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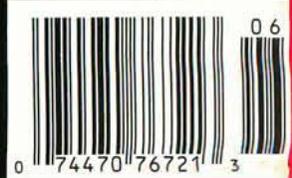
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SUNSTONE

GOD'S "ALTERNATE VOICES": WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MAURINE WHIPPLE?

ARE ALL ALIKE UNTO GOD?

PREJUDICE AGAINST BLACKS AND WOMEN IN POPULAR MORMON THOUGHT - EUGENE ENGLAND



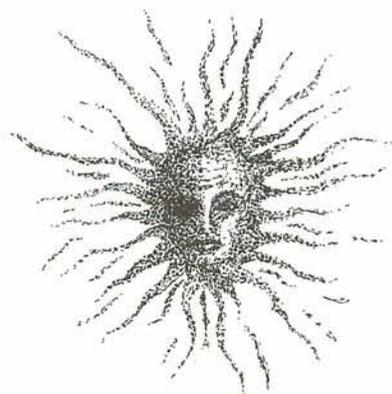
SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, AND ART

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ONE FOLD

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READERS' FORUM

A PAROCHIAL PARODY

I FOUND Hand Carré's "Directing the Shine of the Light" (SUNSTONE 13:6) to be both enlightening and thoroughly enjoyable. But I did notice one conspicuous omission, the Roman Catholic Church's advertisement recruiting candidates to the priesthood. It features Father Guido Sarducci and the headline, "Eat Free At Italian Restaurants." This is the only religious advertising I am aware of that intentionally parodies itself.

J. FREDERIC VOROS, JR.
Salt Lake City

ONCE MORE INTO THE BREACH

I AM SORRY to see that Mark Thomas feels the need to defend himself on my account (SUNSTONE 13:6). But my sorrow is even greater when I see that his idea of defending himself includes pejorative and contemptuous insults. I do not mind a little intellectual sparring, but this feels more like a street fight.

Actually Thomas and I are too close in thinking to ever be true opponents. For underneath the flurry of blows and counterblows lies a fundamental agreement. Indeed, it almost looked like a real fight until I read Thomas's last sentence in which he concluded that both Mormonism and "conservative Arminianism" were "mediation[s] between liberal Arminianism (with its optimistic view of human nature)." I have no gripe with that statement.

I said nearly the same thing in my book *Religious Seekers and the Advent of Mormonism*, though a little less precisely and confidently as Thomas. After describing the Book of Mormon as essentially Arminian in theology, I added this cautionary paragraph (the paragraph that initiated this discussion): "Still, as Marvin Hill has pointed out, there are 'remnants' of Calvinism both in the Book of Mormon and in early Mormon doctrine. For example, the Book of Mormon states that 'the natural man is an enemy to God' (Mosiah 3:19) and that 'because of the fall our natures have become evil continually' (Ether 3:2). Yet

such 'remnants' were characteristic of other contemporary Arminian groups as demonstrated by the rhetoric of the revivalists. Early Mormon convert Eli Gilbert placed Mormonism somewhere between 'mongrel Calvinism and crippled Arminianism.' Certainly early Mormons, like Seekers and other Primitivists, participated in the general rejection of Calvinism characteristic of the times" (71-72).

In this paragraph, I tried to avoid making a definite conclusion about the source of the Book of Mormon's concept of innate depravity: Was it there because of Calvinist influence? Because of revivalist of Arminian influence? Or a combination of both? Thus while I was certain that the concept was definitely Calvinistic, without a thorough investigation I could not decide whether it came to Mormonism via the Arminians or some other way. Besides, I was not trying to identify Mormon theology with any specific group besides the Seekers. Rather, I was supporting the thesis that Mormons and Seekers participated in the general swing of American religions away from Puritan Calvinism toward Arminian theology, and I was happy to establish that point. Furthermore, I see nothing wrong with my leaving the matter unresolved—it certainly did not deserve the narrow, presumptuous kind of criticism Thomas gave it.

Thomas, on the other hand, is sure that "the notion of depravity in the Book of Mormon is clearly not derived from Calvinism but rather conservative Arminianism." Further, Thomas believes the Book of Mormon is "completely Arminian" and "consistently opposes all forms of Calvinism." Underlying this assertion, however, is Thomas's assumption that Joseph Smith adopted wholesale conservative Arminianism, which included the idea of innate depravity. This is a lot to swallow in one bite, but Thomas may very well be correct. Indeed, after reviewing Thomas's most recent arguments, I believe he has grounds for maintaining his position, at least in the area of soteriology.

Thomas may have even clarified some of my own suspicions. If Thomas is correct that both the Book of Mormon and conservative Arminians were mediating between liberal Arminianism (particularly Unitarian/Universalist versions) and Calvinism, then Joseph

Smith may have adopted conservative Arminian theology in order to mediate between the Universalism of his father and the Presbyterianism of his mother, a point I tried to make in my book (25-41, 67-77, 171-72, 215-16). Further, this may have been the reason for Joseph Smith's early attraction to Methodism.

Since the study of Mormonism is an ongoing investigation, all interpretations are subject to modification and refinement, including mine. Certainly I would have made use of Thomas's theories had they been available to me. I would therefore like to counter Thomas's challenge by issuing one of my own: I challenge Mark Thomas to write his ideas down in greater detail. I also challenge SUNSTONE to publish Thomas's paper so that all can benefit from his research.

DAN VOGEL
Westminster, CA

SPIRITING THE INTELLECT

MEDIOCRITY IN THE Church is a matter I have long pondered, particularly regarding the quality of Church instruction. It was therefore with much interest that I read David

Bailey's "Mediocrity, Materialism, and Mormonism" (SUNSTONE 13:3). Having served in the Sunday School program for a number of years, I agree with Bailey's observations that the lesson manuals are "filled with simplistic, mind-numbing lessons." But asking the LDS curriculum department for advanced supplementary material, as Bailey suggests, would do little to alleviate the problem.

First, there is a mechanical problem with the block system that contributes to the quality of instruction. Often it is the amount of class time alone that determines the quality of the lesson, no matter how good the teacher may be. Thirty to forty minutes on a good day, even less if the opening exercises run over, leave the teacher with little opportunity to do more than to summarize the lesson plan, much less to develop a good discussion.

Even if class time could be expanded to give teachers an adequate amount of time to teach the gospel with greater depth, the predominant attitudes in Mormonism toward education stands as an even greater obstacle. With education weeks, seminaries, institutes of religion, priesthood meetings, Sunday School, and Relief Society, Mormons enjoy the appearance of an education-minded people. But in reality, most of these programs provide little more than entertainment because they

do not require outside work or demand intellectual rigor from their participants. Likewise, gospel instructors are expected to be reasonably prepared, knowledgeable, articulate, and motivated, but the people who attend their classes usually do not expect the same kind of effort from themselves, seldom remembering what was discussed in the previous lesson or giving a thought to the next reading assignment.

The attitudes that many in the Church have toward learning is due, in part, to the kind of knowledge that Mormons choose to emphasize: emotional intuition is more valued than the intellect. For example, missionaries are discouraged from intellectualizing the gospel. Rather than presenting a rational treatise on the philosophy of Mormonism, or engaging in a scholarly exchange of theological principles with investigators, missionaries are taught to give an overly simplified presentation of basic Church doctrine, interspersing their visit with prayer and emotional testimonies that what they are saying is true. The investigator is likewise encouraged to repeat the process by reflecting on the presentation of the testimonies, reading simplified pamphlets and emotionally stirring passages from the Book of Mormon, and praying. Missionaries will often conclude, furthermore,



that the spirit was present during their lesson when an emotional moment was shared with their investigators. Thus, the missionary process appeals to those who are inclined toward subjective reasoning and emotionalism. After the conversion, the same emphasis on subjective reasoning is reinforced by the way many members approach learning and knowledge. While Mormons believe that the glory of God is intelligence, many seem to be uncomfortable with the kind of education that emphasizes the intellect.

What we need to improve the quality of teaching in the Church is personal innovation and initiative from the members and the leaders. Rather than sitting through boring lessons, why not volunteer to teach? Much of my teaching experience in the Church has come about because I walked up to whoever was in charge and asked for the calling. Local leaders need to find teachers who will challenge spiritual complacency, encourage exploration, and teach with daring, rather than relying upon trusted and faithful souls to drone in front of a class for half an hour. As a Sunday School president, I have often found such people on the margins of the ward. I called one woman to teach Sunday School, for example, who had probably violated every commandment there was, and only attended church because her daughter wanted to be with her young friends. Another man was a recovering drug abuser. Were Jesus Christ's disciples any less marginal or any less controversial? Given the proper care and guidance, teaching the gospel has just as much power to change lives as hearing it.

Whoever accepts the challenge to teach, however, must learn to walk with greater faith and exercise greater initiative if he or she is to be effective. Throughout my years as Sunday School president, inservice instructor, and teacher development teacher, I have advocated a method of preparation and teaching that has often been viewed as quasi-heretical: relying on the spirit for direction while using the scriptures for support. The hardest thing to get people to understand is that lesson manuals are like crutches; they are to be used while the teacher learns to trust his or her own legs. A central planning committee in Salt Lake cannot foresee the needs of a particular class in a particular time. It is up to the teacher to prayerfully assess the spiritual and intellectual needs of his or her class and to meet them with the aid of the scriptures. I don't believe that lesson manuals would be needed—other than for finding out what pages should be read that week—if the gospel was studied and taught as it should be.

Jesus Christ was the ultimate model of how one should teach; note that in JST Matthew 3:25, his peers did not say to him, "Wow, what a great lesson manual he taught from." They marveled, instead, that "he spake not as other men."

EUARDO PAGAN
Princeton, N.J.

THE BUDGET BALANCE

I CELEBRATE Elbert Peck's communal commentary springboarding off the new ward budget policy ("Equality and the Diversity of Gifts," *SUNSTONE* 13:6), and, personally, I am happy to have my Church donations consolidated and reduced. However, we should also note the down side of the new arrangement.

This new policy of having a ward's budget funded from Church headquarters increases the centralization of control and decreases the autonomous nature of the ward and bishop. Specifically, stake presidents now oversee ward finances in minute ways they never did before. And with the bishop's annual budget now being approved by the stake president, the bishop's allegiances and loyalties are

unavoidably turned from the congregation to the stake president. I wonder whether bishops will now present the ward budget to the priesthood for a vote as many did previously. Will we, too, lose this tiny bit of democratic participation and openness? There is something very healthy about the bishop having to maintain a good rapport with his members in order to raise the funds necessary to support the ward's activities. I am afraid that this change has the potential to diminish the community Elbert Peck desires to enhance.

GEOFFREY ARTHUR JONES
Salt Lake City

R-RATED FICTION

WE NEED TO talk about your claim on the table of contents page: "SUNSTONE—Mormon Experience, Scholarship, Issues, and Art." That statement is hardly accurate in view of the quality of the fiction and poetry I find in the magazine, and if you understand what I'm about to say you will surely see the need to remove your reference to Mormonism.

I learned decades ago that there is a covert, extra dimension of subliminal manipulation



"Okay, now break into small groups and brainstorm ten ways to sincerely home teach. Then we'll reassemble and share the ideas."

inherent in fiction that does not lend itself to straight forward honesty, and which has great potential for mischief. Also, while I've always seemed to understand words and meanings fairly well, I have found little enthusiasm for the mental gymnastics of unraveling the cryptic ravels that many so-called poets and their admirers seem to imagine to be poetry. So, just recently I casually checked to see why you would spend so much space on poetry and fiction.

But even the disarming mask of "entertainment," per se, is not directly my disenchantment. Rather, it is in the X- or R-rated, "soap-opera" license you seem to think is somehow acceptable—even appropriate—as long as it is disguised as fiction or poetry and entertainment. Do you think us as too dense to see that the emperor doesn't have the clothes on you want us to think he does?

Take, for instance, Loretta Randall Sharp's poem "Breathings" (SUNSTONE 13:3). We do not use, need, or accept her kind of degraded language in my home. My children never heard it here nor used it here. I never heard gutter language like that in the home I was brought up in, and it was never so callously normal in my extended family. By definition, real Mormons don't talk like that.

Sharp's poem "Watching 12N" (SUNSTONE 13:4) is obsessed with sensuality. What is there of Mormon-level entertainment (not to mention that subliminal dimension of doctrinal manipulation in fiction and poetry) in picturing a yellow nightgown, a skin-like garment stretching against Beth's breathing? Or Willene's unzipped skirt, buttoning of a blouse, and the need to strip off all her clothes?

Check Lewis Horne's short story "Mona's Family" (SUNSTONE 13:3). A crude "mystery" story—jumbled, coarse, and vulgar language, starting nowhere, going nowhere. Totally non-Mormon in context, it is just a forum for Lewis Horne to spill his decay on anyone unfortunate enough to read it, and an attempt to pull Mormonism down to the level of moral values he is legitimizing through you.

And you let him. You let him smear your pages with profanity and pornography—some even a little sick. Did he mesmerize you until it didn't seem like pornography? Is that desensitization the reason why this garbage won second place in the 1988 Brookie and D.K. Brown Contest? You need a *real* Mormon to evaluate Mormon submissions. This stuff does not remotely qualify as anything connected with Mormon values.

Then there is Michael Fillerup's story "A Game of Inches" (SUNSTONE 12:5), yet another

contest "winner." This is not quite as disgusting as his story published in the same time period in another publication claiming to represent "Mormon Thought," but it still reeks with shallow, un-Mormon crudeness. We see in it a headlong rush of fast-paced, static-like episodes accorded into frenzy—but bland and negative, with considerable rude prejudice. It is mostly material description—very little emotion—no emotional highs and lows. Even his report of being happy is just cold wordage. Nothing backs it up. But aside from a picture of a strange being that I cannot recognize, and whatever must have tickled profane ears, that level of language doesn't belong in a magazine claiming positive connection to Mormonism.

Take Robert Frederick Lauer's "award winning" play "Digger" (SUNSTONE 12:6). BYU contest winner or not, how does Lauer know that Joseph Smith swore like that? Or that he was a drinker? Lauer paints Joseph Smith as a sly manipulator, or a sorcerer or magician—maybe a nice, benign one—as well as borderline vulgar and rude. Maybe a liar, too. He clothes Joseph in an aura of spells and magic: hearing voices at night, perhaps like Joan of Arc. Lauer seems purposely to attempt to make Mormonism's founding revelations just wishful fantasy or witchcraft. But maybe, more simply, Lauer is the sly one, and he just found a naive audience whom he could convince he had his new clothes on. Why would you print this play without at least an appropriate critique, like you do in your symposiums? I didn't hear crudity at your last symposium. Do you imagine that fiction is somehow any less a declaration of philosophical belief or any less a crafty missionary tool? You seem to have been netted whole by that subliminal, covert manipulation that is fiction's special danger.

One other thing. Your choices of fiction and poetry seem to have been solely for their purely artistic structure—as if content were irrelevant. Art is validated as it rings the bells of the human soul, but you are saying that it doesn't matter what bells are rung, that the talent to ring bells is greater than content.

Genius is not an icon of human value. Satan is a genius. Talent, per se, is irrelevant to righteousness. Our icon is goodness. I cannot see any redeeming excuse for why you ignore Mormon moral boundaries.

Is trash, like in these examples, the broader voice you want heard in Sunday School, or over the pulpit? Does boredom with the kindergarten simplicity you find in regular gospel discussion in Church come from the desire to freely curse and blaspheme and bask

in sensuality and pornography? Are you trying to lower gospel sights to justify searching for the Holy Ghost in, say, "R" or "X" or even most "PG" rated life-styles? What do you imagine a real Mormon can say in public (or mostly even in private) that could not be said in Church?

I don't know—maybe you all swear and curse and tell crude jokes and use profanity and all the four-letter words at Sunstone. Maybe worldly-wisdom has desensitized you to the purpose for which that communication was invented and should be used. Maybe that is the "freedom" you want in the Church—to talk in the language you are used to—to desensitize us all to such expletives and the moral landscape they represent. Maybe you entertain that tunnel-vision hoax that free speech means a person has the right to say anything anywhere—ignoring the superseding rights of "victims" to not have to hear it. If not I suggest you recognize the problem and decide whether you want to dine at the restaurant or at the landfill. The very real option is to remove all references to valid Mormonism from your claims and further pursuit.

RAEO PASSEY
Midvale, UT

Editor's reply:

SUNSTONE is not Hyde Park—an unscreened forum. The job of an editor is to select based upon established standards. SUNSTONE'S poetry and fiction are selected by individuals regarded as expert in the Mormon literary field.

Among other things, art can be prescriptive or descriptive; a utopian vision or a horrifying honest mirror. We need both. We cannot establish Zion on false assumptions of our human condition. Let's face it, some Mormons swear and others think and do worse things. I am not inclined to put blinders on those who, in part, serve as the eyes of our societal body; but neither am I desirous to make them the head.

SUNSTONE ENCOURAGES CORRESPONDENCE. LETTERS FOR PUBLICATION SHOULD BE ADDRESSED TO "READERS FORUM." WE EDIT FOR SPACE, CLARITY, AND TONE. LETTERS ADDRESSED TO AUTHORS WILL BE FORWARDED TO THEM. ☐

FROM THE EDITOR

RETURNS REQUESTED, FORWARDING GUARANTEED



By Elbert Eugene Peck

“I AM NOT renewing my subscription to *SUNSTONE* because I am getting too old and can't read much any more,” penned one of our former subscribers on the back of a renewal notice. Her letter sparked an office discussion on the need to recruit young subscribers.

Most of the letters we receive get a healthy staff hearing, maybe that's because there are so few of them. Because of some letters, the following topics have been placed on our formal or informal agendas: the quality of our fiction and the use of profanity, the size and kerning of our typeface, the censoring of cartoonists, and the editorial balance between devotional and critical writing.

A regular letter we anxiously await is by the incurable and compulsive proofreader Ed Kimball. After reading each issue he takes the time let us know where we goofed. The staff winces as it reads and discusses his eagle-eye discoveries; it hurts to see the grammatical flaws in the finished uncorrectable product, but that outside report is invaluable and after each letter we're determined to reduce the error count in his next missive. (A small consolation is that he also lists mistakes in the textbooks for his BYU law classes and informs publishers of their errors.)

Of course, one of the reasons Ed feels okay about critiquing us is because he's on our board of trustees and we encourage him to write. Still, it feels good just to hear that someone reads the magazine. After we published one author's "ground breaking" article and neither he nor *SUNSTONE* received any feedback, he telephoned me and quoted John Adams from the musical *1776*: "Is any body there? Does any body care?" Maybe the reason for the lack of response, he speculated, is that *SUNSTONE* isn't titled *Dialogue*, a name which invites response; the sun after all simply radiates in a black void.

At symposiums I'm often asked, "What do

the authorities think of Sunstone? Do they talk to you?" Hell, no, I want to reply, we don't even hear much from our subscribers. One person, however, did let us know that Church leaders read the magazine. He essentially said: "Enclosed is my check. I'm subscribing because last week at our stake conference leadership meeting when Elder Maxwell was asked in a Q&A session about the excommunication of George P. Lee he said, 'I won't comment, but you can read Lee's letters in *SUNSTONE*.'" It wasn't exactly an endorsement (the apostle probably referenced us as a way of appearing open without having to say anything) but it was nice to hear the account in any event and to know that people read and talk about the magazine.

I suspect most readers just assume that editors and authors mystically know how the content of articles is received, that we've received many more letters than we can publish. Many times I have been casually asked, "What was the response to such-and-such article?" When I rejoin that no one has said anything about it to us, with an air of incredibility, they invariably say, "Well everyone around here was talking about it." I guess I just don't go to the right parties or discussion groups, but, then, it is a big country.

I'll get in trouble for saying this, but, of the letters we do get, a disproportionate number are from fanatics or individuals who are at least a little too intense, some are just down right kooky. Why don't the thoughtful, reasonable, mainstream readers write more often? Although he has never written a letter for publication in *SUNSTONE*, Leonard Arrington often writes directly to our authors, commending them for their good work. Several have told me how important his letter was to them—especially when it was the only one their piece elicited. (Authors also love to hear

when their article was, ahem, *photocopied* and passed out in Sunday School, Relief Society, or priesthood meeting.)

Not all letters respond to an article, some briefly share an intelligent opinion. Let's face it, most of us are intellectually lazy and read the short informative pieces before getting around to those long definitive articles which stack up for years. Our Readers' Forum letters section economically allows for the articulate expression of numerous important ideas which, if expanded into columns and articles, would triple the number of issues produced in a year (and, given *SUNSTONE*'s production history, we all know how unlikely that it is).

Of course, we prefer letters that we can publicly share with our readers in the magazine, but understandably many individuals prefer to write private letters to us or our authors. *SUNSTONE* does not give out address or telephone numbers of our authors or subscribers to people who call and ask for them. However, we gladly forward all letters addressed to individuals, c/o *SUNSTONE*.

