a relevant subject to the Mormon community, B. H. Roberts's examination of challenges to Book of Mormon authenticity ("Defending the Keystone," two articles, SUNSTONE, May-June 1981), evoked only superficial responses. It would seem that some readers have written off the "keystone of our religion" as just so many words and don't care to respond, while others casually dismiss the questions that haunted general authority Roberts through the 1920s.

Roberts encountered a similarly inadequate response in 1922, then an enforced silence when he was denied permission to publish. He discussed his 141-page "Book of Mormon Difficulties" with President Grant, the Twelve, and the Seventies on January 4, 5, 26, 1922, and then with James E. Talmage and Anthony Ivins at the home of James H. Moyle on February 2, April 28, and May 25 of that year. (In my footnote # 1, SUNSTONE inadvertently omitted reference to those dates in the Personal Journals of James E. Talmage—BYU Special Collections, as well as the January 4, 1922 entry in the Diary of George F. Richards—Church Archives.) In a January 9, 1922 letter to President Grant, five days after the first presentation before the Church councils, Roberts expressed disappointment in the response given the issues he had raised: "There was so much said that was utterly irrelevant, and so little said, if anything at all, that was helpful in the matters at issue that I came away from the conference quite disappointed. . . I cannot be other than painfully conscious of the fact that our means of defense, should we be vigorously attacked along the lines of Mr. Couch's questions, are very inadequate." (Special Collections, University of Utah)

Later that year, Roberts's investigations were interrupted by a call to serve as Eastern States Mission President, and afterward, when he wanted to publish his comparison of the Book of Mormon to *A View of the Hebrews*, "the Church authorities would not sanction its publication." (Grant Ivins letter of Dec. 26, 1967, footnote # 1 in SUNSTONE article)

The issues remain unanswered: The Book of Mormon seems to put New Testament material into an Old Testament time period and quotes Bible passages before they were written—it quotes the Old Testament prophet Malachi before he wrote and it has Christ speaking Peter's words before Peter spoke them. Finally, the apparently misread conclusion in both SUNSTONE articles: Important similarities to *A View of the Hebrews* indicate that Joseph Smith *could have* written (not *did write*) the Book of Mormon.

Now that Roberts's concerns have surfaced again sixty years after he addressed them to President Grant and Church councils, where are the committed Latter-day Saints with a scholarly defense of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon?

George D. Smith, Jr.
San Francisco, California

No Royal Road

Mr. Norman J. Barlow's criticism of Ms. Charles's article (Readers' Forum, March-April 1981) misunderstands the real question at issue in any discussion of critical biblical scholarship and the LDS community. He argues that an LDS interpretation of the Bible must be distinct from mainstream commentators if the truthfulness and importance of the restored gospel is to be reflected therein. On the contrary, the real issue is that LDS commentators must be willing to humbly submit to God's word given both today and in ages past and be honest, judicious, and competent in their efforts at learning what that word is and was. Deliberate attempts at a "Mormon exegesis" or a "Mormon translation" are doomed to failure, because humility and honesty are ill at ease with deliberation to secure LDS advantage. By naively assuming a propositional model of revelation, Barlow conflates several concepts which are in reality quite distinct.

First, I agree with Barlow that our understanding of God's dealings in ages past is deepened and enlarged by the living revelation, but I do not agree that this necessarily implies the kind of authoritarian, extrinsic, and

propositional "royal road" to history and exegesis for which Barlow argues.

Barlow suggests that the concept of restoration (rather than reformation) requires one to suppose that the extrinsic, categorized, and propositional formulations of LDS orthodoxy (as if such a credal monolith existed in Mormonism) reflect the extrinsic formulations of the true faith in the biblical period in such close detail that the LDS formulations are a reliable guide to establishing critically the rituals, beliefs, and ideas of ancient Christianity and Old Testament Judaism and Yahwism. This argument, however, is a gross reductionism. The term holds much more meaning than merely the idea that true doctrines, once lost, are now available again. If "restoration" were this alone, then any religion mimicking exactly LDS beliefs, rituals, or modes of expression would also be a "restoration" of the ancient true religion and would be true in the same manner and degree as Mormonism. However, these things do not constitute the truth of the restored gospel.

