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TIME AND OMNISCIENCE IN
MORMON THEOLOGY



SCHOLARSHIP AND
THE BOOK OF MORMON

AN INTERVIEW WITH
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SUNSTONE

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From
the

Editors



We Need Your Help

In the last two years, SUNSTONE has, we think, improved significantly. We have increased its size, improved its graphic quality and editorial content, published regularly, and attempted to include a wider variety of viewpoints, topics, and authors. In order to do this, we have attended numerous lectures and conferences, talked to many individuals here in Utah and elsewhere, and have sponsored our own events such as last year's theological symposium and fiction contest. SUNSTONE has become a fulltime occupation for us, and therefore, we have the added responsibility of paying a small staff (previously all work was done by volunteers). Nevertheless, the sacrifice is worthwhile if we can continue to produce a magazine of which we are proud.

However, the sad reality is that our income does not cover the expenses which providing such quality generates. So we must look at a couple of options. We could raise the yearly subscription cost from \$12 (a constant since SUNSTONE'S beginning over five years ago) to \$15 or even \$20 in an attempt to cover our costs while maintaining the strengths of the magazine. But we would prefer not to do that. We do not want the price to be prohibitive for anyone interested in good ideas. Or we could cut back on the number of pages, the stock of paper, or the amount of design and color and basically reduce the magazine to a skeleton. Again, we would rather not have to do that—especially not now when we have so many excellent pieces waiting to be published and look forward to many more from upcoming events such as the history and fiction contests and the symposium. We would rather *increase* the number of pages and even publish more frequently in order to print all of the worthwhile materials available. Our last option, by far the best, is to substantially increase the number of subscribers so we can cover the costs.

Last year when we asked our readers how we could best increase circulation, many of you suggested that we use you, our subscribers, to help us do that. So we would like to suggest a number of ways you could help us maintain our present level of publishing:

1. You could give gift subscriptions to your friends. If each subscriber would give two gift subscriptions, we would reach our break-even point. We will be glad to extend your subscription by one issue for every gift subscription that you send in.
2. You could renew your subscription for three years right now, whether it has expired or not.
3. You could send us lists of names to add to our mailing list.
4. You could patronize our advertisers and let them know you learned of their product through SUNSTONE.
5. You could suggest the names of potentially large donors who would contribute to SUNSTONE generally or for special projects such as an art issue or the publication of the symposium proceedings.
6. You could make a cash donation yourself, either large or small.

SUNSTONE must be a participatory venture. We cannot succeed without your continuing support and help. Thank you.

Award for Best Article

The editors and staff of SUNSTONE are proud of the recent award given to one of our own, Allen Roberts, for an article published in the magazine. The article, "Where Are the All-Seeing Eyes? The Origin, Use, and Decline of Early Mormon Symbolism" (Volume 4, Number 3, May-June 1979) received the Mormon History Association's 1980 "Annual Award for the Best Article in Mormon History by a Junior Author." Congratulations, Allen!

In the past, we have received a number of awards for graphic quality. As a staff,

we feel that the Mormon History Association's award symbolizes another kind of "coming of age" and hope to achieve consistently in the future the excellence we have been honored for on this occasion.

Advertising Representatives Needed

SUNSTONE is hiring representatives to work on a commission basis selling advertising and subscriptions. We would like at least one person in the Salt Lake area and would consider persons in other areas as well. If interested call Allen Roberts or Peggy Fletcher at (801) 355-5926.

Call for Papers

Proposals for papers to be presented at the 1981 Mormon History Association meetings to be held in Rexburg, Idaho, on May 1-3 should be sent to Davis Bitton, History Department, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah 84112, no later than 15 July 1980.



Upcoming Events

- World Conference on Records, August 12-15, Salt Palace, Salt Lake City
- Church Educational Symposium on the New Testament, August 14-16, BYU
- BYU Education Week, August 19-22, BYU
- Sunstone's 1980 Mormon Theological Symposium, August 22-23, Salt Lake City
- Mosaic on Mormon Culture, October 2-3, BYU
- AMCAP (Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists) Annual Meeting, October 2-3, LDS Institute of Religion, Salt Lake City
- BYU Sesquicentennial Church History Symposium, October 10-11. Authors of the sixteen-volume history of the Church will present papers.
- Brigham Young Historical Lecture Series, September 3 - October 29
- Annual Meeting of the Utah State Historical Society, September 12-14, Vernal, Utah
- Society for the Sociological Study of Mormon Life, Annual Meeting, August 29, 7:30 p.m., New York City Hilton (Adjunct meeting to American Sociological Association)
- John Whitmer Historical Association annual meeting, September 26-28, Council Bluffs, Iowa.
- Rocky Mountain Writers' Convention, July 30-August 1, BYU.

Readers' Forum

Stimulating Combination

Until the December, '79 issue of SUNSTONE, I have regarded your publication with the curiosity and annoyance I reserve for the usually uneven writing quality of the so-called "Dialogue-Exponent II-Sunstone" crowd. I have found publications featuring Mormon writers consistently lacking an excellent standard of prose, in spite of the real worth of what is often written. The medium is too often the message, and not a particularly articulate one. No wonder the Church has public relations problems.

But after reading "December, 1979" I am compelled to ask who is the genius responsible for such a stimulating combination of articles. I frequently wonder, "Can any good thing come out of a committee?" But if the Roberts, Fletcher, Oman combination is in fact responsible, I may have to alter a basic prejudice.

Sterling McMurrin's "Problems in Universalizing Mormonism" was interesting, thought provoking, and sprinkled with a certain wry humour. His approach was refreshing, a welcome relief from the usual "us vs. them" quality of discussion about Mormonism.

"Knowing, Doing, and Being" by Arthur Bassett is a fine combination of religious intensity and good sense, an excellent sermon. Lowell Bennion is right; the *Ensign* should print it. That it has not reflects clearly what Richard Cummings discussed in his "Identity Crisis" speech. The consolidated meeting schedule notwithstanding, multitudinous church programs and their required meetings have so quantified the religious experience that one can spend one's life being active and never give thought to the nature of Godliness, of charity, or the Christlike life. Bassett asks an important question, "... What is happening internally as the result of all our doing?"

The issue raised so ably by Richard Cummings in his speech to the Association for Mormon Letters is not one of thinkers vs. doers. It is one of creative use of agency. What he says is readable, interesting, and extremely encouraging. "Reflections on the

Mormon Identity Crisis" was tremendously reaffirming, and charmed the intellectual socks right off me, or perhaps put them back on. I would like to read everything Cummings has written and meet him as well. I thank you for the excellent December, '79 issue. With it *Sunstone* has made a worthy contribution to the life of my mind.

Sharon Pedersen
Wheat Ridge, Colorado

Gospel and Church

Linda Sillitoe's investigative reporting of the ERA-Sonia Johnson situation (Vol. Five Number One) and Scott Kenney's treatment of "Reinhold Niebuhr and the Mormon Experience" (Vol. Five Number Two) are commendable pieces of objective thinking coupled with attitudes of faith.

Having always felt a strong commitment to the gospel (only partially owing to four sets of convert great grandparents), I have never had an occasion to be ashamed of it. But I have learned to make careful distinctions between the GOSPEL and the CHURCH.

There is corroboration within my own experience (as in Southern California not long ago when there was a strong church-initiated movement to help pass the released-time religious education initiative in the public schools) to support certain contentions presented in the two *Sunstone* articles cited.

Without ANY inclination toward apostasy, I am now pondering the pragmatism and situational ethics which seem to be a part of the church's current political postures.

In the welfare session of the April conference the members were warned that they should make their own provisions against hard economic times and not expect the church to do it all. A logical extension of that philosophy would be that we are stewards, on a very individual basis, of our spiritual well-being, too.

Evalyn M. Sandberg
Salt Lake City, Utah

Christocentricity Defended

I have read with interest the reaction of Gerry Ensley to my article, "Knowing, Doing and Being . . ." He has labored strenuously, and I trust ineffectively, in attempting to make it say something it simply was not saying. The point I was making in my reference to the person of Christ, the issue that appears to have been most disturbing to him, was one suggested long ago in the statement, "Whom can I teach but my friends?" i.e. that the teachings of Christ become more meaningful as Christ becomes our model for activity/works—as I thought was made clear in the "doing" aspect of the triad. In no way can my article be construed as a pitch for "cheap grace." It is simply a suggestion that one works out one's salvation "with fear and trembling" better with someone to turn to in times of discouragement.

Initially I thought I would not respond, feeling that a careful reading of the original article was sufficient to refute Mr. Ensley's contentions. However, on second thought, I think his comments raise at least two important points that I feel are worthy of further scholarly attention.

One deals with the relationship between faith and knowledge. Is knowledge *per se* "clearly more valuable than faith" *per se*? Is faith simply a "necessary evil supporting life's enterprise during the many states thereof wherein knowledge is imperfect?" Or is this type of jargon rather a symptom of a hangover from the heady wine of the eighteenth century enlightenment? The logical conclusion of Mr. Ensley's statements—echoed widely throughout the church and the secular world as well—is that omniscience destroys the need for faith/trust.

Is God therefore devoid of faith—in mankind, in eternal law, etc.? Is *knowledge* of error what keeps one from sin, or is it *faith* in the worth of that knowledge? Certainly faith is often a prelude to knowledge, but is not knowledge also a prelude to faith? I for one would like us to explore this problem with greater care, avoiding the easy clichés of the enlightenment. I have the feeling that we will find that faith is as eternal as knowledge, and often, in its widest ramifications, at least as essential. I feel uncomfortable about our tendency to label anyone who wishes to give the principle of faith any intellectual respectability as a mystic.

Secondly, I would like to see a careful, in-depth study of the Christocentricity of the teachings of the Church. Ensley's conspiratory theory of the canonization of the scriptures has some major

problems so far as the Book of Mormon is concerned. This volume has much in common with the central thrust of "Christ-praising" found in the works of John and Paul, et al. This volume—which incidentally contains, according to the Lord, the "fulness of mine everlasting gospel" (D&C 27:5; 20:9-10), sans information on premortal existence, polytheism, etc.—is rather clearly a record of people who "talk of Christ . . . rejoice in Christ, . . . preach of Christ, . . . prophesy of Christ, and . . . write according to [their] prophecies, that [their] children may know to what source they may look for a remission of their sins." (2 Nephi 25:25)

The Christocentricity of the Doctrine and Covenants is perhaps not so evident, except in the fact that every revelation admonishes the listener to hear his word. I would like to see the Christology of the Doctrine and Covenants, as well as that of the Presidents of the Church, explored in depth with the concept of Christocentricity as a focal point.

Arthur R. Bassett
Provo, Utah

Letter on a Letter

I pity those who, like Gerry Ensley ("Christ at the Periphery", Readers Forum, V:2) deny or at least minimize the central place of Christ's personality and the love that properly emanates from Him to us and should from us to Him. We cannot experience enough of such love, and those who have sufficiently experienced it would have it no other way. Though doctrine is important and consonant with it, our intimate relationship with the Savior transcends all abstract or theoretical constructs about the purpose of life. When Dietrich Bonhoeffer said that "Without Christ we would not know God. Without Christ we would not know one another"—and I would add, "Without Christ we would not know ourselves"—he surely had in mind, along with principles and sublime teachings, that very personal revelation in another man's life of the divine virtue which alone can lead to perfection. How can we even begin to feel gratitude for all Deity has afforded us, except—as with our earthly fathers—in the most intimate, personal terms? Consider the recent message a missionary penned to his branch president at the MTC in the week he received his special witness: "Now I know he's there, and realize that it's just a matter of treating my Father in Heaven as a person." Like Father, like Son.

Thomas F. Rogers
Provo, Utah



Peaceful Agreement with Leaders

With regard to Linda Sillitoe's article on Church politics and Sonia Johnson (Volume 5, Number 1), a few observations.

The piece gave a great deal of insight into Mrs. Johnson's personal motivations and clarification of certain of her statements and actions. What it did not address was the Church's reasoning for taking an official stand in opposition of the "ERA." Bringing this to the fore does much toward solving the dilemma Sister Sillitoe so articulately expressed in the last few paragraphs.

It is central to the issue at hand that the very reason the Church refuses to take an official stand on political matters is to avoid putting members in just such a quandary. The only issues that may be in the political forum that they will take a stand on are those which have profound moral implications. In these cases it should not be difficult for all members to understand the wisdom of the Church's stand, and align their own personal commitment—not just blind obedience—with the position taken by the First Presidency and Council of the Twelve.

Suppose, for instance, a situation where the government was attempting to enact a law providing workshops in sex education as part of the high school curriculum to make sure that students had complete knowledge and personal experience with the full range of the subject matter, including as well as several variants, of course, approved birth control measures. Though I literally tremble at such a thought, there are surely some people in the country who would favor adoption of such a curriculum. According to a Gallup poll quoted on page 6 of the same issue of *Sunstone*, 59% of American teenagers feel that premarital sex is not wrong, compared with only 30% who believe it

is wrong. When these teenagers come to comprise the voting majority, how can we not expect them to favor just such legislation. (Also, to anyone who feels that such a problem lies in the future and has no relationship to present realities, I would ask who taught today's teens the attitudes the poll reports? Is it not the nation's opinion leaders? Aren't the same opinion leaders promoting the ERA?)

My intention in proposing this hypothetical legislation is to present a situation in which no Latter-day Saint could disagree as to the great moral dangers involved and that it would be very bad legislation. How would we feel toward a Church-organized lobbying effort against this?

If the cautions our Church leaders have given us about the potential effects of ERA are valid, the implications of its passage are possibly just as serious as my for-instance. I am sure that ERA proponents within the Church simply don't believe that ERA holds the dangers that our leaders say it does.

We all have the right and responsibility to form our own conclusions and beliefs, but should realize that they are formed through synthesis of the information we receive or perceive. In matters such as the ERA issue we cannot form our conclusions independently, because we have received both positive and negative input on the matter. As we are faced with the choice of accepting the view that it should be ratified or the view that it should be opposed we thereby discount the opposite point of view. To do so we must reason that its advocates aren't as informed as we are, or don't understand as well as we do, or that their objectives run counter to our own.

In the case of ERA the Federal government has lobbied for its ratification, the Church against it. I think it all boils down to whom do we trust?

The government or those whom we sustain as Prophets, Seers, and Revelators? Who do we consider the wisest—the President of the United States or the President of the Church? Whose motives, goals and objectives do we align ourselves with?

While it's true that members of the Church have a right to be pro-ERA, it is clear to me that this is the same as our right to smoke, drink, be inactive, or withhold any contributions to the Church. It is not similar to our right to be a Republican, Democrat, independent or whatever.

The Church says it is a moral issue, the world says it's political. Who do we believe?

Sonia Johnson, and others apparently feel that the Church's opposition to ERA is a "patriarchal panic" based on a chauvinistic desire to keep women under the thumb of men in the Church. The First Presidency and Council of the Twelve have stated their reasons for opposition and we do them a terrible disservice in discounting their statements and suspecting instead various unholy ulterior motives.

Besides having the right to be wrong, Church members have the right to inspiration from the Holy Ghost (assuming personal worthiness). I submit that we should exercise that privilege rather than the former, and find ourselves in peaceful agreement with those whom the Lord has charged with the great responsibility of leading us aright.

Douglas W. Buhler
West Jordan, Utah

Public Instruction of Leaders

I wanted to comment on Dr. McMurrin's article in your last issue, and after reading Ms. Sillitoe's article on Sonia Johnson, I find that the two seemingly unrelated articles become very complementary.

When I first learned of the revelation giving blacks the priesthood, I had only one negative feeling: one of anger. This anger had been generated years before, when I read Dr. McMurrin's speech calling on the "prophet" to have a "revelation" and thus remove the church from its difficult racist situation, which was not nearly so serious as had been the church's position at the time of the "revelation" repealing polygamy.

The anger I felt was not that the black members could now hold the priesthood. I wept for joy at that. It was now the smug self-satisfaction that I was sure Dr. McMurrin felt. After all, he had pointed the way. He had given his instructions and at last the "prophet" had had a "revelation" to his order.

My great-grandfather, and my husband's great, great-grandfather were both excommunicated for various reasons. Another great-grandfather was called into a bishop's court, and left feeling he had been wronged, but nevertheless confessing his own sins to save his membership.

I don't believe there is a member of the church that at some time or other doesn't feel dissatisfaction with the performance or actions of some members of the church. But I feel that whenever we take it upon ourselves to publicly instruct the leaders of the church, we are in apostasy.

Three ancestors learned this, and reacted in various ways.

I gather from the tenor of Ms. Sillitoe's remarks, that the Eastern press will soon be taking delight in trumpeting her instructions to the world.

Eunice Pace
Albion, New York

Savage Misogyny

Sonia Johnson has a gift for "startlingly vivid language." She has an eye for it as well. Unless it has become Movement jargon, I suspect the phrase "a savage misogyny"—whatever its orthographic permutations—comes from an article by Andrea Dworkin in the June 1979 issue of Ms. magazine, "Safety, Shelter, Rules, Form, Love: The Promise of the Ultra-Right." Ms. Dworkin writes, with reference to Ruth Carter Stapleton,

Though fundamentalist male ministers have called her a witch, in typical female fashion Stapleton disclaims responsibility for her own inventiveness and credits the Holy Ghost, clearly male, thus soothing the *savage misogyny* of those who cannot bear for any woman to be both seen and heard.

Jean B. Ohai
Kailua, Hawaii

Church Court System

I have just read and reread Linda Sillitoe's excellent article on Sonja Johnson, "The Central Conundrum," in the Jan.-Feb., 1980 *Sunstone*. This article states, however, that "the Church court system . . . does not protect the individual," that "women are at a true disadvantage in Church courts," and that women do not "have access to the General Handbook and its supplements" concerning Church courts.

While it is true that women may be at a disadvantage because they are never tried by their peers, that is by other women, and that they seldom have the *General Handbook of Instructions* issued to them, Sillitoe might also have pointed out,

1. that the *Handbook* is not distributed to most men in the Church,
2. that the *Handbook* is neither secret nor much restricted; the details of Church Courts are found on pp. 71-88; although contents of the *Handbook* may not be reproduced, nothing in the foreword states that an accused person may not request permission to read these pages,
3. that any person dissatisfied with the judgement of a Bishop's Court may appeal to a High Council Court,



4. that the rules for a High Council Court are set forth in a place available to anyone—the 102nd section of the Doctrine and Covenants,
5. that according to the Doctrine and Covenants six members of the twelve man High Council are chosen by lot to “stand up in behalf of the accused to prevent insult and injustice.”

Although I have never been involved in any way with a Bishop's Court such as tried Sonja Johnson, I have for seventeen years sat on the High Council in my area. The three Stake Presidents under whom I have served have always been extremely careful to give the accused a completely fair hearing with no time limits imposed before or during the proceedings. Especially have we been concerned with the rights and feelings of all females it has become our unhappy duty to judge.

Stanley B. Kimball
Florissant, Missouri

Water Trauma A Theme?

I've been delighted with my subscription to *Sunstone*. I wish I'd known about it much sooner. The "Crisis in Zion" article was fascinating and informative. Bruce Jorgensen's "Born of the Water" is an extraordinary piece of fiction.

There are half a dozen magazines that come to my desk and I find something gripping in one of them every now and again. Your darn *Sunstone* keeps me from getting my work done. I sit down to read a short story and end up reading articles, essays, and all. Your advertisers should be happy with *Sunstone*. If I am a typical reader, the "shelf life" of each issue must be tremendously long—compared to things like *McCalls* or even *Reader's Digest*. People keep *Sunstone* long after the others are moldering in the city dump.

I have a question about fiction. Is water-related trauma a *sub rosa* theme for this year's *Sunstone* fiction? If it is please let me know because I have some fiction in progress, and I'll work it in somehow. The reason I ask is that death by water is a central element in each piece of fiction in the last three issues—except Jorgensen's—and that "water trauma," is a near death one and figures centrally in the plot. Let me know, we Midwesterners are as afraid of water as Utahns.

Mary Jane Heatherington
Lawrence, Kansas

Update

Florida ERA Campaign

Florida Secretary of State George Firestone has begun an investigation to determine whether any state election laws were violated by a 1978 fundraising campaign organized by leaders of the LDS Church. This campaign funneled thousands of dollars to state senate candidates in Florida who said they would vote against the Equal Rights Amendment.

After dividing the state according to Church district lines, Mormon leaders solicited contributions from members of their congregations. Hundreds of small checks that sources say totalled at least \$60,000 were sent to the candidates and to a political action group (FACT) working against ERA.

State election laws require any group that solicits or spends more than \$100 for political purposes to register as a political action committee and disclose how much money is raised, who contributes it, and how it is spent.

Sources say the Florida campaign was organized by Jay N. Lybbert, a regional representative of the Church. Lybbert said that he had "just talked to a few of his friends" but records show that the political action group FACT (Families Are Concerned Today) paid \$414.80 worth of phone bills for Lybbert, and Mormon leaders above and below Lybbert said they discussed fundraising with him. Richard Chapple, president of the Tallahassee district, confirms that Lybbert contacted him and that he, in turn, contacted the bishops of individual wards to raise money for FACT. The majority of the money for FACT, however, was raised by out-of-state Mormons in California, Georgia, and Alabama. (Of the total FACT funding for the Florida election, 5.5 percent came from Alabama and Georgia Mormons, 27 percent from North Florida Mormons, and 53 percent came from California Mormons, mostly from the Sacramento area.) "It is our hope that nothing was done illegally," says Jerry Cahill, spokesman for the Church in Salt Lake City (*Miami Herald*, 20 and 22 April 1980).

Mormon "Front" Organizations

Media attention in California was also devoted to the Mormon-backed

fundraising campaign which helped back anti-ERA candidates in the 1978 Florida elections (Diane Divoky, *Sacramento Bee*, 19 April and 4 May 1980.) According to the articles, Jerry Cahill, director of press relations for the LDS Church, confirmed that Church authorities in Salt Lake received a call for help in raising Florida campaign funds. A letter (dated 12 October 1978) signed by President Kimball and his two counselors was sent to all 9000 Church officers in the United States authorizing collection of anti-ERA funds from Mormons. Jerry L. Gardner, public communications director for the Church in the Sacramento area, denied that the request for funds had come from Church authorities, said the *Bee* article, and the majority of Sacramento area contributors denied contributions had been made through Church auspices.

Bee staff writer Diane Divoky also outlined further anti-ERA political activities sponsored by Mormons. The following groups or individuals were identified:

Standard of Liberty Political Action Group (SOLPAC). This group was organized as a result of efforts in 1977 by prominent Mormons living in California including Dr. Stephen Van Wagenen, realtor Henry Moss, and former California Lt. Governor John L. Harmer. Senator Orrin Hatch, R-Utah, wrote a fundraising letter for SOLPAC in 1979 (See Update in *Sunstone*, Vol. 4, No. 3, May-June, 1979), which quoted President Spencer W. Kimball, and has spoken on behalf of the group. All members of the executive committee as well as all trustees are Mormons. Regional representative Jay N. Lybbert, who organized the last-minute, anti-ERA campaign in Florida in 1978, is an executive committee member.

Pro Family Unity. This organization was incorporated in Charleston, N.C., but, according to the *Bee*, had a Sacramento base in 1978. Mormon Jan Clark, president of the group, described herself as "a one-issue person" dedicated "to bombing the ERA." According to the article, when Clark and her husband were transferred from North Carolina to Illinois, she received "a letter from

general authorities in Salt Lake, from Elder Dunn, saying it was heaven sent for me to be here, that I had been sent here to fight the ERA."

United Families of America (UFA). This organization, based in Salt Lake City, evolved from Pro Family Unity. Jan Clark, who now sits on the board of UFA, is quoted as saying the group plans to do research in conjunction with BYU and works closely with Barbara Smith, general president of the Relief Society. National vice-president of UFA is Susan Roylance, an anti-ERA leader in Washington State until her recent move to Salt Lake where her husband now works for the Church. Gordon S. Jones, a Mormon who works for the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee, edits the newsletter, *The National Family Reporter*, which goes to 15,000 members. President of UFA is Mormon V. Dallas Merrell, who is challenging a two-term incumbent for a U.S. Senate seat from Maryland. Merrell is running a heavy TV and radio campaign and has a fundraising group called Mormons for Merrell. Three-fourths of contributions listed on his first campaign report came from residents of Western states, including prominent Church leaders in California, Washington, and Oregon.

American Association of Women. Modeled after the Utah Association of Women, which formed three years ago (after Utah's IWY conference), this new national umbrella group was formed this spring. Georgia Peterson—Utah state tax commissioner, Mormon, and anti-ERA activist—is president. The new organization is overwhelmingly Mormon in membership, according to the *Bee* article.

ERA Poll

Utah voters oppose passage of the "Equal Rights Amendment, yet they strongly support what the amendment stands for." This contradiction emerged in a statewide poll sponsored by the *Salt Lake Tribune* and conducted by Bardsley and Haslacher, an impartial research firm.

The results of the poll showed that overall only 29 percent of those questioned support passage of the Equal Rights Amendment. However, when asked how they would vote on the statement "Equality of rights under the law shall not be abridged by the United States or by any state on account of sex"—the exact wording of the ERA—58 percent of those polled said they would support the measure.

The poll indicated that religion played a prominent role in rejection of the Equal

Rights Amendment. Only 18 percent of the LDS polled favored passage of the amendment (76 percent opposed) while 57 percent of the non-LDS polled favored ratification (37 percent opposed). All denominations supported the actual wording of the amendment, however: LDS who approved 51 percent (38 percent opposed); other denominations, 76 percent (16 percent opposed). (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 15 May 1980.)

Freemen Institute

The Freemen Institute, "a non-profit educational foundation" teaching "constitutional principles in the tradition of America's Founding Fathers" has been at the vanguard of a resurgence of conservatism in Utah, according to a series of articles in the *Ogden Standard Examiner*.