While working on the forthcoming index of the magazine I discovered a thirteen-year-old article by the now syndicated journalist Lee Roderick titled, "Write a Letter to the Editor" (*SUNSTONE* 3:1). It was a short high school civics piece on how to get your views printed in newspapers: be timely, be brief, limit yourself, organize, be factual, be simple, be constructive, look sharp, sign your name, don't worry. When I first read the article I exclaimed, "What a dumb thing to have run in the magazine!" and, now, wouldn't you know it, here I am writing an article encouraging readers to write letters! (Maybe if we look carefully we can find a chiasmic cycle in the content of *SUNSTONE*, thus showing divinity in its editing.)

Perhaps the most ambivalent correspondence *SUNSTONE* ever received was a response to a request for a congratulations letter to appear in the magazine's very first issue. A woman who had helped found *Exponent II* sent two letters. The one for publication basically said: "Congratulations on starting *SUNSTONE*. It desperately fills a void in Mormon publishing. Best wishes and good luck." In contrast, her private letter counseled: "You're crazy. Don't do it. You'll regret it. Friends will forsake you, Church leaders will shun you, it'll consume all your time, you'll burn out."

Obviously we can't do what all letters tell us to do, but to keep this sun beaming we need rigorous public and private dialogue with our readers. ☺

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

ALTERNATE VOICES: THE CALLING AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

By Armand L. Mauss



IN RECENT SUNSTONE symposia and LDS discussion groups, much attention has focused on Elder Dallin Oaks's remarks about "alternate voices" in general conference last year. I would guess that most of the Saints had no idea who or what he was referring to. Even among the participants in the "unsponsored" literature and discussion groups, there has been no clear consensus about the meaning or the implications of what Elder Oaks said. Some have found it ominous or at least

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condescending; some have seen it as a harmless, matter-of-fact clarification of leadership attitudes. Some have even taken encouragement from the fact that it was not more specific and constraining. For me the conference address and ensuing discussion have provided the occasion for reflection upon the past twenty-five years of my own intellectual activity in the Mormon arena.

HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

TO begin with, an historical perspective seems helpful. We have always had "alternate voices" in the Church. I am not referring to apostates (nor was Elder Oaks, I believe) but to certain loyal and thoughtful saints of independent mind who would occasionally

question conventional doctrine or policy—and do so publicly. Before about 1940, such public discussions frequently took place in official Church magazines and even among the general authorities themselves. For evidence of this contention, one has only to consult early issues of the *Improvement Era*, *Contributor*, and *Juvenile Instructor*, or to review the careers of figures like B.H. Roberts. Even the LDS Institute program once provided a forum for discussion and sometimes honest disagreement among the devout and intellectually cultivated scholars so often found in the ranks of the Institute faculty in those early days.

In many ways, the Church was like one big family during its first century or so. This was especially true of the general authorities, who constituted a rather small circle of relatives and boyhood friends. Their families shared impeccable pioneer credentials and intimate knowledge of each other. When Orson Pratt disagreed publicly with Brigham Young about doctrine, they had been through too much together for Brother Brigham, even as president, to question basic loyalty and commitment of Brother Orson. When B.H. Roberts and the young Joseph Fielding Smith disagreed publicly about evolution, neither risked suspicions of heresy, apostasy, or disloyalty to the Brethren. When Heber J. Grant as president of the Church disagreed publicly with Apostle Reed Smoot over the League of Nations, it probably never occurred to President Grant to question Elder Smoot's loyalty after their shared travail in 1903. Even when J. Golden Kimball regularly embarrassed some of his colleagues, they knew, after all, that he was "Heber's boy." His rock-solid Mormon heritage was more important than his idiosyncrasies in assessing his reliability.

It is a different church today for reasons that are quite understandable. As in any organization, rapid growth and complexity have brought increasing reliance on centralization and standardization (now called "correlation"). Some of the general authorities might still be related to each other, but not nearly so many and certainly not so closely. Recruitment to their ranks comes increasingly from outside the founding families and even from outside North America. Some of the recruits to general authority rank have come up through the Church civil service bureaucracy (especially the Church Education System, C.E.S.) where they have had opportunities to demonstrate their loyalty, but not by questioning "the Brethren," to be sure.

The fact is that the presiding brethren are

simply not in a position to know each other (especially the Seventy) as intimately as they once did, so they cannot afford to be as tolerant of disagreements, especially open disagreements, even among themselves, as they once were. Their relationships (except the few that are lifelong) are less familial in nature and more bureaucratic. They cannot predict or control as confidently as they once could where such disagreements will end or what the implications will be. The George P. Lee case is a particularly painful illustration of the difficulty that the Church leaders face today in truly knowing and understanding each other's thoughts and feelings intimately. Nor can they know the ordinary Saints as well as their predecessors could; they cannot visit the wards and stakes with any appreciable frequency.

In such a situation, disagreements and serious questions within the ranks (either of the leadership or of the Church as a whole) can no longer be readily contained or managed by resort to family bonds, shared biographies, or mutual reliance on well-known ultimate commitments. Nor can the leadership enjoy the luxury of indulging their individual opinions and disagreements in public. The confidence of the membership and of the local leadership in the general authorities can no longer depend even partly upon a personal awareness of the hearts, minds, backgrounds, or individual charisma of those brethren. That confidence must now rely upon their formal ecclesiastical roles and callings as "prophets, seers, and revelators."

The spectacle of public disagreements among these distant prophets, on any subject, carries the risk of undermining grassroots confidence in their instructions on any other subject. Thus, such disagreements as they have (which, I do not doubt, are many and vigorous) must be carried out entirely behind closed doors and settled ultimately by top-down directives. Necessary as all that might be in a modern church so "correlated" and so conscious of public relations, it gives the largely false appearance of a monolithic and intellectually homogeneous leadership. To the extent that such homogeneity seems necessary, we cannot expect today's Church leadership to recruit (at any level) the independent intellectuals and scholars of the kind we once saw in Elders B.H. Roberts, John A. Widtsoe, James E. Talmage, or Joseph F. Merrill. *Different skills, talents, and training* are needed for today's corporate Church leadership.

THE MODERN DIVISION OF LABOR

TODAY'S "alternate voices" are found no longer among the general authorities but instead among an amorphous and informal body of independent scholars and intellectuals. While sometimes called a "community," and including many close friends of long standing, this body is probably too large, too dispersed, and too diverse to qualify as a real community. It is tied together mainly through the reading and writing of a common literature published in various "unsponsored" books and articles, and through participation in such gatherings as those of the Mormon History Association and the Sunstone Symposium. The religious beliefs and intellectual commitments of its members cover a broad spectrum. Its numbers include LDS and RLDS members, non-members, devout believers, doubters, and apostates; but in my experience the great majority are active, loyal, and committed Latter-day Saints who are willing to tolerate diversity and ambiguity in the quest for truth, intellectual integrity, and fuller understanding.

This collection of "alternate voices" has an important part to play in the life of the Church and of each ward, even when it is worrisome to leaders. Many feel direct spiritual calls to offer their "alternate voices" on occasion. Such calls are clearly implied in Doctrine and Covenants 58:26-28, especially in the passage about being "anxiously engaged in a good cause . . . of their own free will." It is important to emphasize, though, that these are not Church calls, which can come only through priesthood leadership. We must never confuse our personal spiritual gifts, talents, and calls (whether of an intellectual or any other kind) with callings in Church leadership. We should feel free, in a candid but respectful and constructive spirit, to offer our ideas and suggestions to Church leaders from the greatest to the least, whether they ask us for them or not, for that is what we are called to do. Yet we must never aspire to displace those leaders, to undermine their influence and authority, or in any way to interfere with the exercise of their callings and responsibilities as they understand them.

Such a *de facto* and tacit separation of responsibilities between Church leaders and "alternate voices" actually works out quite well in practice, as long as there are not excesses on either side (as there sometimes are). The leaders of the Church, including the prophet and president, neither seek nor receive revelation in a vacuum. It is implicit in Doctrine and

Covenants 9:7-9 that divine inspiration and revelation come primarily in response to well-considered *proposals* that we take to the Lord. I think that this is as true for the prophet as for the rest of us. I have always appreciated the care and precision in President Kimball's announcement of the dramatic 1978 revelation on extending the priesthood, where he explicitly spoke of having received *confirmation* of a policy decision.

Where do Church leaders get the ideas for the proposals that they take to the Lord in search of their revelatory confirmations? We must assume that they get their ideas from many sources, both within and without the Church. Some ideas no doubt come to them from the Saints and leaders in the rank and file; some from "pilot projects" started on local initiative; some from sponsored research; some perhaps from the business world; some even from their wives and children. The "alternate voices" of LDS intellectuals simply add, in a unique way, to the supply of ideas available to Church leaders as they undertake to formulate proposals to take to the Lord. That is an important function for these "alternate voices" and is perhaps the main mission to which they are called. I have had plenty of reasons to believe that our leaders often consider these "alternate voices," and that their proposals to the Lord are sometimes informed by what they read and hear from these sources as well as from others.

I, for one, appreciate this *de facto* "division of labor" between Church leaders and "alternate voices." Such a distinction is blurred in some of our sister Christian churches which maintain "house intellectuals" hired and salaried primarily to insure that official Church doctrines, policies, and pronouncements are based on extensive scholarly research and made intellectually palatable to the world. To the extent that "alternate voices" depend for their livelihood and professional recognition primarily on Church largesse, they run a constant risk of being muted, moderated, and compromised by organizational imperatives and internal political pressures. (I hasten to add that they do not always succumb to such pressures, as we can see from the number of outstanding "alternate voices" that somehow manage to maintain distinguished and independent careers at BYU; but they are often uncomfortable.) While many Mormon intellectuals might enjoy the luxury of basking a little more often in the celestial warmth of official approbation, they are far better off maintaining their separate callings and their intellectual independence.

The Church leaders, for their part, also

benefit from this separation. For one thing, they need not feel obliged to evaluate and respond to every idea, proposal, or criticism coming from among the "alternate voices." These are not products that they have paid for, and they need not make "use" of them in order to get their "money's worth" from an investment in professional services (as they might feel obliged to do, say, in the case of the professional consultants whom they occasionally hire). Second, the Church leaders cannot be held accountable for any of the public writings or speeches of "alternate voices" as they might be for the public utterances of "house intellectuals" (and as they once were for the dissident voices publicly expressed from their own ranks).

In sum, Church leaders can get on with the daily business of running a large and complex world organization, with all the pragmatic compromises and adjustments implied in that enterprise, but without having to deal with constant interruptions from internal intellectuals intensely concerned with ideas but lacking either experience or responsibility in practical affairs. My experience in academia convinces me that (with occasional sterling exceptions) intellectuals as a class suffer from a trained incapacity for successful administration. I know exactly what William F. Buckley means when he says that he would rather be governed by the first 500 people in the Boston telephone book than by the Harvard faculty! By all means, let us foster complete freedom of expression, even in the Church, for all kinds of "alternate voices" (academics or not); but let "idea-people" do what they do best—offer creative ideas and informed critiques of the status quo—and leave the practical affairs of Church governance to those who bear the awesome responsibility for it!

Those of us who would take seriously and conscientiously the calling of "alternate voices," however, must be prepared to accept the implications of so doing, whether we would be listeners or speakers in such a challenging enterprise. Even as listeners we are responsible for the *evaluation* of what we hear. Intelligent evaluation, especially in spiritual matters, is not possible without a considerable personal investment in studying, both widely and deeply, in prayer and in meditation. The hearer (or reader) of "alternate voices" who is not willing to do all this is only a dabbler and is far better off sticking with the Standard Works and the correlated lesson manuals.

People who read *SUNSTONE* and other "alternate" sources mainly to make mischief (and I know a few) are intellectual adoles-

cents. They are searching less for understanding than for cheap shots at traditional shibboleths, or for juicy and scandalous tidbits about Church leaders past and present. I have one more *caveat* (with apologies to Dante!) for those who would be conscientious listeners of "alternate voices": *Abandon certainty all ye who enter herein!* Never again will you enjoy the immunity to doubt and ambiguity that went with your previous life. But then the ability to live with perpetual ambiguity is also a trait that distinguishes adults from adolescents.

DECALOGUE FOR DISSENTERS

MY remarks in this final section are directed mainly to those who would undertake to join the ranks of "alternate voices" as speakers, not just as listeners. These include, I hasten to add, not only academics or other professional intellectuals but anyone who would aspire to be efficacious in offering alternative ideas or counsel to the Saints and their leaders at any level, whether in the pages of *Dialogue* and *SUNSTONE*, in ward council, priesthood quorums, Relief Society, or Sunday School.

I would like to share ten principles that I have learned, sometimes painfully in the breach, during the past twenty-five years from my own efforts to offer an effective "alternate voice" at various forums and occasions. As a rhetorical device, I will use the imperative tone appropriate for a decalogue; I apologize in advance if the tone also seems imperious in places. Also, since my efforts have taken place in the context of an ultimate commitment to the LDS faith, some of the following principles will be less applicable to those who don't share that commitment.

1. *Seek constantly to build a strong personal relationship with the Lord as the main source and basis for your own confidence in the alternate voice you are offering.* We often have to do without the Church's approval, but we need the assurance of the Lord's.

2. *Do your homework before you speak up.* We must be sure that our knowledge of the scriptures, of history, and of other relevant data on a given matter will bear up well under scrutiny and under efforts at rebuttal. Otherwise, our offerings will be exposed as unreliable, we will lose credibility as intellectual leaders or teachers, and we will be suspected even by our sympathizers as mere malcontents. No one expects infallibility, but we must know whereof we speak, especially

if we espouse an unpopular or untraditional idea.

3. *Relinquish any and all aspirations (or even expectations) for leadership callings in the Church.* Actually, that is wonderfully liberating. In any case, stake and ward leaders, to say nothing of general authorities, rarely call people to powerful positions who are suspected of too much "independent thinking." To be sure, the ranks of "alternate voices" have provided occasional examples of bishops, stake presidents, and Relief Society leaders showing that there may be some happy exceptions to this generalization, but don't count on that. If you have a career in C.E.S. or in any other Church bureaucracy, don't expect approval or promotion to accompany your identification as an "alternate voice."

4. *Endure graciously the overt disapproval of "significant others," including family members, but never respond in kind.* Lifelong friends and old missionary companions may sever (or reduce) friendship ties when they learn that you are one of "those." They simply cannot understand what your "problem" is. If such reactions prove especially crucial in your case (e.g., if your marriage is threatened), you will have some tough choices to make.

5. *Pay your "dues" as a member of the Church.* Pay your tithing, make clear your willingness to serve wherever called, and do your best to get your children on missions. Try as hard as anyone to "keep the commandments." You still probably won't get much Church recognition, but you will win over a few who once looked on you with suspicion. More important, you will make it difficult for your critics to dismiss you as an apostate, for all will see that "thy faithfulness is stronger than the cords of death" (D&C 121:44).

6. *Be humble, generous, and good natured in tolerating ideas that you find aversive in other Church members, no matter how "reactionary."* As "alternate voices," we cannot complain when we are ignored or misunderstood if we respond with contempt toward those whose ideas we deplore. Besides, if we have any hope of educating them, we have to start where they are and treat them with love and tolerance. No one is won over by being put down, especially in public. Whether in our writing or in our exchanges during Sunday School classes, we must try to be gracious as well as candid (difficult though it be on occasion) and always remember to show forth afterward "an increase of love toward him whom thou has reproved, lest he esteem thee to be his enemy" (D&C 121:43).

7. *Show some empathy and appreciation for Church leaders, male and female, from the*

general level down to the local ward and branch. Anyone who has ever held a responsible leadership position knows how heavy the burdens of office can be, especially in callings like bishop, Relief Society president, and stake president (to say nothing of apostle), in which the decisions made can affect countless numbers of people for good or ill. We may privately deplore the poor judgment, the unrighteous dominion, the insensitivity, and even the outright ignorance of some leaders. Yet, after all, they are, like us, simple mortals doing their best according to their lights. Some of them sacrifice a great deal for no apparent benefit, and all are entitled to our support, and occasionally our praise, whenever these can reasonably be given. When they do something outrageously wrong, they need our sympathy even more. "There but for the grace of God . . ." etc.

8. *Do not say or do anything to undermine the influence or legitimacy of Church leaders at any level.* They have their callings and prerogatives, and we should not step forth to "steady the ark" by publicly offering our alternative leadership. Please don't misunderstand: I am *not* advocating silent submission in the face of official stupidity. There is much that we can do without playing the role of usurper. When we write for publication, let us by all means criticize policies, practices, or interpretations of doctrine; but let us not personalize our criticisms with *ad hominem* attacks. They are not only discourteous and condescending, but quite unnecessary. (They can also get you "ex-ed.")

We should feel free, though, to seek *private* interviews and/or correspondence with Church leaders, including our own bishops, in which we can offer, in a spirit of love and humility, our constructive criticisms and suggestions. If these are ignored, then at least we have exercised our callings as "alternate voices," and we have done so without sowing seeds of contention. We are not responsible for how a given leader carries out his or her stewardship. Yet we are not powerless, which leads to the next principle.

9. *Take advantage of legitimate opportunities to express your "alternate voices" and to exercise your free agency in "alternate" ways within the LDS church and culture.* We must never lapse into a posture in which we just sit and gripe. If we find the correlated lesson manuals to be thin fare, it is up to us as teachers to enrich them with relevant supplementary material (including some "alternate voices"). If we are not teachers, then at least we are obligated as class members to speak up

knowledgeably and enrich the class, not simply boycott it.

If we find a general intellectual famine at Church, then we are free to start study groups of our own to supplement the Church fare for those who feel the need. Some of our more conservative leaders may not like such unsponsored study groups, but they have no right to forbid them, and they seldom try (but don't forget principles 2, 3, and 4). In short, even if we are not bishops or general authorities, and even if we are ignored by those who are, there is much constructive that we can do with our "alternate voices": "For the power is in them, wherein they are agents unto themselves. And inasmuch as they do good they shall in nowise lose their reward" (D&C 58:28).

10. *Endure to the end.* The calling of "alternate voice" is too important for us to allow

ourselves either to be intimidated by the exercise of unrighteous dominion or to be silenced by our own fatigue. "And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not" (Galatians 6:9; D&C 64:33). I have seen many a rich harvest in people's lives from seeds planted by "alternate voices," and I hope to live to see many more.

Though I have often failed to comply with all ten of these principles, I have learned from my failures as well as from my successes that the likelihood of influence and efficacy for "alternate voices" depends heavily upon compliance with those principles. They also add up to a personal philosophy that has yielded me a great deal of inner peace in my years of coping with the predicament so common among "alternate voices": commitment to the religion but a feeling of marginality in the Church. That is my testimony. ☐

PSALM

PSALM FOR A SATURDAY NIGHT*

Bring forth thy Sabbath, O Lord,
For I am ready.

I have anointed my head with jubilation
Pressed from thy ripest blessings.
My soul has been washed in thy raining grace,
And I am clean and shining.
O deliver thy Sabbath, for I await!

I have clothed me in a garment of repentance;
The ragged sins of this week have I cast off.
My hair is perfumed with the unguent for forgiving:
There remains no burr or tangle to snarl the sweep of love.
O sanctify thy Sabbath, and let its mantle fall about me!

I have adorned by hand with jewels of compassion.
My feet are shod with eagerness for thy service.
Here in the pulsing darkness I bate my breath
And urge the stars on in their passage.

Bring forth thy Day, O Lord,
For thy servant waits.

—ELOUISE BELL

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A call to let every woman and man speak in the name of God

GOD'S ALTERNATE VOICES

By Scott Kenney

HERE ONCE WAS A MAN NAMED BALAAM, SON OF BEOR. When the Israelites began to take possession of his homeland, Balaam went to discuss matters with the Moabites:

And God's anger was kindled because he went: and the angel of the Lord stood in the way for an adversary against him. Now he was riding upon his ass and his two servants were with him.

And the ass saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand; and the ass turned aside out of the way, and went into the field: and Balaam smote the ass, to turn her into the way. But the angel of the Lord stood in a path of the vineyards, a wall being on this side, and a wall on that side. And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she thrust herself into the wall, and crushed Balaam's foot against the wall: and he smote her again.

And the angel of the Lord went further, and stood in a narrow place, where was no way to turn either to the right hand or to the left.

And when the ass saw the angel of the Lord, she fell down under Balaam: and Balaam's anger was kindled, and he smote the ass with a staff.

And the Lord opened the mouth of the ass, and she said unto Balaam, What have I done unto thee, that thou hast smitten me these three times?

And Balaam said . . . Because thou hast mocked me: I would there were a sword in mine hand, for now would I kill thee. . . .

Then the Lord opened the eyes of Balaam, and he saw the angel of the Lord standing in the way, and his sword drawn in his hand: and he bowed down his head, and fell flat on his face.