Rather, it is the tacit dimension of our faith—what we call variously the life of the spirit, the power of authority of the living God involved in an extraordinary way in our community and personal life—which constitutes this truth. Only secondarily do the categorizations of our experience of this spiritual life, authority, power, or holiness sustain and reflect the truth of the gospel thus constituted. Because of this, a testimony of the restored gospel does not necessarily logically require assent to the claim that these secondary matters are the *sine qua non* of continuity between Old Testament Yahwism, New Testament Christianity, and modern Mormonism. Thus, modern scriptures and doctrines are not necessarily critically reliable data in the reconstruction of the history of the religions involved or the meaning of their scriptures as intended by their inspired human authors. They reflect inspired interpretation, application, and midrashic embellishment of biblical texts more than they reflect the equally inspired intent of the original human author. Since God reveals himself and his truths to humankind "in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understand" (D&C 1:24), the extrinsic categorizations, though important and truly reflective of God and his truth, are subject nevertheless to conditioning factors in culture, history, language, and modes of thought. Revelation does not occur in a vacuum.

Barlow's position manifests the

"historylessness" so well described by Mark Leone: faced with apparent differences between LDS formulations and biblical formulations, Barlow would have us "correct" the biblical text which to his mind is obviously erroneous, rather than struggling to understand the historical horizons upon which the divergent formulations appeared. This opens what Arrington and Bitton have called a "huge loophole" in our belief in the Bible: "as far as it is translated correctly" is here understood by Barlow to mean "as far as it agrees with our present understandings" rather than "as far as it accurately reflects what we know of its original sense." Barlow's appeal to the bad transmission or translation argument has a hollow ring, since clearly there are no external controls over the claims one might make about the Bible given such a position.

Related to Barlow's misunderstanding of the conditioning factors at work in revelation's historical horizon is Barlow's second major confusion of issues. He appeals to the "practice of scholars, critics, and exegetes" to argue that we should be open to uniquely LDS sources in our biblical criticism. This is a patently disingenuous argument, since Barlow admits that none of the experts to whom he alludes would share his enthusiasm when he claims that using the Book of Mormon "to aid in understanding the Old Testament is precisely equal to using the Dead Sea Scrolls or the Nag Hammadi (sic) Library to understand the Bible."

Note that all the LDS sources which Barlow would like to see at the root of an LDS criticism of the Bible cannot be dated critically earlier than the late 1820s. The Book of Mormon, for example, presents itself as having ancient origins as well as divine ones. Yet it simply cannot be said in honesty and awareness of the facts that it is ancient in the same way that the Nag Hamadi or Qumran texts, or even the major biblical manuscripts are: for one thing, its text is available to us only in the English of a nineteenth century American. The text, indeed, presents itself as the product of relatively late antiquity—the work of fourth century A. D. redactors (Mormon and Moroni); and the obvious influence of the King James Bible on its language, text (when parallel passages are involve), and theology is in evidence on nearly every page. To be sure, there are enough peculiarities of style and conception which indicate that its claim to antiquity should not be dismissed lightly. However, one should not on this account follow Barlow in thinking that this *guarantees* the importance of the Book of Mormon as a central piece of evidence

in reconstructing the meaning of other ancient scripture. It is precisely when one is willing to submit to all the evidence, and as a result begins to nuance one's use of various sources that one begins to use a critical methodology and starts to acquire the "background" which Barlow admits is not "as extensive" among LDS scholars as it is among normative Christian and Jewish exegetes. I submit that Barlow's suggestion that with more time LDS biblical scholarship will outstrip non-LDS exegesis will never be realized until LDS scholars and the community which supports them disabuse themselves of precisely the smug self-assuredness which bears the fruit of deliberate inattention to detail and refusal to engage in serious dialogue with others about the scriptures and their intent.

Finally, Barlow confuses the inspired literary artifact of scripture with its subject matter. As a result, Barlow seems unable to distinguish between the intent of a human author and the surplus of meaning provided a text by an inspired community in the dialectic

of history. Thus, Barlow tends to see the scriptures primarily as source books for doctrine, as a repository for proof texts of modern teachings, rather than as a condensation of the living God and his truth in various settings.

Perhaps by making more careful distinctions, Mr. Barlow could channel more profitably his obvious love of the gospel and concern for the faith of Zion's youth. To suggest that we must choose the living prophets over the dead ones, or choose dead ones over living ones, misses the point. If we truly wish to listen carefully to God's word, we must allow what he has said and what he now says to stand on its own, without harmonizations or anachronistic imputations of meaning. To do otherwise would be a betrayal, be it well intentioned, of our belief in all that God has revealed, does now reveal, and will yet reveal.