The copyrighted series by John Harrington and Vaughn Roche portrays the Institute founded by W. Cleon Skousen as a progeny of the John Birch Society. "I think a lot of what used to be John Birch Society strength in Utah has flowed toward Cleon Skousen," state Representative Lorin Pace, R-Salt Lake, is quoted as saying. Utah Public Utilities Commissioner David Irvine told the *Standard Examiner* that Skousen and his institute "are, without a doubt, the most significant influence within the Utah Republican Party today."

The Freemen Institute counts among its members and supporters a sizable bloc of state senators and representatives, comprising what House Minority leader C. DeMond Judd, Jr., D-Ogden, described as Utah's "shadow legislature."

In addition to forums and educational courses, the Institute has been directly involved in western political campaigns and legislative lobbying. The Institute has garnered enough backing to become capable of tilting the outcome of elections in favor of Institute-favored candidates, according to numerous elected officials. They agree that in 1976 the increasingly influential Freemen Institute, aided by other "New Right" groups, helped lift the then unknown attorney Orrin Hatch to Republican Party candidacy and eventual victory over three-term U.S. Senator Frank Moss. To recruit LDS supporters, Skousen repeatedly maintains that his institute is carrying out a mission given to him in 1960 by the late Church president, David O. McKay, a claim disputed by McKay's son Robert.

Skousen has a close relationship with Ezra Taft Benson, president of the

Council of the Twelve Apostles. President Benson, supporter of the John Birch Society in the 1960s, now appears frequently at Freemen Institute functions in the company of Skousen. Benson's son Mark was recently installed as executive vice president of the Institute.

Institute members have in the past used LDS buildings to forward Institute goals. To end the practice of announcing Institute meetings at Church functions, the First Presidency issued a 15 February 1979 directive stating that "no announcements should be made in Church meetings of these or other similar lectures or events that are not under sponsorship of the Church."

The Institute, headquartered in Salt Lake City, has grown into a nationwide organization and claims to have given constitutional seminars to more than 600,000 people in all fifty states and Canada. At the recent opening of the new headquarters building, speakers included Senator Orrin Hatch, Representative George V. Hansen of Idaho, Weber State College President Rodney Brady, and Church-sponsored anti-ERA activist Beverly Campbell.



Errata

Edward H. Ashment, "The Facsimiles of the Book of Abraham: A Reappraisal," Volume 4, Numbers 5 and 6. Footnote 14 (page 46) should read: Nibley, *Message of the Papyrus*, p. 2 (instead of *Ibid.*) Footnote 52 should read: Summer 1971 instead of Summer 1961.

Edward H. Ashment, "The Book of Mormon—A Literal Translation?" Volume 5, Number 2. Footnote 26 (page 14) should cite JD 9 instead of JD 4. Footnote 32 should read: "Unfortunately most critical studies . . ."

Lorin K. Hansen, "Some Concepts of Divine Revelation," Volume 5, Number 1. The quotation from Karl Rahner in the second column of page 12 should read: "the question to which the Church at that time (during the Modernist Movement) had no clear [not *clean*] answer . . ." The quotation from Bultmann in the first column of page 17 should read: "or for mysteries that become known [delete *no man could have*] once and for all . . ."

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AN INTERVIEW WITH DAVID GARDNER



Recent events have intensified public scrutiny of the role of the LDS Church in the secular arena. Dr. David Pierpont Gardner is an active, believing Mormon who has spent his entire career in that public sphere. We felt that his perspective would provide valuable insights.

Dr. Gardner became tenth president of the University of Utah on August 1, 1973. Previously Dr. Gardner had worked as an administrator in the University of California system and also held a faculty appointment in education. His book, *The California Oath Controversy* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1964), was well-received, and he has also published numerous articles regarding the role of universities in American society. In a special August 1974 edition of *Time* magazine, President Gardner was named one of the 200 men and women "destined to provide the United States with a generation of leadership." He was one of nine university presidents on the list. In 1979 he served as a Visiting Fellow at Clare Hall, Cambridge University, England. Dr. Gardner is married to the former Elizabeth Jane Fuhrman, and they have four daughters.

This interview was conducted by Peggy Fletcher and Allen Roberts in President Gardner's office at the University of Utah, 23 April 1980.



In the coming years, knowledge will be more central to our nation's ability to compete in the world.



SUNSTONE: Tell us about your background and how you came to be president of the University of Utah.

GARDNER: I was born and raised in Berkeley, California. My parents were both from Utah, but they moved to California in the 1920s. Growing up in Berkeley had a significant influence on my value system, on my attitudes, on my respect for learning, and on my sense of the place of universities in our society. My freshman year was spent at Berkeley, but then I wanted to get away from home; so I went to BYU. I graduated with three majors (political science, history, and geography) and took a secondary teaching credential. I went into the United States Army and served in the Far East for two years in Army Intelligence. Then I returned to Berkeley and took a Master's degree in political science and a Ph.D. in Higher Education. My studies focused on the university in our society in much the same way as the study of business focuses on the private corporation. The course of study was highly interdisciplinary and included a mosaic of courses in economics, public administration, political science, sociology, intellectual history, and philosophy.

During graduate school I worked for the Alumni Association at Berkeley. Later I served as vice-chancellor at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where I also held my first faculty appointment. I served there from about 1964 to 1970. From 1970-1973, I served as a vice-president of the nine-campus University of California system. I came to Utah in 1973.

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SUNSTONE: How do you perceive the role of the University in America, now and in the future?

GARDNER: In order to discuss the future, we would be well advised first to consider the past. Prior to the Civil War, there were no universities in America; there were colleges. The emphasis was on preparing young men for the ministry, law, or medicine. This was accomplished through a classical undergraduate liberal arts program, preparatory to one's professional training. The idea of the liberal arts college had its conceptual roots in England and over the years gradually adapted to the American scene. During the Civil War the Land Grant Act (the Morrill Act of 1862) was passed, which gave life to the land grant university idea. That act was the most important single stimulus for public higher education in the United States. The act not only encouraged the colleges of higher education in the country to reach out to more of the people, but it also broadened the curriculum to include the sciences and the agricultural as well as the liberal arts. During the period between the close of the Civil War and the turning of the century, the German idea of research and graduate instruction, which emphasized empiricism and the scientific method, further modified the essential character of the emerging American university. Thus, by the end of the century a new kind of university had been forged in this country, which included an expanded undergraduate curriculum accommodating the liberal arts, the sciences, the agricultural arts and sciences, professional work, a panoply of professional schools, newly founded graduate programs, and a growing emphasis on research.

This concept of a university, with its threefold mission of teaching, research, and public service, held together pretty well until the close of World War II. It began to fray at the edges a little then because of the enormous stress placed on the system by the GI's coming back from the war; in some cases enrollment almost doubled within a two- or three-year period but then slacked off. But in the 1960s enrollment in American higher education doubled and this time the increases stuck, placing a different



I do not regard higher education as merely a conduit for linking up a high school graduate with his or her first job.

kind of stress on our colleges and universities: dissatisfaction on the part of students with the quality of teaching and the curricula, unhappiness with the size and perceived impersonality of the institution, and a widespread disquietude about the social and political role and responsibility universities should have in modern society. In addition, an increasing number of persons in their thirties and forties began to study part time, many of them women. These forces have tended to affect the fundamental character and style of higher education, approximating in some ways the magnitude of the changes that worked their influences on our universities and colleges a hundred years ago. We're still in transition, and what universities will look like in twenty years is anyone's guess.

But whatever the university will look like in the year 2000, it will still be society's chief instrument for the discovery, organization, analysis, and transmission of knowledge. That role will not change; but how we go about performing it, on the other hand, will very likely change, and considerably so. The basic mission, however, will most likely remain unchanged. In the coming years knowledge will be more central to our nation's ability to compete in the world, to secure its sovereignty, and to satisfy the educational aspirations of her people. There is very little likelihood that universities will move to the margin or periphery in terms of their significance. Instead, they will continue to move towards the epicenter.

SUNSTONE: Do you see an increasing emphasis on learning which will provide employment as opposed to the study of ideas for their own sake?

GARDNER: There is always a pull and tug (which tends to become acute in this state from time to time) between those on the one hand who view higher education as a means of training high school graduates for their first jobs and those on the other who view the purposes of higher education in a more inclusive way. A university both *trains* students for gainful employment and *educates* them for purposes not principally related to their employment but pertinent to their responsibility as citizens functioning in a free society. We both train and educate and should do both. For example, law school helps prepare students to practice law. Medical school helps prepare students to practice medicine. But both medical and law school faculties expect that the students coming for professional training will have been previously educated, i.e. their communications skills will have been developed and refined; their capacity to think abstractly

and understand concepts will have been nurtured; their ability to understand the relationship between things and ideas and to appreciate the complexities of the social, political, economic, religious, and cultural dimensions of life will have been enhanced and refined. I do not regard higher education as merely a conduit for linking up a high school graduate with his or her first job. I think that view shortchanges the student, corrupts the underlying purposes of education, and is not in the public interest.

SUNSTONE: Do you consider yourself an active, believing Mormon?

GARDNER: Yes.

SUNSTONE: Did you have any personal doubts or experience a crisis of faith during your educational career?

GARDNER: Of course. I think anyone who exercises faith does so in part because of doubt. That should be self-evident by definition. Faith has no function if there is no doubt. Faith, in my view, serves the function of sustaining testimony in the face of uncertainty. There is a precarious and precious balance between the two; and it tends to shift back and forth over the years. I was born in the Church, but I think everyone whether born in the Church or not must be converted to it sometime, if, that is, the membership is authentic. Often, one is converted by asking questions to which the answers are not clear; but as knowledge increases, one relies more on a knowing conviction of the truth than on the pure exercise of faith. Of course, there is always a measure of murkiness, and that's where faith comes into play. To say that one has never had a doubt or an uncertainty about the Gospel is to misconstrue entirely the nature of our obligations as Mormons. We should be expected to examine our beliefs and ask ourselves the hard questions, not only to help satisfy the purpose of our mortality and the exercise of our free agency, but also to enable us to respond intelligently to the questions of friends for whom the exercise of faith is irrelevant.

SUNSTONE: What was the Church involvement in the establishment of the University of Deseret, from which the U of U was derived?

GARDNER: The University of Utah was founded in 1850 as a secular, public university by the Utah territorial legislature. It was not founded as a Church university. There were 15,000 people in the Salt Lake valley at the time. Many of them were without adequate housing and with barely enough to eat, and yet they gave life not to a Church university but to a public one. In a state generally

Faith has no function if there is no doubt.



regarded as a theocracy, that demonstrated a remarkable measure of vision and insight into the nature of the educational process itself and into the need for that process to be reasonably free from the kind of constraints that necessarily affect universities that are overtly church affiliated or church owned. When the territorial legislature gave life to the University of Deseret, it was enlarging on the model of the University of Nauvoo, where the same kind of sensitivity was reflected on the part of the founders. Therefore, this university was always viewed as serving all of the people of the state and not just some. It fits established notions of a free university in a free society. The pioneers exhibited high courage and just understanding and perception in what at that time and under those circumstances can only be construed as an audacious act of faith and self-confidence.

SUNSTONE: Could you comment on BYU, which is overtly sponsored by the Church?

GARDNER: Brigham Young University and the University of Utah are both universities, but they perform different missions. If that were not so then either the taxpayers' money would be misspent in the one instance or the Church's tithing would be misspent in the other. The University of Utah is a public, secular university, established in the tradition of free universities in this country. It is governed by two boards appointed by the governor of the state with the approval of the state senate. The taxes paid by all the people of the state, whatever their religious affiliation, support the University. This university must be and is free—as free as any public university I know of in the United States—from both political and ecclesiastical influence. The criteria we employ in recruiting faculty, promoting faculty, and granting tenure to faculty are the same used by all public universities of our kind and character in this country. We make these decisions based on the professional competency and promise of the faculty members. We admit students if they are capable and prepared to engage in university-level work. There's no religious test. Finally, all ideas are welcome here and none is excluded. I have an affirmative obligation to protect our freedom against pressures however severe and extreme the source; and I do so.

The Brigham Young University has a somewhat different mission. Its purpose is to permit the LDS Church to educate some of its young people as it wishes. The Church has every right to require certain standards of decorum and belief fitted to the purposes for which the BYU exists, but wholly inappropriate if similarly required by a public university. The Church can also have a degree of

influence over the curriculum at BYU in ways that could not be imposed on the University of Utah. The Church can, and quite appropriately does, encourage BYU to pay more attention to particular kinds of research and teaching that tend to further the Church's interests worldwide. At the University of Utah, teaching and research are a function mostly of what our faculty and students choose to do. I also think that it's a bit more difficult for all ideas to be as welcome at BYU as they are here without disturbing the perceived sense of purpose the Church has in mind for that institution. Were there not these differences, of course, the Church would be hard pressed to justify the sponsoring of BYU.

SUNSTONE: If you had an opportunity to be president of either of the two schools, which one would you select?

GARDNER: Well, I doubt that I would have an equal opportunity to be president of both. My background has been in public higher education. I understand the enterprise—its purpose, premises, inner life, and subtle nature.

SUNSTONE: You have children who have reached university age. Where have they chosen to go?

GARDNER: The first one is here at the University of Utah. I don't know where the second will choose to go as she leaves high school this spring. My wife and I leave the choice entirely up to them. Each child is different. What fits the needs of one child in terms of a desirable educational environment and experience won't fit another's. I do go out of my way to make sure that they understand the differences. Berkeley is *not* the University of Utah, UCLA is *not* BYU, Stanford is *not* Cal Tech; these places are all different. They should understand these differences and then try to match up their needs, their desires, their aspirations, and their hopes with the university that holds out the greatest promise of helping realize them.

SUNSTONE: What would you perceive as the advantages and disadvantages of selecting BYU?

GARDNER: It's very hard to generalize. But after all, the purpose of a university is, mostly, to broaden rather than to limit the exposure of students to ideas and people. Many of the communities in our state are so overwhelmingly Mormon that the opportunity for young people to come into contact with those whose views, opinions, life styles, attitudes, and ideas differ from their own is quite limited. But, for a person like me who grew up in Berkeley where there were only four Mormons in a high

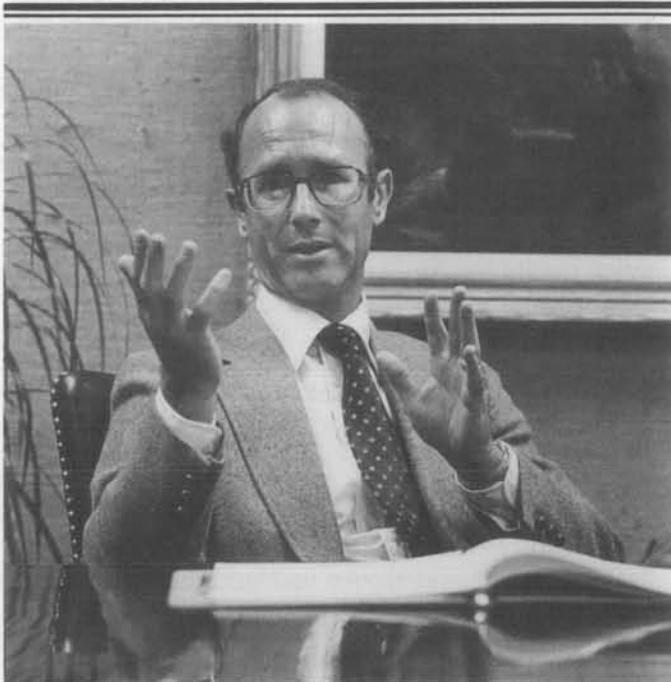


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school of 2,200 students, BYU added a certain dimension to my life that would not have been there had I remained at Berkeley. So, I think it is hard to generalize.

SUNSTONE: How do you see the future of the two universities?

GARDNER: In many ways, the Church, contrary to the opinion of many, may have less difficulty in the future relating to the University of Utah as a public university than to its own university. One can always expect differing opinions to exist between a university of our kind and the civil and ecclesiastical authorities. It is in the very nature of the relationship. We are bound to be a disquieting influence in the community. All universities are. We are dealing with ideas. Ideas affect people differently. We are transmitting the culture from one generation to the next, and the teacher and the student ask and try to answer hard questions.



We should nourish active, believing Mormons who are intellectually equipped to enter into the mainstream discussion.

As BYU asserts its intellectual prerogatives (and this will most assuredly occur as it continues to better itself academically), the more likely it is that differences will arise. Such differences, however much they are an expected part of a public university's life, tend to be less expected between a church-owned and operated university and the church that owns and operates it. The question, of course, is what will the Church do about it? If it permits, without interference, the natural course of events to unfold, then the tensions will arise; but if the Church tries to intervene, then the image of BYU as a university qua university tends to tarnish.

SUNSTONE: And its best and brightest members won't go there.

GARDNER: Some will and some won't.

SUNSTONE: What do you think education means in the context of Mormon theology?

GARDNER: The Church has clearly demonstrated a commitment to education from the beginning. This commitment is reflected in the underlying values of the people of Utah. And I think it cannot be contested that the Mormon Church and its members have consistently supported education. The photograph you see there on my wall is of the Pine Valley Chapel. My dad grew up there. Grades one through eight of the Pine Valley School were on the first floor; the chapel was on the second. I think that graphically illustrates the value the Church has always placed on education.

The idea of education, however, has generally meant preparation for work, preparation for a job. Students in Utah tend to be somewhat more vocationally oriented in their outlook than at many other universities in the country. I also believe that when education is more inclusively or liberally defined, it is disconcerting to those people who have difficulty living with uncertainty or who find doubt to be disquieting. These characteristics, if discerned by others, often manifest themselves in anti-intellectual ways.

SUNSTONE: I wonder how a Mormon can deal with that dilemma?

GARDNER: I think it is a dilemma for the person who sees it as a dilemma. Why should we be insecure in these matters? If we understand what it is we believe, why should we be threatened by people whose ideas are not the same as ours? I regard the difference as an opportunity, not a threat. Even if we're not really comfortable about the depth of our knowledge or our capacity to re-

Rather than be afraid of opposing ideas, we should become better informed and more knowledgeable about our own beliefs.



respond effectively to other ideas, we should not try to push off these ideas or suppress them or pretend they are not there. Instead, we should increase our capacity to deal with these ideas. Rather than be afraid of opposing viewpoints, we should become better informed and more knowledgeable about our own beliefs. Such ideas are not going to go away in any event, and, therefore, I think we're better off dealing with them head on. This process is a fundamental part of mortality.

We talk much about the kind of adversities that our grandparents, great-grandparents, and great-great-grandparents encountered as they crossed the plains. They faced physical and environmental problems which, in many respects, were more easily understood and more easily coped with than the more sophisticated, more subtle, less visible kinds of intellectual and conceptual pressures that members of the Church face today. The principle, however, is constant. How did the pioneers overcome their adversity? Certainly not by pretending it wasn't there. When they got to the Missouri River, they crossed it. When they got to the Platt, they crossed it. They didn't say, "There is no river there." There *was* a river. In one sense, ideas constitute the rivers that we want to cross today. We can't just wish them away or curse their presence.

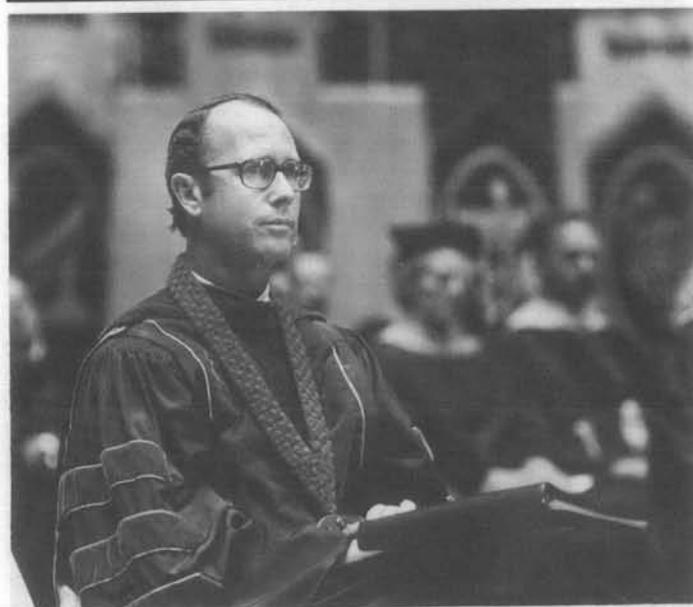
SUNSTONE: Are there not situations in which individuals are asked to obey, making them feel uncomfortable?

GARDNER: I believe in exercising one's agency such that it becomes habit-forming.

SUNSTONE: But isn't it true that the world through the media perceives ours as a church which demands obedience of its members? Won't this handicap Mormon graduates, especially in areas of public service?

GARDNER: If the Church did demand such absolute obedience, then it would be a hardship without any question whatsoever. I hold a position of public trust. I exercise my best professional judgment in making decisions that are intended to serve the long term best interests of the University of Utah. Let's assume there is some issue on campus (it happens all the time) that engages the interest of Church members, and let's assume that the Church, as an institution, expresses a view on that issue indicating that the solution to the issue should be A. Based upon information and the counsel I receive from advisers within the University, I decide A is the best solution. Who is going to believe that I decided on A independently and not because of Church pressure? No one, of course. Under such a circumstance, I would find my-

self under unbelievable pressure from those who quite naturally would think that I had accommodated pressure from the Church, even though I arrived at the decision independently.



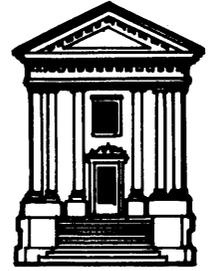
Ideas constitute the rivers we want to cross today. We can't wish them away or curse their presence.

Let's turn the matter on its other side. Let us assume that the Church, as an institution, expresses the view that A is the right solution and, after I have made proper inquiry into the matter, I conclude that A is the wrong solution and that B is the correct one. I would, of course, choose B, and then my faithfulness as a member of the Church would be called into question. No one should be put into that position. If one is, then no active member of the Church is going to be permitted to serve in positions of public trust. Fortunately, we are not in that position, and I honestly hope that we never will be.

SUNSTONE: It's like President Kennedy being perceived as a Catholic and owing final allegiance to the Pope.

GARDNER: Yes, and he overcame that with the acquiescing cooperation of the Catholic Church.

Nothing is without risks, and I think our absence from the ranks of theologians who communicate globally is not serving us well.



SUNSTONE: Are there any LDS educators that you have particularly admired?

GARDNER: I have a great respect for Sterling McMurrin and Dallin Oaks and others like them here in Utah and elsewhere.

SUNSTONE: In terms of original ideas, do you think that the time will come when Mormons will rise to the very heights of the sciences, arts, and other fields?

GARDNER: I think they have in the sciences and in some of the arts, less so generally in the social and behavioral sciences and humanities. You see, there are two ways of affecting Church influence in the world. One is through the kind of relationships which have naturally evolved out of the presence of Mormons in the various towns, villages, cities, communities, and countries of the world and through the very active Church missionary program. That's one kind of influence and we do a pretty good job of it, probably as well as almost any other Church. There is another way to influence and I don't think we do very much of it, and I think we should do more. We should develop and nourish active, believing Mormons who are intellectually equipped to enter into the mainstream discussion of theology with the world. We should be part of the conversation at the top and we're not; we're not even close to it. Now if we run the risk of losing some of our bright young people in the course of preparing them for this kind of dialogue, that's a risk we must take. Think of the alternative. Nothing is without its risks, and I think our absence from the ranks of theologians who communicate globally is, in the long run, not serving us well. We should be an ongoing, vital, contributing, participating part of that conversation. We have much to offer and something to learn.

SUNSTONE: Why are we absent?

GARDNER: Because I think we don't value it enough. If we did, we wouldn't be absent.

SUNSTONE: Does your Mormonism, your sense of the doctrine and your beliefs, affect your leadership of this university?

GARDNER: What I am, of course, is a function of a lot of things: DNA, my family, parents, friends, teachers, and the Church. My world view, my value system, my perspectives, my lifestyle, my attitudes are all significantly influenced by my being a member of the Mormon Church and having been so all my life. But the decisions I make as president of this university are strictly professional, based on a background of twenty years of univer-

sity administration. I have an overreaching respect for the purposes of the university and the kind of intellectual freedom which accompanies it. I understand its inner life and its value system which I find in no respect to be incompatible with my own beliefs.

SUNSTONE: The University of Utah has been accused of having anti-Mormon hiring practices and there certainly are whole departments with few, if any, Mormons. Do you think that that is a problem?