And the angel of the Lord said unto him, Wherefore hast thou smitten thine ass these three times? behold,

I went out to withstand thee, because thy way is perverse before me: And the ass saw me, and turned from me these three times: unless she had turned from me, surely now also I had slain thee, and saved her alive (Numbers 22:22-33).¹

This paper is based on the premise that if God could speak to Balaam through an ass, he could speak to Mormons through the Sunstone Symposium. I believe that Mormon scholars, who occasionally leave the path and wander into secular fields, sometimes unearth things authorities prefer buried. Writers who bruise sensitivities may have a vision of the angel which authorities refuse to acknowledge. Modern Balaams, with the rod of dogma and the lash of authority, sometimes whip their best allies for obeying an angel's voice. And if, in fact, God could speak to the Church through lay members, it is our responsibility to speak out and not squelch the voice of God within us.

Five hundred years after the Hebrews had taken over Balaam's homeland, two hundred years after they had divided into Judah and Israel, Isaiah appeared: "What are your endless sacrifices to me? says Yahweh. I am sick of holocausts of rams and the fat of calves. . . . When you come to present yourselves before me, who asked you to trample over my courts? Bring me your worthless offerings no more, the smoke of them fills me with disgust." Jehovah was fed up with the "righteousness" of his people. Under priesthood direction, in modern parlance, they attended meetings, prayed unceasingly, read the scriptures, met their temple quotas, and paid tithing to the max. But they failed to deal with institutionalized poverty, to "help the oppressed, be just to the orphan, plead for the widow" (Isaiah 1:10-17). The people were "following the Bethren" to destruction. And that is why Lehi fled Jerusalem—priesthood ordinances and ritual, and the Law had become more important than simple justice and human dignity. Through Amos the Lord declared, "I hate and despise your feasts. . . . I reject your oblations, and refuse to look at your sacrifices of fattened cattle. Let me have no more the din of your chanting, no more of your strumming on harps. But let justice flow like water, and

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integrity like an unfailing stream" (Amos 3:21-24). Hosea put it succinctly: "What I want is love, not sacrifice" (Hosea 6:6).

Seven hundred years later, another Jew, a carpenter's son from Nazareth, rode into Jerusalem on a donkey (Matthew 21:5, Isaiah 62:11, Zechariah 9:9). He carried none of the trappings of a high priest, had no official status. He came in the prophetic tradition, as a critic, independent of priesthood authority. He was the Messiah. Not by virtue of the laying on of hands, but by the revelation of God in his person.

Jesus' first act on entering the city of Jerusalem was to go to the temple. There he rebuked the money changers and drove them out (Mark 11:15-17). The high priests and elders came, and demanded to know by what authority he presumed to act like this. Jesus replied:

"I will ask you a question, only one; if you tell me the answer to it, I will then tell you my authority for acting like this. John's baptism: where did it come from: heaven or man?" And they argued it out this way among themselves, "If we say from heaven, he will retort, 'Then why did you refuse to believe him?'; but if we say from man, we have the people to fear, for they all hold that John was a prophet." So their reply to Jesus was, "We do not know." And he retorted, "Nor will I tell you my authority for acting like this" (Matthew 21:24-37).

The point here is not that Jesus was a clever debater, nor that he had received authority from John. No. The point is that the authorities were asking the wrong question. The word of God, whether spoken by an ass or by the Messiah himself, carries its own authority. It needs no other pedigree. The *people* knew that. They knew John was a prophet by the *message* he bore. Some recognized Jesus as the Messiah, but it was not because he showed them a certificate of ordination. They recognized the voice of the Good Shepherd. When they *heard* him, they knew—even though he was denounced as an imposter by the presiding quorum of high priests.

Jesus was an alternate voice. Of Church authorities he said, "The scribes and the Pharisees occupy the chair of Moses. You must therefore do what they tell you and listen to what they say." Too often we forget that Jesus did not renounce the authority of the scribes and Pharisees. He never denied their authority. He accepted it (Matthew 23:1-3).

Nevertheless official voices were not above criticism.

They tie up heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders. . . . Everything they do is done to attract attention, like wearing broader phylacteries and longer tassels, like wanting to take the place of honor at banquets and the front seats in the synagogues, being greeted obsequiously in the market squares and having people call them Rabbi. . . . You hypocrites! You who travel over sea and land to make a single proselyte, and when you have him you make him twice as fit for hell as you are (Matthew 23:4-36; cf., Mark 12:38-39 and Luke 20:46).

It could be said that Jesus was sowing contention, was speaking evil of the Lord's anointed. After all, by his own admis-

sion, these "whitewashed tombs" occupied "the chair of Moses." Apparently there are times to stand in silence before authorities (Matthew 26:62-63, Mark 14:60:61); times to denounce abuse of authority; times to "resist not evil" and times to lay an ax at the root of the tree (Matthew 5:39, 3:10).

Jesus was a leveller, and he detested authoritarianism. "You must not allow yourselves to be called Rabbi," he told his disciples, "Nor must you allow yourselves to be called teachers. . . . You know that among the pagans their so-called rulers lord it over them, and their great men make their authority felt. This is not to happen among you. No; anyone who wants to be great among you must be your servant, and anyone who wants to be first among you must be your slave, just as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve" (Matthew 20:24-28; cf., Mark 10:41-45, Luke 22:24-27; also Mark 9:35, Luke 9:48, Matthew 23:11). Jesus' disciples were to be servants, not authorities.

Throughout the Judeo-Christian tradition nothing is more important to authorities than obedience. That is natural; official voices are the keepers of the law. But the story of ancient, and to a certain extent even modern scripture, is one of God's breaking through the din of official voices with alternate critiques. Isaiah, Amos, and Hosea criticized the priesthood cult for honoring ritual more than justice. Jesus reminded the Pharisees that "the sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath," and the essence of the Law was simply to love God and love your neighbor as yourself (Mark 2:27; Matthew 22:37-40, also Mark 12:28-31 and Luke 10:27-28). Historically, official voices tend to mix up ends and means, and almost always attach more importance to their callings than God does.

For example, after the Crucifixion and Resurrection, Jesus first appeared to Mary and the other women, not to the First Presidency or the Twelve. This would be a serious breach of Mormon protocol. Naturally, when women reported the visitation, the apostles refused to believe. After all, they were women! They had no priesthood, let alone the calling of prophet, seer, and revelator. But Peter ran to the tomb to check things out for himself and sure enough, Jesus was not there. Instead, Jesus was appearing to two locals on the road to Emmaus. Jesus spent quite a little time with these two, explaining the scriptures and dining with them. Only later did he drop by to visit the apostles (Luke 24:1-36). Why? I don't know, but the record is clear, since the act of Creation, the most important revelation of God to man was first given to women, then to laymen, independent of the duly constituted and functioning quorums of the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles. Initially, "the Brethren" were out of the loop.

If the apostles were not the first to be informed about the Resurrection, will they necessarily be the first to be informed about the ordination of women? Why do we think apostles have to be experts on sexual morality, Church history, or the relationship of religion to science and art? Why would God, after thousands of years, suddenly reverse himself in the nineteenth century and stop communicating through "alternate voices" by limiting revelation to "official" channels?

As Jesus was an alternate voice to Jews, Paul was an alternate voice to the early Christians. To the Galatians he wrote: "The fact is, brothers, and I want you to realize this, the Good News I preached is not a human message that I was given by men, it is something I learned only through a revelation of Jesus Christ. You must have heard of my career as a practicing Jew, how merciless I was in persecuting the Church of God . . . and how enthusiastic I was for the traditions of my ancestors" (Galatians 1:11-14). Paul had been a defender of Jewish orthodoxy, a champion of the official tradition against Christian Jews.

"Then God . . . chose to reveal his Son in me, so that I might preach the Good News about him to the pagans. I did not stop to discuss this with any human being, nor did I go up to Jerusalem to see those who were already apostles before me, but I went off to Arabia at once and later went straight back from there to Damascus" (Galatians 1:15-17). Paul went out of his way to emphasize that he did not go to any church authorities. He was not called by anyone but God, nor did he receive "the laying on of hands by those who are in authority." He wanted the Galatians to know that his authority was independent of Peter and the other apostles.

Even when after three years I went up to Jerusalem to visit Cephas [Jesus, you will recall, had named Peter "Cephas," meaning "rock" (John 1:42)] and stayed with him for fifteen days, I did not see any of the other apostles; I only saw James, the brother of the Lord, and I swear before God that what I have just written is the literal truth. . . .

It was not till fourteen years had passed that I went up to Jerusalem again. . . . I went there as the result of a revelation, and privately I laid before the leading men the Good News as I proclaim it among the pagans; I did so for fear the course I was adopting or had already adopted would not be allowed.

And what happened? Even though Titus . . . is a Greek, he was not obliged to be circumcised. The question came up only because some who do not really belong to the brotherhood have furtively crept in to spy on the liberty we enjoy in Christ Jesus, and want to reduce us all to slavery. [Paul viewed Jewish obsession with obedience to the Law as "bondage."] I was so determined to safeguard for you the true meaning of the Good News, that I refused even out of deference to yield to such people for one moment. As a result, these people who are acknowledged leaders—not that their importance matters to me, since God has no favorites—these leaders, as I say, had nothing to add to the Good News as I preach it. On the contrary, they recognized that I had been commissioned to preach the Good News to the uncircumcised just as Peter had been commissioned to preach it to the circumcised. The same person whose action had made Peter the apostle of the circumcised had given me a similar mission to the pagans. So, James, Cephas and John, these leaders, these pillars, shook hands with Barnabas and me as a sign of partnership:

we were to go to the pagans and they to the circumcised (Galatians 1:15-28).

For seventeen years, Paul pursued a course independent of Peter and the other apostles, a course he at least suspected was contrary to their teachings. During those seventeen years he visited Peter only twice. On the second visit he risked schism by insisting that the gentile converts did not have to be circumcised or observe Jewish dietary laws. He refused to yield to the apostles because "God has no favorites." And when the session was over, they shook hands "as a sign of partnership." Not authority, partnership:

We were to go to the pagans and they to the circumcised.

When Cephas came to Antioch, however, I opposed him to his face, since he was manifestly in the wrong. His custom had been to eat with the pagans, but after certain friends of James arrived he stopped doing this and kept away from them altogether for fear of the group that insisted on circumcision. . . .

When I saw they were not respecting the true meaning of the Good News, I said to Cephas in front of everyone, "In spite of being a Jew, you live like the pagans and not like the Jews, so you have no right to make the pagans copy Jewish ways" (Galatians 2:8-14).

By what authority did Paul confront Peter, opposing him "to his face . . . in front of everyone"? Certainly not by virtue of any priesthood ordination, nor even by claim to special revelation. He opposed Peter simply because "he was manifestly in the wrong."

What was Paul's purpose in telling the story in such a straightforward, even arrogant manner? I think Paul is saying, don't be intimidated. Acknowledge authority, but don't be intimidated. As Jesus said, we have only one master and only one teacher (Matthew 23:8).

JOSEPH SMITH had an experience through which he understood that all Christendom was manifestly in the wrong, and though all kinds of pressures were brought to bear, he would not, could not deny his experience. He became an alternate voice, and the restoration movement he initiated was at first noted not for its priesthood authority, but for the charismatic gifts: dreams, visions, prophecy, healing, speaking in tongues. Initially, Joseph and Oliver held the same office as most of the other men in the Church. They were simply "Elders." But six months after the organization of the Church, Joseph announced a revelation that "no one shall be appointed to receive commandments and revelations in this church excepting my servant Joseph Smith, Jun." (D&C 28:2). Section Twenty was amended so Joseph and Oliver were not simply "Elders," but the "First" and "Second" Elders. Later it was revised again to make them apostles as well. Alternate voices became official voices. Eventually authority and revelation became virtually synonymous. According to Bruce R. McConkie:

Every person properly appointed and sustained to

act in an official capacity in the Church is entitled to the spirit of revelation to guide the particular organization or group over which he presides. The "Presidency are over the Church," the Prophet said, "and revelations of the mind and will of God to the Church are to come through the Presidency. This is the order of heaven, and the power and privilege of this priesthood. It is also the privilege of any officer in this Church to obtain revelations, so far as relates to his particular calling and duty in the Church."

"This system of promulgating revelations through the established head of the Lord's earthly work," McConkie concludes, "is so unbending and inflexible that it stands as a test to establish the truth or falsity of purported revelations."² In other words, the Spirit invariably follows the hierarchical order of the priesthood.

Jesus, on the other hand, compared the Spirit to the wind. "The wind blows wherever it pleases; you hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. That is how it is with all who are born of the Spirit" (John 3:8). The Spirit is like the wind. You cannot tell where it will come from next. It might be from a bishop or home teacher; it might be out of the mouths of babes; it might even be out of the mouth of an ass. How does that square with the notion of an "unbending and inflexible" system through which revelations are promulgated? It doesn't. As Paul would have said, "Brethren, you are manifestly in the wrong."

In 1965 I was called on a mission to the New England States. Being a good missionary, I knew next to nothing about other churches. But the Second Vatican Council was drawing to an end, and in its three-year course the Council had generated a lot of public controversy. I found it symptomatic of an apostate church: various factions debating and arguing points of doctrine, making demands and concessions, negotiating wording. As though God would run a church by committee! How preferable the Mormon God who simply tells a prophet what to do. No fuss, no muss.

Little did I realize, at that very moment, three thousand miles away, Eugene England and his cohorts were hatching a scheme that would, for me, change the face of Mormonism forever. Leonard Arrington and Lowell Bennion were advisory editors, and on *Dialogue's* first editorial board, Dallin H. Oaks.

What a difference twenty-four years make.

It was Saturday morning, the first Saturday of April 1989, and I was in the yard burning weeds. "Come in here," my wife called. "I think you should listen to this." I hurried into the house to hear Elder Oaks on the radio waxing eloquent about "alternate voices."

Most of his comments were not flattering. A few alternate voices, he begrudgingly admitted, might be "well-motivated," but others are motivated by "selfish personal interests, such as property, pride, prominence, or power. Other voices are the bleatings of lost souls who cannot hear the voice of the Shepherd and trot about trying to find their way without his guidance."

"Members who listen to the voice of the Church need not

be on guard against being misled," Elder Oaks observed. That is because the Church has "procedures to ensure approved content" that "provide a spiritual quality control that allows members to rely on the truth of what is said. . . . They have no such assurance for what they hear from alternate voices," because some alternate voices have the "secret object" of deceiving and devouring the flock. "Gospel truths have been corrupted when left to the interpretation and sponsorship of scholars who lack the authority and reject the revelations of God," he warned. And so there would be no confusion as to what alternate voices he had in mind, Elder Oaks pointed out that they "are heard in magazines, journals, and newspapers and at lectures, symposia, and conferences."³

It was terrific. For years it seemed no one was listening. I feared we would forever remain a few hundred souls bleating in the wilderness, but here was twenty minutes of Mormon prime time dedicated to alternate voices. We had been heard, we had status! I shouted Hallelujah and danced a little jig. Then I sat down and wrote out a hundred dollar check to Sunstone. I don't know how many others were so inspired, but to those who fear conference had a chilling effect, I say, opposition calls for commitment. The best is yet to come.

Doug Alder, Tom Alexander, Lavina Fielding Anderson, Leonard Arrington, Art Bassett, Maureen Ursenbach Beecher, Lowell Bennion, Davis Bitton, Mary Bradford, Newell Bringham, Lester Bush, Claudia Bushman, Richard Cummings, Eugene England, Ed Firmage, Jess Groesbeck, Stan Kimball, Armand Mauss, Lou Moench, Jack Newell, Linda King Newell, Grethe Peterson, Levi Peterson, Richard Poll, D. Michael Quinn, J. Bonner Ritchie, Tom Rogers, R. Jan Stout, Ron Walker, the list goes on and on. These individuals are not young upstarts, not rebels or rabble rousers: they are voices of intellectual honesty and spiritual integrity. When in the history of the Church could alternate voices muster such a roster? When in the history of the Church have alternate voices had a larger audience or made greater contributions? In the last year, scores of articles and dozens of books have been published by alternate voices. Thousands have attended symposiums from coast to coast. At the 1989 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium, seventy-five papers and twenty-five panels were presented, and two thousand attended. Why do they come, many traveling hundreds of miles? Because they hear the voice of the Good Shepherd here, too, because God speaks not only through prophets, seers, and revelators, but also out of the mouths of babes, scholars, and asses.

In his entire lifetime, my grandfather E.E. Ericksen would not have seen as many independent books and articles, or heard as many papers, as have been produced in 1989. Thanks to subscribers and benefactors, writers and publishers, speakers and respondents, administrators and support staff, alternate voices will only grow in numbers and influence. For the first time, alternate voices have an opportunity to make a real difference. I am therefore in complete agreement with those who suggest we take care of the beam in our own eyes before trying to remove the mote from others. The danger of spiritual

pride and arrogance is real and ever-present; so is the sin of lethargy, of burying our talents in the ground. Let us therefore, like Luther, be ever mindful of our own sinfulness, then sin bravely and leave the results to God.

In addressing the Second Vatican Council, John Paul XXIII invited the prelates to throw open the windows and let the sun shine in. That is what Mormonism needs, to draw aside the curtains, open the shutters, and let in some fresh air. Without alternate voices breathing new ideas into the Church, Mormonism would suffocate in its own exhaust. The Church needs a structure, needs conservative leaders to provide continuity and stability. But prophets and apostles are human. Just like scholars, they make mistakes. Imagine telling God that if he has anything important to say, he may only talk to fifteen men headquartered at 47 East South Temple! If true, God's prophets, seers, and revelators are his Jailors as well. Dostoevsky's Grand Inquisitor would be green with envy.¹

God has more to say to this generation than emanates from the Church's department of "spiritual quality control." The Church needs a loyal opposition to reexamine traditional assumptions, suggest alternate courses, provide new perspectives and creative insights.

If, in these latter days, through symposiums, magazines, and journals, the Lord has seen fit to give the asses of the Church a voice, the Church might give heed to their brayings. To alternate voices who have inspired and uplifted, challenged and confronted me, my unending gratitude. To those who aspire to alternate status, I say, let every woman, every man speak in the name of God; be faithful to your vision; don't be intimidated; contend for the right as God gives you light; and be willing to pay the price.

Do what is right; the day-dawn is breaking
Hailing a future of freedom and light.
Angels above us are silent notes taking
Of ev'ry action; then do what is right.
Do what is right, let the brethren follow.
Battle for freedom in spirit and might;
And with stout hearts look ye forth till tomorrow.
God will protect you; then do what is right.
And don't forget to bray. ☒

1. For the remainder of this paper, biblical passages are quoted from the Jerusalem Bible, an "alternate" translation from ancient texts. Alternate modern translations never sound as important as King James, but they are usually more faithful to the original text.

2. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd Ed. (Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 1966), 646.

3. Dallin H. Oaks, "Alternate Voices," *Ensign* (May 1989):27-30.

4. Fyodor Dostoevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, Part Two, Book V, Chapter 5.

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THE RESTORATION OF ALL THINGS

The aluminum siding peeled away with a bent moan—
Hand-grained tiger maple leapt out from the shadows.
A sliced chip of paint reveals the first brilliant coat—
A raucous turkey red bled beneath the pieties of pigment.

They hand-painted their floors.
They ate on ware the color of lemons
Burnt their flesh on liquid candle tallow
Split open wooden hearts
Stoked throbbing embers
Sliced and turned open virgin soil.
Sowed seed in uneven furrows
And rough shod, trod upon the clotted earth.

Full-faced, the primitively painted
Stare out upon this restitution
We make for them.
From above the timber bed,
Returned by our hands to its proper place
Like the ark on Ararat's thigh,
They exult:

We joined this bed together,
He and I,
With tenon thrust deep into mortise.
We've held true.
Cleave together!
Combine heart to heart!

—STEVEN EPPERSON

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“We need to lift our vision beyond personal prejudices”

President Howard W. Hunter

ARE ALL ALIKE UNTO GOD? PREJUDICE AGAINST BLACKS AND WOMEN IN POPULAR MORMON THEOLOGY

By Eugene England

WHAT WILL PEOPLE FORTY OR FIFTY YEARS from now think of us? What will seem as blatantly wrong to them as the racism and sexism of fifty years ago—or today—now seem to us? Will it be our careless destruction of forests and pollution of air and water that left an ugly, diminished earth to our descendants? Will it be our blind, heartless enmity with the Russians and Chinese that wasted trillions of dollars on arms while most of the earth's people went hungry and without adequate housing or education? Or will our descendants, building the New Jerusalem, wonder why we spent so much time at Sunstone symposia sitting around complaining about such things as prejudice in popular Mormon theology when Christ was at the door and the gospel needing to be taken to the world.