Anthony A. Hutchinson
Ph.D. Candidate in Biblical Studies
Catholic University of America

Update

Women in Medicine at BYU

Three female LDS physicians talked about the problems and possibilities of integrating church activities, personal life, and a career in medicine at the "Women in Medicine Seminar" held at BYU on September 16.

Over 165 people attended the afternoon sessions which featured Dr. Anne Osborne, assistant dean at the University of Utah Medical School and Relief Society General Board Member; Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, a physician at the BYU Health Center and mother of one child; and, Dr. Virginia Armstrong, also associated with the University Health Center, team physician for women's sports at BYU, and mother of six.

Dr. Osborne said women's choices are often based more on cultural expectations than on the gospel or what the Lord wants them to do. She asserted that a career in the medical profession is a viable option for a faithful LDS woman and ought to be a personal, though prayerful decision.

According to pre-med student Barbara

Hurst, the seminar was organized to counterbalance the notion that a career in medicine is not an acceptable option for Mormon women. The pressures at BYU to stay in the home, non-supportive male counterparts, and the stiff competition inherent in pre-med classes often dissuade freshman women from becoming physicians, said Hurst. "If they can survive their freshman year," she added, "most women who go into pre-med find other, supportive females in the program and eventually get into medical school."

Alternative Publications at BYU

Last year the Open Door Club was organized to promote the pursuit of intellectualism and more direct communication between students and the administration at BYU. It has since spawned two publications aimed at a student readership.

The first is an unofficial guide to classes and professors similar to those for other major universities. It includes both the faculty's and the students' opinions on which courses

and instructors constitute the cream of the crop at BYU, as well as a smattering of interesting comments and statistical trivia about the institution. The club's second publishing venture is a weekly newspaper. Called the *Seventh East Press*, the new paper was prompted by an administration take-over of the *Daily Universe's* managing editor position, a job formerly held by a student. Although Ron Priddis, one of the paper's organizers, said his publication "is not planning on being overtly critical of anybody or anything," it will investigate academic controversies now considered "sacred cows."

The paper will be sold for ten cents through local businesses, door-to-door, and on the BYU campus like any other private paper.

New Edition of Standard Works

A significant change in the wording of a Book of Mormon prophecy is one of many spelling, stylistic, and grammatical corrections made in the newest edition of the Book of Mormon, Doctrine and Covenants, and the Pearl of Great Price. The passage promising that righteous American Indians would become a "white and delightsome people" has been changed to read "pure and delightsome people."

According to Church spokesman Jerry Cahill, the 1840 edition of the Book of Mormon, edited by Joseph Smith, contained the words "pure and delightsome." Cahill said no one knows why later editions reverted to the former phrasing.

An article in the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that various Church leaders, including President Kimball, "have used the phrase to describe the eventual state of righteous Indian members of the church. Kimball asserted in a 1960 address that children participating in the church's Indian placement program were lighter complexioned than their brothers and sisters living on the reservation."

When asked whether Church members should believe that faithful Indians will become lighter complexioned, Cahill told the *Tribune* that they should assume that they will become a "pure and delightsome people."

Hoary Dissenting Pamphleteer

Fans of Mormon Jack Anderson will be pleased to hear that the controversial columnist has added a new magazine to his investigative enterprises. The first issue of *The*

Investigator, published by Anderson, came off the press in September offering "a rival account of reality, a measure by which to judge the efficacy of leaders and whether the truth is in them, an unauthorized stimulus to action."

Departments featured in the new publication included "Raising Hell," an expose on Jimmy Carter and his "Good Old Boys," written by Anderson, and "Fleecing America!" by William Proxmire. Other articles investigated the wealth of the Red Cross, great art scams, a possible pre-attack tip-off to Pearl Harbor, and the status of the war on cancer.

Dedicated to "the truth without false report or wishful thinking," editor William McGraw wrote, "it is the role of the hoary dissenting pamphleteer that *The Investigator* seeks to revive."

Mother's Place in Home

"A mother's place is in the home," Elder Ezra Taft Benson, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, told female members of the Church at the annual general meeting of the Relief Society Saturday evening, September 26. Decrying "alternative life styles," Benson stressed the need for devoted mothering. "It is a misguided idea that a woman should leave the home, where there is a husband and children, to prepare educationally and financially for unforeseen eventualities," he said.