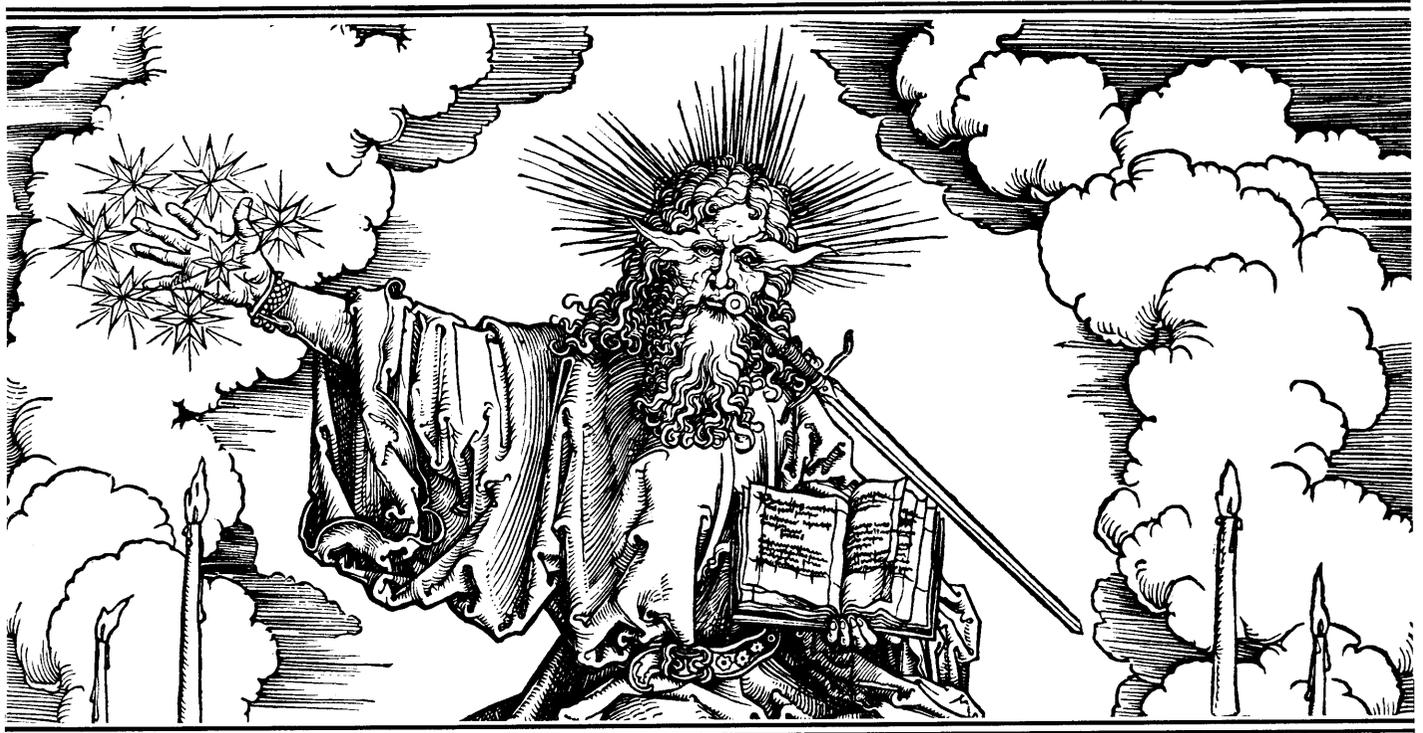
GARDNER: If one reads the history of the University, one would correctly conclude that there were times when it would have been very difficult for a member of the Mormon Church to be appointed in certain departments and, one might add, very difficult for someone who was not a Mormon to be appointed in other departments. Such behavior, of course, is a mark of institutional immaturity. I find it to be professionally and personally offensive and, wherever it surfaces, I have no tolerance for it at all. The University, of course, has made great strides in recent decades. If it exists today, it's just a residue (a little pocket here and there), and my hope is that it will wash out in a decade.

SUNSTONE: Are you optimistic about the overall challenges which confront us as Mormons?

GARDNER: I think it may be difficult for active Mormons to be invited to take positions of major responsibility in the future. That's already happening. I don't mean it's an overpowering difficulty; I merely mean that today we have to overcome a certain measure of suspicion and concern before we can be objectively considered (e.g., perceived Church positions on ERA in the present and the issue of Blacks holding the priesthood in the past).

I heard it expressed the other day that "the way things are going Church members are going to wind up sitting in the back of the bus." My response to that was if we think we're going to sit in the back of the bus, then that's where we're going to sit. But that is up to us. It is a function of how informed we are about the great issues of the day, how people perceive us, how we perceive them, and how effectively we communicate the essence of our beliefs, coupled with the degree of understanding, compassion, and tolerance for others that we expect them to accord us. If we communicate clumsily, or in untimely, insensitive, and ill-informed ways, we'll be lucky to get on the bus at all. On the other hand, if we proceed with the measure of care, sophistication, sensitivity, and good sense that I think we are capable of exhibiting, we will come out all right. I think it can go either way.

TIME & OMNISCIENCE



IN MORMON THEOLOGY

Kent E. Robson

Editors' Note

This paper was presented at the Sunstone Theological Symposium in August 1979.

God knoweth all things." The scriptures both old and new are replete with this claim.¹ The recently published *Gospel Principles* reiterates for Mormons this claim.² Though such statements are adequate for religious faith, deeper religious understanding demands to know what the things are that God can know. Is His knowledge absolutely unlimited? Is God, to use a theological term, totally omniscient or all-knowing?

Theology as a study aims to examine the content of religious faith and then to express it in clear and coherent language. This paper is theological in trying to understand what it means for God and Jesus Christ and the Holy Ghost to know all things, or what it means for God to possess an attribute of omniscience.

Given the many scriptural passages concerning the knowledge of God, no orthodox Mormon wants to deny the omniscience of God. No matter who wrote the second lecture of the *Lectures on Faith*, it says that God is omniscient.³ In surveying religious thought, however, there

are many different ideas of omniscience and it is essential in Mormon theology to decide which concept of omniscience Mormons have adopted and which they ought to adopt. Scriptural revelation is not self-interpreting. Interpretation must be approached cautiously and with sensitivity. But scriptures are given in human language, to prophets who themselves have concepts and who may not have previously understood the idea being expressed in the revelation. The caution in the *Doctrine and Covenants* 1:24 is therefore extremely important and represents recognition that prophets are not automatons nor are scriptures self-interpreting.

Even in traditional Christianity, the concept of God's omniscience has hardly ever been assumed to be total and unlimited. St. Thomas Aquinas represents well the tradition that Sterling McMurrin has characterized as "the absolutistic tradition" (in contrast to the Mormon "finitistic tradition").⁴ Still, Aquinas does not believe in the total omniscience of God. God cannot know nor be required to know things that are not true or self-contradictory. On the contrary, God knows only those things which "in any way are."⁵ Another way of putting this point is to say that God knows everything that can be known. It is no limitation on God's knowledge to say that

God cannot know that which cannot be known.

Exactly the same point is made by B.H. Roberts, perhaps the most perceptive of accepted Mormon theologians, when he says in the fourth year manual of *The Seventy's Course in Theology* that "the ascription of the attribute of Omnipotence to God" is affected by what "may or can be done by power conditioned by other external existences—duration, space, matter, truth, justice . . ." Roberts continues, "so with the All-knowing attribute Omniscience: that must be understood somewhat in the same light . . . not that God is Omniscient up to the point that further progress in knowledge is impossible to him; but that all knowledge that is, all that exists, God knows."⁶

It is no limitation on the concept of omniscience in Mormon theology, or anywhere else, to say that God cannot know what absolutely cannot be known. In fact, this is true by definition. Only those who want to make of God an ineffable mystery, a totally other being, incomprehensible and uncomprehended would maintain otherwise. In the medieval tradition of "negative theology" and in order to stress the radical discontinuity between God and man, some have adopted such views. Even in the Mormon tradition, if Owen Kendall White is correct here as I believe he is, there exists such a temptation in Mormonism which White labels "Mormon neo-orthodoxy."⁷ If we choose this option, we must consistently eschew rational discourse and theological investigation because God is a total mystery. This is not the position I will adopt here. I am assuming it is a discussable and proper question to ask "what can God know?" I must make clear here that of the many questions that could be pursued through this line of thought, I shall consider only one, and in this one I want to address only some of the arguments that have been advanced concerning it. The important question for me in this paper is whether God is in time or outside of time; whether God therefore knows all things timelessly or whether God's knowledge is in any sense of the past, present, and future as it is for man. Furthermore, if God is in time, could God know the future, including all future human acts?

In the tradition of orthodox Christian theology, the position of Thomas Aquinas is clear and has become the standard view. God is totally aloof from time; time is God's creation and God's knowledge is extra-temporal. For God, there is no past, present, or future. These are only makeshift human concepts and apply only to finite men. Therefore, God does not know successively but simultaneously. As Aquinas says, "His knowledge is measured by eternity as is also His being; and eternity, being simultaneously whole, comprises all time."⁸ Aquinas elaborates further when he writes, "Things reduced to actuality in time are known by us successively in time, but by God they are known in eternity, which is above time."⁹

The crucial question for Mormons is whether this Catholic doctrine or something like it is to be adopted as their doctrine, or whether a unique "finitistic" answer emerges from Mormon theology. In the past the finitistic answer has been overwhelmingly advocated. At present, however, another view on time is being advanced in Mormon thought. Since the issue of incompatible, different views concerning time has only recently emerged,

the proper Mormon concept of time has never in my judgment been systematically resolved.

Perhaps I overemphasize the recent emergence of this issue. Mormons have always used traditional theistic concepts and have often failed to realize the extent to which the most distinctive views in Mormon theology differ radically from Catholic-Protestant theism. Words such as "omniscience" or "all-knowledge" are used by Mormons and non-Mormons alike. The popular writer and preacher, as McMurrin points out, "sermonize with a language" replete with the vocabulary of absolutism.¹⁰ In spite of this practice, McMurrin reports only one view on time as *the* Mormon view.¹¹ Any other possible Mormon view is overlooked. This view as reported by McMurrin holds that "God himself is a temporal being with a past, present, and future, a being genuinely involved in the processes of the world."¹² Here McMurrin correctly reports the views of past Mormon writers. Joseph Smith's King Follett Discourse, while not explicit on time, seems to clearly foster a finitistic solution to the time question. Man is akin to God and Jesus Christ and indeed "God himself was once as we are *now*."¹³ Since we are in time, so also are Christ and God.

That God is explicitly in time is affirmed by Orson Pratt. "The true God exists both in time and space. He has extension, and form, and dimensions, as well as man. He occupies space; has a body, parts, and passions; can go from place to place—can eat, drink, and talk, as well as man."¹⁴

In B.H. Roberts' devastating rebuttal to Reverend Van Der Donckt, Roberts emphasizes that God the son "became man," that there was for him a "before and after" and that "here there is succession of time with God—a before and after; here is being and becoming."¹⁵

Even non-Mormon writers have assumed that this is *the* Mormon position. The Anglican theologian Edmond B. LaCherbonnier in his recent address in a BYU symposium on Mormonism reports and applauds this Mormon position. "Mormons also conceive God as temporal, not eternal in the sense of timeless. This idea of a timeless eternity is incompatible with an acting God, for it would be static, lifeless, impotent. If God is an agent, then he must be temporal, for timeless action is a contradiction in terms."¹⁶

If we choose this option, we must consistently eschew rational discourse and theological investigation because God is a total mystery.

In contrast to this traditional position concerning God being in time in Mormon theology, a radically different position has recently been articulated by Elder Neal A. Maxwell of the Presidency of the First Quorum of Seventy. A statement of the position is found in an article "A More Determined Discipleship" in the February 1979 *Ensign*, and a longer discussion of the same view occurs in Elder Maxwell's book: *All These Things Shall Give Thee Experience*.¹⁷ In the midst of a timely and eloquent call to commitment, Elder Maxwell discusses in the article the Mormon concept of "foreordination." He explicitly recommends a view of God's relation to time that in light of

the above discussion seems remarkably non-Mormon and is virtually indistinguishable from St. Thomas Aquinas' previously mentioned views.

He writes, "Once the believer acknowledges that the past, present, and future are before God *simultaneously* (italics in Maxwell's text)—even though we do not understand how, then the doctrine of foreordination may be seen somewhat more clearly."¹⁸ Acknowledging that this view is difficult to comprehend, Elder Maxwell writes, "when we mortals try to comprehend, rather than accept, foreordination, the result is one in which finite minds futilely try to comprehend omniscience."¹⁹

If God is in time, could God know the future, including all future human acts?

I now turn to a consideration of this view of time espoused by Elder Maxwell. If we search for evidence as to why this position is taken, we find in the article a discussion of scriptural passages concerning foreordination. For example in 1st Peter 1:2 we are told that our election will be according to the foreknowledge of God the father. I presume the inference we should make is along these lines: God could not foreknow what is in our future unless God is outside of time knowing all things simultaneously. This inference does seem to be explicit in Elder Maxwell's discussion of the statement. Further evidence along the same lines is offered in Alma's statement concerning the foreknowledge of God in Alma 13:3-5. The conclusion that emerges for Elder Maxwell from this line of discussion is that "the omniscience of God made it possible, therefore, for him to determine the boundaries and times of nations" (p. 72).

It seems clear that it is extra-temporal omniscience that is being espoused as the correct Mormon position. Perhaps the most important evidence offered for this position is explicit scriptural evidence offered in two passages. The two key passages, given on p. 72 in his article are these: The first taken from Moses 1:6 says, "And all things are present with me, for I know them all." The conclusion drawn from this passage is that God does not live in the dimension of time as do we. In further discussion of this passage, Elder Maxwell consistently says that God "actually *sees* rather than *foresees* the future—because all things are, at once, present before him!"

The second passage is taken from the Doctrine and Covenants 38:2 in which we read the Lord describing himself as "the same which knoweth all things, for all things are present before mine eyes." The last scriptural passage mentioned in support of this position in the article is in 1st Nephi 9:6 in which Elder Maxwell quotes, "But the Lord knoweth all things from the beginning; wherefore, he prepareth a way to accomplish all his works among the children of men." Elder Maxwell observes on p. 73 that "we should always understand that while God is *not* surprised, we often are." We are left to draw the inference that since God is outside of time and we are in time, we can be surprised by what comes to us in the future, but God will never experience such surprise since all things are known extra-temporally to God.

If God is outside of time, then to God, the past, pre-

sent, and future are fictions since God's total omnitemporal or extra-temporal omniscience demands, as Elder Maxwell says, a simultaneous knowledge of the entire creation. A first problem with this view is this: the notion of simultaneity is a transitive one. If A is known to happen simultaneous to B, and B is known to happen simultaneous to C, then A is known to happen simultaneous to C and so on for all things that are known. In other words, all knowledge occurs co-temporaneously. It follows from such a transitive concept as simultaneity that my death is known as fully and as co-temporaneously as that of Socrates; for God, while I am writing these words Nero is fiddling on his violin while watching Rome burn. While such a position can be maintained, I wish to assert that this position is inconsistent with a claim that God has foreknowledge. One has to decide whether God's knowledge is simultaneous knowledge or whether God has *fore*knowledge. An attempt to assert the two positions together is, as Anthony Kenney has asserted in a discussion of Aquinas in an article entitled "Divine Foreknowledge and Human Freedom," fundamentally misconceived.²⁰ If God has foreknowledge, there is such a thing as before-knowledge and after-knowledge.

One could adopt the view that the foreknowledge is only from man's perspective, but from God's perspective there is no such thing as foreknowledge or foreordination. Elder Maxwell seems, as I suggested earlier, to recognize that this is the position that he would have to consistently maintain when he asserted that God actually *sees* rather than *foresees* the future because all things are at once before him. The only difficulty in asserting this position is that the scriptures speak of the foreknowledge and foreordination *of God!* As I read them there is no hint that these concepts apply only to men or to man's perspective. Now if these concepts are God's concepts and if God uses these concepts, then we have one reason for denying the simultaneous knowledge of God, since it is apparently inconsistent with such a concept of foreordination or foreknowledge.

Let me mention some scriptural passages that ought to be examined in order to clarify this question. The first is the one that Elder Maxwell has himself given us in 1st Peter 1:2 in which the phrase is used "according to the foreknowledge of God the Father." There is no hint that the concept "foreknowledge" applies only to man's temporal perspective. It is asserted that it is God's foreknowledge and not man's foreknowledge of God. To insure that we are not simply dealing with an expression in biblical translation unique to the King James Version, it is useful to look at the more recent Mormon scriptures. Here the usage of Alma 13 would seem to be decisive on the side of God having foreknowledge for in Alma 13:3 the "foreknowledge of God" is mentioned explicitly and in verse seven God's foreknowledge of all things is mentioned once again. There is no hint in these passages that this concept is used only from man's perspective. The position we are left with is clearly this: we can either assert the simultaneity of God's knowledge and abandon the concept of the foreknowledge of God, or we can assert the foreknowledge of God which places God in time in some sense. But we can only do both on threat of inconsistency. A decision must be made as to how we are to interpret the concept of foreknowledge or foreordination.



Let me for a moment digress to examine some other uses of God's knowledge in Mormon scriptures. There are numerous claims that God knoweth all things, but never once are we explicitly told that he knows these things timelessly. The closest we come to such a view is found in the Words of Mormon 1:7 where we read "the Lord knoweth all things which are to come." Here the Lord would seem to be within a temporal perspective because there are things which are to come and these things the Lord knoweth. But the claim would seem to be that God would know all future events. There is no explicit claim that to do so, God would need to be outside of time and therefore possess a simultaneous knowledge of the past, present, and future. The simple claim here is that future events can be known.

The statement, however, is ambiguous in that we are not told whether every specific human act in the future would be known by God or whether God would know all things which are to come in his unfolding of a plan of salvation. It may be that God would know what He is going to do in the future without His having to know every future human act. Here is a way of interpreting at least this passage to see that it could mean that God would not have to possess a knowledge of all specific human acts in the future.

The last two passages that Elder Maxwell mentioned in support of this view that God has simultaneous knowledge of what is to man past, present, and future are the verses found in Moses 1:6 and D. & C. 38:2. Here it is extremely important to recognize that these verses are not self-interpreting, and they are potentially ambiguous. Many different interpretations could be given of them. Elder Maxwell gives these verses a temporal explanation, but it is just as natural to explicate them in terms of spatial concepts. The eyes of God are mentioned in the *Doctrine and Covenants* passage, and it is asserted that all things are before me or in front of me. In other words, I

can stand aside from the earth and have things spread out in front of me, and in that sense they are spatially present before mine eyes where I stand, from the position in which I am located. This spatial rendering of the passage, I suggest, is just as natural as a temporal rendering of the passage. There is no explicit mention of time in the passage, nor is there any discussion of time in the context of the passage coming before or after either passage in the *Doctrine and Covenants* or in *The Pearl of Great Price*. It is difficult to see how one could conclude such an important matter on such potentially ambiguous evidence.

One could, of course, abandon the idea that God is in space and that such spatial metaphors could be applied to God at all. Whether or not Elder Maxwell would wish to do so, I have no idea. But an essential element in my view of Mormon theology has always been that God has an actual tangible body separate from other tangible bodies in a location separate from the location in which I, for example, am now located. It would be only by denying all of these assumptions that one could once and forever dismiss spatial interpretations of these passages.

There are additional scriptural passages that Elder Maxwell has not adduced on behalf of this view which we should examine before trying to decide whether there is an alternative Mormon concept of time other than the view that God is in time. The passage most frequently used here is the passage in Alma 40:8 of *The Book of Mormon*. The passage asserts that "all is as one day with God and time only is measured unto man." The overt suggestion seems that for God there is no time, but when we look more closely at the passage in context and at the explicit words in this passage there is still a temporal designation used for God. The word "day" is applied to God, and "day," I suggest, has temporal dimensions. The passage may be used only to indicate that there is a difference in the time dimension of man and of God. If that is all that is asserted, then the passage is clearly consistent with other passages in the Book of Abraham in *The Pearl of Great Price* in which God is said to exist in another location and in a different time dimension. The time dimension of God, however, does have a relation to the time dimension of man. If one looks at the entire Alma 40 passage in context, the point of the passage seems to be that in the resurrection God will know all of the times, and it is not important for man to know when he will be resurrected. God knows all of these times, and man's measurements of time may not be God's measurements of time.

Another scripture in connection with time that we ought to take note of is in Revelations 10:6 where we read in the King James Version "that there will be time no longer." This assertion, however, may be simply due to the language chosen by the King James translators, as a quick look at other translations will confirm.

More important is the view expressed in the *Doctrine and Covenants* 84:10 which says "Satan is bound and time is no longer." In *Experience*, Elder Maxwell uses this scripture (p. 11). If this were the only evidence we had to assert that God is outside of time, it would indeed be tenuous, for this passage may simply mean that the time of Satan will come to an end even though from God's temporal perspective in His location, such is not the case. In

this very passage, reference is made to a time when Satan is bound, and then time is no longer. There has been, therefore, time up until then. This already suggests that time is indeed a concept and what we are dealing with is a designation of different eras or different periods of time.

Perhaps the strongest passage that might be used is in *Doctrine and Covenants* 130:7 wherein we are told in a discussion of angels that "they reside in the presence of God ... where all things for their glory are manifest, past, present, and future and are continually before the Lord." The thing that makes this passage less than ideal to assert the simultaneity of God's knowledge is that in the very same passage in verse four, we are told of a "reckoning of God's time, angel's time, prophet's time, and man's time according to the planet on which they reside." An assertion of different times is here affirmed. The presence of God is also affirmed as a location, because the angels reside in the presence of God. So, this is simply an emphatic assertion that God's knowledge can extend into the future as well as the past and present. This is not a passage that can be used to assert the extra-temporality of God and His knowledge.

It may be that God would know what He is going to do in the future without His having to know every future human act.

Perhaps the biggest issue in the discussion of the knowledge of God, that is, as to whether it is extra-temporal, simultaneous knowledge or successive, is the question as to where such a view leaves the freedom and agency of man. In his article Elder Maxwell asserts that a doctrine of foreordination as he understands it is "no excuse for fatalism or arrogance or the abuse of agency," and that the doctrine of foreordination including the doctrine as he asserts it of the simultaneity of God's knowledge preserves our free agency completely. The reason it does is that we do not know, as Elder Maxwell says, in the perfect way that God knows what is to come and thus our free agency is preserved completely (p. 71).²¹

This question has been discussed in connection with the Thomistic doctrine of the simultaneity of God's knowledge and the same arguments could be applied to Elder Maxwell's assertion of God's simultaneous knowledge. At issue is the question as to whether the freedom of man and his agency is compatible with God knowing extra-temporaneously what is to man his entire future. In support of the position that God could have such knowledge Elder Maxwell mentions a common analogy.²²

The analogy is that we can predict in many cases what will happen to us and to others in life. A father can predict for his children how they will act and what they will do. God who has enormously greater knowledge than man, who knows us over a much longer period of time, would therefore be able to foresee all of our future acts. In this context, Elder Maxwell quotes from Elder James E. Talmage: "Our Heavenly Father has a full knowledge of the nature and disposition of each of His children, a knowledge gained by long observation and experience in the past eternity of our primeval childhood." Talmage

continues, "His foreknowledge is based on intelligence and reason. He foresees the future as a state which naturally and surely will be" (p. 72). Elder Talmage explicitly mentions that from God's perspective God has foreknowledge and there is a future for God that He foresees. At issue here is the comparison in this analogy that God's knowledge would be like a father's knowledge of his children. Our knowledge is limited, although accurate in many cases. God's knowledge would be totally unlimited.

This is a common analogy, and yet I would like to suggest that the analogy is faulty and will not support the idea that God has total knowledge of men's future human acts. The fundamental difficulty with the analogy is that a father can only know in a general way based on the current dispositions and personality of a child what that child will do in the future. The father does not know when the child will do something or whether that thing will ever be done or precisely in what way the character and dispositions of the child will be manifested. In other words, the father cannot know the specific future acts of the child.

Furthermore, a father only knows the future acts of children on the basis of knowing the current dispositions of his children. He does not claim to be able to know what the future factors are that may change those dispositions. If one were to use the analogy with God, one would have to say in order to make a claim for the total knowledge of God that He not only knows the specific future acts (future, from man's perspective) of man but in addition would have to know in advance every single influence that could alter the dispositional state of man and would have to know these now or know them simultaneously to everything else known, so that they would not lie in the future from God's perspective. If we are to use such an idea, I would assert that there is no coherent sense we can make of an idea of human freedom. The reason is simply that our apparent choices are not real choices; our freedom of action not real but only apparent. The reason for this becomes evident in Kenney's passage below.

As to the incompatibility of God's omnitemporal omniscience and human freedom, let me quote from Kenney's discussion of Aquinas on the same issue:



It does not seem to be possible both that God should know what I shall do in the future, and that I shall do freely whatever it is that I shall do. For in order for me to be able to do an action freely, it is necessary that it should be done within my power not do that action. But if God knows what my action is going to be before I do it, then it does not seem to be within my power not to do it. For it cannot be the case both that God knows that I shall do such and such an action, and that I shall not in fact do it. For what God knows must be true: and indeed what anybody knows must be true, since it is impossible to know what is false. But if what God knows is true, and God knows that I will do such and such an action, then it must be true that I will do it. And if it is true that I will do it, then it seems that nothing I can do can prevent it come true that I am doing it. And if nothing I can do can prevent it come true that I am doing it, then I cannot prevent myself doing a certain action, then that action cannot be free. Therefore, either God cannot know what I shall do tomorrow, or else whatever I shall do tomorrow will not be done freely.

If we simplify this problem, the issue is this: Mormons clearly believe in freedom and free agency. In order for me to have freedom, I must have alternatives in my future that are *truly open* to me. They do not just *appear* to be open. I could subjectively think that I had alternatives open to me for my future actions when in fact God would know omni-temporally which alternative I would already select. If it is the case that God knows that, then the alternative choices I supposed to be open to me in the future are not truly open to me in the future. They are simply *apparent alternatives*. So, if God knows my every specific act, then I have no freedom.

This argument is sufficiently subtle that it is important to understand the point of the argument. The rebuttal is often made to this argument that God does not coerce or cause us to choose one alternative or another, and, therefore, we are still free even though God knows in advance which alternative we will select. I am willing to acknowledge the lack of coercion or force on God's part. But there is a *qualitative* change in the argument in moving from the analogy of the father who is occasionally able to guess in a general way what his children will do in the future, to the claim that God could know all specific future acts, dated, located, with specific people at precise moments in time. There is a profound qualitative difference between the kind of *prediction* that is based on the general dispositions of children on the one hand and the totally accurate *knowledge* concerning all of the specific future acts of all human beings on the other hand. Remember that these must be known not just in a general way, but they must be dated and located in man's time in every detail. This latter concept of knowledge is so strong that the analogy with the father breaks down completely. The qualitative difference can be emphasized, as Elder Maxwell does, by saying that God is not surprised at anything: He is never surprised.