But again, they may wonder why we didn't help bring the Millennium sooner by working more directly and courageously to achieve a crucial condition of the New Jerusalem—that we all indeed be one, that black and white, male and female, be all alike unto ourselves as well as unto God. This essay is intended to help clear our minds and hearts for that task. I realize that it may oversimplify or sound dogmatic at times. Please help me achieve my real intent by silently prefacing each of my statements with “It seems that . . .”

First let me give you a little quiz. Just jot down true or false by each of the following eight statements:

1. We will be punished for our own sins, and not for Adam's transgression.
2. All are alike unto God, both male and female.
3. All are alike unto God, both black and white.
4. In order for the faith of any rational being to center in God for life and salvation that person must believe that God is no respecter of persons.

EUGENE ENGLAND is a professor of English at Brigham Young University. Versions of this paper were presented at the Sunstone Symposium XI in Salt Lake City and at the 1989 Northwest Sunstone Symposium in Seattle.

5. Because Eve listened to Satan and transgressed first in the Garden, women must suffer in childbirth and be obedient to their husbands.

6. Plural wives, but not plural husbands, are part of the celestial marriage order.

7. We are born into a particular race as a blessing or a punishment for our actions or decisions in the pre-existence.

8. Religious practices and beliefs which make a spiritual distinction between races or sexes are inspired of God on the basis of what to him are spiritual differences between races or between sexes.

In an American literature course I taught at Brigham Young University, I found my students amused at what they saw as the ridiculous contradictions in Puritan beliefs and practices—for instance, the stated Puritan conviction that they were saved or damned solely by the inscrutable will of God, yet their frantic efforts to prove through good works they *were* saved and their meticulous attempts to discern signs of God's grace or damnation in the way people behaved or what happened to them. I developed a version of the quiz above to engender, through self-scrutiny, a little empathy for the Puritans. It turns out that Mormons, at least my students, seem to be about as inconsistent as the Puritans. How about you? The first four statements I gave are quotations or paraphrases of Mormon scripture or statements by the prophets. Orthodox Mormons, I believe, should have put “true” by all of them. The second four are popular Mormon beliefs which directly contradict in order the first four; that is, five contradicts one, six contradicts two, etc. If the first four are true, the second four should, I believe, all be false. So, those of us who have even one or two of the second four statements marked true are about as inconsistent as Puritan Divine Cotton Mather, a good and pious man who helped burn over twenty women in the 1690s for witchcraft and believed women more inclined to be witches than men because of the physiology of menstruation.¹

Where do such inconsistencies come from and what can

be done about them? Let me give some history and then focus on present solutions. The remarkable thing about the Restoration, coming as it did to an American culture that in the early nineteenth century was openly racist and sexist, is that the Restored gospel avoided, even directly contradicted, traditional beliefs and practices that downgraded blacks and women. While careful not to deny the legal property rights of slaveowners, the Church accepted blacks into full membership, gave them the priesthood, and anticipated their full participation in the gathering and in temple blessings. In 1840 Parley P. Pratt wrote a hymn encouraging the Twelve to carry the gospel to "India's and Afric's sultry plains,"² and that same year the First Presidency wrote that "we may soon expect to see flocking to [Nauvoo] . . . Persons of all languages, and of every tongue, and of every color; who shall with us worship the Lord of Hosts in his holy temple, and offer up their orisons in his sanctuary."³

In his "Views on the Powers and Policy of the Government of the United States," written during his campaign for the U.S. presidency in 1844, Joseph Smith discussed slavery at length and gave no comfort to the then-current ideas about inferiority of blacks or their descent from Cain and Ham or to the then-current claims of divine endorsement for slavery. Instead he called upon the nation to work to "ameliorate the condition of all: black or white, bond or free; for the best of books says, 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men, for to dwell on all the face of the earth.'"⁴

But by 1852 Brigham Young, speaking to Utah's territorial legislature, declared that "any man having one drop of the seed of [Cain] . . . in him cannot hold the priesthood and if no other Prophet ever spake it before I will say it now."⁵ Although there are journal accounts of Brigham Young taking this position earlier, this is apparently the first public, essentially official, denial of the priesthood to blacks. This seems to be a dramatic change from Joseph to Brigham; it appears to contradict the general truth that Joseph Smith's teachings were essentially accepted as normative after his death and also to call in question Brigham Young's claim that he never taught anything but what he heard from Joseph.⁶ On the strength of that claim by Brigham Young and the evidence that many of Joseph Smith's teachings concerning the temple were made only in private councils during the last two years of his life, Ronald Esplin has argued that the denial of priesthood and temple blessings to blacks "was introduced in Nauvoo and consistently applied in practice at least by 1843, although it would require additional documentation to raise the possibility from the realm of the probable to the certain."⁷ Whenever it occurred, there was clearly a change from the teachings and practices of the Church up to the early 1840s, and the present evidence seems to me to point to the beginning of Brigham Young's administration.

The concept of a partial God sending his favorite children into more and more favored conditions leaves the restored Gospel in shambles—especially our concept of a loving God of all people.

It is difficult to judge the reasons for the change—perhaps simply a different personality and perspective in the new prophet, Brigham Young, perhaps (as I argued in 1973) the Lord's recognition, conveyed either to Joseph or to Brigham, that, even with slaves freed, racism would continue to be so strong in America, even in God's true Church, that blacks simply would not be allowed—by others—to function fully and be blessed if they held the priesthood.⁸ Whatever the case, it is now embarrassing to read of a man I love and respect saying such things as the following:

The Lord put a mark upon [Cain], which is the flat nose and the black skin. Trace mankind down to after the flood, and then another curse is pronounced upon the same race—that they should be the "servant of servants"; and they will, until that curse is removed; and the Abolitionists cannot help it, nor in the least alter that decree.⁹

Or this:

Shall I tell you the law of God in regard to the African race? If the white man who belongs to the chosen seed mixes his blood with the seed of Cain, the penalty, under the law of

God is death on the spot.¹⁰

I can only take comfort that President Young never taught that the priesthood was denied because of any action or lack of valiance in the pre-existence, and he held out some hope that the curse would eventually be removed in this life—though many Mormons later forgot both *those* elements of his teachings.

By the late nineteenth century, though all slaves in Utah (contrary to Brigham Young's expectations) had been freed by the Emancipation Proclamation, Utah was much like the rest of the country in its beliefs about Negro inferiority and the rightness of prejudice and segregation. This was true even of the more educated and supposedly enlightened leaders like that hero of Mormon intellectuals, B. H. Roberts (who in his ideas about race was perfectly in tune with Harvard professors such as Louis Agassiz). Roberts included, with approval, in the 1907 *Seventy's Course in Theology* a quotation from a then-current defense of racism, *The Color Line, A Brief in Behalf of the Unborn*: "That the negro is markedly inferior to the Caucasian is proved both craniologically and by six thousand years of planet-wide experience; and . . . the commingling of inferior with superior must lower the higher."¹¹

In 1931, a new rationale for the Church's one official racist practice, denial of the priesthood and of temple blessings to blacks of African descent, was developed by Joseph Fielding Smith in his very influential *The Way to Perfection*.¹² Explicitly recognizing that developments in science and popular thought had undermined the traditional rationale based on descent from

Cain, Elder Smith put forward what he called the “pre-existence hypothesis”: Assuming that blacks themselves were somehow responsible for the denial, he used what might be called the Mormon escape clause for difficult social questions, that is, pushing the cause back to our pre-mortal development and decisions. By 1949 this hypothesis became the major rationale in the first official statement of Church policy on blacks, though it was there stated undogmatically as a *possible* explanation.¹³

One thing that did not change in twentieth century Mormonism was the persistent rejection of racial mixing, whether in intermarriage or simple social intercourse, a rejection which began in Joseph’s time and continued. The predominantly Mormon Utah legislature in 1939 extended its anti-miscegenation statute to prohibit whites from marrying Mongolians, members of the “malay race,” or anyone with even an eighth part black ancestry,¹⁴ and in the 1940s it persistently killed public housing and fair employment bills aimed at reducing segregation. In 1947 the First Presidency wrote to Mormon sociologist Lowry Nelson, who had questioned the Church’s racial policies, that racial intermarriage was “a concept which has heretofore been most repugnant to most normal-minded people.”¹⁵

WELL, here we are, forty years later, probably with some relatively normal-minded people reading this essay who are married to people of other races. Blacks were given the priesthood twelve years ago; no leaders now speak against interracial marriages (except occasionally on the purely practical grounds that the couple and their children will “experience difficulties” in society); the Church has no longer any official racist practices or doctrines. But there is something going on still, much more surprising to me than those statements by Brigham Young or B. H. Roberts or the First Presidency. Let me give some examples.

In January 1989, just before Martin Luther King’s birthday, I received an unusual phone call. The voice was pleasant enough but the request a bit unsettling: “I’ve just read your essay on blacks and the priesthood. Can I come and talk with you?”

I said, “Sure,” but as I was waiting I wondered who might still find that sixteen-year-old work troubling.¹⁶ It was a student, who introduced himself as a fairly recent convert from a big Eastern city, thanked me for the help the essay had given him, and told me how much he had been surprised and hurt to find, here at BYU, that most people he talked to, including professors, still believed that blacks like him had been denied the priesthood because they were “less valiant” in the pre-existence.

The next week, in BYU’s unofficial magazine, the *Student Review*, Stuart Pace, reflecting on his interracial marriage, talked

about the “tacit racism” he has found in Provo. He mentioned “professors and amateur theologians who hypothesized about what spiritual shortcoming prevented blacks from getting the priesthood all those years, never once asking themselves what the universal atonement’s shortcoming was that prevented it from applying to all men.”¹⁷

About that same time one of my students told me of going to dinner with friends of roommates and being regaled with a story, by a returned missionary, about how a convert’s skin gradually turned white after she joined the Church, because of her spiritual change. The roommates stared at their plates in embarrassment but said nothing; the regaler was completely oblivious to the insult he was giving my student, who despite her conversion remains as black as ever; and she was hurt to the point of impotent anger and silence and later to uncertainty and tears as she considered that the people of the Church she believes is true seem to believe there is a connection between skin color and righteousness.

These three people, and probably thousands—even millions—of others, perhaps especially the white Mormons who believe such ideas, are being hurt, damaged, even damned up, I believe, in their spiritual

progression, by a popular but false theology. It is a theology that developed—from Orson Pratt to B. H. Roberts to Joseph Fielding Smith—as a tentative, unofficial rationalization for the official policy of denying blacks the priesthood. But such theology gradually became so universally believed, despite its inconsistency with central Mormon beliefs and scriptures, that it easily took on dogmatic, official status when it was included, in 1958, in Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s unofficial but forcefully worded and extremely popular book, *Mormon Doctrine*. It was then developed in detail by two books written specifically as rationales for the priesthood denial when that denial was coming under increasing attack, John J. Stewart’s *Mormonism and the Negro* and John Lewis Lund’s *The Church and the Negro*.¹⁸ In each of these books a temporary Church practice is used to develop a racist theology: the concept of a partial God, sending his favorite children into more and more favored conditions where they buy their salvation easily by taking advantage of their already superior advantages. Such an argument, that lets the tail of historical practice wag the dog of fundamental doctrine, leaves great concepts of the restored Gospel in a shambles—especially our concept of a universally loving God of all people and of a universal Atonement.

A typical example of the unabashed racism that resulted is the following from Lund’s book: “When people rebel against God’s commandments, either during their pre-earth life or while in mortality, they are given a dark skin so that those who are of the chosen seed will not intermarry with them.”¹⁹ I know from personal conversations with some of those affected that

Since we are constantly changing and growing, sinning and repenting, we can’t really judge *anything* about anyone’s pre-existent life.

such ideas administer devastating hurt to dark-skinned people, who make up the majority of God's children on the earth and will before long make up a majority of members of the Church.

One reader of this essay has suggested that perhaps Mormons don't really take these notions seriously any more. I hope she is right, but I've taken various informal polls, and on that evidence and the many stories I keep hearing from blacks and other racial minorities themselves about such ideas being taught or left unchallenged in classes at BYU—right in their presence, I am convinced that a large number, perhaps a majority, of Mormons still believe them. I will proceed on that assumption.

What's wrong with the notion that blacks are "not equal" (in Elder McConkie's words in his original edition) and that that inequality is caused by God? What is false about thinking that God sends people into a certain race and puts "spiritual restrictions" on them because they were "less valiant"—so false that, I believe, it interferes with the salvation of all those who believe it, whether black or white? Simply, as Stuart Pace pointed out, that such theology denies the "universal atonement" of Christ by telling blacks they did something wrong in the pre-existence but that they can neither know what they did nor repent of it. It thus introduces, against the many scriptures that claim the Atonement is universal and *all* are born innocent into life, the notion that there are differences, color-coded by race, in the plan of salvation.

And it denies all common sense: There are people with every possible degree of black inheritance; how "white" do you have to be to inherit Abraham's blessings instead of Cain's curse or the pre-existence stigma: 10 percent, 50 percent, 99 44/100 percent?

And it denies all our experience: It implies that all the best black people in the world—Martin Luther King, Elijah Abel, Alan Cherry, Catherine Stokes, my student—did something in the pre-existence that makes them intrinsically, spiritually, inferior to the worst white people in the world, such as Hitler, Stalin, Hofmann, Bundy.

And this damning idea that all blacks are spiritually inferior because of some unknown act or choice in the pre-existence directly denies one of the most beautiful and important and absolutely clear Book of Mormon scriptures, 2 Nephi 26:33: "[The Lord] doeth that which is *good* among the children of men; and he doeth nothing save it be *plain* unto the children of men; and he inviteth them all to come unto him and partake of his goodness . . . and *all are alike unto God*, both [*black and white*]" (my emphasis). This scripture does not suggest, of course, that there are no physical or cultural differences between races but simply that there are no differences "unto God," that is, gradings that are essential, spiritual, that imply different

value or potential or processes of salvation and exaltation between races.

ELDER MCCONKIE, just a few weeks after the revelation giving blacks the priesthood in 1978, claimed that in the past the Church, including himself, had not fully understood the scripture that claims "all are alike unto God." "Many of us," he said, "never imagined or supposed that these passages had the extensive and broad meaning that they do have," apparently because we assumed there were essential differences, distinctions "unto God," between the races. Elder McConkie, well aware that he had made such distinctions and taught that blacks would not receive the priesthood on earth, continued, "Forget everything that I said . . . that is contrary to the present revelation. [I] spoke with a limited understanding."²⁰ That was brave and good advice. But we have not followed it.

It is time, right now, to have Elder McConkie's courage and to accept the inspiration of our prophets and to renounce the false theology, the limited understanding, that we developed in an effort to explain our practice of denying blacks the priesthood.

That theology, if we cling to it, subsidizes racism as much as the practice God has inspired us to renounce. It is time for all of us, especially any who teach religion, in seminaries and institutes, Church classes, or at BYU, to turn to the scriptures and receive the inspiration by which God renounces the theology as well. It is time to turn completely away from the peripheral and destructive notions which undermine our central concept of the universal Fatherhood of God, the universal brotherhood of man, and the Atonement of Christ.

It is time to reaffirm what seems to me the only scriptural and logical doctrine of the relation of the pre-existence to this life, that our actions and decisions there helped form the internal *quality* of what we became there and continue to be here, not our color or other external "advantages" of birth. Of course, there is a connection between the pre-existence and what we are here, and it is the obvious one: We are the same people, continuing with the same general kind of character and qualities we had there, but that doesn't mean that God grades us accordingly by color or condition of birth. In fact, since we are constantly changing and growing, sinning and repenting, we can't really judge *anything* about anyone's pre-existent life. The only thing we need to know and have any right to act upon is that we are all children of God, "alike unto God," and of infinite potential. As Joseph Smith stated in the King Follett Discourse: "All the minds and spirits that God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement and improvement."²¹ This means that we do not have moral *identity*, fixed and determined by past actions and signalled by skin color or condition of birth,

We should not be looking for signs by which to judge each other's moral identity but rejoicing in and doing all we can to help develop every person's infinite moral potential.

but rather a moral *history* and infinite moral *potential*; we should not be looking for signs by which to judge each other's moral identity but rejoicing in and doing all we can to help develop every person's infinite moral potential.

Some have argued that since we are judged and given graded status *after* this life then it follows that we were *before*. But the Book of Mormon makes it clear that our post-mortal judgment is essentially administered by ourselves, based on complete self-knowledge, and consists mainly of such self-awareness and continuing to have "the same spirit that possessed our bodies" when we died (Mosiah 3:25 and Alma 34:34)—rather than the traditional Christian set of external rewards and punishments.

The *only* kind of pre-mortal judgment for which we have any scriptural evidence (besides, of course, the third who chose to deny themselves the chance to even *come* here) is the sending by God of certain "noble and great ones" into times and conditions where they can best *serve*—and if we can assume that prophets like Joseph Smith and Samuel the Lamanite are among those, they are certainly not rewarded with luxurious earthly conditions or white skin.

If there are any connections, for the rest of us, between our pre-existent character and the external conditions of our birth here—race, family, wealth, position, etc.—we do not have any clue as to what those connections are. We can only be certain, on scriptural warrant, that those connections are not a punishment nor a denial of the Atonement. In fact the most logical connection, given the assumption and scriptural evidence that our Heavenly Parents are better than the best earthly ones, is quite different from the usual one in popular Mormon thought. If good earthly parents had a chance to send one child to a badly-run summer camp and one to an excellent one—and one child was sinful and troubled and the other righteous and a good influence—where would they send the troubled child? To the place the child could get the most help, I think the gospel would suggest and most of us would believe. But that means, assuming God is such a good parent, that we who are born into privileged white Mormon families were likely those *least* valiant in the pre-existence and in need of help! I'm very serious about this; such a relationship to the pre-existence, if we insist on any at all, squares much better with what we know of God's nature than the other notion, which makes God partial, racist, and vindictive.

LET me suggest two lines of thinking that can help us and those we influence to renounce any negative connection between pre-existence and race. In 1963, when the Civil Rights movement and also agitation about the Church's policy concerning blacks were at a height, I had expressed myself in my ward as unable to accept either the curse-of-Cain or the pre-

existence hypotheses as consistent with the scriptures. I was told that I could not be a Mormon in good standing without accepting these "doctrines."

I knew that Joseph Fielding Smith had been the main modern Church writer about such matters and was very close to being the official Church scribe as well as President of the Quorum of the Twelve and likely our next Prophet. I got an appointment with him and asked him directly if I must believe in the "pre-existence hypothesis" to have good Church standing. He replied, "Yes, because that is the teaching of the scriptures." I asked him to show me the teaching in the scriptures, since I had not been able to see it there.

President Smith patiently went through the sources with me, particularly the Pearl of Great Price,²² and then he said something quite remarkable: "No, you do not have to believe that Negroes are denied the priesthood because of the pre-existence. I have always assumed that because it was what I was taught, and it made sense, but you don't have to believe it to be in good standing, because it is not definitely stated in the scriptures. And I have received no revelation on the matter."

He then said to me that if Negroes were being denied the priesthood because of their pre-existence then we could not expect any of them to receive the priesthood in this life. It would be unfair, inconsistent with God's perfect justice, to those who had been denied it up to that point if some started getting it. The logic is good, but of course it has an important implication: If indeed Negroes ever *are* given the priesthood then we can only preserve our sense of God's justice by admitting that the reason it was withheld in the first place was *not* the pre-existence. President Smith did not state that logical implication, but I believe he would have accepted it had he lived to see the priesthood given to blacks in 1978.

The trouble is that others have not accepted that logic, though they have accepted the new revelation and apparently adjusted well to blacks having the priesthood. Even Elder McConkie, who leaned very heavily on President Smith's teachings about race, did not accept that implication of his logic about the justice of God. When he reprinted the 1966 second edition of *Mormon Doctrine* in 1979, it seems the only change he made was under the entry for "Negroes," for which he wrote a report of the new revelation in place of the old entry. He thus removed his earlier comments under "Negroes" about racial inequality and priesthood denial because of "lack of spiritual valiance" in the pre-existence. But he left complete his old entry under "Races of Men," in which he continues to suggest that other races than the white arise from "racial degeneration" and "apostasy" from "our common parents" and states clearly that "The race and nation in which men are born in this world is a direct result of their pre-existent life."²³ His book thus con-

If good earthly parents had a chance to send one child to a badly-run summer camp and one to an excellent one, where would they send the troubled child?

tinues to provide a powerfully authoritative claim for a connection which cannot help, it seems to me, but implicitly encourage racism—and the examples I've given above clearly demonstrate that such racism continues in Mormonism. But Elder McConkie's claim, it seems to me, is directly counter to the reasoning of Joseph Fielding Smith and the clear implications of the revelation of 1978.