"It is a fundamental truth that the responsibilities of motherhood cannot be successfully delegated. No, not to day care centers, not to schools, not to nurseries, not to babysitters. We become enamored with men's theories such as the idea of pre-school training outside the home for young children. Not only does this put added pressure on the budget, but it places young children in an environment away from mother's influence."

Counseling mothers to "carefully count the cost before you decide to share breadwinning responsibilities with your husbands," Benson suggested that some "active Latter-day Saint families" are experiencing "difficulties with their children because mother is not where she ought to be—in the home." Indeed, he stressed, "The seeds of divorce are often sown and the problems of children begin when mother works outside the home."

As an example to modern mothers, Benson described the eighteenth century mother of 19 children, one of whom was religious reformer John

Wesley. He also shared excerpts from the letters of several successful homemakers. One asserted that the Lord will help every woman "find joy and fulfillment in her role in the home," while another said the task of "molding children's characters" is more important than "a college education, a job, developing talents or anything else!"

Benson urged women to "radiate a spirit of contentment and joy with homemaking" and suggested that mothers give their daughters opportunities to practice homemaking skills in order to prepare for the "highest, most noble profession to which a woman might aspire"—homemaking.

Other speakers at the session, which was broadcast from the Tabernacle to more than 2300 closed-circuit locations, were general Relief Society President Barbara B. Smith; Marian R. Boyer, Homemaking Counselor; Shirley W. Thomas, Education Counselor, and Elder Gordon B. Hinckley, counselor to President Spencer W. Kimball.

Elder Hinckley introduced the theme of the meeting: "Charity Never Faileth." After citing the example of the William Martin handcart company and the charity of the Saints in the Valley who aided their arrival, Hinckley expanded the definition of charity to include forgiveness of others' faults and offenses and an abandonment of the spirit of criticism. Referring to the tendency of the media to find fault, Hinckley defended men and women in positions of authority, suggesting they need support rather than criticism. He advised the sisters to curb their tongues when tempted to criticize. He concluded his talk with a personal tribute to Sister Camilla Kimball whose love of learning and devotion to husband and family makes her a fitting example to all women.

Entitling her talk "Relief Society in Times of Transition," President Barbara B. Smith encouraged Relief Society members to be prepared to offer charitable help whenever needed, especially to those under stress because of transitions in their lives.

Counselor Shirley W. Thomas reviewed the educational programs of the Relief Society, stressing the importance of the mother education lesson to all sisters, whether or not they "have children in their homes." Said Thomas, "As women in the Church we are familiar with the

terms patriarch and patriarchal order. . . . We do not speak much of matriarchs, we call them instead mothers. The mother is the counterpart to the patriarch of a home. Mothering is also an eternal fundamental work. It has to do with bringing life and love, and it is largely learned." Citing the example of young college students who visited a nursing home, Thomas remarked, "Mother Education lessons deal not with the physical processes of giving birth but with the nurturing qualities that can help every child of God live in the light. . . . Mother Education can be not only suitable but enriching for all Relief Society members."

Counselor Marian Boyer declared, "The roots of Relief Society in welfare lie at its very founding," and urged present-day sisters to exercise charity within the welfare system, since "the poor are still with us." As examples she cited Relief Society aid extended to South Vietnamese refugee children and the volunteer assistance offered during the Teton Dam disaster. Boyer urged Relief Society presidents to "instruct visiting teachers on how to

recognize signs of depression, of loneliness, and physical want" so that needs would not go unmet.

Errata

The following footnotes were inadvertently omitted from J. D. Williams's article in vol 6:4, p. 44.

33. Linda Sillitoe, "Fear and Anger in Virginia: The New Mormon Activists, Part II," *Utah Holiday* (April 1979):9-10, 12.

34. Paul Swenson, "Who is Beverly Campbell and Why is Everyone Afraid of Her?" *Utah Holiday* (February 1980):12-14.

35. "Mormon Money Worked against Florida's ERA," *The Miami Herald* (20 April 1980):1. See also "Church Orchestrated Florida anti-ERA Drive, Report Details," *SL Tribune* (21 April 1980).

36. See the First Presidency's encyclical, "Political Involvement Urged," *Church News* (8 March 1980).

37. *The Church and the Proposed Equal Rights Amendment, A Moral Issue*, p. 17.