Even given the free agency of man, it would be impossible for man to say: "I know that God expects me to be here on this day at this time doing what I am now doing, but I am going to reject this knowledge; I am going to attempt to foil God. I am going to rebel against what God knows as to what I will be doing here and now." On the extreme knowledge supposition, one must assert that

God would know of my rebelliousness at this time and place. At this point I could say that if God knows what I would do, then God would know of my rebelliousness, so I am not going to rebel; but then God would have to know that in advance also. In fact, it would be absolutely impossible for God to be surprised or disappointed or thrilled and exhilarated or overjoyed at what man does when he does it, because God would have known from all time simultaneously, extra-temporaneously what every man would do in every specific action he ever undertakes, now and in all of the future. This doctrine is incompatible with free agency.

If we are to use such an idea, there is no coherent sense we can make of an idea of human freedom.

If God knows my every specific future act, then I have no freedom.

If human freedom is incompatible with the extra-temporal omniscience of God, and there is no responsibility where there is no freedom, then we must choose which we consider to be more important: the concept of the omni-temporal omniscience of God or the concept of free agency and responsibility. One other alternative is to say: it is all a mystery and no one can understand how God could know in an omni-temporal way. This is *not* an alternative that I find particularly attractive because it does seem to me that Mormon theology has been uniquely common-sensical and has rejected the ineffability, incomprehensibility, and the radical otherness of God doctrines in orthodox Christian, i.e., Catholic-Protestant theology. Here I agree entirely with McMurrin that Mormons have been tempted by the categories of thought and discussion of orthodox Christian thought, but I feel that unless Mormons resist that temptation, they neglect everything that is uniquely interesting in Mormon theology, and, in particular, by opting for the Catholic-Protestant concept of the extra-temporal knowledge of God, they abandon the very concept of human freedom and agency.

There are other doctrines in Mormon theology that I view as similarly incompatible with the view that God is outside of time. I will briefly discuss some of these here.

In the more traditional doctrine of time in Mormon theology in which God is Himself in time, there was no temptation to say that anything was fated or predestined. The concept of God knowing in advance the potentialities of individuals and foreordaining them to certain callings and positions did not preclude their betraying that foreordination, and in their free agency they could do so. This is not true of traditional Catholic theology where the doctrine of predestination—since God knows everything that is to happen in man's future—is indeed incompatible with human freedom.

Some of the additional concepts we would have to abandon in light of such a view of time and God's extra-temporal omniscience would be all of the discussions of changes of state in the disposition of God, of His experiencing joy or happiness when His children obey His commandments and disappointment and even anger

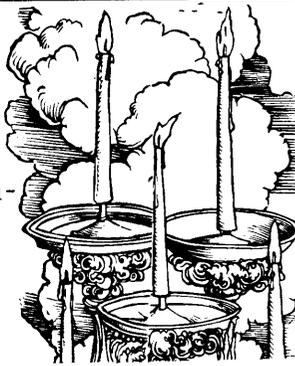
when they do not. Such changes in state could not occur in a God who is not in time.

Furthermore, the concept of a personal God with a body having a location makes sense only if we can use time to give us spatio-temporal location. Location is not a spatial concept alone as Einstein has taught us. We need the spatio-temporal dimension in order to make sense of location of bodies being here or there, now or later.

A personal God with a body in a location becomes incoherent if one abandons the concept of time applying to God. Moreover, the spatial doctrines of being separate from heaven, changing from heaven to earth, moving through those changes in time—all of these doctrines become unconnected when we abandon the possibility that God is really in time.

One interesting view in Mormon theology is that man is not radically other than God, that man is of the same race of God, that in fact man may know eventually as God knows. Such a position is given scriptural warrant in the famous passage in *The Book of Mormon*, Moroni 10:5 in which all men are told “ye may know the true of all things” (italics mine). So, just as God knows all things, men may know the truth of all things. Like Christ, men in the context of Mormon theology may progress and become as God. This is the position that Joseph Smith articulates in the King Follet discourse, and it is radically heretical within the context of orthodox Christian theology. As Joseph Smith says, “God himself was as we are now (note the temporal indicator) and is an exalted man and sits enthroned in yonder heavens.” Joseph Smith continues, “the mind or intelligence that man possesses is co-equal or co-eternal with God Himself.”²³ So, if we are in time now, then God was in time like us sometime, and we may progress to the point that we will be beyond *this* temporal perspective *but not all temporal perspectives*. We will then be within God’s perspective. This doctrine gives scant support to the idea that God and man are radically discontinuous, radically different, that time is measured only to man, except in a relative sense.

Mormon theology has been common-sensical and has rejected the ineffability, incomprehensibility, and the radical otherness of God.



These ideas have made up part of the very bulwark of Mormon theology, and essential to them is the position that God is in time and not above time. This provides a unique dimension in Mormon theology. It is a dimension that has ramifications for the problem of evil and important consequences for the concept of God in which Mormons believe. I have not attempted to say what God can know in the future nor how God can bring his prophecies to pass. I have only argued that God cannot know all

specific future human acts unless we are willing to abandon a real concept of human freedom.

Does this leave us without a doctrine of omniscience in Mormon theology? Not at all! Mormons do believe that God can know everything that can be known. In this sense, God is all-knowing. There are, however, some things that cannot be known. This is no limitation of God’s true knowledge, and it is no limitation on a concept of God’s omniscience when that concept is carefully and correctly and fully understood.

Notes

1. See Psalms 44:21; Isa. 66:18; Luke 16:15; John 16:30; 1 Ne. 9:6; 2 Ne. 2:24; 2 Ne. 9:20; W. of M. 1:7; D&C 38:2 and Moses 1:6.
2. *Gospel Principles* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1978), p. 6
3. *Lectures on Faith*, N. B. Lundwall, compiler (Salt Lake City, Undated). This publication incorrectly reports on the title page that these lectures were delivered to the School of the Prophets. Actually, they were given to the School of the Elders. The really interesting question, however, is who wrote the lectures. A case can be made that Sidney Rigdon authored at least lectures one and seven and shared in the writing of the others except for lecture five which Joseph Smith seems to have written. A committee of the Prophet Joseph Smith, Oliver Cowdery, Sidney Rigdon, and Frederick G. Williams put the lectures into final form and any of them may have shared in the authorship. See “What of the Lectures on Faith?” by Leland H. Gentry, *BYU Studies*, 19, (Fall 1978): 5-19, and “The Lectures on Faith: An Authorship Study” by Alan J. Phipps, (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1977), pp. 67-68.
4. *The Theological Foundations of the Mormon Religion*, Sterling M. McMurrin (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1965), *passim*.
5. *Summa Theological*, I, Q. 14, Art. 9.
6. *The Deseret News*, Salt Lake City, 1911, p. 70.
7. “The Transformation of Mormon Theology,” *Dialogue* 5 (Summer 1970): 9-24.
8. *Summa Theological*, I, Q. 14, Art. 13.
9. S. T., Q. 14, Art. 13.
10. McMurrin, p. 35.
11. McMurrin, p. 36-40 and *passim*.
12. McMurrin, p. 13.
13. In *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, compiled by Joseph Fielding Smith (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1976), p. 345. A newly amalgamated text is found in *BYU Studies* 18 (1978): 198-208, and many articles discuss the import of the King Follett Discourse in this same volume of *BYU Studies*.
14. *The Kingdom of God*, Liverpool, Oct. 31, 1848, No. 2, p. 4.
15. *The Mormon Doctrine of Diet*, 1903, pp. 95-96.
16. *Reflections on Mormonism, Judaean-Christian Parallels* (Provo: BYU Press, 1978), p. 157.
17. The article will be hereafter “Discipleship,” pp. 69-73. This book published by Deseret Book, Salt Lake City, 1979, will be hereafter *Experience*.
18. “Discipleship,” p. 71. Similar statements are found in *Experience*, p. 37.
19. “Discipleship,” pp. 70-71.
20. In *Aquinas*, edited by Anthony Kenney (Garden City: Doubleday Anchor, 1969), pp. 255-270.
21. In *Experience*, two reasons are given for our free agency in the face of God’s simultaneous knowledge: “Part of the reason . . . is our forgetfulness of our earlier experiences and the present inaccessibility of the knowledge and understanding we achieved there. The basic reason, of course, is that, as we decide and act, we do not know what God knows. Our decisions are made in our context, not His” (p. 19).
22. “Discipleship,” p. 72 and *Experience*, p. 20. In the book, admission is made of the fact that there is an “awesome” difference between us and God.
23. King Follett Discourse, Joseph Fielding Smith, p. 353.

Scholarship



LDS Church Historical Dept.

and the Future of The Book of Mormon

Mark Thomas

I've always enjoyed reading Shakespeare. In my undergraduate days at the University of Utah, I attended all three classes offered on the works of the Bard. An enormous body of scholarship has supplemented his works. Open almost any printed work of Shakespeare and accompanying it will be a historical introduction, literary interpretation, and footnotes discussing the meaning of obsolete word usages and variant textual readings. This huge body of scholarship has made

Shakespeare accessible. It has bridged the gap of hundreds of years, and we hear his voice from the dust. This cluster of scholarship should serve as a model for the Book of Mormon scholar.

Obviously, the Book of Mormon differs from the plays and other works of Shakespeare. Yet the Book of Mormon shares certain features with every sacred and profane work: historical setting must have influenced its writing; its text has developed; it contains nouns, verbs, symbols, and a wide variety of literary forms. For these reasons, the principles used to interpret the Book of Mormon should be no different from the principles used to interpret any book. And biblical scholarship during the past two centuries has clearly shown how basic interpretive principles can greatly enrich our understanding of, and appreciation for, sacred texts.

Someone once claimed that communication in America is a competitive sport—the first person to draw a breath is declared the listener. We are wonderful speakers, and yet we do not know how to listen carefully. That merely compounds the problem of communication. It is already far too easy to misunderstand even those we know best. Given the enormous cultural and subtle linguistic differences which stand between our present edition of the Book of Mormon and the current twentieth century reader, misinterpretation is bound to follow. The very plainness with which the Book of Mormon wishes to address us becomes a stumbling block in an age that values ambiguity and subtlety. "We have looked so long at foggy landscapes reflected in misty mirrors that we come to *like* fog."¹ For the Book of Mormon *everything* is either black or white. For us, *nothing* is black or white. This is just one example of the wide gulf separating the Book of Mormon from our age. It is the role of scholarship to detect these hidden meanings and assumptions and let the estranged parties communicate. And with Shakespearean and biblical scholarship as models, the effort will be worth it.

The world view reflected in the Book of Mormon is fundamentally different from the world view held by most of its current readers. When scholarship can help us see that world view, *because* it is so fundamentally different from the view held by most of its current readers, it will certainly challenge our unnoticed assumptions about life. If we let it, scholarship can help us listen to the Book of Mormon for the first time in its own "language." And under its beggar rags we will find a wizard. We are not dealing with a work that only broadens our view or charms our sense of the aesthetic. No, we are dealing with a work of encyclopedic form, a work of bombastic aspiration and revolutionary intent. It portrays itself as the spiritual answer, the instigator of a latter-day reformation which will convert Jew and Indian, and warn Gentile from apocalyptic catastrophe. Its intentions are many; its ambition is boundless. The light of this book, for some reason, blinds a certain number of its readers. Even today, I hear stories of people losing sleep and missing meals while the book works its visionary wonders. And yet even these readers, who seem to bridge the gulf, misinterpret the intent of certain passages. For these reasons, the future of the Book of Mormon lies, to a de-

gree, in the future of scholarship. First let us examine past scholarly approaches to the Book of Mormon and thus find where future scholarship may lead us.



For the Book of Mormon everything is either black or white. For us, nothing is black or white.



Textual Criticism

Before we can ever think of interpreting any work, we must first obtain the best possible text. Any student of the parables of Jesus must be first and foremost a textual critic of the New Testament. Anyone seriously interested in understanding the dialogues of Plato must be thoroughly aware of their textual history before he can begin.

Most research on the Book of Mormon text focuses on the early nineteenth century manuscripts. There are still important textual issues that need to be addressed, but we can arrive at a fairly good text.² The first set of textual problems came about as the scribes transcribed what Joseph Smith spoke. For example, there are several incorrect homonyms (“rite” for “right” and “Son” for “Sun”)³ in the original manuscript. Later, Oliver Cowdery copied the original manuscript and (for the most part) the printer in Palmyra used this copy for the 1830 edition. When Oliver made this copy, he corrected some grammatical errors, made some copying errors, and in a few spots actually changed or added words to clarify meaning. An example of a problem caused by miscopying can be seen in the story of Korihor. Korihor is struck dumb and makes his confession. He says that he knows that only the power of God could have caused this curse; “yea & I always Knew that there was a God” (original manuscript). In copying this statement from the original manuscript, Oliver Cowdery mistakenly wrote “also” in the place of “always.” This change gives the impression that Korihor once knew that there was a God but ceased believing in him. But the original manuscript helps us understand that Korihor was deliberately deceiving people. Unfortunately, this error has never been corrected in the Utah editions.

Neither the original manuscript nor the printer’s copy were punctuated. The punctuation and paragraphing were added by the printer in the 1830 edition. Joseph Smith made changes in the 1837 and 1840 editions to correct mistakes and, in some instances, to expand or clarify a thought. Other less significant changes have been made in subsequent editions. The original and printer’s manuscripts contain better readings in several hundred passages than our present Utah edition. But only a handful of these changes have doctrinal significance.

By tracing the history of the text, we discover two basic types of change. The first type can be called “static” change. These changes include accidental scribal mistakes, printer errors, corrections of bad grammar, and modifications that clarify original authorial intent. The copy error in the Korihor story is an example. The vast majority of textual changes have been this first type.

The second type or “prophetic” change, rather than preserving a static text, allows the text to be modified to reflect expanding theological insight. It is interesting to note that a similar prophetic interpretive method shaped early Christian texts.⁴ One example can be found in I Nephi 15:35. Both handwritten texts and the 1830 edition state here that Satan is the “preparator” of hell. In reworking the text for the 1837 edition, Joseph Smith first changed “preparator” to “father” in the manuscript. He then crossed out “father” and wrote “foundation.” “Foundation” is a symbol that implies a more permanent and powerful relationship between evil and Satan. Another example can be found in I Nephi 13:40. In 1837 the phrase “the lamb of God is the eternal father” was expanded to read, “the lamb of God is the son of the eternal Father.” Early Mormonism was trinitarian (probably modal trinitarian).⁵ But by the mid 1830s the Church had come to believe that God and Christ were separate beings. This 1837 alteration reflects the changing theology.

This prophetic spirit was “editorially formulated with no particular reference to any . . . revelatory experience.”⁶ The transmission of Church history and the development of the Doctrine and Covenants reveals this same prophetic tendency. The conflict between static and prophetic texts is caused by a fundamental tension in Mormonism. The early Church believed that the gospel was a static fulness and that new revelation merely stacked revelatory blocks on past blocks (either teaching new principles or delivering specific instructions). That is how revelation was *perceived*. But the revelations were in fact organic—doctrines changing as new revelation came. It is this tension between the perceived and actual nature of early Church revelation that caused this textual conflict. This tension is what has made Mormon history and early Mormon texts so interesting, and it still exists in the Church today.

These two types of change, the static and the prophetic, reveal the basic elements of interpretive theory. One is an attempt at an objective text; the other is an attempt to make the text pertinent to the present. Both of these elements are necessary for good interpretation.

Historical Criticism

Once we establish the text to be interpreted, the next step is to reach a historical understanding of the text. Of course there is not agreement as to when the Book of Mormon was written. It is a sad fact that, because of this debate, almost all historical investigations into the book have been apologetic. Apologetics have their important place but not at the exclusion of interpretation. Every text can, to a greater or lesser degree, be better understood with a knowledge of the original historical language, setting, and author. It is tempting to avoid the question of the origin of the Book of Mormon in order to address both Mormon and non-Mormon. In certain limited approaches this is possible. There are certain passages that are more or less self-contained literary units, with little need for historical interpretive aids. The question of origin cannot ultimately be ignored, however, because the functions and meanings of Book of Mormon passages are intimately connected with history. A summary of past historical investigations will help us see some future interpretive possibilities.

American Continent Approach

The quality of the research varies in works dealing with American archaeology and the Book of Mormon. Generally such research reveals "more wishful thinking than accurate knowledge." This unfortunately has made it difficult for more precise Mormon scholarship to gain an audience. I do not think that this area of history will presently provide any results for two reasons: first, because of lack of material. The Book of Mormon provides us with an approximate idea of the *relative* position of many of its cities, the narrow neck of land, and other geographical landmarks. But no archaeologist has been able to locate a single Nephite text or city. We cannot even locate the approximate areas of the Nephite or Lamanite civilizations. There are at least seven current theories attempting to locate these civilizations in different areas on the American continent.⁷ But even a recent Church editorial has described these attempts as useless speculation. We know nothing of the Nephites except what is provided in the Book of Mormon. This approach, therefore, has concentrated its efforts on civilizations that postdate the Book of Mormon in hopes of finding Nephite or Lamanite antecedents. Because of the lack of historical data, this approach is only used apologetically (to defend the divine origin of the book).

This leads to the second major difficulty: some of the material often used to show Nephite or Lamanite influence in America was available to Joseph Smith, and thus even the apologetic value is weak. An example is the legend of the appearance of Quetzalcoatl. Quetzalcoatl was a fair-skinned, bearded god of the Mayan religion. Mormons often see this as a corrupted form of the story of Christ's visit to America. A number of Mormon authors have used this legend to prove the divine origin of the Book of Mormon. But it is never mentioned that the story of Quetzalcoatl was readily available to Joseph Smith.⁸ In short, this historical approach to the Book of Mormon provides no interpretive aids and only very weak apologetic material.

Near East Approach

The Near East approach, recognizing the difficulty with Nephite archaeology, attempts to place the Nephite scripture in its old world setting. It has been used for both interpretive and apologetic purposes. Mormons use this approach because they believe the nations in the Book of Mormon came from the Near East. Certainly the Book of Mormon is not in the tradition of nineteenth century literature. It has very little in common with such authors as Cooper and Hawthorne. Its closest relative is a product of the Near East: the Christian Bible. If I had to choose one phrase to describe the Book of Mormon, I would call it "The American Bible." The form of the book as a whole and many of its smaller literary units are based on biblical forms of literature. Throughout the Book of Mormon are *hundreds* of biblical quotes and allusions presented in a biblical style.⁹

Those who believe that the Book of Mormon is fiction will want to reduce the Near East Approach to a biblical approach, and that is perfectly legitimate. But a simple skimming of the Bible as a source book for Joseph Smith is inadequate; the Book of Mormon absorbed more from

the Bible than meets the eye. The astonishing fundamental similarities between the two books make the use of insights acquired from exhaustive biblical scholarship relevant to study of the Book of Mormon. Mormon scholars have purposely sought Near Eastern elements in the Book of Mormon that *cannot* be traced to the Bible in order to prove that the Book of Mormon is ancient. But I believe the important interpretive aids must be sought through the Bible itself, because it is the father of the Book of Mormon.

Let us take an example of how a biblical quote can help us interpret a Book of Mormon passage. "Wherefore, he said unto Eve, yea, even that old serpent, who is the devil, who is the father of all lies, wherefore he said: Partake of the forbidden fruit, and ye shall not die, but ye shall be as God, knowing good from evil." This passage from II Nephi 2:18 is quite clearly taken from Genesis 3:4-5. Here, the Book of Mormon explicitly interprets the serpent as the devil (using phrases from Revelation 20:2 and John 8:44). Also, the phrase "ye shall be as gods" has been changed to "ye shall be as God." For the Book of Mormon, there is only one God. This doctrine is summarized in Alma 11; "Now Zeezrom said: Is there more than one God? And he (Amulek) answered, No." "Gods" in Genesis 3 was probably seen as a textual corruption and corrected in II Nephi. Thus, the subtle changes and wording in II Nephi interpret the Genesis passage. This example illustrates one aspect of the exceedingly fascinating and instructive relationship between the Bible and the Book of Mormon.¹⁰



The Book of Mormon has been called a "sponge" and a "mirror" of the nineteenth century.



Early Nineteenth Century Approach

Non-believers have been exploring the nineteenth century roots of the Book of Mormon since its publication. Even the best works using this approach are almost totally concerned with proofs of when the book originated. There has been relatively little interpretive effort.

A simple-minded use of this method tends to reduce or distort the Book of Mormon into a rubber stamp of its age. The Book of Mormon has been called a "sponge" and a "mirror" of the nineteenth century. Alexander Campbell stated that it discussed *every issue* current in early nineteenth century New York.¹¹ But reducing any work to its historical setting distorts it. This is a typical error when studying any unfamiliar age. The better we understand a particular period, the less its artifacts appear exactly like each other. The problem is a methodological one; the meaning of a text is distorted when it is forced to conform to preconceived historical molds.

But such distortions of the Book of Mormon contain an element of truth. Nephi, Mormon, Moroni, and others clearly and purposely address the latter-day audience

when the book would appear. Thus we find nineteenth century theological issues in the book; also style and word usage combine the English of the King James Bible and the nineteenth century. Therefore, certain words and phrases can only be adequately understood in the theological and historical setting of Joseph Smith's age.

One example of this can be found in Mormon 8:31; "Yea, it (the Book of Mormon) shall come in a day when there shall be great pollutions upon the face of the earth." I have heard this verse used a number of times to prove the prophetic value of the Book of Mormon. The speakers have pointed to the great environmental pollution as the fulfillment of this prophecy. But the word "pollution" in Joseph Smith's day never referred to physical pollution, only to moral corruption or sin. It is clear from its context that Mormon 8 is using the term "pollution" in the nineteenth century sense.



Mormon scholars have purposely sought Near Eastern elements that cannot be traced to the Bible in order to prove the Book of Mormon is ancient.



Another example of a nineteenth century phrase in the Book of Mormon can be seen in the sacramental prayer in Moroni 4; those who partake of the bread signify that "they are willing to take upon them the name of Christ." In the book of Mormon we see frequent references to the "name of Christ" (believe on his name, worship in his name, pray in his name, and do miracles in his name). These phrases have biblical precedents.¹²

But the phrase "take the name of Christ upon you" is not biblical and must be understood in the nineteenth century context. To understand the phrase, we must first examine the primitivist movement in Joseph Smith's time.¹³ The primitivist movement started in America after the revolution. It was, in part, a reaction to sectarian conflict, and it affected thousands of Americans in the early nineteenth century. These various primitivist movements and churches believed that the existing churches were corrupt, having departed from primitive Christianity. A number of these groups believed that the only proper biblical appellation for the *church* and the *true believer* was simply "Christian." For the primitivists in Joseph Smith's area, to "take upon you the name of Christ" meant to take upon you the designation "Christian" or "Christ."¹⁴

As with the primitivists, the Book of Mormon uses this phrase for the name of the true church, as well as a designation for individuals. It is clear that the Book of Mormon uses this phrase in a primitivist sense; "... all those who were true believers in Christ took upon them, gladly, the name of Christ, or Christians as they were called, because of their belief in Christ who should come."¹⁵ But in the Book of Mormon, this title signifies more than a name. It is unclear whether taking the name of Christ comes as a prerequisite to baptism or through baptism itself,¹⁶ but it is accompanied by covenants of

obedience and spiritual rebirth.¹⁷ It signifies that Christ is close to the intentions and thoughts of one's heart.¹⁸ It, in short, implies a certain relationship between the person and Christ, symbolically portrayed by an animal and its master. For both the church and the individual, it signifies possession by Christ. The "name" is only blotted out of the individual's heart through transgression.¹⁹ The taking of Christ's name by the church implies that it teaches his doctrine.²⁰ For the Book of Mormon, this phrase is more than assuming the name "Christian" or "church of Christ"; it is all that that implies. So we can see why "there is no other name whereby salvation cometh; therefore, I would that ye should take upon you the name of Christ."²¹ These are only two examples of the many instances when nineteenth century usage is helpful in interpreting the Book of Mormon.

In this discussion of historical criticism we have seen how the Book of Mormon relies on earlier historical sources and creatively molds each of them in a different way. We are entering the beginning of an era of *interpretive* historical criticism in Book of Mormon research. This approach will examine all of these inherited sources and demonstrate how the Book of Mormon shapes them for its own purposes.

Literary Criticism

The newest discipline to approach the Book of Mormon is literary criticism, and it would be difficult to overstate its importance. I believe that the future of the Book of Mormon lies in its hands. Religion and literature are intimate companions. As one literary critic put it: "The strongest part of our religion today is its unconscious poetry."²² Images, myths, and symbols are the very substance of the spiritual life.²³ It is impossible to fully understand the Book of Mormon without understanding literary laws. The literary critic is in an ideal position to teach us the subtlety and variety of language in the Book of Mormon.

The importance of literary criticism can be seen in the interpretation of Lehi's dream and Nephi's vision. Lehi's dream is a spiritual map that contains a cluster of symbols. Nephi's vision follows this dream. In Nephi's vision, an angel interprets or transforms the *cluster of symbols* into a *historical allegory*; the symbols are transformed into signs of historical events. Signs function quite differently from symbols, and Nephi's vision in certain respects modifies Lehi's dream. There is a strong moral dualism in both the dream and vision; there are only two roads, two destinations, and only two churches. In Lehi's dream, the building is a symbol of evil or "the world." But in Nephi's vision the building represents all false religion (the historical Great and Abominable church). Now, the lack of distinction between Lehi's symbols and Nephi's historical signs has led to a debate as to whether or not the Great and Abominable church is the Catholic church. Since the building is a symbol for evil in Lehi's dream, it cannot be identified with Catholicism. Only in Nephi's allegory do we see specific allusions to Catholicism; and these are only historical examples of all false religion.²⁴ The question of the place of the Catholic church in this vision cannot be answered adequately without understanding how distinct literary forms function.