My second line of thinking begins with the quotation used in statement four on my quiz. It is from the "Lectures on Faith," which were partially written and fully approved by Joseph Smith and included in the Doctrine and Covenants as scripture until 1921:

It is also necessary that men should have an idea that [God] is no respecter of persons ["but in every nation he that fears God and works righteousness is accepted of him"], for with the idea of all the other excellencies in his character, and this one wanting, men could not exercise faith in him; because if he were a respecter of persons, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise faith in him, or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion; but no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he is no respecter of persons, than they see they have authority by faith to lay hold on eternal life, the richest boon of heaven, because God is no respecter of persons, and that every man in every nation has an equal privilege.²⁴

This is a marvelous argument, though we seem to have missed it in popular Mormon thought: All human beings *must* be alike unto God and we *must* understand that that is *true* for the plan of salvation to work—for faith unto repentance, the experience of Christ's Atonement, and exaltation even to be possible. The passage describes precisely how it seems to me it must feel to be black or a woman in a racist and sexist culture, supposedly being punished for something done by an ancestor or inherent in their own nature, but with no way to repent of that "something" and no certainty about its effects on their future. Joseph Smith provides us here with the most powerful practical reason why we must immediately stop teaching theology that supports color or sex prejudice: We are denying others—and probably ourselves—full access to Christ and his plan of redemption.

THOUGH it provides a powerful argument against all prejudice, the quotation above from the "Lectures on Faith" is full of apparently sexist language ("every *man* in every nation has an equal privilege"). Are the races alike unto God but not the

Are the races alike unto God but not the sexes? I believe the Restoration was as radically nonsexist as it was nonracist—at least to begin with.

sexes? Actually I believe the language in that passage is perfectly general rather than sexist, referring to all "mankind"—as we used to say but no longer should. At any rate, the Restoration was as radically nonsexist as it was nonracist—at least to begin with. Though Mormon women were from the beginning excluded from the governing priesthood, as in every other Judeo-Christian church, and thus from much of Church leadership, even this began to change when Joseph Smith responded to women's

needs and questions with the founding of the Relief Society in 1842. There is good evidence that he meant to make that organization a literal extension of the primary functions of priesthood, which are service and healing, and that the special endowment and sealing given to the so-called Temple Couples in Nauvoo actually introduced women equally into a body, with at least some governing functions, of "kings and queens, priests and priestesses," beyond the purely patriarchal Melchizedek priesthood.²⁵ Whatever the case, when Eliza R. Snow got the Relief Society going again in Utah, she presided with the title "High Priestess" over the "priestesses" who did endowment work and gave priesthood blessings in the temple.

During most of the nineteenth century the Church was in what non-Mormon historian Jan Shipps has called a mode of radical restoration. Mormon women were fully involved and their involvement crucial to the success of a literal building of the Kingdom of God that required heroic efforts not only in traditional women's roles of establishing homes and caring for their families and the sick and needy as the Saints were uprooted time after time. The Restoration effort also required women, because of polygamy and the continuing proselyting effort, both of which reduced the presence of men, to become heads of households and thus to develop occupational and professional skills. They did this, as Shipps has pointed out, "in far greater numbers than [women did] elsewhere in the Western world."²⁶

Mormon women, individually and collectively, developed unusual independence, participated in public life, including publishing and politics, voted and involved themselves in the national suffrage movements. They enjoyed remarkable equality within the Church itself through the Relief Society and through their opportunities in speaking in tongues, healing the sick, and giving washings and anointings and blessings to women.

The success of the Mormon Kingdom generated opposition from Victorian society and the U.S. government that nearly destroyed it by 1890, and the Church moved into a period of conservative accommodation and preservation, including the end of polygamy (which, despite its sexist nature had liberated many women) and of theocratic politics and economics. Mormon women generally took the place defined for them as wives and supporters of the male Church and business and

political leaders, and their lives centered almost completely in home and family. Their prominence in politics and publishing and their independent auxiliary declined. Evidence suggests that even their roles in relation to the priesthood and the temple were gradually diminished between 1880 and 1950.²⁷

This stage of retrenchment may have been inevitable, given the nature of American culture, but we are now, in the 1980s, entering a third stage, one more like the first, where radical restoration is needed again more than conservative accommodation. New nations are opening up to the Church almost monthly, in a way unthinkable just ten years ago: India, Ghana, Poland, Hungary, China, East Germany. The Book of Mormon is being placed everywhere, with almost exponential increases, sweeping the earth, as President Benson has prophesied, like a flood. The need for leaders and teachers, for talent and energy and ideas, is growing just as fast, very much as in the early Church, when women had to contribute, beyond the conventions of American culture of the time, for the Kingdom even to survive. Again, I believe we are seeing, and will see, women emerging in new roles in the Church not because of someone's theory about equality but simply because their abilities and energies are desperately needed. It should simply no longer be possible to relegate women, over half the Church, to anything less than full participation in building the Kingdom.

However, it will be possible to make the mistake of ignoring women's abilities and energies and the Lord's need for their full service in the Kingdom if we do not, as we move into this new stage, leave behind some cultural baggage. There are prejudices and ideas inherited from our sexist Western traditions, some popular doctrinal ideas that are unworthy of our worldwide mission—and directly damaging to it. As Elder Boyd K. Packer said in 1987 concerning our entry into third-world nations, "We can't move *there* with all the baggage we produce and carry *here*! We can't move with a 1947 Utah Church!"²⁸ Part of that baggage, I believe, is 1947 vintage racism and sexism, and we have the means, in the gospel itself, to renounce both.

A CENTRAL liberating truth restored by God to Joseph Smith was that the Fall was not a bad thing, a thwarting of God's plan, but was instead *part* of the plan, a courageous act by our great first parents, Adam and Eve, that initiated the process of mortal probation and atonement. Christ completed his Atonement, leaving us *all* free forever to choose and to progress through repentance toward Godhood. At the same time, because we have been unduly influenced by American values, including traditional sexism, a destructive ancient notion was gradually insinuated into popular Mormon theology: that Eve succumbed to Satan's temptation, in turn tempted Adam, and

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brought about our downfall—and thus she and all women have to be punished and controlled. This notion has long been used to justify the horrible suppression of women in Western culture, including the terrible persecution of so-called witches, when perhaps hundreds of thousands of women in Europe were executed, in the name of Eve, often simply because they practiced the healing arts or thought for themselves or did not fit the stereotype of "goodwife."

I cannot emphasize too strongly how destructive this idea of Eve's weakness and guilt has been or how fundamental it is to Western sexism. It led theologians to debate seriously whether women had souls, and it produced a constant barrage of teachings and pronouncements like the following from Pierre Charron, a sixteenth century French cleric:

The distinction of superiority and inferiority consisteth in this, that the husband hath power over the wife, and the wife is subject to the husband. . . . In all things the wife, though she be far more noble, and more rich, yet is subject to the husband. This superiority and inferiority is natural, founded upon the strength of one, the weakness and insufficiency of the other.

The Divines ground it upon other reasons drawn from the Bible [i. e., the woman was born after man, and sinned before him.]. The woman then, the last in good and in generation [that is, being made after Adam] and, by occasion, the first in evil and the occasion thereof, is justly subject unto man, the first in good, and last in evil.²⁹

This idea—that Eve, because of her womanly nature, was the first to fall and the cause of Adam's fall, and that thus all women are inferior and must be punished and subjugated—persisted into Joseph Smith's time, and one of the most remarkable achievements of the Restoration was to denounce it. In fact, the Lord warned Joseph many times that the plain truths of the gospel had been lost to God's children because of what he called "the tradition of their fathers" (D&C 74:4; 93:39). Joseph was given to understand specifically that "our wives and children" have been made to "bow down with grief, sorrow, and care" because of "that spirit which hath so strongly riveted the creeds of the fathers, who have inherited lies, upon the hearts of the children, and filled the world with confusion" (D&C 123:7). Nothing has so literally fulfilled that description than the false Christian creeds concerning the Fall, which have directly obscured the central truths that all children are innocent and that both male and female are alike unto God and have caused women and their father-abused and neglected children sorrow and care and all of us great confusion.

Given the deep entrenchment of that false idea about Eve in American religion of the early nineteenth century, one of

the most amazing revelations of the Restoration was received right after the Church was organized in 1830. Section 29 of the Doctrine and Covenants explicitly denies the idea of Eve's prior transgression by saying *Adam* was the one who initiated the Fall: "The devil tempted Adam, and he partook of the forbidden fruit and transgressed the commandment. . . . Wherefore, I . . . caused that he should be cast out from the Garden" (29:40-41). But of course this is not mere reverse sexism, blaming Adam instead of Eve. God is using the term "Adam," a plural proper noun, to mean here *both* Adam and Eve, Mr. and Mrs. Adam, as President Spencer W. Kimball called them. They made that crucial decision as you would expect our great, divinely chosen, first parents would do—through consultation and agreement and some kind of choice and action together. Much of the pain I have seen on the faces of Mormon women in the past few years could be removed, I believe, if we taught this true doctrine, which honors women and men equally and gives them equal responsibility.

Unfortunately, despite this clear modern scriptural refutation, the false tradition of Eve's guilt has been buttressed for Mormons by a too-literal reading of the Genesis story, repeated in Moses, and then a too-literal reception of the temple enactment of that story. When we have made such a literal interpretation, we have failed to heed the clear warning that was given at the beginning of the temple enactment that it is only figurative as far as Adam and Eve were concerned. We thus chose a false theological tradition, based on a sexist view of women, in preference to the Lord's clear teaching that the Fall was a great moral achievement, planned by God and carried out by two courageous heroes, Adam and Eve, acting together in married harmony.

The Book of Moses gives a figurative telling of the mythic story of the Fall that is essentially repeated from the Genesis account which has been used in Western culture to excuse prejudice against women. But the modern scripture also later makes absolutely clear that what Eve correctly refers to as "*our* transgression" was a correct decision and something to be thankful for, not a reason for punishment and suppression (Moses 5:11). Further, God tells Adam and Eve after they are baptized that they are forgiven of their transgression in the Garden and it "cannot be answered upon the heads of the children" (Moses 6:53-4).

Why the old mythic form was retained in Moses and transferred into the temple I do not know, but, whatever the reason, the context and the warning in the temple should have prevented us from reading a literal and negative, sexist message into it that clearly the Lord does not intend and has explicitly rejected. The recent significant changes the First Presidency made into the temple ceremony, especially in the Eve segment, seem to me a clear indication that the story is *not* literal history

but a mythic representation that can be changed by revelation to serve changing needs.

In the Book of Mormon, the Lord tells us clearly that not only are black and white alike unto God, but so are both male and female (2 Nephi 26:33). If, as Elder McConkie clearly stated in that talk given shortly after the revelation giving blacks the priesthood, we didn't understand for a long time what it means that "black and white" are "alike unto God," perhaps we *still* don't understand fully what it means that "male and female" are alike unto God. Surely it must mean in part that in spite of obvious physical differences, there are no spiritual differences—no differences "unto God." I look forward, in this third era of Church history, opening up in the 1980s, to our discovering more fully what that means and changing our practices and beliefs accordingly. We can start by recognizing that it clearly means that our popular theology is wrong in claiming there are differences that affect the processes of salvation—such as that skin color is connected to "spiritual valiance" or that women are "more righteous" and thus needed for celestial polygamy or that men and women have intrinsically different spiritual needs and gifts.

The false tradition of Eve's guilt has been buttressed by a too-literal reading of the Genesis story in preference to the Lord's clear teaching that the Fall was a great moral achievement.

LET me summarize: I believe that God, as part of the Restoration, gave revelations and inspired direction to Joseph Smith that directly countered in remarkable ways the prevailing racism and sexism of Western culture. In doctrine, and even in practice for awhile, the Church was relatively free from those evils. But beginning in the 1840s and for a variety of reasons, some of which we still do not understand, the Church adopted a clearly racist practice—the denial of priesthood to blacks—and gradually developed semi-official racist doctrines as rationale for that practice. The Church, by revelation, has now ended that racist practice, but we have not yet repudiated all of the racist popular theology that we developed to explain the practice, particularly the notion that race is a result of behavior in the pre-existence, though this theology denies the implications of the revelation.

By 1852 the Church openly adopted a clearly sexist practice—polygamy—and then developed a semi-official sexist theology to support it. The Church, by revelation, ended that practice in 1890, but it has not repudiated the sexist popular theology that went with it, the notion that the ideal form of celestial marriage is not an equal yoking of one woman and one man in an eternal union of polar opposites that makes possible a continuation of the seeds forever, but rather one patriarchal man and plural wives. I have presented in an essay elsewhere five reasons why I believe that though nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy was revealed to Joseph Smith from God, it was for mortal purposes and not to be practiced in

heaven. My chief reason is that there is no clear scriptural support for such a crucial but sexist idea about the highest ordinance of the gospel, celestial marriage.³⁰

In this essay I am attacking the other popular but sexist Mormon belief, adopted from the surrounding culture despite being directly contradicted by modern scripture, that Eve and thus all women are under some kind of penalty for the Fall, a belief which undergirds continuing devaluation, and therefore probably even some abuse, of Mormon women. I am also attacking the popular but racist Mormon belief, contradicted by reason and modern scripture, that race is connected to the pre-existence and that white skin is a sign of particular righteousness there and favor from God here, which undergirds a generally subtle but very real continuing racism of attitude and practice in far too many of us. We persist in these beliefs despite lack of scriptural support, even against clear scriptural evidence and official statements to the contrary. Why do we and what can be done about it?

It could be argued, of course, that our popular beliefs result from racist and sexist practices rather than the other way around, so that correcting false doctrine will not help us. But I suspect that beliefs and practices change together, and we can work on both at the same time. Certainly, persisting in false doctrine will not help reduce prejudice. The question of changing our practices gets at the main difference between racism and sexism: The Church no longer has official practices that imply a spiritual difference between races but it does have practices which imply such a difference between sexes. Those practices are changing slowly: women now praying in sacrament meeting; more women going on missions; wives of leaders appearing in more prominent roles as part of an implied team; a few women speaking in general conference. I suspect that there will be many more changes, but I believe that they will come much faster if we stop teaching false doctrines that imply that women are spiritually inferior. I do not know whether such changes will include women being “given” the Melchizedek Priesthood. Women already hold some form of priesthood through the endowment and sealing ceremonies, and perhaps, as we approach a Zion society and a true sense of being “alike unto God,” that will emerge more and more as the fullness of the priesthood envisioned in the Restoration. Whatever the case, as we wait and pray for continuing revelation to change our practices according to the Lord’s will and time, we can work directly to change our beliefs to accord more fully with his *already* revealed will.

MORMON sociologist Armand Mauss has studied the process by which strange theological ideas connected to surrounding cultural beliefs become popular among Mormons: First

certain beliefs, such as that blacks and women are inferior and are being properly punished and subjugated, are imported from the prevailing culture. Then what seem like supportive ideas from Mormon doctrine or practices of the Church are combined with the cultural beliefs and the combination given authoritative support by statements of some Church leaders or religion teachers. These statements are usually tentative or merely personal at first, but as they are repeated they become

more dogmatic and semi-official until they become independent of the persons who first tentatively expressed them and are accepted as official doctrine by many or even most of the Church—though they are not accepted by all Church leaders and may, in fact, be directly repudiated by at least some.³¹

Elder Howard W. Hunter, President of the Quorum of the Twelve, has said:

The gospel of Jesus Christ transcends nationality and color, crosses cultural lines, and blends distinctiveness into a common brotherhood. . . . All men are invited to come unto him and *all* are alike unto him. Race makes no difference; color makes no difference; nationality makes no difference. . . . As

members of the Lord’s church, we need to lift our vision beyond personal prejudices. We need to discover the supreme truth that indeed our Father is no respecter of persons.³²

I would only add, and I believe President Hunter would agree, that all *women*, as well as “men,” are invited to come to God and all are alike unto him, both male and female—that we must repudiate entirely any prejudice against Mormon women based on the false tradition of Eve’s primary guilt.

What can we do? What if religion teachers or priesthood and Relief Society leaders—or even General Authorities—teach these false ideas? Lowell Bennion has articulated a useful guideline when the scriptures, or Church leaders, apparently contradict each other. He suggests we look for the great central principles that are repeated again and again, especially by Christ, and judge all other claims or notions by them.³³ He writes, “I do not accept any interpretation of scriptural passages that portrays God as being partial, unforgiving, hateful, or revengeful. It is more important to uphold the character and will of God than it is to support every line of scripture.” In that spirit, it seems to me we must not accept any interpretation of scripture, or any statement by a Church leader or teaching in a Church meeting or Church school class, that denies or diminishes the clear, central doctrine that all are alike unto God, black and white, male and female. It is more reasonable, as well as ethical, to give up racist and sexist theology than to cling to every statement by every Church leader as authoritative.

We are all sinners. I am guilty, I am certain, of other things

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as evil as color or sex prejudice—and so, probably, are you. There is no room in what I have said for self-congratulation, but neither is there for reticence. Racism and sexism are clear and destructive evils, inconsistent with our preparation for Christ's coming and, most seriously, effective denials of the impartial love of our Heavenly Parents and of the power of the Atonement of their son. People who feel that they—or anyone else—because of their skin color or sex do not have the same standing or privileges before God cannot exercise faith in him unto salvation. It is time to stop such beliefs. I suggest that we each find a way, first to expunge them from ourselves, but also to refuse to allow them to continue to be taught unchallenged.

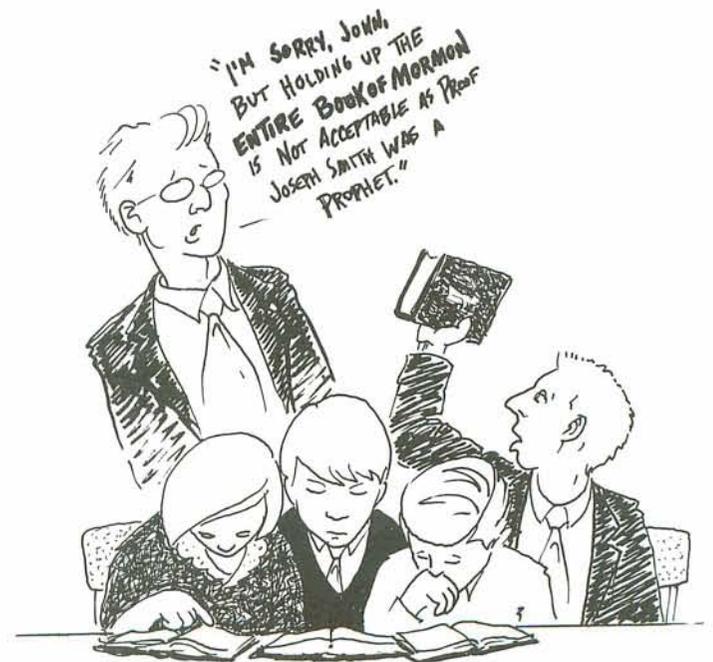
I certainly don't mean that we need to challenge or denounce people in the traditional male model of confrontation. There are better ways to persuade, as explained in Doctrine and Covenants 121:41-46, and if we remember that our purpose is to persuade, not to cover our own sins or merely to demonstrate we are right—and if we prepare by knowing well the modern scriptures and reasons on which good and loving arguments can be based—we can find a way. May our Heavenly Parents, to whom we *are* all alike, help us to do so. ☞

NOTES

1. See Kenneth Silverman, *The Life and Times of Cotton Mather* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985), 94ff.
2. "Ye Chosen Twelve," by Parley P. Pratt, in *A Collection of Sacred Hymns for the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, in Europe*, selected by Brigham Young, Parley P. Pratt, and John Taylor, 1840. The best source for this kind of information, to which I am indebted for many of the following quotations, is Lester E. Bush, Jr., "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8.1 (Spring 1973): 11-68.
3. "Report of the Presidency" at general conference, 3-5 October 1840, in *Times and Seasons* 1:188; or Joseph Smith, Jr., *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, ed. Brigham H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1902-12), 4:213.
4. *Times and Seasons* 5:528-533, reprinted in *Dialogue* 3.3 (Autumn 1968): 28-36, with editorial notes by Martin B. Hickman.
5. In an address as governor to the territorial legislature, 16 January 1852, as recorded in Wilford Woodruff's journal of that date, published in *Wilford Woodruff's Journal, 1833-1898*, ed. Scott G. Kenney (Midvale, Utah: Signature Books, 1983-84).
6. *Deseret News*, 6 June 1877.
7. Ronald K. Esplin, "Brigham Young and Priesthood Denial to the Blacks": An Alternate View," *BYU Studies* 19.3 (Spring 1979): 399.
8. Eugene England, in a response to Lester Bush's "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine," entitled "The Mormon Cross," *Dialogue* 8.1 (Spring 1973): 82-83.
9. Brigham Young, 9 October 1959 sermon, *Journal of Discourses* [27 vols.] (London and Liverpool: LDS Booksellers, 1855-86), 7:290-91; hereafter cited as *JD*.
10. *JD* 10:110 (8 March 1863).
11. William Benjamin Smith, *The Color Line: A Brief in Behalf of the Unborn*, section reprinted in *Seventy's Course in Theology, First Year* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1907), 160.
12. Joseph Fielding Smith, *The Way to Perfection* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Press, 1931); see chapters 7, 15, and 16, especially pp. 43-44 and 105-6.
13. First Presidency statement, 17 August 1949, copy at Church Historical Department. Reprinted in the "Historical Supplement" to John J. Stewart, *Mormonism and the Negro* (Orem, Utah: Bookmark Division of Community Press, 1960).
14. Bush, fn. 196.
15. First Presidency letter to Lowry Nelson, 17 July 1947, copy at Brigham Young University Library.
16. Eugene England, "The Mormon Cross," 78-86.
17. Stuart Pace, "Reflections after Three Years of Mixed Marriage," *The Student Review* 3.17 (25 January 1989): 1 and 12.
18. Stewart's book was given undeserved credibility by an "Historical Supplement," "The Church and the Negroid People," written by prestigious Mormon historian William E. Berrett and added to the second edition (1960) and all subsequent printings (1964, 1967, 1978). The book was reprinted in 1978 by Horizon Publishers, with the new revelation giving blacks the priesthood simply added—even though the revelation implicitly denied much of the reasoning of the book! John Lewis Lund's book, *The Church and the Negro*, perhaps the more racist of the two, was privately printed in 1968.
19. Lund, 102.
20. Bruce R. McConkie, "All Are Alike unto God," speech given 18 August 1978, published

in *Charge to Religious Educators* (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1982), 152.