J. D. Williams is a professor of political science at the University of Utah. Founding director of both the University's Bureau of Community Development and Hinckley Institute of Politics, he authored a college text for Little, Brown entitled *Public Administration: The People's Business*.

by the Princeton Religious Center revealed that 8 out of 10 adults in the United States pray at least once a day. Ten percent of those say they pray "about twice a day" while 17 percent indicate that they pray three times a day or more.

When the same people were asked how they prayed during a 30-day period, 86 percent said they did so privately by themselves, 48 percent during a worship service, 35 percent with members of their families at meals, 16 percent with members of their family other than at meals or church services, and 16 percent as a regular part of some extra-ecclesiastical group to which they belonged. Another 15 percent claimed they prayed constantly—prayer is their life—and 13 percent either had other responses or did not know.

SACRED ARCHITECTURE

Rev. Anne Thieme

Given the billions of dollars going into the construction and renovation of church buildings nation-wide, church architecture is an important concern these days. A church's image in the community can be its most important asset or liability, and its building is a major determinant of public image. In addition to community impact, our buildings determine "who we are and what we do for a generation or more."¹

Of course the sacrality of public worship does not derive from its being held in a special place or through its use of special objects but vice versa: "It is the holiness of ecclesia in action that touches place, furniture, and objects and makes them special."² Thus it is the lives of the host people, more than nostalgia or principle, which are fundamental to their sacrality.

Contemporary architects seem especially sensitive to the fact that worship celebrations involve the whole person, calling on all the human faculties—body, mind, senses, imagination, emotions, and memory. Their designs strive to be more wholesome than precious, more expressive than impressive, more hospitable than imposing.³

According to James Doon, consultant on architecture and the arts for the Presbyterian Church in the United States, people want to be involved in the action of worship. Proclamation, devotion, learning, service, and fellowship are *all* components of worship, each important but none able to stand on its own. Buildings that isolate devotion from learning, from

One Fold

Papal Encyclical on "Human Work"

Pope John Paul II recently issued "his most comprehensive statement on social issues," according to the *Los Angeles Times*. In the third encyclical of his papal career, John Paul strongly backed labor unions and worker participation in management and condemned both rigid capitalism and collectivist systems that eliminate all private ownership of the means of production.

Opting for a socialist middle ground, the encyclical further opposed the "dehumanizing excesses" of modern economic systems. "We must emphasize and give prominence to the primacy of man in the production process, the primacy of man over things," said the Pontiff. Written in Polish and carrying the Latin title, "*Laborem Exercens*" or "On Human Work," the encyclical also urged that workers receive a just wage—adequate to support a family and

allow mothers to devote themselves "exclusively to their families" if they so desire; called for radical reforms to protect farmers from big landowners; and accused multinational corporations of widening the gap between rich and poor nations by fixing high prices for their products while trying to keep prices low for raw materials. According to the *Intermountain Catholic*, Father Kenneth Doyle, a Catholic News Bureau chief in Rome, pointed out that "people who look to the encyclical for easy answers to specific problems may be disappointed. . . . The encyclical offers broad ethical guidelines readers can use to answer labor questions and to evaluate and reform existing systems."

A Praying People

Prayer appears to be a regular part of the lives of many Americans. A study entitled "The Unchurched American"

hospitality are "heretical buildings." Churches, according to Doon, need to be multipurpose buildings in order to live up to their mission.

St. Boniface Church in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, having faced rising maintenance costs and a changing neighborhood, decided it was cheaper to start over than to renovate. Thus it tore down its romanesque-style building, sold the property, and bought a neighborhood supermarket which it transformed into an effective multi-purpose building for worship and community programs.

Some architects recommend that churches open into an outdoor gathering space large enough for the entire congregation in order to accommodate people's need for a "stand and talk" space as well as worship space. Calvary Baptist Church, a black congregation in Milwaukee, drew on the model of African twin hut gathering spaces and constructed two identical concrete towers to serve as sanctuary and fellowship hall. The vestibule which separates the two has natural lighting and a ready atmosphere of welcome enhanced by warm tones from the natural wood ceiling and orange cushions.

Speaking to the same need, European architect Gottfried Bohm, using a light steel structure with aluminum spanned masonry walls he designed in Kettwig near Essen, created a covered space between parish buildings. The space is like a village square, with both intimate appearance and easy access. It is used both for fellowship and for open air events by the congregation.