This is an example of the first task of literary criticism—definition of literary units (this may be the

book as a whole or any of the smaller literary units such as Lehi's dream). There are a wide variety of literary units in our American Bible—from letter to dramatic monologue. And each one functions differently. We see examples all around us that may help us understand the importance of literary form. For instance, if I were to see a story that begins "Once upon a time" and ends "They lived happily ever after," I should not attempt to criticize that story for its absurdity. In fact, I would expect it to be ahistorical and perhaps even absurd. If I were to see another written document that begins "Our Father In Heaven" and ends "Amen," I would have to conclude that its language is being used in a *fundamentally different manner* from that of the former document.

We cannot afford to ignore literary forms in the Book of Mormon because form and message are often inseparable. In fact, knowing the form will help us discover the message. Form criticism must be based on historical criticism because forms are historically conditioned. Even prophets speak in the language they inherit.



We cannot ignore literary forms in the Book of Mormon because form and message are often inseparable.



Once these individual units are interpreted, we will be in a better position to interpret the entire work. The literary-historical interpretation of individual units will lay the groundwork for a number of other approaches, such as a broad theological approach. Since the Book of Mormon is such an ambitious work (it speaks on everything from political economy to infant baptism) nothing less than a theological overview will be able to grasp its broad messages. Theological attempts to date have twisted the Book of Mormon to match a preconceived theology.²⁵

We have seen how the literary approach can be used to interpret historically conditioned forms. Every work, to some degree, is a prisoner of its historical setting. But there is a second task for literary criticism. Symbolic and religious language often contain hidden elements that transcend historical setting, and the literary critic is best trained to grasp these universal qualities of language. A strictly historical approach to the Book of Mormon will make it look strange and outdated from a modern point of view. If the book cannot speak to us, if its world cannot change our world, it is probably not worth a second reading. So the literary critic must call us to understand ourselves anew in the presence of a historical text. The hours of scholarship will have been worth it as soon as the historical chains binding the Book of Mormon are broken and it can become either the gardener of our ideals or the prophet of our blindness. The literary critic can help us not only understand the original meaning of sacred language but also restore its significance to a world where nothing is significant and everything is relative. This cultural difference between the Book of Mormon

and our age is large and there are two temptations to be avoided. We must avoid being too proud to let the Book of Mormon challenge our modern presumptions and beware of being too gullible to let modern presumptions challenge the Book of Mormon. If we avoid these, the dialogue will be a challenging dialogue of fundamental questions between the reader and the Book of Mormon. That dialogue must rest upon, and be the driving inspiration for, sound scholarship.

The Book of Mormon scholarship of the future will be somewhat different from that of the past. Its apologetic past has made it a defense of an extant faith. But its interpretive nature in the future will give it power to mold and modify faith. I am of the hope that Book of Mormon scholarship can mold a purer faith and a nobler Mormonism. I am of the opinion that a spiritual trek is at hand for Mormonism, and that the scholar's word will be one of those that guide the Church's future. And any Book of Mormon scholarship that will give direction to this journey will have to be an *eclectic scholarship*, combining textual, historical, and literary criticisms.

Notes

1. Wayne C. Booth, *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (Chicago, 1969), p. 374.
2. Among the more important works on the Book of Mormon text are: Richard P. Howard, *Restoration Scriptures: A Study of Their Textual Development* (Independence, Missouri, 1969). Jeffrey Holland, "An Analysis of Selected Changes in Major Editions of the Book of Mormon—1830-1920," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1966). Stanley R. Larsen, "A Study of Some Textual Variations in the Book of Mormon Comparing the Original and the Printer's Manuscripts and the 1830, the 1837, and the 1840 Editions," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1974). Larsen's thesis is an indispensable aid for those who wish to see a verse by verse collection of major textual changes up to 1840. Larsen claims that the original and printer's manuscripts contain better readings than the present Utah edition in several hundred passages.
3. Stanley Larsen, "Conjectural Emendation and the Text of the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 18 (Summer 1978): 564-569.
4. Norman Perrin, *Rediscovering the Teaching of Jesus* (New York, 1967), pp. 15-37.
5. One of the great religious debates of the nineteenth century was on the godhead. These theological positions provide all of the variety of the early Christian church. The most common position was that the godhead contained three persons with one essence. On the extremes, some Unitarians believed that Jesus was not "the very eternal God" (hence, denying his divinity) and there were those who believed that "God," "Jesus," and the "Holy Ghost" were merely three separate titles for the same Being. This latter position is known as modal trinitarianism or Sabellianism. The Book of Mormon constantly stresses the divinity of Jesus and the unity of the trinity. It is almost certainly modal trinitarian but general enough in its wording to be acceptable to a more orthodox reader who might interpret the book with imprecision. In this connection, see II Nephi 26:12; Alma 11:26-29; 38-39, 44; Mosiah 15:1-5.
6. Howard, pp. 51-52.
7. Paul R. Cheesman, *The World of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, 1978).
8. One example is Ethan Smith, *View of the Hebrews; or The Tribes of Israel in America*, second edition (Poultney, Vt., 1825), pp. 204-207. Smith considered Quetzalcoatl a corrupted form of the story of Moses.
9. Specific examples of biblical forms have been discussed in the following articles: Steven P. Sondrup, "The Psalm of Nephi: A Lyric Reading," *Proceedings of the Symposia of the Association for Mormon Letters* 1978-79 (Salt Lake City, 1979), pp. 79-93; John W. Welch, "Chiasmus in the Book of Mormon," *BYU Studies* 10 (Autumn 1969): 69-84; Mark Thomas, "Listening to the Voice From the Dust," *Sunstone* 4 (Jan.-Feb. 1979): 22-24. There are a number of other forms that have yet to be treated in published works. The only nineteenth century forms are I

Nephi 1:1 as beginning of a biography, and the stories of Korihor, Sherem and Amlici as dying infidel stories. But nineteenth century forms are not found in such sections as the sermon, where we might expect them.

10. The Book of Mormon anticipates the criticism of its many biblical quotes in II Nephi 29:8; "Wherefore, I speak the same words unto one nation like unto another. And when the two nations shall run together the testimony of the two nations shall run together also." The Book of Mormon contains biblical motifs, allusions, parallel stories, and phrases. These biblical phrases are used for a variety of reasons: to add scriptural language and its theological flavor (and hence add scriptural authority to the book); to substantiate, repeat, interpret, or clarify the passage; to add a second level of meaning or allusion; to provide a proof text; and since the Book of Mormon claims textual corruption in the Bible, to correct error or restore lost meaning. These biblical phrases or "interpretive parallels" come in meaningful patterns; the Nephite Apocalypse (I Nephi 8-16:6) often quotes the Book of Revelation; the wilderness stories contain many interpretive parallels from Exodus and Numbers; there are many more interpretive parallels in sermons than in narratives.

11. Alexander Campbell, "Delusions," *Millennial Harbinger* 2 (Feb. 7, 1830): 93. This important work at times is led into exaggeration by Campbell's hatred of the Book of Mormon. There are important nineteenth century issues that the Book of Mormon never touches upon, such as temperance and the use of benevolent societies (to name a few).

12. See Rudolf Bultmann, *Theology of the New Testament, Vol. I* transl. Kendrick Grobel (New York, 1951), pp. 125-140. III Nephi 27:5 mistakenly ascribes the phrase "take the name of Christ upon you" to scripture.

13. Marvin S. Hill, "Role of Christian Primitivism in the Origin and Development of the Mormon Kingdom, 1830-1844," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, 1968), pp. 92-97. A summary of Hill's conclusions can be found in "The Shaping of the Mormon Mind in New England and New York," *BYU Studies* 9 (Spring 1969): 351-372.

14. Palmyra was surrounded in every direction by a primitivist group who designated themselves "Christians." *The Gospel Luminary* (their

publication from West Bloomfield, New York) used such phrases as: "We took upon us the name of CHRISTIANS singly and alone in contradiction to all other sectarian names . . ." (vol. I, no. 10; Oct., 1825, p. 220). See also vol. 2 no. 3, p. 64; vol. 3 no. 5, p. 115; vol. 3 no. 7, p. 163 for similar examples.

15. Alma 46:15. The name of the Nephite church was The Church of Christ (Mosiah 18:17; III Nephi 26:21; 27; 28:23; Moroni 6:4). Similar phrases substantiate this interpretation of "taking upon" the name of Christ (Mosiah 25:12; Alma 51:6; IV Nephi 1:20).

16. Moroni 6:2-4; II Nephi 31:13; Mosiah 25:23.

17. Ibid. Also Mosiah 5:1-6:3.

18. Mosiah 5:1-6:3 (especially 5:13).

19. Mosiah 1:12, 5:11.

20. III Nephi 27:1-9.

21. Mosiah 5:8.

22. Giles Gunn, ed., *Literature and Religion* (New York, 1971), p. 17.

23. Mircea Eliade, *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism*, transl. Philip Mairet (New York, 1961), p. 11.

24. Certain Mormons and non-Mormons have interpreted I Nephi 13:1-9, 25-27 as an allusion to the Catholic Church. But I Nephi 14:10 makes it clear that Catholicism is only one part of false religion.

25. An example can be seen in William Barrett, *Teachings of the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City, 1962), chapter 5. This work was a theological course of study for the Melchizedek priesthood quorums. This particular chapter on the godhead begins by quoting 15 verses from scriptures outside of the Book of Mormon. It ends with seven verses from the Book of Mormon. Barrett here gives us his own systematic theology and states that it is only cryptically revealed in the Book of Mormon. By accepting Barrett's reversal (his systematic theology explains the meaning of specific passages), one denies the Book of Mormon the plain style on the trinity that the Book of Mormon claims for itself (II Nephi 31:2-3). In Barrett's view, the Book of Mormon must be a failure by its own standards. This technique of theological distortion is not confined to this doctrine, nor to Barrett's writings. I use it as an example since we have examined this doctrine earlier in this article.

The Book of Mormon and the Anthon Transcript: An Interim Report

Edward H. Ashment

According to statements made at its beginning¹ and near its end,² the Book of Mormon was written in a form of the Egyptian language. This would indicate that during their 1,000-year history the Nephites maintained a tradition of using Egyptian as a scriptural language. But they apparently did not originate this practice, for Nephi was not the first to write in "the language of the Egyptians." In fact, he was only continuing a tradition which already had been established among his relatives in the Old World, for had Lehi not been "taught in the language of the Egyptians," he would not have been able to read the engravings on the brass plates.³

It seems that this scriptural language evolved through time, each new generation altering its form somewhat so that by the end of Nephite history it did not resemble its presumably more archaic form on the brass plates. Thus, Moroni declared that the Egyptian language which the Nephites used became "reformed" through the years,

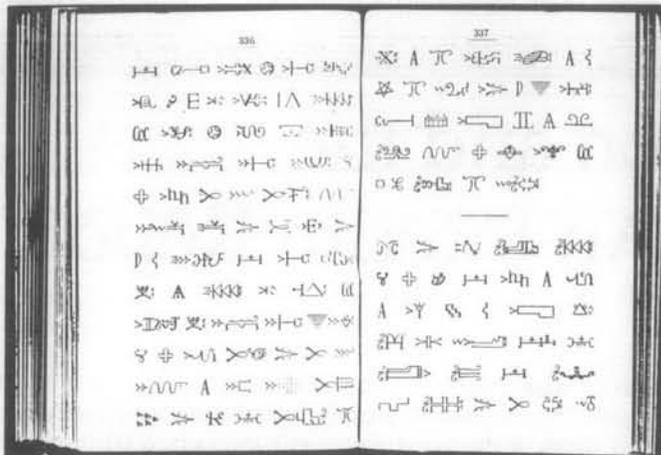
being "altered by us, according to our manner of speech."⁴ However, it is also true that knowledge of the older form of the language was maintained throughout Nephite history, for Mormon was capable of reading not only the small plates of Nephi⁵ (which Nephi began ca. 1,000 years before Mormon) but also the brass plates⁶ (which potentially were much older).

The identification of this older form of "the language of the Egyptians" which Lehi learned cannot be clearly ascertained, although it obviously was the same form as the Egyptian on the brass plates. One reason why its exact nature remains obscure lies in the fact that the date of the composition of the brass plates is unknown—a problem which is further complicated by the possibilities that the material on the brass plates could have been written over a number of years or it could have been recorded within a short period of time. In the former case, an older form of Egyptian would probably have been used, while in the latter a more recent form would have been in order.

Consequently, the record on the brass plates could have been written in archaistic Middle Egyptian (which, by the time preceding Lehi, was being "retained as the religious language" in Egypt⁷), in Late Egyptian (which flourished from ca. 1554 to ca. 710 B.C.), or in Demotic (which came into use ca. 710 B.C. and died ca. 470 A.D.). Nephi clearly had to learn the same type of Egyptian as did his father (and as would anyone else who would want to read the brass plates), which would be the type of Egyptian expected to be in use at least at the beginning of the small plates of Nephi. Moreover, that type of Egyptian presumably would be recognizable as a known form of ancient Egyptian.

The characters on the Anthon Transcript are not thus recognizable. The author has studied them with one of the world's foremost Demoticists.⁸ They have resisted decipherment as Demotic and stand just as little chance of representing earlier forms of ancient Egyptian. A possible conclusion is that the characters of the Anthon transcript were not copied from the small plates of Nephi but were extracted from the large plates of Nephi which Mormon abridged. In that case the characters might at best bear a minimal resemblance to Egyptian because the language had been "altered."

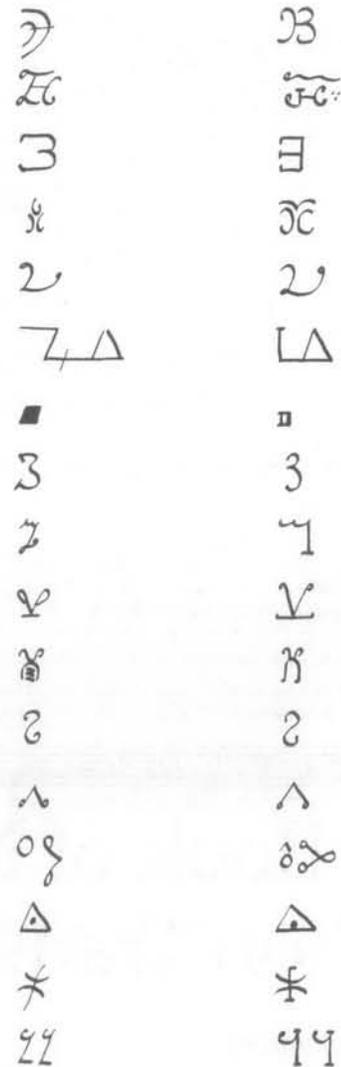
A number of the characters closely resemble hieroglyphics of the Micmac Indians.



Two pages of Micmac script from the Manual of Prayers.

That the characters came from this source seems probable, for soon after Joseph Smith produced the Anthon Transcript he commenced dictating the abridged portion of the large plates of Nephi. The 116-page manuscript which resulted from translating this section was later lost,⁹ so if it is true that the prophet's extract for the "learned" to translate came from this part of the book, then none of the extant Book of Mormon could serve as a translation "pony."

The characters on the Anthon Transcript are not thus recognizable.



Smith/Anthon letter Hieroglyphs

Micmac Indian Hieroglyphs

The improbability that the characters of the Anthon Transcript are related to any known form of Egyptian does not rule out comparative studies, however, for a number of the characters closely resemble some of the hieroglyphics of the Micmac Indians of northeastern North America. Apparently, some of the Micmac hieroglyphs have been in use for years, while more signs were added by Father Leclercq and Abbe Maillard in the early eighteenth century.¹⁰ The historical development of this writing system deserves serious study by qualified persons.

A proper interim conclusion is: Moroni's statement that "none other people knoweth our language"¹¹ must still be seriously considered.

Notes

1. Ne. 1:2.
2. Morm. 9:32.
3. Mos. 1:4. The brass plates contained "the five books of Moses," a "record of the Jews from the beginning . . . down to the commencement of the reign of Zedekiah," numerous "prophecies which have been spoken by the mouth of Jeremiah," and a genealogy of Lehi's ancestors. (1 Ne. 5:11ff.) All of this material was recorded "in the language of the Egyptians."
4. Morm. 9:32.
5. Wrds. of Morm. 3ff.
6. 3 Ne. 10:17. There is a possibility that the literacy rate of this language among the Nephites was surprisingly high, for Alma the Younger asked the poor Zoramites (at ca. 74 B.C.) if they remembered having read the words of Zenos (Al. 33:2), whose words clearly were recorded on the brass plates. (cf. 1 Ne. 19:10-22.)
7. A. H. Gardiner, *Egyptian Grammar*, 3rd ed. rev. (London: Oxford University Press, 1957), p. 5.
8. The version which was available to us was the Reorganized Church's, in which the signs were arranged horizontally. A few of them were expanded versions of single groups in the recently-discovered version, and many seem to have been drawn somewhat more hastily.
9. Cf. D&C 3,10.
10. J. M. Lenhart in *Manual of Prayers, Instructions, Psalms and Hymns in Micmac Ideograms*, 1921, p.v. Barry Fell, a retired marine biologist, has recently claimed that the Micmac glyphs are a form of ancient Egyptian hieratic. (*America B.C.* [New York: New York Times Book Co., 1976], p. 253.) Presently he is more inclined to regard the Micmac glyphs as having come from "the eastern Libyans from the border of Egypt and Libya." He further asserts that "Micmac signs have also been observed on a bilingual proclamation of a Libyan king of the second century B.C. Thus Micmac script is probably to be attributed to east Libyan influence." (*Saga America* [New York: New York Times Book Co., 1980], p. 223.) Such observations remain to be demonstrated. As of this writing, Fell has claimed to have deciphered the first four lines of the recently-discovered version of the Anthon Transcript, recognizing no less than five (!) ancient scripts from North Africa.
11. Morm. 9:34.

Freshet in the Dearth: Samuel W. Taylor's *Heaven Knows Why* and Mormon Humor

by Richard H. Cracroft



Editors' Note

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I

While it is profoundly true that, as Henry James insisted, "It takes a great deal of history to produce a little literature,"¹ it is equally and too-soberly true that it takes a great deal of sifting through Mormon *belle* and not-so-*belle lettres* to uncover even one page of intentional humor.

Excuses are freely given in behalf of the nineteenth century Saints, who were too busy, we remind ourselves, building and fleeing and preaching to pause for breath and perspective on their lives, the perspective that begets humor. Modern readers, anxious to find the revealing self-knowledge of humor among the nineteenth century Saints, point with too-steady fingers to the occasional *bon-mots* of Joseph Smith or Brigham Young, or to the few memorable humorous passages in the works of Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, Eliza R. Snow, John Lyon, or

even the little known Scipio Africanus Kenner. But the fact remains: There is little of that sense called humor manifest in nineteenth century Mormon literature, public or private.

And when one turns, hopeful, to the twentieth century, it soon becomes apparent that celestial hopes (if humor can ever be celestial) are again eclipsed by terrestrial realities, and the Mormon funnybone remains too nearly unassailed. One must search far into the first half of the twentieth century before turning up any intentionally sustained published humor. Among the folk there is always humor, particularly the anomalous jokelore which clusters about J. Golden Kimball and the Sanpete Scandinavians, but such folk humor is countered by sundry *Church Section* editorials and Church Presidents' asides in General Conference which warn against humor from the pulpit and in the Church classroom.

Yet there are some hopeful signs. Emerging from decades of roadshows, such plays as Keith Engar's *All in Favor*, Carol Lynn Pearson's *The Order is Love*, or Douglas Stewart's *Saturday's Warrior* and its several light-hearted though less satisfactory spinoffs, show a stirring of inter-

est among the membership of the Church that bodes well for a better popular reception for Mormon humor. At the same time, Virginia Kammeyer has published a light book of humorous poems entitled *Saints Alive*, Carol Lynn Pearson has demonstrated in her *Busy Bishop's Notebook* and its successors that Saints are willing to pay a dollar for a laugh, while Calvin Grondahl, in his very successful book of Mormon cartoons, *Freeway to Perfection*, has stretched their willingness to \$3.75. Donald R. Marshall has increased the price tag, if not the interest, by sandwiching into his *The Rummage Sale* and, to a lesser extent in *Frost in the Orchard*, some of the finest pieces of sustained Mormon humor written thus far. Indeed, it is in just such serious collections as Marshall's that Mormon humor seems most likely to flourish as a kind of relief from more straight-faced literature.

Certainly the most sustained popular humor in the Mormon tradition is found in what might be called the "happy family" books in the style of Clarence Day's *Life With Father* or Rosemary Taylor's *Chicken Every Sunday*. In this tradition, Rodello Hunter's nationally popular *House of Many Rooms* was well received by Church members, though her more acerbic *A Daughter of Zion* met with notably less enthusiasm. Probably best received of all these books has been *Papa Married a Mormon*, by John D. Fitzgerald, author of the Great Brain books.

Not as popular, but of primary importance to Mormon literature, is Samuel W. Taylor's *Family Kingdom* (1951). This quasi-family history of the John W. Taylor families, steeped in Mormon "peculiarities" and tintured with universal family humor, was republished several years ago to supply the continuing demands of a variety of readers who enjoy Mormon on the rocks with a twist of lemon. It took a Sam Taylor to turn the sober marriage proposals of his father, a Mormon apostle, into the delightful and occasionally bittersweet comedy made possible when, for example, that marriage proposal is to a fourth or fifth wife, and spiced by an innocent suggestion by the revered apostle that the first wife accompany the bride and groom on their honeymoon. It took a Sam Taylor to make that Mormon apostle at once a lovable bumbler and a spiritual giant, and to turn the problems and squabbles of multiple families into unforgettable Mormon comedy which has made *Family Kingdom* a near-classic in Mormon non-fiction, or semi-fiction, for the difference is not always great in Sam Taylor's works.

But it is in a strictly fictional work, in Taylor's little known but truly delightful *Heaven Knows Why* (1948), that he has created the best Mormon comic novel to date. While Professor Kenneth B. Hunsaker has been understandably hyperbolic in calling the book "the most delightful of all Mormon novels,"² he is right in insisting that *Heaven Knows Why* is an "outstanding comic novel," which is "different from all other Mormon novels."³ Unfortunately, the praise is slightly tarnished when one must add that the book is, as far as I know, the *only* full-length comic novel in Mormon letters; however, such a qualification does not, in fact, diminish the worth of the novel, which is a joyful *tour de force*.

First serialized in six parts in *Collier's* as "The Mysterious Way," *Heaven Knows Why* was published in 1948 by A. A. Wyn, Inc., of New York, and named an alternate selection for the Literary Guild. Although it was widely

noticed and favorably reviewed, the novel raised a small storm in Utah. Indeed, Taylor suggested in a recent conversation that the book was a kind of litmus paper among Mormons — it was either violently loved or hated.⁴

As with so many of the Mormon books of the 1940s, it is presently difficult to understand why *Heaven Knows Why* was ever controversial. Today the novel seems innocently funny, one of the few works—Mormon or non-Mormon—which moves the reader, on nearly every page, to a response which ranges from a quiet chuckle to boisterous belly-laughs—not at the expense of personal conviction or the LDS faith, but at the refreshing combination of things familiarly Mormon and things erringly human into a series of hilarious situations.

The book, only recently reprinted by Millennial Publications, is unique and should be well-known among Mormon scholars, for, as I hope to show, the novel affords an excellent example of the possibilities of in- and out-group Mormon humor, and an opportunity to consider briefly why there has been so little Mormon humor when its effect can be so healthy.

It takes a great deal of sifting through Mormon letters to uncover even one page of intentional humor.

II

*Heaven Knows Why*⁵ braces its contents between two bookends comprised of heavenly scenes featuring the late but now angelic Moroni Skinner. Moroni has just lost promotion to Chief Checker of the Compiling Office because of his preoccupation with the rapidly deteriorating state of his and Lucy's grandson, Jackson Skinner Whitetop, a handsome and lazy young veteran of the very recent World War II who now exists on the remnants of the once-proud Skinner ranch in a western Utah valley which Taylor has recently identified as Deep Creek Valley at Ibapah.⁶



An angel, Moroni Skinner visits his relative.

After requesting and receiving "limited orders" (with seventeen carbon copies) permitting him to make one appearance to his wayward grandson, Moroni Skinner journeys to earth and undertakes his short-term mission. Moroni makes a practice appearance to old Milo Ferguson, a crusty apostate of recent vintage; but Milo, though he is finally convinced of Moroni's otherworldly reality, still refuses to be overawed or to believe.

Now more confident, Moroni materializes in Jackson's untidy bedroom and solemnly tells his grandson that he is "from beyond." "Beyond what?" asks the stunned Jackson; then, recognizing that the visitor is indeed his late grandfather, Jackson stammers, "You're Grandpa S-Skinner. How's a—tricks up there, Grandpa? How's Grandma Lucy Skinner?" (p. 31). A solemn Moroni then presents his message to Jackson without benefit of scriptural phrasing: "I'm telling you to straighten up, fix up your place, and marry Katie Jensen. That is my message" (p. 33).

Stunned but obedient, Jackson goes immediately to confide in Bishop Jensen. The Bishop is dumbfounded and, left alone in his study, prays for guidance. His wife, Beryl, a doubting convert to the Church who has long eavesdropped on her husband's interviews with Ward members, listens in. Concerned that her daughter might marry the no-good Jackson Whitetop, Beryl places a milk can to the thin partition and speaks through it, in a voice ringing with eternity, and demands that Jackson be allowed to marry Katie only when he has solved "The Trouble," a longstanding feud between the north and south sectors of the valley, both of which believed the Lord desired a new chapel to be built in their respective neighborhoods.

Moved to action by his own revelation, the Bishop, with Katie, visits Jackson, and explains to him that he must solve "The Trouble" before he can claim Katie's hand. A confident Jackson promptly proposes marriage to Katie, who, though flattered, turns him down.