21. "The King Follett Discourse: A Newly Amalgamated Text," ed. Stan Larson, *BYU Studies* 18 (Winter 1978): 204.
22. See Bush, 34-37, for a history and critique of the use of the Pearl of Great Price as a rationale for denying blacks the priesthood.
23. Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd edition (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966, rpt. 1979), 616.
24. "Lectures on Faith," lecture 3, paragraph 23, in any edition of the *Doctrine and Covenants* before 1921; also published in N. B. Lundwall, compiler, *A Compilation containing the Lectures on Faith* (Salt Lake City: n. p., n. d.).
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26. Jan Shippis, "Introduction" to *Sisters in Spirit*, vii-xii; I draw on Shippis' analysis for much of this paragraph.
27. See Newell, in *Sisters in Spirit*, 121-138.
28. Boyd K. Packer, Address to the Church Coordinating Committee Meeting, 8 September 1987, copy in Historical Department Library, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; cited in Lee Copeland, "From Calcutta to Kaysville: Is Righteousness Color-coded?" *Dialogue* 21.3 (Fall 1988): 97.
29. Pierre Charron, *Of Wisdome*, trans. Samson Lennard (London, 1658); originally published in Paris in 1602.
30. "On Fidelity, Polygamy, and Celestial Marriage," *Dialogue* 20.4 (Winter 1987): 138-54.
31. Armand Mauss, "The Fading of the Pharaoh's Curse," *Dialogue* 13.3 (Autumn 1981): 33. His essay reporting a study of Mormon racism compared to that of others was "Mormonism and the Negro: Faith, Folklore, and Civil Rights," *Dialogue* 2.4 (Winter 1967): 19-39.
32. Howard W. Hunter, "All Are Alike unto God," *Ensign* 9.6 (June 1979): 72, 74.
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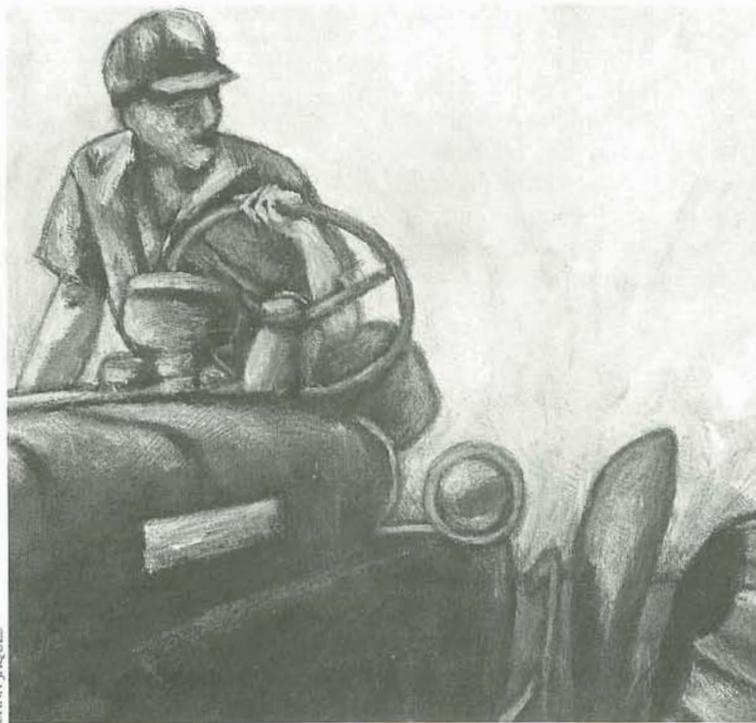
**GENTERVILLE STAKE
SCRIPTURE CHASE**

B.K. Landa

1987 D.K. Brown Contest First Place Winner

FAMILY PLANTATION DAY

By Michael Fillerup



LAST SATURDAY FLOYD FAIRBANKS DROVE THE JOHN DEERE across the ward garden, through the picket fence, across Brother Guillermo's weed field, through another fence (barbed wire), across the dirt highway, and into the irrigation canal. We watched, cave-mouthed, shaking our heads and rubbing our eyes like cartoon caricatures. No one could believe it. "Floyd?" they whispered with facial spasms as the story circulated up and down the pews the next day, a step ahead of the sacrament. "Floyd Fairbanks?"

Why, Floyd was the rock, the pillar, the foundation of steel and concrete. Whenever the sign-up sheet went around for hospital visits or a day at the Bishops' Storehouse, Floyd's bold signature always topped the list. Sustaining vote? His big red paw was the first to go up. Big, handsome, affluent at thirty-five, he was a scholar (summa cum laude BYU; MBA from Stanford), an athlete (All-State Football, 1968-70), an Eagle Scout,

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a returned missionary (assistant to the president). His beautiful wife could sing, dance, and decipher the complexities of an IBM interface. Tall, blond, blue-eyed, with her hair in a Sunday bun she looked like Miss Sweden. Her cheese fondue was the best in the Valley. She and Floyd lived in a four-bedroom house ten miles out of town. Did I say house? Try hacienda. Mini-mansion. A jacuzzi in the master bathroom is what I'm talking about. They were the couple with the proverbial everything.

But "everything" makes us—you, me, the rank-and-file of the Church—pause, look, and prod. It is a concept counter-doctrinal: just as no mortal is perfect, so no man or woman has "everything."

Floyd and Charlene Fairbanks had no children.

After ten years of trying, they had resigned themselves. Condolences were brushed aside with little homilies pilfered from the Richard Evans quote book: "Far worse things have happened to far better people. . . ." True, true. After all, we're not

talking death, dismemberment, starvation, torture in the Nicaraguan jungles. We're not, after all, talking hard core tragedy. Pity fades fast. Plus it's hard to shed too many tears for someone who looks like a movie star and drives a cherry red Mercedes. These two income families. . . .

So what got into Floyd? Who knows? Not I. But saying this I feel a fib. The polygraph goes haywire. Mad jags. My nose grows an inch. My ears stretch and droop. You see, I notice things. I look, I observe. What else can you do during the sacrament meeting when you're refereeing four kids? Actually, the children do very well. Janet has agreed to put Nancy Drew aside until after the sacrament. Katie likewise holds her coloring book and crayons in check. At five, Susan's behavior is still negotiable—Quiet Book, Etch-a-Sketch, and three sugarless mints if she makes it through the bread and water without leaving her seat. The boy, the three-year-old, I stuff with Cheerios and cheese squares, silently urging the deacons to put it into overdrive. Hustle buns, boys!

Jenene is there, of course, my alter-ego other-bookend, issuing silent first and second warnings that keep the kids in line, remarkably effective since instituting Lee Canter's *Assertive Discipline for Parents*. (She is my superior in execution: Daddy the soft touch, the marshmallow man.)

As the bread and water make the rounds, my eyes wander, take a brief bird flight from Gethsemane. Am I looking for foibles, cracks in the dike? Or simply trying to hasten the clock by becoming oblivious to it? Whatever, I look, I listen, I see and hear things I maybe ought not: the Bartlett boy, ten, a Blazer A, the way he scratches his teenage sister's back, up and down and all around—innocent affection, surely, but why the very adult expression on her face, the slow eye-closing ecstasy? Or Bruce Saunders, how he and Carolyn wage eye-wars over who will drag the twins into the foyer this week. Or Sally Rogers, who just last month delivered number four after six dry years of trying, whispering to Sister Simmons: "I can't believe it! I feel so stupid. . . ." (Sally, you of all people should know better! The doctor's wife!)

Or Floyd. Four or five years ago I'm talking about, when I was new to the ward and all I knew of Brother Fairbanks was a month of accumulated hearsay, a comment here, a brush encounter there. Not much in other words. But it took no Sherlock Holmes to infer the obvious: no kids. However, this is not the type of observation I'm referring to.

It was fast and testimony meeting. Bill Paxton had just blessed his twin girls—Bill the proud Poppa holding up his two pop-eyed dittoes. Later, Bishop Marler introduced a new couple, Brother and Sister Harmon from Bountiful. "And from what I understand," Bishop Marler said, "Bonnie is going to be a mother soon. February? Of course, in our ward, it's only news when one of our young brides *isn't* expecting!"

The hearty chuckles, the girlish titters. The pinched smiles and eyes of the elderly.

Floyd was on my left, his big block of a body hunched forward, head dipped like a buffalo's. Staring at his hands, thick mallets, tugging at the stringy red hairs around his knuckles,

nodding, mumbling to himself. A dour look. Rodin's *Thinker*.

Not Charlene. In her colorful Easter dress, a Van Gogh explosion, she looked positively euphoric, sunshine in her soul. I concluded the obvious: Charlene was basking in the light of incumbent motherhood while Floyd, the father-to-be, was suffering premature withdrawal pangs: demotion to number two, forfeiting the final lock on his life (any bachelor airs, I mean), staggered sleep, scheduled sex—in fact, all bodily pleasures realigned to fit the whims of this mystery newcomer. The spontaneity that is the fuel of romance, kaput! A veteran dad, I could empathize. My intentions were good when I leaned his way and whispered, "Is your wife expecting, too?"

The tugging ceased. A smile moved across his lips like a zipper. He did not look at me; his eyes were on his hands. "Nope," he said, shaking his pompadoured head. "We're one of the exceptions."

Gambled and lost! I tried to console him. It wasn't hard—or shouldn't have been. Fatherhood. The stories I could tell! Why, our little Katie had had us up the night before with the twenty-four hour bug, coughing, crying, throwing up. Jenene and I were suffering the day-after consequences—rash rings around the eyes, the waterlogged look, the body aching everywhere. I felt like Muhammad Ali's punching bag. I leaned Floyd's way again and whispered the same pearls of wisdom Jenene's mother had once passed on to us after tiring of our six month lamentation over "trying" to make a baby: "Enjoy it while you can. . . ."

Floyd began nodding again, moving his lips. The smile returned, this time for good, though a little sinister, I thought (but rationalized that orthodontia can sometimes determine a happy or sad countenance). Then he clutched a handful of reddish hair just above his wrist and ripped it from his skin. I felt a nudge on my other side. "Bread, Dad," Janet said, passing me the silver tray.

It takes no Sherlock Holmes. . . .

I could empathize, yes, but only to a point, for I am a father, a parent, a partaker of the fullness, so to speak. The married childless have no special programs in the Church, no satellite broadcasts, no dinners or roadshows strictly for their kind. They occupy the unacknowledged limbo of Mormondom. And it is a state I sometimes covet. All parents who are perfectly honest with themselves occasionally do. Check: except for Bill Paxton.

I cannot imagine Bill separate from his kids. Like the scripture, Bill is not without his children nor *his children* without him. They cling to him like little marsupials. Bill is one of these new and improved fathers of the Eighties who plays the "greatest calling" admonition to the hilt; who is so infatuated with this adventure called parenthood that his family has become inseparably Siamese. In his household, everything is a family undertaking: prayer and scripture study at 5:30 A.M., followed by a family jog around the block (the baby in a Gerrycarrier, bobbing along on Bill's back). Camping, hiking, church, meals, movies—everything a family happening. Only their textbook modesty ruled out communal showers.

So when the Stake President gave our ward the dubious assignment to "do something" with the two weedy acres behind

the old Spanish Branch, and the bishop, espousing grand visions of fresh watermelon and tomatoes as big as basketballs to supplement summer feasts and fall fiestas, instructed the elders quorum to plant a ward garden, it was no surprise when Bill suggested we make it a family event.

"Sure," he argued in his nasal twang, his Adam's apple bobbing like an enthusiastic gobble-bobble. "A family affair. Wives, kids. They could help weed and plant—a great learning experience. With a picnic lunch after!"

By the time he'd finished he was talking homemade root beer and Rototiller inservice for the primary kids. Crew-cut hair bristling with excitement, electrified with the idea of it, he turned to me and Roy Brown, his faithful counselors, for support. We nodded, half-convinced of the plausibility of the project and thoroughly that there would be no talking Bill out of it, so why oppose? Floyd rolled his immense shoulders uncomfortably, gripped and released his thigh-thick neck, a sudden four-finger absence and flooding of color. He exhaled slowly, deeply, conspicuously. Quorum secretary, he would not speak unless spoken to. Democratic Bill prompted him. "Floyd?"

"I don't know," he said, his shoulders rolling like a giant wave about to break. "I'd just as soon start early and get the job over with. Too many cooks in the kitchen, you know."

He argued impressively. Starting at sunup, we could till, plant, irrigate, and be out of there by noon. "Bring the wives and kids and we end up with a giant baby-sitting party."

Nodding, Bill thanked Floyd for his input. "Those were excellent points. Dave, how do you feel?"

"Either way," I said. "I see pros and cons to both."

"Roy?"

Roy Brown shrugged. "Up to you, Bill."

Bill started in on the virtues of family togetherness and his homemade root beer. Floyd pointed out that with an Elders Only project we could finish early enough for the husbands to spend the entire afternoon with their families, to do as they pleased—"work or play!" But even in his subdued fervor, his granite jaw in motion, his blue eyes blazing, I detected a timbre of futility in his voice, as if he knew, from the outset, his vote would be registered but ignored. He was trying to kill the sacred cow.

Bill acknowledged Floyd's foresight and logic, offering the usual strokes (Floyd's diligence in submitting the monthly reports, in gathering home teaching stats, et cetera, et cetera), but the final verdict was family. Floyd lowered his head. "Brethren," he said solemnly, "when the President speaks, the debate is over."

Bill's bird-like hand fell momentarily on Floyd's monstrous shoulder. "I know!" he said, finger up, the light clicking on. "We'll call it 'Family Plantation Day!'"

"Why not 'Family Fiesta Day?'" grumbled our faithful quorum secretary.

II

ONLY Floyd and Steve Tryon and his wife were present when we pulled up by the old Spanish Branch, that Mormon Alamo. So much for our seven sharp kick-off. Floyd, in a pea green jump suit, was waist deep in weeds, swinging his hoe like Goliath mowing down the flimsy ranks of Israel. Susan and Benjamin scrambled out of the station wagon and immediately lost themselves in the joys of desert dirt. (Our older two, Janet and Katie, had reached the age of slumber parties and peer group preference. So much for *our* Family Plant Day.) In faded blue jeans and a pink t-shirt, leotard tight, Jenene muffled a yawn and groaned, reprimanding herself in a drowsy underwater voice for playing sucker, once again, to a grade B late night movie. I waved to Floyd who continued hacking down the enemy.

Steve Tryon was genuflecting by the Rototiller, yanking the cord, teasing the choke, trying everything short of consecrated oil and the laying on of hands to resurrect it from its winter coma. Bridgett Tryon was raking the vanquished into big green mounds as the cracked adobe visage of the Spanish Branch looked on like a peevish old patriarch. Every three or four rakes, Bridgett straightened up and pressed her hand to her lower lumbar, wincing as if she'd just been stabbed there. I could barely make out the design on the front of her shirt: a stork with crossed saw and hammer underneath, and "Under Construction" printed below that. I estimated three months.

Bridgett waved to Jenene who waved back.

"Duty calls," I said.

"Talk me out of it," Jenene said. "Please. . . ."

I whistled the first two bars of "The World Has Need of Willing Men" and handed her a rake.

Steve Tryon gave a hopeful shout as the Rototiller roared convincingly, stinking up the cool morning air with bitter blue exhaust, but it shortly sputtered and died. Steve gave the machine a swift kick, then plopped down in the dirt, looking as if he's just missed the winning free throw.

"Je-ne-ene!" Bridgett straightened and rubbed.

Jenene muttered sourly, "She plays it to the hilt." Smiling, she waved again and marched towards the weed mounds, mumbling and murmuring to herself. She was not in good spirits this morning, and not because of the grade B movie or the prospects of sweating and grunting all day in the one hundred-plus heat. These might be her excuses, later, but I knew the real reason: last night she had asked me, once again, and I had refused.

"Have a good one, Jen," I said, without sarcasm.

She cast me an ambivalent glare—pre-love or premenstrual, her expressions were strikingly (distressingly!) similar, the way one eyebrow would angle downward while the other would lay perfectly flat. I grabbed a hoe and trudged towards Goliath.

Aside from a bit of bluish-gray lathering the peaks of the Superstitions, the sky was bare, stropped and shaved. Caught behind the minty froth, the sun was like a blind man trying to prod his way out. Once it did, it was going to be another

scorcher. Sauna City. By noon we'd all be cornflakes. But for now, cast in cool translucence, compliments of a mild Sonoran southerly, the morning looked fresh, fertile, the dew on the weeds and crabgrass sparkling like diadems. Damp and cool, the shaded earth smelled positively aphrodisiac.

"Not much of a turnout," I said, joining Floyd.

He paused for a split-second. "Mormon time?" he grumbled, and resumed his steady hacking. Evidently he was in no better spirits than Jenene.

"Anything in particular you'd like me to do?" I asked.

"Grab a hoe."

He hadn't noticed I was holding one.

I raised my hoe like a weapon and struck the blade to the ground: the severed weeds released a juicy green scent. I took another swipe, another. Weeds were falling left and right.

"Deeper," Floyd grumbled. "You're cutting too shallow."

I should have known.

I did not go to law school to bust sod and nurse the dirt for a living. I do not particularly like blisters. I do not like applying Ben Gay to my sore parts. Occasionally, as a diversion, okay. But for me, manual labor is like a class reunion: after the initial surprise, the novelty wears off. It gets old fast.

And so it was today! After what seemed like an hour of intense hacking and chopping, I looked up to only find that I had taken at best a bitsy baby bite out of the infinity of weeds in front of me. A glance at my wrist-watch revealed I had been at it all of ten minutes. I was further humiliated by the massive shadow of Floyd Fairbanks working relentlessly behind me, cutting a swath twice as wide as mine, and twice as fast. Granted, the shadows had an enlarging effect, but still, the man's arms looked as thick as my thighs. They were swinging to and fro like a giant metronome, chop-chop-chop, never missing a beat. Watching, listening, sensing the stiff fever that was not sun-induced in my arms and shoulders and Floyd's shadow passing back and forth behind me like the Angel of Death, suddenly I was feeling my age like thirty-nine stones stacked on my shoulders. I could literally feel myself sagging under the weight, growing hunchback.

A beep! beep! momentarily spared me further self-scrutiny. It was Bill Paxton, pulling up in his old Chevy van. The side door rolled open and the Paxton tribe poured out—one two three four five six seven eight of them, including two sets of twins. They marched out to the field and immediately set to work, hoeing, digging, raking, like little foreordained angels. Becky stepped down from the van—blue jeaned, freckled, smiling like a June bride though sideways she looked as if she'd swallowed a volleyball for breakfast. She waddled over to join Jenene and Bridgett.

Bill shook my hand vigorously, then offered his to Floyd with such good will and enthusiasm that even Goliath had to momentarily put aside his hoe and reciprocate. As if on cue, the sun broke through the clouds, showering gold dust across the field. In seconds the morning turned from cool to warm as the gray shadows of the church house darkened to a mid-night pitch. Old Brother Guillermo stepped outside his stucco

shack, visoring his eyes as he gazed at us through Coke bottle glasses, wondering what these crazy gringos were up to now. He shook his silver-gray head and trudged back inside, the red chilies by the doorway glowing like petrified fire.

Alvin and Diane Lyon drove up in their Rambler station wagon. Before it had come to a halt, four towheads were leaping out, whooping and hollering like a war party as they charged towards the dirt mounds, brandishing plastic Ninja swords. More families followed. By nine the sun was high and hot, and the grounds teeming with activity—kids in Levis and t-shirts making mini-cities in the sand, the ladies raking up the last of the weeds the men, led by Floyd, the human propeller, had quickly finished off.