When asked how we are to identify our buildings as churches, scholar John Dillenburger replied:

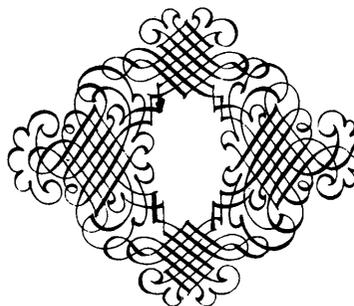
Certainly, when the church was the center of the life of a community, its visible centeredness called attention to itself from every angle of sight: reality and symbol were joined. Today, the church is not the center of the community, though it may be a center for a segment of a community that overlaps with other communities. Surely there is a way in which church buildings may be recognized that lies somewhere between the traditional steeple and the sign "Jesus Saves." That recognition may well have to do with the form and reality of the building, rather than with the obvious props to which we are accustomed.⁵

In suburban St. Paul, architect Ralph Papson designed St. Thomas Aquinas Roman Catholic church to fit in with, rather than to dominate, its neighborhood of single story homes.

Solid walls reflecting its concrete and steel structural system, it is a low building which gives an impression of directness, simplicity, and economy.

The church's building does not have to look like anything else, past or present. Certainly the Crystal Cathedral, Garden Grove Community Church's sanctuary with its five-pointed star of 10,500 windows, takes advantage of this freedom. It is described by its pastor as a "twenty-two acre shopping center for Jesus Christ." It boasts a main "showroom" with doors eighty feet high and twelve feet wide opening onto the "drive in" portion of the worship space.⁶

On the whole, contemporary architects agree that worship space needs to be focused on the people. Based on his study of the history of church architecture and the needs of contemporary worship, Frederic Debuyst suggests that hospitality is the prime characteristic to be strived for. "A theater or auditorium is not and cannot be a model for the liturgical space. We have used them as such, consciously or unconsciously, for a long time. A far better model is the home."⁷



Likewise it is best to design a worship space that does not require voice amplification. When seating congregation and ministers, the aim is to enhance movement rather than to emphasize rank or distinctions. Above all, the people need to have a sense of direct contact with the primary symbols of their worship, whether speaker's desk, altar, or scripture.

There are, of course, various techniques to emphasize religious themes architecturally. Placing the baptismal font at the church entrance underscores that it is by baptism that we are included within the faith community. The use of circular or semi-circular seating arrangements expresses the fact that the church is a family of believers gathered for worship. Use of stark concrete walls can suggest the unfinished quality of our human condition. Placing the

choir among the congregation rather than in front of it emphasizes its function to assist in the congregation's song rather than to perform for it.

One effective communion table was simply a table set with place settings and chairs. Similarly a baptismal font sunk into the church floor, four feet in diameter and kept full of running water, can serve as a constant reminder to that congregation of the need for cleansing.⁸

Above all, we are concerned with beauty, for it is beauty which most directly evokes, and is most fitting to facilitate, our experience of the divine. Architect Robert Rambusch argues that we "can't preach the genuineness of Christian life within buildings which display imitation stone, imitation stained glass, imitation wood, and imitation plants."⁹

In *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, the National Conference of Catholic Bishops underscores that point: "Every word, movement, object, and appointment in our worship ought to be real in the sense that it is our own, coming from our deepest self-understanding."¹⁰

To this end, the Interfaith Forum on Religious Art and Architecture holds an annual conference to educate and to foster excellence among those professionals working in planning, designing, and financing religious art and architecture. Annual awards are given for architectural design, art for sacred spaces, and stained glass. Workshop topics at their 42nd Conference held in Chicago this past May included Theology—a Basis for Architectural Design; Stewardship of Energy in Design; and Barrier Free—Architecture for the Handicapped.

It is an exciting era in which not only the forms of our church institutions and worship are changing but the forms of the buildings as well.

Notes

1. Ezra Earl Jones in "Friendly Spaces," *Christian Century*, September 21, 1977, p. 807.
2. Bishop's Committee on The Liturgy, *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, Washington: 1978, p. 8.
3. "Integrated Buildings," *Christianity Today*, July 6, 1971, p. 44.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 44.
5. John Dillenburger, "Art in the Religious Community," *Faith & Form*, Fall 1980, p. 31.
6. "Crystal Cathedral," *Christianity Today*, August 8, 1980, p. 29.
7. Richard Hovda, *Strong Loving and Wise*, Washington: 1976, p. 6.
8. "Gospel and Architecture," *Christianity Today*, April 23, 1976, p. 807.
9. *Ibid.*, p. 808.
10. *Environment and Art in Catholic Worship*, p. 20.