Complications arise in the person of Henry, the Bishop's unregenerate and worldly First Counselor, who has sired an illegitimate child (and arranges to have Jackson acknowledged as the father), has stolen Jackson's sheep, and is intent on marrying Katie. The un-

ravelling begins, however, at the shotgun wedding which Henry has arranged between Jackson and Anita, the mother of Henry's child. Just as the good Bishop, far gone on innocently imbibed hard cider, begins to perform the marriage of Anita and Jackson, Milo Ferguson arrives from Salt Lake City and reveals his discovery that Henry is a thief—and the father of Anita's child. Bishop Jensen hastily marries Anita and Henry.

Another stunning event follows: In a dramatic meeting of all the valley Saints held that evening Apostle Black insists that the burial plot of Milo's late wife must be the property on which the controversial chapel will be built. Claiming now to understand why Moroni Skinner appeared to him, Milo rises to his feet, testifies to his continued unbelief, and offers his property, which Apostle Black promptly dedicates. Jackson, "The Trouble" now resolved, elopes with Katie, promising that he will take her to the temple as soon as he is ordained an elder. The Bishop's wife, Beryl, who had deceived her husband with the milk-can revelation, now understands that the

Most of these literary clergymen, like Bishop Jensen, plod innocently on to eventual triumph over the human and satanic forces that would belittle and destroy them.

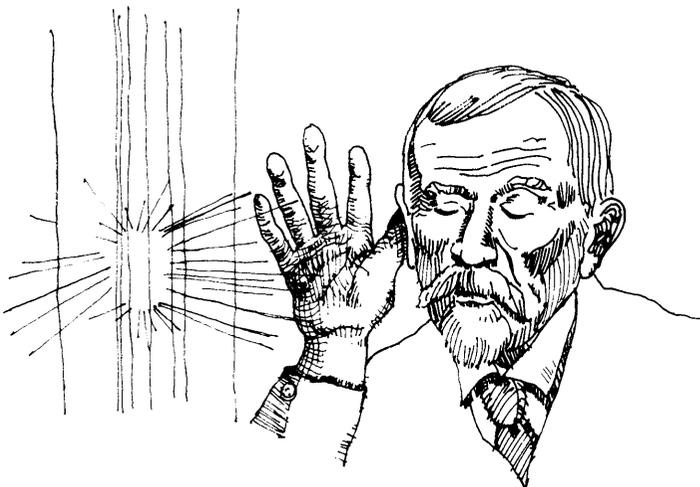
Lord had worked through her, the Bishop, Jackson, and Moroni Skinner to expose Henry and solve "The Trouble." She thus comes belatedly to a testimony of the Church, and all ends well.

The bookend of *Heaven Knows Why* is found in a return to heaven, where Moroni, now at ease regarding his happily married grandson, has been promoted to Chief Checker of the Compiling Office of the Accounting Section of the Current History Division of the Records Department, and, because "progress and glory are eternal" (p. 211), is moving into better quarters, much to Lucy's joy.

III

Heaven Knows Why is not a great book but it is a very funny book—a freset in the dearth of Mormon humor. Taylor's aim was to entertain, and he is amused by Professor Hunsaker's claim that there is a not-too-subtle parallelism between the story of Moroni Skinner and Jackson Whitetop and the story of Joseph Smith and various heavenly visitors.⁷ While the idea is feasible, to burden the lightweight plot of *Heaven Knows Why* with such heavy allegory would be to freight the book beyond its capacity to float lighter than air.

In fact, the book can bear no such serious interpretation. It is a light, tastefully handled, and very funny novel. The story, Taylor insists, is "a sugar-coated sermon on the power of faith," a novel not written to satirize Mormons or things Mormon, but to entertain human beings who like to read about the foibles and the joys of other human beings, regardless of their faith.



Bishop Jensen receives a "revelation" through the wall.

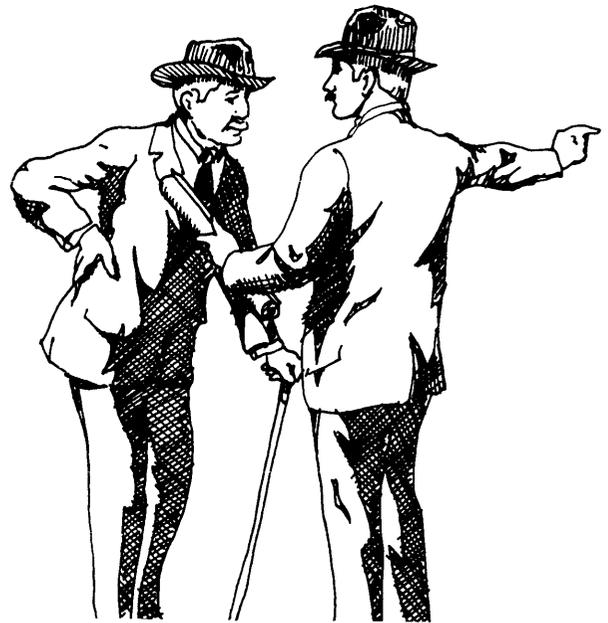
In this Taylor is successful, for *Heaven Knows Why* appeals to both Gentile and Saint, and his comical yet only slightly barbed treatment of Mormon customs, revelation, and the Word of Wisdom shows how the Matter of Utah can be dealt with in a delightfully refreshing, funny, yet painless manner.

Knowing that he is aiming at millions of *Collier's* readers—an overwhelmingly non-Mormon readership—Taylor wisely refuses to become stuck on the reef of Mormon terminology. Consequently, the book is very nearly free of nomenclature peculiar to Mormon organization or belief. Taylor also manages to avoid the straits of polygamy and thus keeps the reader's mind uncluttered by received cultural notions that have generally accompanied any mention of plural marriage. He even sets the novel in a remote Utah valley, and while the time is post-World War II, the Mormon folkways and attitudes suggest the 1920s, a less complex world of yesteryear.

Bishop Jensen is the central comic figure in the novel. And while some Mormons would take offense that a man holding the office of Bishop is being treated lightly, most Mormon and non-Mormon readers will see the Bishop in the well-defined literary tradition of the sincere clergyman whose continuing innocence in a fallen world makes him vulnerable and may even imperil his peace of mind for a time. Most of these literary clergymen, like Bishop Jensen, plod innocently on to eventual triumph over the human and satanic forces that would belittle and destroy them. Thus all readers can enjoy the plight of the Bishop, regardless of their perspective. So, when the devoted Bishop barks his knuckle on a wrench and cries, "You misbegotten son of perdition. . . . You illegitimate offspring of an unnatural union," readers agree with Jackson, who notes that he "admired the man's ability to cuss without using profanity" (pp. 36-37), and mentally underscore the Bishop's humanity and not his Mormonness.

Similarly, any reader must be sympathetic with the good Bishop's very human confusion about revelation. As a sound and sober twentieth century man, the Bishop is naturally skeptical about visitations. At the same time, he is a believer. His two sides clash, however, and he muses, "Trouble was that some abused the privilege. All you had was a person's word for a thing like [a visitation.] You had to draw a line between the genuine . . . , ritual, wishful, and mistaken. Not to mention . . . visitation" (p. 38). Thus, when Jackson . . . of Moroni Skinner's visitation, the Bishop is troubled, partly because he has never had a visitation, "or so much as a prompting."

So the Bishop rejoices when he also hears the voice of the Lord, albeit through his wife's milk can, and he is thrilled to have become worthy of such a manifestation. Later, when he learns that his revelation was wifely and not heavenly, the Bishop decides that, after all, it really was the Lord speaking through her, for the apparently false revelation clearly led to a much-welcome solution of "The Trouble," a unified congregation, and to Beryl's gaining a testimony of the gospel. Taylor's tone is not ambiguous. He is not mocking revelation, faith, Bishops, or the LDS Church; instead, he is dealing lightly with the very human problem of the skeptical-believer, a problem not peculiar to Latter-day Saints.



Apostle Black insists that the chapel must be built on a burial plot.

Taylor uncovers a similar universal problem in his comic treatment of the Bishop and the Word of Wisdom. Henri Bergson has written that "rigidity is the comic, and laughter is the corrector,"⁸ and in the good Bishop, Taylor gently assails rigidity. The righteous, well-meaning, and innocent Bishop is duped by nearly all his Word-of-Wisdom breaking associates into violating the Word of Wisdom, although he is never aware of his fall. Indeed, at some point in the book, most of the characters violate the Word of Wisdom, most of them with an excuse similar to that of Henry Brown, who claims at various times that the doctor has ordered him to drink hard cider and coffee—for his back. "Gentile doctors don't realize the value of coffee as a medicine" (p. 63), comments Jackson wryly.

In one of the funniest scenes in the book, Bishop Jensen has just dropped in on Jackson and finds him brewing a pot of coffee and experiencing tobacco hunger. Says the Bishop, through the door:

"I see you are living the Word of Wisdom," the voice said acidly.

The bishop's purple-ringed eyes were peering through the shotgun hole in the kitchen door. The bishop's nose was sniffing the rich brown aroma.

Jackson scratched his chest vigorously instead of pulling out the tobacco. "Just having a cup of Coffee-Near," he said desperately.

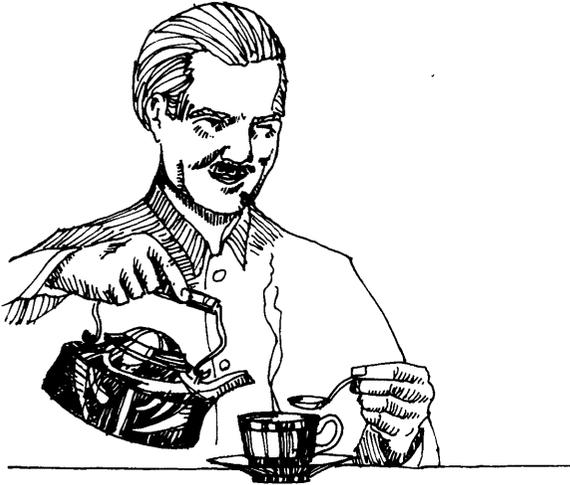
"Coffee-Near? What's that?"

"Just an old family recipe. Make it out of wheat and dandelion roots and stuff. Got it from the Indians. Nearest thing to coffee we ever tasted, so we just call it Coffee-Near."

"Don't say." The bishop sniffed at the tantalizing odor wafting through the hole. "Just made out of wholesome grains and roots?"

"And the seed of a berry," Jackson said, not wanting to stretch the truth beyond recognition.

"It smells wonderful," the bishop hinted.



Jackson pours a cup of "Coffee-Near."

"Well, you have to get used to it," Jackson said disparagingly. "I've drunk it so many years I don't mind it."

The bishop squinted his left eye and smelled in small delicate sniffs, getting the subtle overtones. Then he closed his eyes and drew in a great lungful, his face revealing ecstasy and vast longing. "Jack," he said, in his passion forgetting formality, "have you got an extra drop or two? If that stuff tastes like it smells . . ."

Jackson had no desire to lead the bishop astray. On the other hand it would be no sin on the bishop's part if he didn't know what he was getting. And, surveying the hopeful face at the hole, Jackson decided it would be more cruel to refuse. Too, at the bishop's age a bit of a lift wouldn't hurt him, just once. Jackson also realized that he was not being hospitable.

"Why don't you come in, Bishop, and we'll get another cup." (pp. 68-69)

Enthusiastic about this remarkable product, the Bishop suggests that Jackson and he market it. Jackson, left alone, frantically attempts to concoct a recipe for Coffee-Near. He fails. But Ned, a local sheepman, gives Jackson an old family recipe for Coffee-Near. Jackson makes up the recipe but finds it tastes "like old horse blanket" and inadvertently leaves it to burn on the stove. When he returns, he tastes the brew and finds that the burning is the secret to creating a delicious blend which very nearly resembles the forbidden joy. As the story ends, Jackson and his father-in-law are planning a partnership to sell the stuff to yearning Saints.

In the Bishop, Taylor's readers, Mormon and non-Mormon alike, see rigidity assailed. Taylor attempts, as he wrote in a letter dated December, 1968, and deposited in the Lee Library at BYU, "to cause the outside world to smile with us [Mormons], to feel warm toward us, to understand the titantic [sic] struggles we can have over such utterly trivial things (from a moral viewpoint) as a cup of coffee or a cigarette."⁹ He wanted, as he insists in a letter to A. A. Wynn's editor, to cause readers "to finish the story thinking 'Gee, I guess Mormons are pretty much like anybody else. They're human, too.'"¹⁰

Taylor succeeded, for the Literary Guild reviewer and several other reviewers agree that the book was "side-splitting," "a funny book that is funny." And, to Taylor's credit, some reviews even forgot to mention that the book was about Mormons!¹¹

Literature either had to be faith-promoting and full of flawless stereotypes, or it was anti-Mormon, there was nothing in between.

IV

But the serialization of "The Mysterious Way" in *Collier's* and its subsequent publication in book form as *Heaven Knows Why* raised another kind of unexpected response which must give Mormons pause. Taylor notes, in a memorandum to the BYU depository, that,

When the story began running in *Collier's*, the mail poured in. Some readers thought it was the funniest thing they'd ever read. But the reaction of others made me realize that the Mormons simply were not accustomed to the type of literature about themselves which was so enjoyed by Jews and Gentiles about themselves. Mormons had been conditioned to judging by black and white—for or against. Literature either had to be faith-promoting and full of flawless stereotypes as characters, or it was anti-Mormon; there was nothing in between.¹²

Perhaps this period has passed. Perhaps firmer-rooted Latter-day Saints enjoying the sesquicentenary maturity of the Church are prepared to see themselves in larger context. Perhaps the Saints are ready to agree with George Washington Harris that "A little nonsense now and then/Is relished by the wisest men."¹³ Perhaps. More likely, however, Mormons are not completely ready for Mormon Art Buchwalds or Mormon Erma Bombecks or Mormon Bill Arps or especially Mormon Mark Twains. There are several reasons why they are not ready and several reasons why they should be.

Taylor himself has argued in a *Dialogue* article¹⁴ that as long as the Church has a "managed press" we will not have a Mormon or regional literature, much less a Mormon humor. But there are more important reasons, for Mormon literature in the non-managed press, from the solemn, humorless profundities of *Dialogue* to the almost puritan tales of Douglas Thayer and the occasional lighter stories of Eileen Gibbons Kump and Donald R. Marshall, underscore E. B. White's memorable comment that too many Mormons seem to feel that "if a thing is funny it can be presumed to be something less than great, because if it were truly great it would be wholly serious."¹⁵ Mormons continue to insist that we are a humor-loving people, but it remains a fact that our humor, literary or folk, is frequently derivative, often contrived, and generally treated with suspicion. The reason seems to lie deeper than a so-called "managed press," which is a symptom, not a cause.

Mark Twain suggests, in another context, one of the reasons for the dearth of Mormon humor. He writes, "Everything human is pathetic. The secret source of humor itself is not joy but sorrow. There is no humor in heaven."¹⁶ If Mormonism is the Kingdom of Heaven on earth, then Twain's statement is already proven; regardless of the state of heavenly humor, however, Twain is right in suggesting that humor generally requires a sting, a stinger, and a stinger. Anxiously engaged Latter-day Saints are anxious not to sting or be stung. The Mormon folk *can* sting its leaders or institutions; it *can* say such things as "The Second Coming was to have occurred last year, but the Lord couldn't get it through Correlation." When the folk puts on its white shirts and ties, however, a not-too-subtle change occurs.

Humor, lawless as it is, enables a Latter-day Saint to flex and reminds him of the need for flexing in lieu of snapping.

Part of the reason for this change is the remarkable sense the Latter-day Saint has in being at stage center and participating in a cosmic drama in which he is a major protagonist. Each Mormon becomes, as it were, Joseph Smith in his own grove, and has, thanks to the doctrine of the Fatherhood of God, a terrific sense of his individual importance. To laugh at any aspect of this drama may seem somehow to be a diminution of that role.

And in playing that important and one-time role for keeps, Mormons are made deeply aware of Platonic appearances and realities. The world, charged with the grandeur of God, becomes a darkened mirror of the divine, for to the Lord and consequently to Latter-day Saints "all things . . . are spiritual."¹⁷ In such a context a sensitive member of the Church often feels guilty about the caustic, the sardonic, the too-urbane and too-skeptical, for he is keenly aware that the world is a kind of negative film which will soon be developed into a positive print, the distortions airbrushed, the shadows properly adjusted, and the focus, the settings, and the characters perfected.

Furthermore, Mormons are committed, if they accept their theology wholly, to a millennialist position which reminds that "the time is far spent, there is little remaining" until worthy Saints are caught up to join the Savior in his advent. This sense of destiny overwhelms and sobers and leads to a necessary warning of one's neighbors, and to a need to present before the world the best possible image of the Church, the vehicle of this theology. To many, a comic world view, with its built-in sting, detracts from that image.

The very nature of our perception of the universe seems to array itself, then, against the possibility of Latter-day Saint humor. Unlike the Jewish sense of good-humored *schimpfen* with God, exemplified in such works as *Fiddler on the Roof*, the Latter-day Saint's relationship to God is more formal, more hierarchical. God exists at the pinnacle of a ladder that begins with the in-

dividual and climbs through a hierarchy of Church authorities to the Prophet, to Christ, and to God. At each level the Mormon becomes more subject to authority and increasingly distrusts the democracy of his position. At each level he sees a diminution of humor, and seems increasingly hesitant to project the barbs of humor at levels too much higher than his own. Consequently, Mormons can laugh at humor about themselves, their Bishops, and even their Stake Presidents, but they generally grow nervous as they listen to jokes about General Authorities, and very uncomfortable about humor concerning the First Presidency; thus humor about deity, unless it is clearly strengthening to the Mormon position, is rarely tolerated. With these powerful theological guns arrayed against them, it is little wonder that Mormon humorists, wherever they are, have settled for an occasional innocuous and much hacked-at paragraph in *The Ensign* or *The New Era*.

But in this dearth the Mormon people have lost rich opportunity for personal growth, not to mention the healthy release and well-being promoted through humor, particularly humor basically in sympathy with the Mormon people. There is, then, a need among Mormons who accept the divinity of the Church and its destiny for a humor which enables them to admit, within their own contexts, their own frailties, and the inevitable frailties of their leaders and organizations, the difficulty which arises when man, with his Nephi-Lemuel nature, must plod forward in faith along a dimly lighted path which remains discernable only to the Lord. In this context a Mormon humor can aid in fostering corrective adjustments, in promoting self-understanding, and in teaching others.

Humor, lawless as it is, enables a Latter-day Saint to flex and reminds him of the need for flexing in lieu of snapping. This need was made clear in the humorous second-wave response of the Mormon people to the serious revelation of June 1, 1978, regarding the black and the priesthood. Within a few days Mormons were making jokes about the black and the temple and talking facetiously of necessary changes in well-established Church procedures and customs, and within a week some were whispering that Saints were now singing, "Come, come ye Saints, Do-dah, do-dah." More inflexible Mormons probably took offense, but such humor, which may never be written, is a sign of healthy adjustment to a sudden change in a longstanding uncomfortable condition, and demonstrates the power of humor in aiding Saints to adjust to change in a world where even the apparent absolutes are ephemeral.

Similarly, humor can make us self-aware, teach us about ourselves, and assist us to teach others about ourselves. Mark Twain insisted that "Humor must not professedly teach, and it must not professedly preach, but it must do both if it would live forever."¹⁸ The moral universe which surrounds Mormon theology promotes the didactic, and so does humor. Thus when Brother Ezra Cooper, in Carol Lynn Pearson's *The Order is Love*, hears Sister Burrows castigate her husband as a "lazy, no account excuse for a man," Ezra responds with a healing, teaching, self-awareness which is both profound and funny. "Sister Burrows," he says, "the Lord hasn't asked us to confess other people's sins—just our own."¹⁹ In the

same play, when Ezra Cooper tells how he came to live in Southern Utah, we note how humor exemplifies at once Ezra's faith *and* his humanity. When questioned about the possibility of a mistake in sending the Saints to the desert regions of Southern Utah, Brigham Young responds, "There's no mistake . . . But don't take my word for it. You go home and pray about it." Says Ezra, in an answer which reflects both heaven and earth, "So I went home and prayed about it—damn it!"²⁰

There will be an increasing need to reinforce the humanness of Church members to a critical world-wide audience which is primarily conscious of Mormonism's peculiarities.

There is an important place in Mormon culture and Mormon letters for both an in-group and an out-group literary humor. At least a corner of the void of in-group humor is being very slowly filled by works such as Grondahl's *Freeway to Perfection*, by musical drama—if such drama can survive the onslaught of sober and serious Mormon critics—and by such funny stories as Donald R. Marshall's "May the Good Lord Bless and Keep You," featuring Elder Calbert Dunkley and Miss Floydene Wallup of Mink Creek, Idaho. But there is room for many more such funny explorations of the Mormon world, room for books and poems and articles which provide gently medicinal stings which most Mormons can increasingly tolerate, and which will depend for their success, in part at least, upon the reader's or viewer's eager grasp of familiar Mormon particularities, as well as upon their appreciation of universal human verities.

But the out-group literary humor of Mormonism remains a wasteland, as Mormon writers hesitate, for at least some of the reasons noted earlier, to communicate comically about what Latter-day Saints take so seriously. As the Church continues its rapid growth, there will be an increasing need to reinforce the humanness of Church members to a critical world-wide audience which is primarily conscious of Mormonism's peculiarities.

While the several non-fictional and humorous accounts of large Mormon families go far toward communicating Mormon humanity to the world, they also insist upon these Mormon peculiarities. In Samuel W. Taylor's *Heaven Knows Why*, however, one finds a unique example of a comic novel which admirably performs what Taylor has called "indirect missionary work"²¹ through its warm and friendly treatment of Mormons as fellow human beings, not as peculiarities, at the same time that it communicates familiarly with Mormons, puts them at ease, and teaches them, subtly but surely, perspective on bumper-sticker self-righteousness. *Heaven Knows Why*, and similar as yet unwritten comical treatments of Mormons and Mormonism, should be encouraged as a refreshing and restorative force, albeit a sub-force, in Mormon culture and letters.

The very nature of our perception of the universe seems to array itself against the possibility of Latter-day Saint humor.



Notes

1. Henry James, *Hawthorne* (Ithaca, N.Y., Cornell University Press, 1963), p. 2. First Published in England in 1879.
2. Kenneth B. Hunsaker, "The Twentieth Century Mormon Novel," unpublished doctoral dissertation (Pennsylvania State University, 1968), p. 13.
3. Kenneth B. Hunsaker, "Mid-Century Mormon Novels," *Dialogue*, IV (Autumn, 1969), 126.
4. Personal telephone conversation with Richard H. Cracroft, September 19, 1978.
5. Samuel W. Taylor, *Heaven Knows Why* (New York: A. A. Wyn, Inc., 1958). All quotations from this work will be cited in the body of the paper.
6. Personal Letter, Samuel W. Taylor to Richard H. Cracroft, September 19, 1978.
7. Hunsaker, "The Twentieth Century Mormon Novel," p. 142.
8. Henri Bergson, "Laughter" (1901), tr. Clouesley Brereton and Fred Roghwell, in *Comedy* (New York: Doubleday, 1956), p. 73.
9. P. 1, Letter "'The Mysterious Way' and the Education of a Mormon Writer," December, 1968. The letter is in the Taylor folder in the BYU Manuscript Library, Harold B. Lee Library. A copy of the letter was also sent to Richard H. Cracroft by Mr. Taylor.
10. P. 2, Letter Samuel W. Taylor to Miss Elizabeth Phinney of A. A. Wyn, Inc., August 23, 1947, p. 1. Letter in Taylor folder, Harold B. Lee Library. A copy of the letter was also sent to Richard H. Cracroft by Mr. Taylor.
11. Particularly reference is made here to the review of the book in *Wings, The Literary Guild Review*, June, 1948. See the Taylor folder in the Lee Library.
12. P. 2, Letter, "'The Mysterious Way' and the Education of a Mormon Writer."
13. *Sut Lovingood* (New York: Grove Press, 1954), p. xxi.
14. See Samuel W. Taylor, "Peculiar People, Positive Thinkers, and the Prospect of Mormon Literature," *Dialogue*, II (Summer, 1967), 17-31. See also Taylor's "Little Did She Realize: Writing for the Mormon Market," *Dialogue*, IV (Autumn, 1969), 33-39.
15. E. B. White, "Some Remarks on Humor," *The Second Tree from the Corner* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1954), p. 174.
16. Mark Twain, from *Following the Equator* ("Pudd'nhead Wilson's New Calendar") in *The Portable Mark Twain*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York: Viking Press, 1946), p. 562.
17. Doctrine and Covenants 29:34.
18. Mark Twain, *Mark Twain Eruption*, ed. Bernard DeVoto (New York, 1922), p. 202 (January 31, 1906).
19. Carol Lynn Pearson, *The Order is Love* (Provo, Utah: Trilogy Arts, 1971), I, i, p. 20.
20. *Ibid.*, p. 17.
21. P. 2, Letter, "'The Mysterious Way' and the Education of a Mormon Writer," *op. cit.*

On Going Home Teaching

Paul Simmons

I am writing this article for a very simple reason. It was this or go home teaching. I know what you are thinking, but it's not true. Home teaching was my first choice. There are few things I would rather do than to go home teaching. Perhaps I should say that there are few things I would rather have done than to have gone home teaching, but you know what I mean. Tonight, however, home teaching was not to be. I am not worried, though. I have every confidence that we will yet visit our families this month. After all, we have until midnight tomorrow.

like to go. The circumstance that prevented us from going home teaching tonight was that tonight is Wednesday, and Wednesday nights my companion works. I should have known that he would have to work tonight. He always does on Wednesday nights. I don't know why it should have momentarily slipped my mind. But for one brief moment I had visions of completing our visits before the month's end, of reporting, with a clear conscience, with head erect, with an unwavering voice, with clean hands and a pure heart, that we had reached that magical mark—100 percent. But alas, tonight was Wednesday,

Oh little one so fresh from the pre-existence. What wondrous things you could tell me... before they slip away and are forgotten?...