Ben Huber drove up with another Rototiller—Ben the High Priest, come to add patriarchal ballast. "I thought I'd best make sure you got the job done right," he quipped to Bill. Our quorum president thanked him profusely.

Ben resuscitated the ward Rototiller, then started up his own, his bullfrog belly jostling as he guided it smoothly up and down the weeded area, its twin blades (which to me looked like a pair of wickedly bent stars) slowly churning up the earth. Working the far side, Bill Paxton gripped the handles of the ward Rototiller for dear life, his wiry arms shaking as if he were being electrocuted.

Some of the women had begun digging furrows and it looked as if, soon, we could begin planting seeds. The wonders of communal labor! The morning moisture was long gone and the shadows had shrunk to tight dark rings around the scrawny olive trees. Faces were reddening and underarms growing half-moons and full-moons of sweat. Floyd, I noticed, was working further and further away from the general cluster. Pausing to survey the scene, he looked like Brigham Young minus the beard—that same paunchy authority and lion look. Or another image: a feudal lord overseeing his estate. His eyes were on the ladies now, that ice man glare. He licked his lips, lizard quick. Twice. Then lowered his blade into the dirt.

I looked across the field at Jenene, apparently in better spirits now, laughing amidst the other Levied ladies. Every time she bent over to rake, her bottom swelled like a denim valentine. When she straightened up, her hair, loosely bound in back with a barrette, reached down past her hips. The sun was selectively picking out the blond streaks. Snatching glimpses of her, I felt like Jacob laboring in the fields for beautiful Rachel, although a slightly older version of that virile wrestler of angels. My thoughts went back to those days of student poverty when I would sit in my seven-thirty class, chin in hand, secretly inhaling the residue of Jenene's wonderful brackish smell—sniffing it like a cocaine addict, her sweet love smell propelling me through the day. As if she had been reading my thoughts, Jenene twisted her head just enough to look my way. I raised my hand and smiled, but she didn't smile back. She was still angry about last night.

Jenene and I married young by today's standards: I was twenty-four; she was twenty. Following the normal course of things, obeying the first great commandment, a year-and-a-half

later we were parents—children with a child. I was juggling three jobs, working my way through law school—up at four A.M., home at midnight, the kid, the baby, a cry in the night, my wife a warm body to come home to after washing the janitorial grit from my hands. We lived a mile from campus in a battered old trailer. Corrugated metal. The front door had been cut from an old billboard. “Frank’s Tavern” it read on the inside. When it worked, the swamp cooler shrieked like a harpy. The summer heat was hell fire—Satan’s sweathouse. What little fat Jenene had melted off her like wax. One other child was born while we lived in that tin can. Like sardines. Wall-to-wall sleeping bags. Tough going, tears at times, but we made it okay.

Our other two, Susan and Benjamin, were born under more convenient circumstances. By then I had started my practice and we lived in a house, three bedrooms. For the first time, Jenene was delivered by her very own gynecologist instead of being treated like leftovers at the county hospital. Susan and Ben have, or will have, all the so called advantages—swimming lessons, piano lessons, violin lessons, Cabbage patch dolls, a Sweet Sixteen Camaro, not to mention a full-time dad. You might say they were born in innocence, free of canned hash and cockroaches, which is good in many ways but not so in others. The older two know the value of a dollar. That sounds soap box, but you won’t see Janet or Katie going around the house leaving lights on. But neither of them plays the violin either.

After our fourth child, Jenene and I decided enough was enough. (Yes, we had hoped—prayed—for a boy, but we would have stopped regardless.) Her parents and mine were letter-of-the-law Mormons, raised on the old school ethic, popping out a kid a year. Birth control was a no-no. Onan would be cursed. Fine. But the women paid for it. Following her seventh in nine years, Jenene’s mother suffered a nervous breakdown. Valium Valley for her. My mother—I recall all too vividly those torturous Sabbath mornings (“Sunday Bloody Sunday” she subtitled them). My father, the bishop, was up and gone before sunrise, leaving the get-ready gauntlet to Mom: brushing hair, washing faces, socks on, shoes on, dresses and coats on, chasing around the kitchen like a short-order cook. Zipping up her dress as she herded the eight of us snarling, quarreling, bitching towheads (“Jeff hit me!” “Shut up, Jack!” “You two quit fighting or I’ll—”) out the door and into the Renault Dauphine. Squeezing us in—crunch, slam! One for the Guinness Book: nine in a Renault. Two in diapers. Always, Filthy. The stench. Pooh-huddah! Mom singing hymns to herself, trying to block out the noise, to keep her cool inside a car that reverberated like a zoo: chirp, shriek, growl, hiss, grunt, snort. Hyena highs. The Sunday nuthouse. Honey in the hair, bubble gum on the seats. “Wait till your father gets home . . . just you wait. . . .” Pale threats. He rarely did before bedtime. By then we, Sunday’s hellions, were asleep. Peace . . . peace in the house. Silence so golden. Why disturb it with delayed discipline? Relax, enjoy . . . while you can. Once I was old enough to drive, my mother stayed home Sundays—made it a true day of rest. The bishop’s wife! The talk, the gossip. But after the early morning havoc, as soon as the car pulled out of the driveway, she would pull

down the blinds and collapse on her bed. Sleep sweet sleep. From that time on, I think she half-lived for Sunday mornings, when the house was empty, when we were gone. Not that she didn’t love us in a motherly way; she just needed some time to herself. To recuperate. To heal.

More and more I appreciate what she went through, having stumbled (and still stumbling) a few feet in her moccasins. Jenene, too. But history, we had decided long ago, was not going to repeat itself. The mother’s health, the official new-and-improved statement read, physically *and* mentally, was paramount. Our enlightened age!

Four was our limit. We had both agreed.

But the night Connie Walker delivered her fifth (putting her one ahead or my wife one behind?) Jenene couldn’t sleep. Three massages did not help, or a double-dose of codeine-coated cough syrup. Which was partly why, once again, last night, we were up at an untimely hour talking out an old gripe. She had been pushing for something permanent. A once and for all.

“Okay, but how—or better, by whom? Me or you?”

She had logic, reason, and the physician’s advice on her side. For me, it’s a ten minute operation in the doctor’s office, a quick snip, sixty-five bucks, ninety-nine-point-nine percent reliable. For Jenene? Major surgery. We’re talking general anesthesia. Five hundred bucks minimum. Our insurance won’t touch preventatives.

“True, but suppose—and of course hoping, *assuming*, this will never happen, not in the very near future, I mean, but suppose something did happen to one of us in a permanent way. . . .”

“You mean if one of us croaked, for instance?”

“For instance.”

“Like yours truly?”

“For the sake of discussion. Suppose I remarried and suppose—well, more children, you know.”

“I see. But doesn’t that work both ways? Meaning, suppose—and of course hoping, *assuming*, it never will, but suppose you’re the victim of the unfortunate happening in a permanent way, as you put it, and I’m the second-time’s-a-charm bride. . . .”

“True. But suppose the unfortunate happening occurs when you or I are fifty-five, well beyond the age for women but for men. . . .”

“Listen: anyone fool enough to start fathering again at fifty-five ought not to have the tools to do it with.”

(That, too, works both ways?)

Reason, logic, the physician’s advice. Still, it is only semi-settled. The old guilt stirrings. Like an amputee who feels the missing limb almost to the point of touching it, sometimes she wakes up at night, she says, and her belly feels so empty (“Cool and damp and hollow, like a cave. . . .”), she will get out of bed, trundle into the kitchen, and forage through the refrigerator for apples, Jello pudding, leftover lasagna, anything to fill up the void there.

I try, futilely, to console her: “The fact that you feel obligated—as long as you’re thinking, *I have to, I’ve got to, it’s my duty*—doesn’t that tell you something?”

Seeing the little salamander hands clinging to Connie Walker's blouse only brings to mind long summer nights strolling Susan around and around the block until she finally dozed off, and the midnight feedings and cryings and runny noses and itchy eyes, one morning literally dropping from exhaustion on the living room floor (answering a knock, the Culligan Man?), and me, lying by the crib at night holding a pacifier in Katie's mouth (breast, bottle, all else having failed). Tawdry days, sexless nights. And the waiting and waiting and waiting—with the little hugs and kisses and mini-achievement and miracles stringing you along—until they can walk, talk, wipe themselves. And don't forget the female fringes: bloated brown nipples, bulging blue in the ankles and calves, splattered veins, crab nebulas, pink squiggles like ringworm in the hips and back of the thighs. . . . That, too, is a factor. Jenene won't deny it. ("But is that a real reason," she asks, "in the eternal perspective? A good one, I mean?")

And lately things have been so nice, so conveniently middle class. For the first time since our honeymoon we had been able to go out weekly, to dinner and a movie, or sneak away to the Grand Canyon for a weekend or take a ballroom dance class together. Give a little to ourselves, each other—was that so terrible?

How could I argue? Or object? Enjoying all of that too, my wife becoming my wife again. Why bring another extra into the act to upstage us? Purgatorial parenthood.

"But I'm still young, healthy. I could, you know. And the prophet, he says if we don't accept these spirits into our homes, they could end up . . . anywhere!"

Starving in Biafra? Cocaine Row?

Then she would start crying. From the beginning we had agreed we would never not just so we could buy a boat, a VCR, a condo in Fountain Hills. (Or even a "nice" home on Dobson or Southern.)

"It isn't fair," she would say.

I wouldn't argue.

"Will you get one?" she asked again last night.

During the silence, her hand softly stroked my chest. Whispering in her little girl's voice I can't refuse: "Please?"

"No."

I can't tell her why because I'm not sure myself. It's not fear that the doctor will miss-snip and permanently impair me. Nor do I have any plans to start a new family or add to my present one. Four is plenty. Quadruple the national average. In my mind, I visualize her logic so graphically: in one corner the doctor putting away his scissors, patting me on the back, and sending me merrily on my way; in the other, Jenene's bare midriff, the masked surgeon slicing her open like a fish. They say the tube is hair thin or thinner. They tie it in a knot, literally. Fine tweezers, microscopic work.

"Will you think about it?" she asks.

"I do. All the time."

"Well, think harder!" she snarls, and wriggles over to the far side of the bed.

GEORGE Huber had finished Rototilling. He picked up the machine like a toy and dropped it a few feet from me. "That'll do 'er," he said in a Hoss Cartwright voice. He exhaled a deep breath and wiped a red kerchief across his sweaty forehead, like a true blue farmer. Bill Paxton trotted over, grabbed George by the hand, and pumped it half a dozen times, thanking him over and over. George shrugged off the kudos. He forked his fingers through his crew-cut hair, bits of sweat spitting from the tips. He pinched Bill's skinny bicep. "We gotta put some meat on this boy!"—winking at me—"so's we can get more work out of him!" Then George drew Bill in close and whispered—counsel from the patriarch—"When I first went into the service, I was skinnier 'n a rail, just like you. But I filled right out. Don't worry." George hoisted the Rototiller to hip-level and started towards his pick-up. "You'll take to seed," he hollered over-shoulder, "you'll take to seed."

Bill smiled affectionately. "Old George. . . ." His sunburned nose was glowing like Rudolph the Reindeer's. Or W.C. Field's.

By noon we were digging furrows, the women gravitating to the left and the men to the right, not by Priesthood prescription or pre-conceived plan but some subcultural magnetism I found interesting (refreshing?) in a liberated, unisex age. It had occurred so naturally and spontaneously that I hadn't really noticed until now. The men were working at graduated speeds: lanky Roy Brown moving the soil quickly and effortlessly while spider-armed Bill pecked at it hen-yard style. Steve Tryon hoed along at a steady pace. Alvin Lyon was talking Sun Devil football, could they knock off the Trojans again next fall?

"The Trojans?" Steve said. "Piece of cake. They're jinxed out here."

Roy Brown, who worked cat burglar hours running a sweeper around Phoenix parking lots, was complaining about Gloria again. "Always moaning and groaning—I'm so tired, I'm so tired." "Spreading his legs and protruding his gut, walking duck-footed along the furrow. "Like I'm not, you know? I get home at five A.M. I'm tiii-red! I'm huun-gree, if you know what I mean."

"Two in two years." Alvin Lyon shook his blond head. "No will power, Roy."

"Once you get the pump primed. . . ." Steve said.

Gloria pregnant? Again? I looked across the furrows at Sister Brown, still slender, elastic, twentyish. Next to her was Christy Simmons, young but burgeoning, her arms sagging like a grandmother's. Beside her, methodically hoeing away, was Becky Paxton, the broomstick that swallowed the volleyball. Bridgett Tryon, Diane Lyon, Judy Stapley stalking the ranks with a papoose on her back. Working side by side, they looked like figures in one of those conception-to-birth charts, a scrambled version you had to re-arrange in proper sequence, with Gloria Brown at one extreme, Becky Paxton, ready to deliver, at the other, and Bridgett Tryon somewhere midway.

And then there was Jenene. Where did she fit into the maternity line-up? At the very beginning, of course, in the "pre" position, but not really. Something about her carriage excluded her from the chart. She was taking a breather now, straddling a

furrow, hands on her hips, looking moderately bored, somewhat tired, and very attractive. Very.

I don't actually believe the law school grind aged me faster than bearing four kids has Jenene—she just hides it better. Plus I am four years older, prematurely gray. At thirty-nine, I look—and often feel—like a high priest: prune juice instead of fruit punch at the elders quorum socials is what I'm saying. At thirty-nine I inhabit another corner of Mormon limbo. Things are happening to me now I never would have fathomed ten or even five years ago—sexually, I mean. Parts are beginning to wear out. My ignition system's bad. I sometimes run out of gas before the finish line.

Jenene is just the opposite. At thirty-five she is getting her second wind. Somehow she has matured without really aging. People can't believe she has a thirteen-year-old daughter. She could easily model swim wear for Sears. Or pose center-fold. Of course, that is the romantic in me talking. In the everyday trudge and grudge of life, the familiar becomes commonplace. What turns heads at the shopping mall I daily take for granted.

But now, watching her tall, shapely figure amidst the expecting mothers, I was seeing her though the eyes of an everyday observer. Even in blue jeans, digging furrows, sweating in the trenches—what was it? Not only her figure and the wonderful little wobbles that accompanied it, but, too, the effortlessness with which she moved about, so unlike the baby-burdened ladies who seemed to trudge around like Atlas, with the planet strapped to their bellies instead of their backs; that, or with diapered toddlers clinging to their jeans, dragging them around like a ball and chain. All of them—even Becky Paxton, Sister Sunshine—were lagging in the heat.

Jenene? Her hair had tumbled free in back. A few loose strands were sloping across her eyes. With a quick flick of her head, she tossed them aside. There was something very telling in that gesture, something I had perhaps been sensing for some time but had been unable to pinpoint. Or had been trying to ignore. At that moment she looked so . . . so single, so free.

"How about you, Dave?"

Roy Brown, drawing me into the conversation. "When are you getting back into the race?"

"Me?" I said, without thinking. "I'm sterile."

Roy and Alvin and Steve and Bill all laughed. Then I remembered Floyd. I looked around to see if he was in earshot. Maybe: he was working solo about fifty feet away. If he *had* heard, he wasn't letting on. Nose to the grindstone, shoulder to the wheel. Sweat was dripping steadily off the tip of his nose.

If nothing else, the kids were having a ball. Several little troopers in He-Man or Dallas Cowboy t-shirts had gathered around the big Igloo jug with little paper cups. There was a good-sized mud puddle under the spout where it extended beyond the picnic table and the kids—my Benjamin included—were walking around in it barefoot. The Larson's baby girl was sleeping in a portable bassinet while the Lyon twins were wrestling like Jacob and Esau. My Susan had just re-possessioned the Hot Wheels from the Aker boy and was pedaling hell fire along the irrigation ditch. Third-born, she had learned early

about squatter's rights. She could be possessive, even pushy, but generally she was the cuddly one in our family. When I visit her classroom at school, she comes right up and takes me by the hand, showing me this and that. She likes that—touching, contact. At night, after her bedtime story, she asks in her meek, heart-breaking voice, the Little Match girl, "Dad, will you lay down with me for a minute?" (If I say no, she kicks, screams, thrashes around like a client for the Exorcist.) Janet wants to be a geologist and Katie, the understudy cheerleader, a Girl Friday game show host like Vanna White.

Career women, those two. (With the odds stacked against them, one good LDS man to every five good LDS women, I'm less inclined to discourage this than, say, my parents a generation ago.) But Susan, when I ask what she wants to be when she grows up, a lawyer maybe, like Dad? she shakes her head soberly.

"Oh? What then?"

"I want to stay home."

"And be a mommy?"

"Un-hunh."

"Like your mom?"

Nodding vigorously (honor in that). "Un-hunh."

We—Jenene—must be doing something right.

By now Floyd was out in Never Land, totally alone, working at a torrid pace. I felt ten degrees hotter just watching him. His furrows ran in perfect, parallel lines all the way to Brother Guillermo's picket fence. I wondered how much further he would go. In his zeal to finish ASAP, would he inadvertently hop the fence (or bash backwards right through it) and begin working his way across Brother Guillermo's weed field and into the sea of alfalfa beyond? No, he had stopped, thank goodness, and was marching back towards us, hoe on his shoulder like a triumphant but worn-out soldier packing it in.

It was half-past twelve and we—the men—had just begun clearing out the irrigation ditch. The women were working in pairs, one good sister poking holes in the soil with the rounded end of a hoe, the other squatting down or bending over to drop a few seeds in. Scott Larson, a latecomer, quickly abandoned the irrigation ditch to join his wife, Denise. Together they were showing their two-year-old the finer points of farming: "First you make a little hole in the ground like this . . . then you put two little pink seeds in the hole. . . ." A wonderful learning experience, no doubt, but slow going. As I looked at the acre-and-a-half of furrows, a giant washboard waiting to be planted, and the irrigation ditch only halfway cleared, I wondered if we'd ever get out of there. When I told Bill this parental instruction was all good and fine, but it was sure dragging things out, he just laughed and sank his shovel into the ditch.

Floyd didn't, however. Joining us from the Outer Limits, he looked at me with hopeful eyes, as if he had just found a lost friend. I was touched in an odd way. When his mouth opened, I waited expectantly, as those ancient elders must have when Zacharias finally broke his silence. But no words came out. At the last instant, he bowed his head and, muttering to himself, walked off.

"Floyd!" I called after him. "What is it?"

"Nothing," he said, shaking his bison head. "Everything's just fine. Cozy fine." He picked up a shovel and buried it deep in the ditch, tossing aside a mound of broken bottles and candy wrappers.

The sun hadn't let up a bit and had no intention of doing so. Bridgett Tryon's face was red, swollen, edemic; any second it was going to explode. Shirts and blouses were soaked. Sweaty bangs were plastered to scorched foreheads. The steady, syn-copated chink-chink-chinking of shovels was slavishly symphonic.

I looked over at Jenene, who was wrestling with a stalk of milkweed, tugging and pulling and twisting and pulling some more until it finally gave and sent her flying back on her behind. As she got up and dusted herself off, my eye caught hers. I smiled and this time she smiled back. The Arizona heat can melt any iceberg. She even winked—a truce? As she bent over to attack another milkweed, I admired the Levied flex of that behind, like a very well-shaped peach. Then I noticed someone else was watching, several feet down the ditch, in between shovelfuls. I told myself to take it as a compliment—which it was, after all—but I was glad when Becky Paxton, waving her arms like a railroad crossing signal, announced that the root beer was ready, come and get it! and Floyd Fairbanks finally put down his shovel and began marching towards the picnic area with the rest of us.

I let Jenene go ahead to take care of the food while I joined the general roundup. Spotting me, Benjamin raced over on little Looney Tune legs and wrapped his arms around my thighs, burying his head in my crotch.

"Hey, Superstar!" I said, hoisting him on my hip.

"Lunch, Dad. Go get lunch." He knew the score.

"Okay, we get lunch, Tarzan. Where's Sooz?"

"Ober dare," he said, pointing with his chin.

"How about Mom?"

"Dare."

I toted Benjamin to a scraggly patch of grass where Jenene and Susan were arranging our lunch on a checkered quilt. Other families had done likewise until the grounds looked like a vast quilt of quilts. Ours was right between the Paxtons's and the Larson's. Floyd, I noted uncomfortably, had pitched his long body directly behind us. No quilt or blanket, he was stretched out sideways, like a sultan on the sand.

Roy Brown said the blessing and instantly the sultry air was rippling with the sounds of cellophane and aluminum foil. Fathers fetched root beer for their families while mothers dished out potato salad. Kids with root beer mustaches sat on blankets like fat little pharaohs, clutching fried chicken legs or peanut butter sandwiches, depending on the family fare. I soon found myself caught in a cross-conversation between the Larsons and the Paxtons. Scott was telling Bill and Becky about the Grand Canyon, a tough hike to the bottom. "It'll take you all day."