If you could only speak... what would you say?



It is not that we (my companion and I) have put off going home teaching, I want you to understand. Rather, it is that we have been put off. No, not by the thought of home teaching nor by our families, but by matters not within our power to control. Our good intentions, as so often happens, were defeated by cruel circumstance. Oh, do not be deceived, gentle Reader. Circumstance is cruel. She is a subtle slavemaster. She comes to you innocently, in her child's frock, in pigtails and pug nose. But underneath she is an insidious siren, a temptress, an entrancing enchantress who would rule your life. Let her once into your life, and she will make it hers. She will abuse your agency, make you do that which ye fain would not, and provide a ready excuse to any who would rebuke you and set you back on that strait and narrow way leading to eternal life, of which the scripture truly says, "Few there be that find it." And why do they not find it? Circumstance! that tool of the devil, by which he cheateth our souls and leadeth us carefully down to—

But this article was to be about home teaching. The point I wish to make is that, I have found (and I believe my experience is not unique), circumstances too often prevent us from going home teaching, much as we would

and Wednesday nights my companion has to work.

Last night my companion was all set to go home teaching, but last night we had company drop in unexpectedly. The night before that, of course, was family home evening. Before that was Sunday, and—well, you know how Sundays are. In the years B.C. (Before Consolidation), Sunday was one continuous meeting, although it went under a variety of guises: elders quorum presidency meeting, priesthood meeting, Sunday School, ward council meeting, prayer meeting, sacrament meeting, fireside—there was barely time to read the Sunday comics and watch *Mork and Mindy*, let alone go home teaching. Day of rest? It was a day of everything but. Now that meetings are fewer and Sunday has begun to earn its ancient epithet, it seems a shame to spoil it by going home teaching. With our meetings not starting till one o'clock, Sunday is the one day I can sleep in. I don't get up till eleven now, and then it's the usual hurry to get the children bathed and dressed and to church on time. Even if there were time to go home teaching before church, it somehow doesn't seem right to go in the morning. Sort of like eating leftover anchovy pizza for breakfast. After church, I feel I owe it to my family to be

with them. After all, isn't that why they consolidated meetings, so we could have more time for our families? So Sunday nights we spend together as a family, except, of course, when we cannot agree on what show to watch.

Last Saturday I had to weed the garden, take the boys to their soccer game, and watch the game of the week. That night was our anniversary, so I had to take my wife out to dinner.

In theory, home teaching is a simple activity.

The night before that, I had a basketball game. Of course I could not miss that. I never know when our team might get a thirty-point lead and I might get to play.

Thursday night I watched the children while my wife went to her aerobic dance class. The night before that was Wednesday, and Wednesday nights—But it seems we've been through this all once before.

play the RAF for first place. Wouldn't miss that for all the sauerkraut in Stuttgart. Besides, all work and no play make Jack—"

"A dull boy."

"Exactly. And oh yes, Friday we have war games all day, and they're showing that new Betty Grable movie Friday night. Saturday I've just got to let the men have some time to write their families. No other success can compensate—"

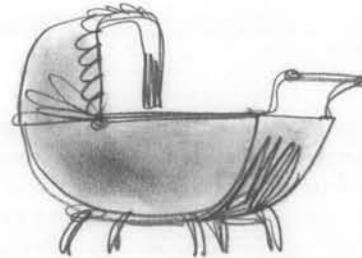
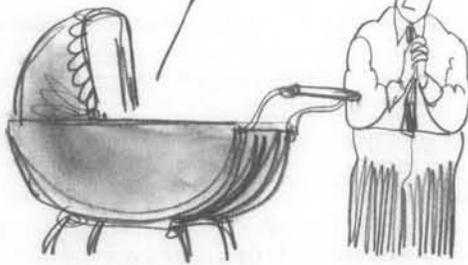
"Yes, yes, I know."

"And of course Sunday is a day of rest. No, there'll be no invasions on Sunday around here. So as you can see, this week is entirely out of the question. We'll just have to try again next week."

No, it never would have done. The French would still need liberating.

But tomorrow night we cannot fail. My companion has assured me he has no other commitments. My wife has agreed to stay home and watch the children all evening. There are no meetings, parties, work, or sports events to get in our way. Only one thing could possibly

HAVE YOU DONE
YOUR HOME TEACHING?



Cartoons by Calvin Gromdahl

In theory, home teaching is a simple activity. I call my companion, we call our families, we go and visit them. In theory, simple. Like changing a tire. Or fixing a leaking faucet. Or deriving the quadratic equation. But, I have found, in this less-than-perfect world things are rarely as simple as they seem. The logistics of home teaching, in theory quite simple, in actuality often overwhelm me.

I wonder that military commanders, who have to coordinate the activities of even more individuals than a hometeacher does, ever accomplish anything. But, then, they do not have such forces to contend with as we do. How would it be?

General Eisenhower runs into General Bradley leaving the officers' club in London.

"General Bradley!" he exclaims. "Just the fellow I've been looking for. How have you been? About that little invasion of France we were discussing. When could we get our men together to carry it off?"

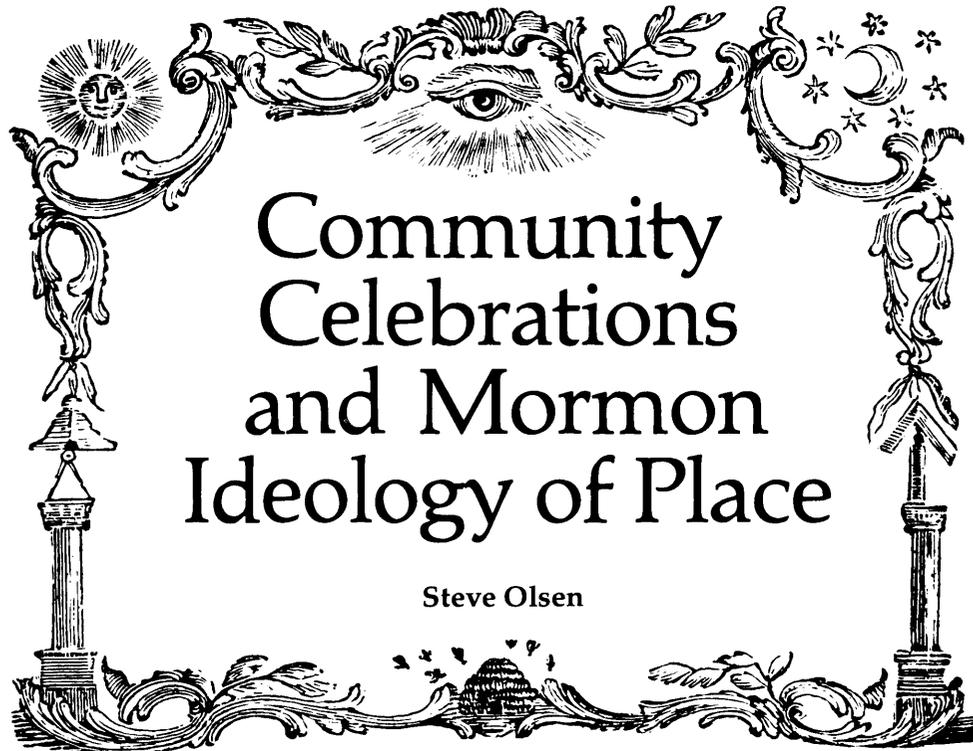
"Oh, I'm afraid it's quite impossible this week," General Bradley replies. "Tomorrow we have our officers' training class, or had you forgotten? The next day is that twenty-mile march. Got to keep in shape. This war's not for sissies, you know. Thursday is the football game. We

go wrong. And the chances of it happening two months in a row surely must be slim. Besides, it was only a coincidence last month. And it is only a coincidence that we are going home teaching on the same day of the month this time. If we were to have the same results this month—No. That would be too many coincidences.

Nevertheless, the circumstances are uncannily similar. You see, last month, through no fault of our own, we could not go home teaching till the last day. We dutifully made our visits, but one man after another was not at home. It was not till later that we discovered the reason. They had all gone home teaching.



But tomorrow night
we
cannot
fail.



Community Celebrations and Mormon Ideology of Place

Steve Olsen

Editor's Note

This paper was presented at the Utah Academy of Arts and Sciences at Weber State on April 11, 1980.

To most Americans of the 1830s Independence, Missouri, was a major outfitting station along the westward trail, but to the Mormons it was the place of the primordial Garden of Eden and the anticipated location of Christ's Second Coming. Similarly, northern Missouri contained vast tracts of land generally considered unproductive by the local settlers; the Mormons, however, viewed the region as Adam's former habitation after the Fall and tried to make it their home until Eden could be restored to them. Most Americans of the nineteenth century saw little value in the Great Basin, but the Mormons perceived it as a refuge from a sinful world and a means for establishing their identity as God's chosen people.²

The idea that the territorial environment functions as a symbol of group identity and thereby reveals a great deal of a group's self-conscious feelings and perceptions is called in this analysis an ideology of place: "ideology" because of the concern to demonstrate the meaning of social action with reference to a culturally defined landscape, and "place" so as not to prejudice the analysis to either the "natural" or the "built-up" aspects of the environment.³ Societies throughout the world use the territorial environment to express fundamental aspects of their cultural ideologies.

The Mormon ideology of place was basic to Mormon identity throughout the nineteenth century and remains active in Mormonism today, although in a somewhat altered form.⁴ I found this spiritual attachment to the landscape particularly strong in a southeastern Utah farm

village, *Bullseye*,⁵ where I spent a summer investigating the local lifestyle. The present article examines ways in which two of *Bullseye's* most important community celebrations—Pioneer Day and Memorial Day—express a local ideology of place.

Community celebrations provide perhaps the best initial context for investigating the Mormon ideology of place because they are occasions during which the group's most important values are ritually and ideally expressed for the entire community. They are also serious occasions for reviewing or testing the vitality of the local culture. For whatever reason, should the celebrations fail to mobilize sufficient interest, participation, and resources for a satisfactory enactment of the group's identity, a revision of some kind in the local culture is likely to result. In short, community celebrations function as a microcosm of the local culture, revealing its idealized as well as its problematic aspects.⁶

The significance of Pioneer Day has often been noted but seldom investigated. Thomas O'Dea has called it "the greatest Mormon holiday,"⁷ and it serves as a cultural birthdate in Mormonism, commemorating the founding of a permanent homeland in the West. How Memorial Day relates to Mormonism and the Mormon ideology of place is less well known. Its observance in *Bullseye*, however, demonstrates its significance in the expression of Mormon identity, complementing Pioneer Day in many respects. During the particular summer I spent there the importance of these holidays as tests of the local culture took on added meaning because of the challenge to the Mormon roots of *Bullseye* from communities "up the county."

Bullseye was settled as an agricultural village by Mormon pioneers shortly after the death of Brigham Young,

as colonization extended into the western portions of the Territory. *Bullseye* was laid out in the typical pattern of the Mormon village—an orthogonal grid pattern, oriented toward the cardinal compass directions and approximately one mile square (Fig. 1). Over the years it has retained its traditional settlement design.⁸

The population and economy of *Bullseye* expanded during the early years. By the 1920s the local citizenry numbered over 700, many of whom were descendants of the original settlers. *Bullseye* also contained ten businesses of one kind or another and was a leader in agricultural production in the valley. The Depression, however, reversed the economic trends of *Bullseye*, and World War II reversed its demographic expansion. Some 150 citizens served in the war, yet few returned to *Bullseye* to settle permanently. The declining local economy meant that fewer and fewer young people could remain in *Bullseye* as their parents had done. As the population and economic base of the community declined, town lots were left vacant, old stores abandoned, county schools consolidated, and the school in *Bullseye* torn down.

In the early 1970s, after nearly one-half century of steady decline (local population had fallen to less than 300), the economy of the valley began to turn around. The basis of the upswing, however, was not the traditional agriculture but coal mining. Coal mines had always operated in the valley but as local concerns, providing off-season and supplemental wage labor to many farmers. With the advent of the energy crisis, national corporations eyed the valley coal.

Community celebrations function as a microcosm of the local culture.

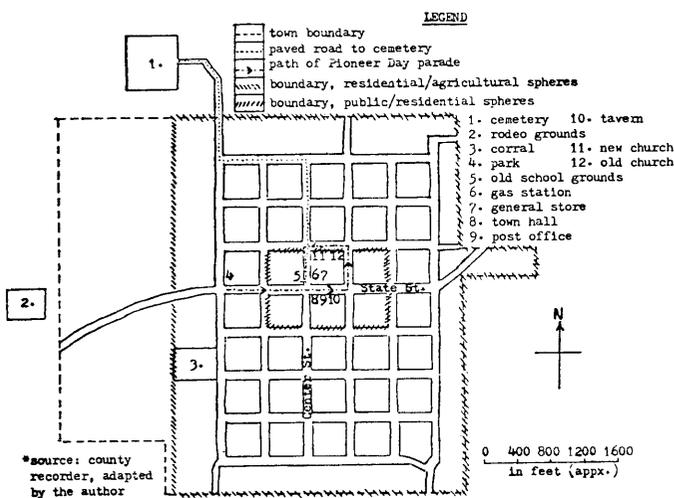
the strongest measures to preserve the traditional culture was taken when the town board created a planning board and adopted zoning ordinances and a building code. These ordinances legally validated the existing tri-partite division of the town into public, residential, and agricultural spheres, a system which reflected Joseph Smith's "Plat of the City of Zion," the prototype of all Mormon settlements.⁹ The community celebrations held during this critical summer when so many were questioning *Bullseye's* future provided vivid windows on the continuing importance of the pioneer heritage for local residents. Memorial Day and Pioneer Day, *Bullseye's* principal community celebrations, complement each other and contribute to a local ideology of place by symbolically segmenting the agricultural production season from the rest of the year, by reinforcing the significance of the various locations of public activity in *Bullseye*, and by providing local occasions for the expression of the wider Mormon ideology of place.

Working the land has been the life blood of *Bullseye* since its founding and possesses a moral and spiritual quality unattained by other local occupations. Nearly every resident of *Bullseye*, regardless of his daily activity, owns some agricultural land and receives satisfaction by preserving its productivity from year to year. The growing season is the most important time of the year in *Bullseye*, and Memorial Day and Pioneer Day provide its symbolic boundaries.

Memorial Day marks the transition between the off-season activities and the agricultural production season. The off-season is characterized by preparations—cleaning, repairing, constructing—for the productive season. Three major loci of off-season activity exist: the irrigation system, the cemetery, and the town. Readyng each involves both family and community participation. Enormous quantities of silt, weeds, and other debris are removed from the canal and irrigation ditches; water shares are redistributed; and the yearly water fees collected. The landscaping in the cemetery is revived; trash and weeds are removed from the grounds; fences and headstones are repaired; and individual plots are dressed for Memorial Day. The roads in town are regraded and gravelled; vacant lots and ditch banks are relieved of the winter's refuse; the park is cleaned and watered and its bleachers are repaired; and individual homes are spring cleaned. Particular days are often set aside for these respective preparations, and criticism usually follows that individual or group which does not adequately participate.

The unofficial deadline for completing these activities is Memorial Day. None of these preparations will extend beyond the end of May. If uncompleted, they will be postponed until the following year when getting ready for the growing season again becomes a major local concern. Following Memorial Day the town is geared up for farming and other production-oriented activities. During the farming season, hard work and long hours are required to ensure a livelihood from the harsh environment. The work ethic thrives in the community and dis-

FIGURE 1: 'BULLSEYE', UTAH*



A rapidly expanding economy quickly changed the face of the towns "up the county" and presented *Bullseye* citizens with a dilemma: they could resist the coal miners and construction workers who did not share their values and watch the local economy continue to erode, or they could accept these "Mormon haters" and "California types" and risk a radical reorientation of the lifestyle, something already happening in the communities "up the county."

The dilemma of *Bullseye's* future was the most important public issue during my summer's residence. One of

tinguishes its most respected residents.

If Memorial Day symbolically terminates the off-seasonal activity, one might look to Pioneer Day to mark the end of the production season. According to local tradition, the first crop of hay should be harvested by July 24 to avoid fall rains, and the second crop is usually left in the fields for the cattle coming "off the mountain" before going to their winter range "on the desert." The gathering of garden produce has begun by Pioneer Day, and the local baseball season (an important summer recreation for both sexes and all ages) is nearly over. The general feeling in *Bullseye* is that when Pioneer Day comes, the summer is nearly over. In short, Memorial Day and Pioneer Day constitute the cultural boundaries for the agricultural season which contributes greatly to the local ideology of place.

In addition to establishing these seasonal boundaries, the two celebrations also elaborate the cultural distinction between "here" and "everyplace else." Even though some residents did not participate in these events during the summer I was there, I knew of no one from *Bullseye* who went elsewhere to observe them. Also many former residents returned "home," which more than doubled the local population. *Bullseye* was the proper place to observe these occasions.

They could risk a radical reorientation of the lifestyle, something already happening in the communities "up the county."

Memorial Day and Pioneer Day were also the two most popular occasions for holding family reunions. A "family" consists of all the bilateral descendants and their spouses of a single ancestral couple and generally extends from four to six generations in depth. Genealogical connections beyond this range are often known but do not constitute "family." Place of residence also strongly contributes to the local concept of "family." That is, the founding ancestors of the "families" in *Bullseye* are in nearly every case the first direct-line kin to settle permanently in *Bullseye*. Furthermore, kin who do not participate in reunions are generally considered to be less "family" than regular attenders. In other words, a "home" helps to establish "family" identity, and the ancestral couple which established the "home" are honored as the founders of a "family." The occasion which celebrates "family" identity is most often held in the ancestral "home" during the community celebrations which reinforces this same attachment in other ways.

Another significant reunion occurs at the local Mormon wardhouse on Sunday, since Memorial Day celebrations usually span a weekend. At these times, the customary format of Sacrament Meeting is altered. Rather than the two or three speakers selected from the regular congregation, up to ten visitors are given the opportunity to express their feelings, which usually center around the theme, "there's no place like home." A local resident told me that one woman concluded the review of her life since

leaving *Bullseye* with the confession, "The day I left *Bullseye* was the saddest day of my life." That she would declare this is significant; equally significant is the fact that my informant would volunteer this statement out of all that went on in the meeting. Place is a powerful idiom through which attachment and identity are expressed.

As boundaries of the yearly activity cycle and landmarks in establishing a sense of "home," Pioneer Day and Memorial Day traditionally work together to buttress the local identity. They are complementary as well in their sequential focusing on the most meaningful places within *Bullseye* itself. They also have unique contributions to make to the local ideology of place.

Memorial Day

The focus of cultural activity on Memorial Day is the cemetery. Except for funerals, the cemetery becomes the center of community attention only on Memorial Day. The cemetery is one of the most significant locations in a Mormon town. In fact, the cemetery is second only to the temple as a link between the living and the dead. Memorial Day is the celebration of that link. As if to emphasize the importance of these ties, the only road in *Bullseye* paved entirely at local expense runs from the center of town to the cemetery (Fig. 1).

An informal "town reunion" held at the cemetery was the principal activity on Memorial Day. Officially sponsored by no local organization, the reunion began at dawn with a sunrise flag ceremony conducted by the local American Legion post. No time limits were set for the reunion, and no organized program was held at the cemetery, something which occurs in other southern Utah communities. However, no other activity was scheduled in town until the reunion had ended, about noon.



The atmosphere at the cemetery was more reminiscent of a family or school reunion than a memorial service. Contributing to the festive atmosphere of the "town reunion" was a concession stand at the head of the cemetery operated by local teen-age girls wishing to earn money for a "super activity" later that summer. Reunion participants, which included most of the people in town for Memorial Day, came and gathered in small groups near the grave of an ancestor or friend. Much visiting and mingling occurred, and the pace of the conversations was

leisurely and light-hearted, containing humorous stories which always seemed to concern someone mutually known among the group and connected with *Bullseye* in some way. The dead as well as the living were included in the reminiscing. The continued association of loved ones rather than their absence through death was emphasized in the "reunion." To preserve these associations, many former as well as most current residents of *Bullseye* have their remains interred in the cemetery.

During Memorial Day many usual cultural distinctions were diminished—past and present, living and dead, resident and visitor. The one unequivocal distinction, however, was between "here" and "everyplace else." For those who view *Bullseye* as "home," Memorial Day could be adequately observed only there.



Pioneer Day

Plans for the Pioneer Day celebrations of 1975 were more elaborate than usual because it was generally believed to be the centennial of *Bullseye's* founding. Later it was discovered that the centenary would not be for several more years; nevertheless, the elaborate plans continued, resulting in one of the best local celebrations in memory. Given the pressing decisions about the future of *Bullseye*, it was vital that these holidays be judged successful by the local residents. The success or failure would be a critical test of the vitality of the local lifestyle. The ideology of place was central to these concerns.

The events of the 24th, like those of Memorial Day, began at dawn. Several sticks of dynamite were set off at various locations around town to awaken the celebrants. The chuck wagon breakfast began at the park at 7:30. A member of the local Mormon bishopric opened the celebration with a short eulogy to the Mormon pioneers, followed by a prayer over the meal and the festivities of the day. By the end of the breakfast, more than 150 people had been served.

The parade began at the park around nine o'clock. The route of the parade outlined *Bullseye's* public sphere (Fig. 1). Spectators lined the parade route and were as much a part of the event as the actual participants. The entries in the parade (floats, decorated cars and trucks, and marching and riding groups) represented the important local institutions (Senior Citizens, baseball teams, Church auxiliaries, family reunions, the Riding Club,

and local business establishments). The entries were usually decorated in some way, but the decorations reflected no particular theme, historical or otherwise. Because the content of the parade focused on the local social organization rather than cultural ideology, it will not be examined in detail here.

The content of the program at the Church which followed the parade, on the other hand, centered primarily on ideology. A local Mormon leader again took charge.

The ideology of place was a principal theme of the program. The program opened with the congregation singing "Come, Come Ye Saints," which perhaps better than any other hymn captures the essence of Mormon pioneer identity. Written during the exodus to the Great Basin, it speaks of courage in the face of adversity and faith in God who will deliver his people. The third verse addresses the ideology of place.

We'll find the place which God for us prepared
Far away, in the west,
Where none shall come to hurt or make afraid
There the Saints will be blessed.
We'll make the air with music ring
Shout praises to our God and King
Above the rest these words will tell
All is well, all is well.¹⁰

Following an opening prayer, the *Bullseye* Mormon Choir sang a very popular patriotic anthem, entitled, "Your Land and My Land." Its chorus goes:

Your land and my land is the best land of all
Sweet land of freedom for the great and the small
So let's stand beside her if it's the last thing we do
Come one, come all and pledge allegiance
To the great red, white, and blue.¹¹

Next a sermon was given by a former Mormon bishop from *Bullseye*, who addressed the topic of the spiritual significance of early Mormon history. The title of his sermon was, "Israel Do You Know?" in which he compared the Mormon experience with that of biblical Israel. He mentioned the Mormon "oppression in the lands of their enemies," a miraculous delivery at the hand of a mighty prophet of God, and their inheritance of a "land of promise" whose climate and topography reminded them of the Holy Land of Israel. In each case, the parallel histories produced a "chosen people" of God, having a special mission for the salvation of mankind. The identification of a chosen people with a chosen place was an underlying theme of his address.

Place of residence strongly contributes to the local concept of family.

Following the sermon a skit, which was written, produced, and performed by local citizens, depicted the difficulty of early settlement in the Great Basin. Several pioneer couples were shown discussing the disadvantages of living in "Deseret," in contrast to the idyllic conditions of California. As their discontent with Brigham Young's decision to settle the Great Basin mounted and

they began to prepare to leave for the West Coast, "Brother Brigham," who was played by the highest ranking Mormon official living in *Bullseye*, appeared on stage to deliver a sermon emphasizing the "chosenness" of the place they had begun to settle. He promised them that through hard work and faithfulness they would make "the desert blossom as the rose." The skit closed with all the pioneers singing a hymn in support of their prophet and all happily deciding to remain in the valley to farm.

In addition to the obvious message that the Great Basin was the Mormon "land of promise," the skit underlined the value of farming as the ideal occupation in the "promised land." The authority of "Brother Brigham" was invoked to remind the local citizens that mining was not an acceptable occupation in the "valley of God," but that they should work the land for its agricultural resources. Facing the possible transformation of the local subsistence base from farming to mining, the residents of *Bullseye* welcomed this authoritative voice from the past defending their traditional occupational patterns. The skit helped them to realize that to abandon their lands at this time would have been a denial of their pioneer heritage. The skit and its message were remembered as one of the highlights of the celebration.

Later in the program, the male chorus of the local choir sang a traditional Mormon hymn, "O Happy Homes among the Hills."¹²

1. O happy homes among the hills
Where flow a thousand crystal rills,
Surrounded by grand mountains high
Whose snow-clad summits reach the sky;
My heart enraptured with the sight
Cries to the heavens with delight,

chorus: God bless and guard our mountain home
God bless our mountain home
(repeat)
2. Fanned by the cool, soft mountain air,
The valleys team with beauties rare;
And flowers deck the hills and plains
Refreshed by spring and autumn rains.
Each nook contains a city fair,
Filled with warm hearts who breathe the prayer,
(chorus)
3. May no intruding, hostile bands
E'er desecrate our beauteous land
Nor war's alarms disturb the rest
And peace with which our homes are blest,
While generations swell the throng
Of happy hearts to sing the song,
(chorus).

This hymn was well received by the audience of several hundred persons. It associated home with beauty, safety, peace, permanence, family togetherness, and divine favor, all of which are part of the Mormon ideology of place.

Several other numbers completed the program, including a song by the local Primary, an Indian ceremonial dance by an adopted son of a former resident, and several songs by local residents. All but one of these numbers focused on the Mormon pioneer heritage, insisting upon its

current vitality.

Following a break for lunch, the park again became the locus of activity. The park is important in *Bullseye* for the display of individual attributes of strength and agility as well as team competition between persons of different sexes, ages, and marital status. The activities included bicycle and foot races, relays between the boys and the girls, horseshoe pitching, and a baseball game between "singles" and "marrieds."

Perhaps the most ambitious test of the viability of *Bullseye's* pioneer past was the attempt to revive the rodeo. Although a proud part of its traditions, a local rodeo had not occurred since the V-J Day celebration in *Bullseye* had been discontinued in the mid-1950s. The rodeo was the best attended event of the day, and its success far surpassed local expectations, showing that local identity was stronger than had been expected. As a result the rodeo was remembered as the greatest accomplishment of Pioneer Day.

In contrast, the dance held that evening provided a grim reminder of the continuing challenges of mining and outsiders. In planning the dance, the local committee had considered a rock dance and a square dance but opted for the former as a concession to local youth, whom some feared had been neglected in the adult-oriented planning. The dance, furthermore, was held on the grounds of the long since razed school house. The consolidation of county schools some twenty-five years before was still a bitter pill for many local residents. Attending a rock dance, an event so closely linked with the transformed communities and held at the place associated with the traditional education of *Bullseye's* youth, presented the local residents with a dilemma which was resolved largely through non-participation. Only about fifty attended the dance, and many of these had come from "up the county" and had no other interest in *Bullseye's* Pioneer Day. Toward the end of the evening, only the outsiders remained; everyone else had gone home.

All in all, local residents were convinced that Memorial Day and Pioneer Day had demonstrated *Bullseye's* cultural vitality. These events helped many residents determine that their pioneer traditions would be a major part of the local lifestyle for the foreseeable future. As a result, a spirit of optimism graced the outlook of local residents throughout the rest of my stay.

The ideology of place was an essential part of this cultural revitalization. These cultural events symbolically set off the agricultural production season from the rest of the year, thereby emphasizing the economic and spiritual significance of the productivity of the land. Furthermore, the preparations for these events and the loci of their occurrence systematically reinforced the significance of each major location of public activity for *Bullseye's* traditional lifestyle. The values associated with the fields, the homes, the cemetery, the park, the church, the rodeo grounds, the canal, the roads, and the school grounds were all essential to the local culture. Finally, the contents of the celebrations themselves—the sermons referring to *Bullseye* as the "land choice above all other lands," the songs of the glories of Zion in the promised land, and the testimonials and conversations employing phrases, attitudes, and values prominent in other Mor-

mon circles—rendered this community a microcosm of Mormonism, whose ideology of place has been central to Mormon identity from its beginning.

NOTES

1. Field research for this study was conducted during the summer 1975 funded by a grant from the National Science Foundation, (SOS); EPP75-08915. I gratefully acknowledge that support. I am also grateful to the residents of this town and others including state, county, and local government officials, newspaper personnel, town planners, and scholars, particularly Professor Milton Singer and Professor Victor Turner, whose cooperation was invaluable as well as personally rewarding.
2. The best studies to date on Mormon environmental symbolism include Lowry Nelson, "The Mormon Village: A Study in Social Origins," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Wisconsin, 1929); Richard V. Francaviglia, "The Mormon Landscape: Existence, Creation and Perception of a Unique Image of the American West," (Ph.D. dissertation, University of Oregon, 1970); Richard H. Jackson, "Myth and Reality: Environmental Perception of the Mormons, 1840-1865: an Historical Geosophy," (Ann Arbor: University Microfilms, 1977).
3. Representative studies of the cultural significance of the territorial environment among the peoples of the world include Paul Wheatley, *The Pivot of the Four Quarters* (Chicago: Aldine, 1971); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Topophilia: A Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes and Values* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 1974); Joseph Rykwert, *The Idea of a Town: The Social Anthropology of Urban Forms in Rome, Italy and the Ancient World* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1976).
4. Francaviglia, "The Mormon Landscape;" Roger Henrie, "The Perception of Sacred Space: The Case of Utah and other Sacred Places in Mormondom," (M.A. thesis, Brigham Young University, 1972).

5. In keeping with an anthropological ethic, I have avoided specific reference to name, location and identity of this community and its residents, while attempting to render an accurate picture of an aspect of its lifestyle. Regarding its fictitious name, I ask forgiveness for this bit of self-indulgence. *Bullseye* is descriptive of this town: its economy has been primarily based on cattle ranching until the last few years; for most local and many former residents, it is the geographical and emotional center of their lives; finally, *Bullseye* is somewhat larger in size and population than Birdseye, the actual name of a small settlement in the same general area of Utah.

6. See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures* (New York: Basic Books, 1973); Victor Turner, *Dramas, Fields, and Metaphors: Symbolic Action in Human Society* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1974); Milton Singer, *When a Great Tradition Modernizes* (New York: Praeger, 1972), 67-80; Edward Shils, *Center and Periphery: Essays in Macrosociology* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1975); chh. 8,9; W. Lloyd Warner, *The Living and the Dead* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959).
7. Thomas F. O'Dea, *The Mormons* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1957), p. 82.
8. Lowry Nelson, *The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Tenure* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952).
9. Early town plats of Zion, Far West, Nauvoo, and Salt Lake City are reproduced in John W. Repts, *The Making of Urban America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1965), 466-472.
10. *Hymns of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book 1948), 13.
11. Dorothy Donnelly, "Your Land and My Land," (New York: Warner Bros., n.d.).
12. *Hymns*, 337.



Announcements

1980 MORMON THEOLOGICAL SYMPOSIUM

SUNSTONE is pleased to announce the second annual Mormon Theological Symposium to be held in Salt Lake City on the 22nd and 23rd of August, 1980. Plans include sessions all day Friday and Saturday, a reception Friday evening, and a luncheon banquet on Saturday.

This year in addition to the many excellent Mormon scholars, we have invited a number of non-Mormon thinkers in the field of American religious studies to participate in a dialogue on religious thought. Among those who have agreed to prepare and present papers and to respond to other papers are:

1. Edwin Gaustad—Professor of Religious Studies, University of California, Riverside. He has published widely in the field of 18th and 19th century American religions. Two of his most important works are: *The Great Awakening in New England and Dissent in American Religions*. He also edited *The Atlas of American Religions*. In his book *Dissent* he devoted some attention to the Mormons and, in this symposium, would do more specific research on the theological splinterism of LDS religion in the 19th century.
2. Catherine Albanese—Associate Professor of Religion at Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio. She earned her Ph.D. at the University of Chicago in 1972. Since then she has published three books: *Sons of the Fathers: Civil Religion of the American Revolution* (Temple University Press, 1976); *Corresponding Motion: Transcendental Religion and the New America* (Temple University Press, 1977); and *America: Religions and Religion* (Wadsworth Press, forthcoming). She is preparing a paper on the Father/Mother God in Mormonism and other 19th century religions.
3. Stephen J. Stein—Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University at Bloomington. He earned his Ph.D. at Yale in religious studies in 1970.

He has published a variety of articles in 18th century American religious history in *Journal of Church History*, *New England Quarterly*, *William & Mary Quarterly*, *Harvard Theological Review*, and *Early American Literature*. His most significant work has been as editor of one of the volumes in a five-volume edition of *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* (his volume is entitled, "The Apocalyptic Writings") being published by Yale University Press. He will compare the biblical worlds of Edwards and Joseph Smith.

4. Jan Shipp—Associate Professor of History and Religious Studies at Indiana-Purdue University at Indianapolis. She is past president of the Mormon History Association and working on a book about the twentieth century Mormonism. The topic she has selected for this presentation is: "Perspectives on Mormon Restorationism in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries."
 5. Paul Edwards—Vice-President of Academic Affairs and Professor of Philosophy at Graceland College, Iowa. He earned his Ph.D. in philosophy (epistemology) at St. Andrews College in Scotland. He is a former president of the Mormon History Association and has done many important pieces analyzing Mormon theology. Unlike the other four, his paper will be more philosophical and theological than historical.
- In addition, the following scholars have agreed to prepare and present papers on the topics listed:
1. Kent Robson—Utah State University, Associate Professor of Philosophy, "Is God the Creator of Natural and Moral Law?"
 2. Scott G. Kenney—Doctoral Studies, Graduate Theological Union, Berkeley, California, "From Kingdom to State: Theological Accommodations in the Mormon Drive to Statehood."
 3. David Paulsen—Associate Professor of Philosophy, Brigham Young University, "The Problem of Evil" (Peter Appleby, Professor of Philosophy at University of Utah and not a Mormon, has agreed to respond to this paper).
 4. Edward Ashment—Doctoral Candidate at the University of Chicago in Egyptology, "Joseph Smith's Egyptian Papers."
 5. Arthur R. Bassett—Associate Professor of Humanities, Brigham Young University, "Another

View on the Doctrine of Atonement."

6. Thomas G. Alexander—Brigham Young University, Professor of History and Director of the Charles Redd Center, topic undecided.
7. G. Eugene England, Jr.—Brigham Young University, Professor of English and Co-director of the Honors Program, "Lords Many and Gods Many: The Idea of a Progressing God in Mormon Theology."
8. M. Gerald Bradford—University of California at Santa Barbara, Associate Professor of Religious Studies, "A Comparison of the Philosophy of William James and Mormon Thought."
9. Richard Sherlock—Assistant Professor of Philosophy at University of Knoxville, "Ethical Consequences of the Mormon Concept of Immortality"
10. Kim McCall—Graduate student in philosophy at Stanford University, "The Moral Imperatives of a Finite God"
11. John Sorenson—Chairman of the Department of Archaeology and Anthropology at Brigham Young University, "Being Wrong" in Mormon Theology"
12. A. Kent Dunford—LDS Institute of Religion, University of Utah, "Exploring the Nether Regions: The Mormon Concept of Hell"
13. Donald G. Hill—Doctoral Candidate in Philosophy of Religion at University of Tennessee, "The LDS Ethic in the History of Christian Ethics"
14. Glenn M. Vernon—Professor of Sociology at University of Utah, "Parallels Between 'Spiritual' in Mormonism and 'Symboled' in the Social Sciences"
15. Richard Oman—Brigham Young University and LDS Division of Arts and Sites, "Visual Images of Christ in Mormon Art versus Traditional Christian Depictions"
16. Andrew Ehat—Doctoral Candidate in History, Brigham Young University, "The Development of the Doctrine of Salvation for the Dead"
17. Max Rogers—Professor of Philosophy, University of Utah, specific topic undecided, general area—biblical studies
18. George Boyd—retired, Graduate Studies at UC, Berkeley and University of Southern California, "The Social Implications of Mormon Theology"

Please plan to attend. Write to SUNSTONE for pre-registration blanks or additional information.

THE 1981 SUNSTONE FICTION CONTEST

SUNSTONE has always welcomed excellent fiction that relates to the Mormon experience. To provide additional incentives for such writing, SUNSTONE is again sponsoring a fiction-writing contest. (For last year's winners, see SUNSTONE, Volume 5, Number 1 and Volume 5, Number 2.) In behalf of D. K. Brown, contest winners will receive cash prizes totalling \$850. The first place story will be published in SUNSTONE.

SUNSTONE encourages any interested writer to submit material. All entries should in some manner relate to the experience of the Latter-day Saints. All varieties of theme, tone, and attitude are encouraged. Both traditional and experimental forms will be considered. High literary quality is mandatory.

Rules

1. The contest is open to all writers. Entries must be delivered to the SUNSTONE office or postmarked by 1 November 1980.
2. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of 8½ by 11" paper (not onionskin). Since manuscripts will not be returned, contestants should keep a copy and send in the original. The papers should not exceed 7500 words.

3. Each entry must be accompanied by a signed statement from the author attesting that it is the contestant's original work, that it is not being considered elsewhere for publication, that it has not won another contest, and that it will not be submitted elsewhere until the contest results have been announced.
4. Announcement of winning entries will be made in the March/April 1981 issue of SUNSTONE. SUNSTONE reserves the right to publish at some time in the future all articles submitted, but is not obligated to do so; it reserves the right to make editorial changes as needed in published entries.

T. EDGAR LYON MEMORIAL AWARD

T. Edgar Lyon was what any historian and scholar ought to be (but few are)—careful, methodical, thorough, analytical, and insightful. It is in his memory and to encourage his sort of excellence that SUNSTONE has chosen to establish this annual award. SUNSTONE will give \$600 in cash prizes for well-researched and documented manuscripts in the field of history. Pieces will be judged on research, style, and organization as well as validity of interpretation and reasoning. We are seeking pieces on social history (history, sociology, psychology, etc.) and history of ideas (theology, philosophy, sermons, etc.). SUNSTONE is deeply committed to the study of Mormon history—the research, interpretation, and exposition of our people, events, and ideas.

Rules

1. The SUNSTONE fiction contest is open to all writers. Entries must be delivered to the SUNSTONE office or postmarked by 1 October 1980.
2. Papers must be typewritten, double-spaced, on one side of 8½ by 11" paper (not onionskin). Since manuscripts will not be returned, contestants should keep a copy and send in the original. The stories should not exceed 6,000 words. One author may submit no more than three stories.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by a signed statement from the author attesting that it is the contestant's original work, that it is not being considered elsewhere for publication, that it has not won another contest, and that it will not be submitted elsewhere until the contest results have been announced.
4. Announcement of winning entries will be made in the January/February 1981 issue of SUNSTONE. SUNSTONE reserves the right to publish at some time in the future all articles submitted, but is not obligated to do so; it reserves the right to make editorial changes as needed in published entries.
5. Prizes will be awarded as follows:
first prize, \$500
second prize, \$250
third prize, \$100
honorable mention



One Fold

Biblical Authority in America

A Gallup poll commissioned by *Christianity Today* indicates 23 percent of the American public consider the Bible to be "a collection of ancient religious writings;" 30 percent feel "the Bible is the Word of God but is sometimes mistaken;" and 42 percent preferred "the Bible is the Word of God and never mistaken." Concludes *Christianity Today*, "in spite of the higher critical theories and other widespread attacks on the Bible, two-thirds of the general public continue to believe it is the Word of God, and 42 percent believe that it is not mistaken in any of its teachings. What is the reason? Simply that the Bible is stronger than its critics."

Profession being easier than practice, however, only 12 percent of the general public professed to read the Bible daily (4 percent for Roman Catholics, 18 percent for Protestants), and 52 percent admitted they read the Bible less than once a month or never.

The poll found that only 45 percent could

name even half of the Ten Commandments.

Kung Update

Stripped of his canonical mission to teach on the Catholic faculty at Tubingen University, popular professor has accepted the school's offer to continue teaching and doing research. Under Vatican pressure, the faculty will not recognize work done under him for degree requirements. Kung continues to fight the Vatican's dismissal move.

Methodist Conference

Every four years the United Methodist church holds its General Conference. This year, between April 15 and 25, 1,000 delegates participated in the conference committing themselves to only one "priority": strengthening local ethnic minority churches. In addition, five programs were reemphasized: Africa, world hunger, world peace, church and campus, and evangelism. The conference endorsed the J.P. Stevens boycott, opposed a peacetime military draft, and reaffirmed support for an

autonomous Palestinian state. The conference represents 9.6 million Methodists.

Individual conferences can make regional policy decisions and local congregations can adopt unique programs. The Southern Indiana Conference, for example, is spending \$60,000 this year on an evangelistic campaign that includes hiring an advertising firm and using billboards and radio and TV spots. The Conference is also sponsoring "Family Nights." Families are encouraged to pray, study, and play together on a designated evening. The program, which might seem familiar to Mormons, was adapted from a Roman Catholic publication, however.

Ghandi Blocks Proselyting Ban

Indira Ghandi has thwarted opposition plans for a national "Freedom of Religion Bill" for India. The bill would have banned any "inducement" to convert persons from one religion to another. Several Indian states have such prohibitions, but Mrs. Ghandi denounced the proposed national legislation as unwarranted government interference in religion.

Mrs. Ghandi's stand hardly opens the door to Mormon missionaries, however. Latter-day Saints have been unable to secure government recognition and the Church does not legally exist in India,

although a few scattered Saints live there under the supervision of the Church's International Mission. The last organized LDS missionary effort in the subcontinent ended in 1856.

Cambodian Refugees Convert to Christianity

According to *Christianity Today*, the 300 Christian Cambodians in Khao I Dang camp on the Thailand border have been effective missionaries. With three native pastors, a few lay leaders, and a

missionary from the Overseas Missionary Fellowship, 20,000 of the 105,000 refugees in the camp have been converted to Christianity.

Southern Baptist surge forward

After a three-year decline in the number of baptisms, the Southern Baptists registered a 10 percent increase in 1979, with a total of 369,000. By comparison, in 1979 Latter-day Saints baptized 192,000 converts and 66,000 children of record, for a total of 258,000.

Reviews

The Expanding Church

Spencer J. Palmer
Deseret Book, 1978



Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures

F. LaMond Tullis, general editor
BYU Press, 1978

365 pages, illustrations; \$8.95



Until 1950 areas outside the United States, aside from serving as missionary fields, played a very small role in Mormonism. Most U.S. Mormons with pioneer roots are descendants of European converts,

reminding us that certain areas of nineteenth century Europe were fruitful fields, but those converts were people who gathered to the Intermountain West and were assimilated into the American/Mormon culture, leaving only small branches of the Church in their homelands, branches which always looked "homeward to Zion." Mormonism was early carried to non-Western cultures, elders being sent to Tahiti by Joseph Smith and to other non-European areas during the pioneer period. Some converts were made in Polynesia and Mexico, but cultural factors essentially blocked the success of such missions. In Asia traditional cultures were closed entirely to Mormon elders.

Only since World War II has the international sector become significant in the Church, with substantial Church growth and administrative consolidation in Europe and the South Pacific and what seems like explosive growth in Latin America and some parts of Asia. It still remains true that most Mormons are children of Western culture and that the

door is really only just opening to non-Western expansion in Asia, Africa, and rural Latin America. Nonetheless, it is also true, as Church members in the United States and western Canada are reminded by general conference, Church publications, and returned missionaries, that the Church is growing rapidly in many lands and can no longer view itself as a Utah church or even an American church but rather must function in ways appropriate to a major international organization.

Aside from a sense of excitement about accelerating conversion rates, most U.S. Mormons have little appreciation of the situation of Latter-day Saints living elsewhere. While American Mormons are increasingly mobile, and many have thus had contact with the Church in various parts of this country, only a handful, relatively speaking, have more than a tourist's awareness of the daily lives of average people in other lands. Thus, LDS scholars interested in the world Church and U.S. Church leaders who have lived abroad sense a need to make the American Church membership more aware of the international Church. The two books reviewed here, while very different in their approaches, both seek to acquaint Mormon readers with the successes and challenges of international expansion.

The Expanding Church by Spencer J. Palmer, director of the Center for International and Area Studies at Brigham Young University and a former Korean mission president, is written to the general Church audience in a straightforward, journalistic style. Professor Palmer states that his purpose is to illustrate the internationalization of the Church through the personal stories of Church members abroad, thus

depicting the universality of the Mormon message.

Chapters in *The Expanding Church* serve one of four purposes. One set of chapters lays out the Mormon obligation to carry the gospel to all the world and presents a late twentieth century definition of Zion as a "community of faith," made up of those in all lands who heed the message, rather than as a "community of blood," composed of Northern Europeans. Multiple Zions are built up in the modern world by the gathering of the faithful in ward and stake communities, as contrasted with the nineteenth century physical gathering to Zion in Utah. A second group of chapters, based largely upon material from Church periodicals, describes Church programs designed to meet international challenges—translation of Church literature and materials, Church educational efforts, and programs to help members in less developed countries achieve a satisfactory level of personal health. A third bloc of material deals with challenges faced by the Church in carrying the gospel to people living in unfamiliar political and cultural settings. Then come first-person accounts based on interviews with Saints from Switzerland, Guatemala, Japan, and Tonga regarding their lives in the Church.

Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures brings together the addresses and presentations of the Expanding Church symposium (one of a series of symposia commemorating BYU's centennial) held in the spring of 1976, as edited by Professor Tullis, of BYU's Department of Government, and others.

Professor Tullis states that the purpose of the symposium, and hence of his book, was the examination of the challenges faced in taking the gospel across cultural boundaries, involving contributions in the "language of faith and practical insight" (that is, presentations by Church leaders from other lands) as well as in the "language of faith and scholarship" (presentations by Mormon academicians). He expresses the hope that the book will convey the "enthusiasm and spiritual uplift" felt by those attending the symposium, as well as make the reader aware of the sobering points raised.

Tullis's book also consists of four parts: A discussion of the relationship of human cultures to gospel ideals; presentations by Church leaders from Europe, Latin America, and Asia regarding the progress of the Church in their homelands; discussions of the challenges of communicating the gospel message from the perspective of one culture to persons of another culture;

and a final section on the strength of Mormon ideas and values in a secularized world, as well as how best to communicate those ideas to non-Mormons living outside the United States.

The Expanding Church will appeal most to those seeking a basic introduction to the international Church. Its strengths lie in Palmer's delineation of the duty of the believer to accept within the faith men and women from all cultures—and not only to accept them passively, but to see them as real brothers and sisters. The life stories of international Saints remind the reader that members overseas are people like himself, that the differences between Saints living in different lands are not as great as the similarities, and that "foreign" is no longer an acceptable word in the Mormon vocabulary. These are valuable lessons, and if this book helps teach them, it will have made a valuable contribution to Mormonism.

The reader of Professor Palmer's book should not expect much analysis of the challenges of intercultural relations, the section prepared by Soren Cox being a major exception. David Kennedy's brief statement is another exception, with its warning that American Mormon political ideas can raise barriers to the spread of the Church in the non-Western world. He points out that if a system of government allows Church members to freely exercise their religion and gives us some scope for proselytizing, we can live with it as a church, though as individuals we might wish for greater guarantees of personal freedom. Kennedy also cautions against identifying scriptural Israel with the present State of Israel to the point that Moslem doors are closed to us.

Most of *The Expanding Church* concerns itself with the institutionally-defined program of the Church, rather than with intercultural contacts. The first-person materials used, while full of human interest, do not raise many intercultural issues. In fact, to a large degree the country of origin of those involved is essentially irrelevant to their stories. They might as well be stories told by old-time members from Atlanta or Cincinnati. However, it should be remembered that Professor Palmer's stated purpose is to depict the universality of the gospel in terms of the lives of individuals, and he does succeed in illustrating that you can be a Mormon anywhere.

In *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* the presentations by international Church leaders also focus largely on the programmatic, though at times their

statements do highlight cultural disjunctures. While I did not attend all of the symposium, my reading of the Tullis book agrees with the reports of friends that one of the most memorable parts of the program was the statement of Augusto Lim, stake president in the Philippines, that his people cannot afford the magazines and buildings designed for them at Church headquarters and that Church programs cannot reach the majority of Filipinos, since the official language of the programs is English, a minority language in the Philippines. President Lim's message seems to be a humble calling out to American Mormons to allow the Church to develop in his country in a Filipino way. Hopefully, the 1977 decentralization of the Presiding Bishopric's Office, which is responsible for temporal support systems, allows for greater flexibility in responding to such challenges. Recent efforts at simplification of Church programs reflect a concern on the part of Church leaders that Mormons not be asked to make needless sacrifices.

President Lim's statement elicits not only agreement but also an emotional response from the sympathetic reader. Most of the issues dealt with in Professor Tullis's book are not presented in such human-impact terms, and yet the issues raised ultimately affect individual Latter-day Saints living abroad. For instance, among the issues raised are whether there is such a thing as a "gospel culture," and then what stance the Church should take with regard to existing cultures around the world. Noel B. Reynolds states that the gospel is a "radical alternative" to worldly cultures which are false gospels in that they espouse ends and means which detract from, if not wholly contradict, gospel purposes (p. 9). He views some cultural practices as intolerable, others as neutral, while some presumably may coincide with Church aims and approaches. If cultural arrangements do not violate the Lord's commandments, then Reynolds says that we can live with them.

But is there a "Mormon culture" towards which Church members everywhere should be tending? John Sorenson in a comment on the Reynolds essay states, "To me the gospel is a content. Culture is a kind of vessel. . . ." (p. 31). He argues that the gospel can be expressed adequately in any culture and that there is not a gospel culture as such.

All of this may seem academic, given the small chance, this side of the millennium, that we can stand entirely outside of and apart from the world's cultures. But consider the implications of

a restatement of the question: Should Church programs be everywhere uniform, or is some degree of diversity possible or perhaps necessary in order to achieve gospel goals in different cultural settings? If there is a unique gospel culture, then perhaps there should be only one Church program, with deviations in one part of the world or another reflecting group imperfection. But if there is no single gospel set of cultural patterns, then perhaps there ought to be a variety of Church programs developed to help members meet the various challenges posed by different human cultures in terms of gospel living.

The point may largely be moot at present, since the vast majority of Mormons live within the framework of Western culture and can get along fairly well with a program made up of forms of worship, instruction, and activity developed in accordance with American/European standards. As the number of non-Western Saints increases, the issue of uniformity versus diversity (in terms of means, not ends) will become more relevant and probably more pressing.

While the presentations in *Mormonism: A Faith for All Cultures* offer no final solutions regarding such matters, they bring them to our attention and provide us with a variety of viewpoints. A statement by Elder Neal A. Maxwell (p. 348) probably reflects the consensus of the Brethren—not to worry, that things will work out, that solutions will develop as needed. Hopefully this will be the case. Perhaps the consideration of the issues raised in Professor Tullis's book will heighten our cultural sensitivities and thus be helpful in dealing with the problems of internationalization and transculturization as they arise in the Church.

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