"And with your kids. . . ." Denise shook her head skeptically.

"You're taking your kids?" Scott's face looked dirgeful.

Bill, savoring his root beer like fine wine, shrugged. "It'll

be a good growing experience."

"Growing what?" I said. "Blisters or ulcers?"

Everyone nearby laughed—even Floyd. He, too, had joined our little circle.

Brother Guillermo shuffled outside, visoring his eyes, his cracked brown face a miniature of the old adobe church house behind us. Becky Paxton jumped up and signaled him over. "Have some root beer!" Scott Larson, who had served a mission in Ecuador, translated into Spanish. Brother Guillermo just smiled, his mouth hanging crookedly, a broken hinge. Becky dipped a cup into the big stainless steel pot and rushed it over to him.

Floyd had not counted on any lunchtime miracles. He'd brought enough food to feed the five thousand. He had already finished one ham and cheese on rye and was starting on another. Each was neatly packed in a square Tupperware container, custom-made for sandwiches. He also had a bowl-shaped container with a hearty serving of potato salad and a large cube-shaped one that protected a thick wedge of chocolate cake. Jenene looked over at Floyd and smiled. "Where's Charlene?"

"Working." His mouth opened like a furnace as he bit into sandwich number two.

"On Saturday?"

Chewing, he nodded. The sun had burned a red stripe on the back of his neck and an arrowhead down the front of his chest. "Somebody's got to bring home the bacon."

Jenene laughed at the hackneyed joke. So did Floyd. She fingered the loose hairs from her face and gave her head a tell-tale toss. I was, for no damn good reason, insanely jealous.

"More chicken, Sooz?" I said, holding up a drumstick. Grease-streaked cheeks bulging, she nodded. Her gut was as big as her heart. I gave Jenene a little nudge. "More chicken?"

"Sure," she said, and rejoined our circle.

"How you doing there, Ben?" I said. Ben held up his half-eaten drumstick and nodded approvingly.

By two P.M. the mothers were folding up blankets and wiping little faces while the men—most of them—sauntered back to the fields. I stayed behind—ostensibly to help Jenene fold up the quilt and repack the ice chest. Floyd was still eating.

Becky Paxton stood nearby, admiring her husband's valiant return to the furrows. "Bill drank too much root beer," she said maternally. "I hope he's all right."

Jenene smiled. Floyd stood up gruffly, dusted off his rear, and headed out, his Clydsdale body making Lilliputians of the kids as he marched through their play area. Jenene turned to me. "Did you hear that? Bill gets sick if he eats too much."

I said, "Oh?" but I really wasn't listening. I was watching Floyd, his massive body dwarfing even the men. I shut the lid on the ice chest. "You win," I said.

"Win?"

"Last night," I said and walked off to join the other men, feeling very peculiar down there, as it if had fallen asleep and would never wake up again.

Rejuvenated by Bill's homemade spirits, we worked double-time. In an hour the irrigation ditch was cleared and water was

coursing through it. The men were hoeing little mounds in which the women, following closely behind, planted cantaloupe seeds.

I had had enough farming for one day. My hands were blistered raw and my body felt deep-fried. My heart was not in it, or my mind. I kept gazing at the children—envious, I suppose—wading knee-deep in the irrigation ditch. Benjamin, a giant among the three-year-olds, had stripped down to his underwear. Watching him splashing in the water, I was moved in a way that parents, in rare ruminating moments, when they are not diapering or cooking or obsessed with the stock market or paying the electric bill, sometimes are—a difficult feeling to describe to those who have not experienced it firsthand. Vestigial? Atavistic? The mirror in reverse? Whatever, I saw myself at three years, a little blond boy discovering the secrets of sand, speech, bowel movements; then Ben in my shoes thirty years from now, hoe in hand, a young man looking at his little boy, thinking what I am thinking, feeling as I now feel, and so on and so on. Then I remembered something that happened years ago in Sunday School class, course 12 or 13. Harry Goulding was the teacher—*Brother* Goulding, the Pan Am pilot, perpetually tugging at his tie, clawing his high borne hair: “All right, who can tell me what infinity means?”

Bruce Williams, my second cousin, the class cut-up, said, “The Boy Scout manual.”

We kids all laughed, of course. Oh, that Bruce! Always so full of it! But this time Bruce wasn't laughing. He was glaring at us, his bushy brows leaping all over his forehead. We were the clowns, his expression said. What's wrong with you people?

“Oh, okay,” Brother Goulding said, folding his arms, nodding, waiting for the punch line, the pie in his face again. “And would you like to elaborate on that, Brother Williams?”

“The Boy Scout manual. There's a picture on the cover of a Boy Scout holding a Boy Scout manual with a picture of a Boy Scout holding a Boy Scout manual. . . .”

Why that suddenly impressed me I wasn't sure. But now I was drifting further back, a three-year-old again, sitting in the front row at sacrament meeting, my father the Bishop on the stand. My eyes were glued to the floor, watching an army of ants swarm the fuzzy green carcass of a caterpillar and drag it millimeter by millimeter across the linoleum floor. I watched from the opening hymn to the closing prayer: in that time, the ants dragged it maybe half a foot.

But there was more: the sun glaring down on the dolphin-sleekness of my fiancé one day, my bride the next, gliding through the blue waters of Torrey Pines; hotel drapes scalloped by the autumn breeze, the smell of rain on pavement as I unwrapped the wrap-around dress, seeing in the flesh, stroking for the first time those little twin mammals with the protruding eyes. Late night in the loft. Midnight massage. Lightning flash on naked thighs. Drowsy sunshine. Leopard stretch. The gut wrench down-on-all-fours head-over-the-toilet vomit all. City nights. Bleeding neon. Little hairy head squeezing out between bent legs like a carnival freak show. Groans. Giggles. Guffaws. Christmas lights. More wrappings and unwrappings.

Soft mornings. Symbiotic warmth.

“Hey, Peterson! You trying to grow something over there?”
Floyd. Goliath. Mr. Clean Jeans.

“Yeah,” I said, turning his way. “Truth.”

“What?”

“Truth!” I said. “I'm growing truth!” Then I gave my head a quick shake, spraying sweat in all directions, the way a dog does drying its soaked fur. I'm not sure why I did this, and was even less certain of my answer. It was just a silly word, the first that popped into my head. It meant nothing.

Floyd shook his head and worked on. I was a hard case, his tumesced lips were muttering, or a lost cause. Something.

What happened next was strange. Jenene, bending over like a cotton picker, was moving slowly backwards along a furrow, planting corn seeds. Floyd, also bent forward, hoeing, was moving backwards in the opposite direction. I could (should?) have said something—“Jenene! Floyd! Red Alert! May Day!”—anything to prevent the inevitable rear-end collision. But in truth I was curious to see the outcome. When their two behinds smacked like an oversized kiss, it was pure slapstick. Jenene whirled around, obviously flustered but trying to hide it. “Floyd,” she said, very businesslike, as if nothing had happened, “aren't you done with that row yet?”

Floyd's response was less amicable. He remained bent over, like a paralyzed hunchback, and threw an arm backwards, pointing roughly in the direction of Roy Brown. “Down *there!*” he barked.

“I already planted there,” Jenene said. “Besides, I could do that in two minutes.”

“Then don't do it!” Floyd growled. “Anything you can do in two minutes isn't worth doing.”

“Don't worry, I won't! You can do it yourself. You can do the whole stupid row yourself, for all I care!”

Floyd stood erect, big as a caveman. Hands on hips. The last straw. He said something and Jenene said something back. Again. Again. Why, they were going at it like husband and wife, like two lovers—or ex-lovers. They weren't exactly yelling and screaming, but it was a firm, frank exchange, a very private argument that abruptly ended when Bill Paxton's nasal falsetto butted in from across the field: “Floyd! Hey, Floyd!”

Floyd kicked his hoe aside. “Now what the hell does *he* want?”

Bill trotted eagerly towards Floyd, who was walking like a gunslinger out to meet him.

“Floyd,” Bill said, out of breath, “Do you think you could run the tractor over the west side? Since we're here and we've got the equipment, we may as well. . . .”

Floyd didn't answer. He shouldered past Bill and mounted the John Deere. It roared consumptively as he shoved the throttle into gear. Slowly, like a harnessed beast, it began crawling across the field, bits of gas and dust spitting out as the engine gathered momentum, its powerful treads leaving behind ice tray indentations as it advanced towards the west end. I can't say which face was more intimidating, the tiger-toothed grill of the tractor or the stone-cold look of Floyd as he expertly maneuvered

the vehicle. He made one complete circle, then a smaller circle inside it, and another inside that, gradually moving towards the center. With all the mounds and furrows planted and water from the ditch moseying down to feed them, the others dropped their hoes and shovels and clustered around the Igloo jug, sipping ice water and root beer as they watched Floyd do his thing. I watched, too, as I walked over to join the group.

Denise Larson was remarking on the wonders of technology while Roy Brown and Scott argued the Yankees and the Dodgers. Alvin Lyon said something and everyone laughed, myself included, though I had no idea what we were laughing about because my eyes and thoughts were still on Floyd.

He had already plowed the area once and was now spiraling in towards the bulls-eye for a second time. He was also doing strange things with the throttle—shoving it forward, yanking it back, slapping it to one side, then the other. When he plowed across the center patch and made another wide, sweeping turn, as if he were going in for a third run, Steve Tryon quietly set down his paper cup and walked out to meet him. He waved his hands back and forth, then sliced his hand across his throat. Enough was enough.

Apparently Floyd didn't agree. Instead of turning back in, he drove the John Deere straight across the field and on through Brother Guillermo's picket fence. The splintered pieces went flying like a house of cards. That's when the others lowered their cups and watched, shaking their heads and rubbing their eyes, thinking, hoping, it was some kind of joke, a prank, a mirage. When Floyd plowed across Brother Guillermo's backyard and broke through the barbed wire fence, the old Mexican ran outside shaking his fist and screaming in Spanish. We all tossed our Dixie cups aside and went running after Brother Fairbanks.

It was twenty minutes—a mile later—before we finally caught up with him. The John Deere had made a crash landing, head-first, into the irrigation canal, its grilled face sinking slowly into the muddy bottom. Floyd sat stoically in the driver's seat, like a valiant captain going down with his ship. We all gathered along the upper bank and watched.

"What's he saying?" Jenene whispered. The sudden pressure of her hand on my arm seemed an intrusion, a violation of something I didn't comprehend.

"I don't know," I said, which was basically true. Floyd was very calmly addressing the algae-colored water in jumbled phrases that made no sense at all: "Probably won't get out of bed at all . . . nobody knows because it's under the rocks . . . I'm going to finish till the paperwork. . . ."

Someone—Alvin Lyon, I think—said it must be the heat, but Floyd rambled on a good five minutes before calmly turning towards us and, directing our attention to the flock of gray storm clouds that had appeared out of nowhere, said, "We'd better hurry up and finish planting before it rains."

JENENE and I didn't say anything about Floyd the rest of the afternoon. In fact, I didn't say much period. I must have

been acting a little morose because around six that evening Jenene finally asked me what was eating me. When I said, "Nothing," she said, "Well, something's eating me, and I'd rather be the eater, not the eaten. So go put on your shoes."

We went to Cafe Casino for dinner and then to a movie. I don't remember the film—Woody Allen, I think—but during it I must have experienced a mood shift. I left Floyd talking to himself as the John Deere sank into the quagmire, and put my arm around Jenene, writing little love notes on her shoulder with my finger. When we got home, I took a quick shower, then laid out my suit and shoes for priesthood meeting while Jenene prepared for bed. There was something I wanted to tell her, but I wasn't sure what; something I could not explain in good lawyer's logic, and even if I could it wouldn't have come out right. So I got into bed, thinking to myself another time, when I had my facts straight, when my mind was right.

Jenene and I prefer the mornings and afternoons. At night we are usually too tired. So it took her by surprise when I began making overtures. She tried to laugh them off at first, but soon I was pressing her with an urgency that startled both of us. Gradually she warmed up, softening for several minutes before withdrawing with an abrupt, near comical, "Excuse me." She groped into the bathroom. The light went on. By the time her puzzled face popped out asking if I'd seen her diaphragm, I was standing naked in the doorway, clutching her arm, pulling her out, down, onto the floor. ☒



"And as your new bishop, I hope we can make our ward a kinder, gentler place, where there are scores of points of light of service and love."

Oral History

WHATEVER HAPPENED TO MAURINE WHIPPLE?

By Katherine Ashton

WHEN MAURINE WHIPPLE WON THE 1938 HOUGHTON-Mifflin Prize¹ for her novel about plural marriage and the Mormon colonization of southern Utah, her entry was chosen from a field of more than 250,000 erstwhile writers (her figure).² Rather than the triumph that she thought the prize would be, it was instead one of the first of many disappointments that would be associated with writing *The Giant Joshua*. Because the prize was considered a real plum in literary circles, Whipple thought that she would be recognized in her home town of St. George, Utah, for her accomplishment. She was not.

In a letter to her close friend Tom Spies, she wrote "knowing you has been worth all the anguish and disillusionment that *Joshua* has brought me."³ She was ostracized by her church and her family. When *Joshua* came off the press, her father talked the postmaster out of her personal copy, read it, and pronounced it vulgar.

The reaction of Whipple's father was typical of many Mormons. In addition to dealing with the colonization of St. George, *Joshua* also dealt very forthrightly with polygamy, then still a very sensitive subject to many Latter-day Saints; polygamy was too close to Whipple's parents' generation. Many of them were children of polygamous marriages, children who remembered the persecution they and their families had suffered at the hands of the federal government. Whipple felt that even though her subject matter was sensitive, she owed it to "her people," as she called them, "not to paint them with too white a brush."⁴

In the preface to *The Giant Joshua*, her affection for those early pioneers and their indomitable spirit was apparent, but Whipple believed strongly in telling the truth; by doing so, she offended the very people she was trying to immortalize without sentiment. The truth hurt.

The book was not banned as such by the Mormon church, but Elder John A. Widtsoe reviewed the book for *The Improvement Era*. Widely quoted in articles about Whipple, the review was only partially negative, primarily in the section dealing with polygamy. Unfortunately, the negative section of the review

is the most often cited, and probably contributed most to the non-acceptance of the book by the Mormon audience. Widtsoe used the word "unfair" to describe Whipple's treatment of polygamy, stating that "there were fewer unhappy marriages under polygamy than under monogamy."⁵ Widtsoe's statement damaged the Utah sales of *Joshua*. His subsequent remark that the "evident straining for the lurid obscures the true spirit of Mormonism, and misleads the reader"⁶ led to *Joshua* being the most widely circulated fiction at the Salt Lake City Public Library at the time.⁷ Interspersed with his harsh criticism, but not often quoted, was praise of the book:

The story of the battle with the desert and the ultimate victory of the settlers is made alive by much detail. . . .

The persons of the novel, among them Erastus Snow and Brigham Young are quite clearly and consistently drawn. . . .

One thing this novel shows is that wherever "Mormon" history is touched, situations of epic value are uncovered. Most novels dealing with "Mormon" life follow the trek across the plains; this book explores only a corner of the subsequent settlements; yet an equally fruitful field is found.⁸

But the praise was not enough to counteract the criticism, and *The Giant Joshua* never became the Mormon classic that Whipple and her editors at Houghton-Mifflin hoped that it would be.

THE AUTHOR

I READ everything I could find about Whipple, but most of the information in print was about her work and not her, or was written when the book came out in 1941. The essence of her personality was missing. Everyone I asked about her said she was old and senile and living in a nursing home in St. George, that I couldn't speak to her. As the saying goes, the reports of her condition were greatly exaggerated. The only accuracy in the rumor was about her age. Maurine Whipple

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was eighty-three years old (or eighty-five, depending on the source) in January 1989.

Mayor Carl Brooks of St. George, Utah, finally directed me to Maurine. He is the son of Juanita Brooks, well known historian and Maurine's long-time friend. Brooks remembered Whipple primarily from when he was a child. He described her as smiling, red-haired, and rather high strung. In a biography of her written when *Joshua* came out, she was described as vivacious; Brooks added the word charming. He gave me Maurine's phone number, but he also told me that he didn't think she was well enough to talk to anyone.⁹

MAURINE is currently living in a retirement home in St. George. The Meadows is an attractive, white brick building with brown trim, divided into individual apartments for the residents. Meals can be taken in a communal dining hall or brought to the residents' rooms. Maurine lives with an obese cat named Kitty who has been with her since he was a kitten and whom she just never got around to giving a real name.¹⁰

The large coffee table in her small, comfortable apartment is stacked with books and papers. She spends most of her time reading, but that pastime becomes more and more difficult due to cataracts in both eyes. She mentioned that she was reading and enjoying Levi Peterson's *The Backslider*.

Because of a serious illness from which she was not expected to recover, Maurine had a legal guardian appointed several years ago. Her name is Carol Jensen. The two met some time before the guardianship proceedings when Maurine was a patient in the local hospital where Carol was a nurse. The relationship has always been one of friendship rather than of guardian and ward. Carol lives close to the retirement home and the two take frequent trips to the countryside in her car.

Carol is Maurine's watchdog; she avidly protects her privacy and her interests. When I called Carol to see if I could talk to Maurine, she spent more than an hour grilling me, asking who I was, why I needed this information, and precisely what I was going to do with the information once I got it. Once satisfied

that my purpose was legitimate, she went to great lengths to arrange a meeting.

That first meeting was one I will always remember. I walked into Maurine's tiny apartment not sure what to expect. Carol had warned me that Maurine was not an early riser and was not at all happy about being routed out of bed at what she thought was an outrageous hour (10:00 A.M.). But she did get up, and when I got there was sitting in an arm chair at the bar in her kitchen, glaring at a bowl of oatmeal. Breakfast is another part of life that Maurine does not appreciate. In the traditional peacemaking gesture I quickly handed over the gifts

I had brought: a box of Cummings chocolates and copies of the *Saturday Review* with Maurine on the cover and a *Time* magazine review of *Joshua* which also had featured her, both issues dating from the time *Joshua* was published. My offerings broke the ice. Invited to sit down, I was warmly greeted by Kitty in a flurry of shedding cat hair, and Maurine began to talk into my tape recorder.

The talk was rambling; as she said, "I keep jumping around," but it was lucid and frequently entertaining. Maurine is a consummate storyteller, and her guardian warned me that she might embellish fact for the sake of the story. Instances where I suspected that what I was hearing was more story than fact were often about recent events. Stories about the old days were very close to what I had gleaned from her correspondence which fills three large boxes containing some seventy file folders in the BYU archives.

Maurine reminisced for most of the morning with occasional prompting as I tried to steer the conversation to cover information that wasn't in any of the biographical material I had read. I was interested in the time she spent at Yaddo, evidently a very lonely one for her. Her editor at Houghton-Mifflin, Ferris Greenslet, had arranged for her to spend time there. Yaddo was and is an artist's colony near Saratoga, New York, that has sheltered the likes of Katherine Anne Porter and John Cheever. It provides talented creative people with the time and place to work without interruption. An invitation to stay at Yaddo is the ultimate stamp of legitimacy for blossoming



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artists in literature, music, dance, and art.

While many of Greenslet's letters to Maurine made it apparent that he wanted her to stay there, it was also evident that she was miserable. In one of his letters to her, he said that he was "sorry for your loneliness, but you should judge from my experience that pain is very favorable to successful literary composition."¹¹ At Yaddo, all the writers were provided cottages. Maurine said she didn't like the seclusion of her cottage so Miss Ames let her write in the ballroom of the main house, complete with minstrel gallery. Much of *The Giant Joshua* was completed at Yaddo, even though the isolation dictated by Yaddo's rules (no visiting until after 4 p.m.) was difficult for her.

When I asked her to tell me about Yaddo, Maurine remembered it well: the history of the place, why it was built, for whom it was built, and the name of the woman who ran it, Elizabeth Ames, and how strict Miss Ames was—except with her. Her description of Yaddo contained information identical to that which I found in an article written for *Publishers Weekly* on the occasion of Yaddo's sixtieth birthday. Maurine had particularly remembered some large chairs in the music room that looked like thrones; the article described the same chairs.¹²

Ferris Greenslet (or F.G. as Maurine called him) wrote wonderfully encouraging letters all during the time she was writing *Joshua*, which she dedicated to him. She seemed to need his support and encouragement, and Greenslet seemed more than willing to supply whatever she needed. His affection and patience was apparent in his letters, as was his respect for her ability. To this day she calls him one of the best. "He was an old man when I knew him, but he couldn't wait to meet me. He was a wonderful editor."¹³

I ASKED Maurine about the men in her life, particularly about Dr. Tom Spies. She met Spies while she was on an autograph tour in the East after *Joshua* was published. Her word for their meeting was

... uncanny. I was supposed to meet him at a lunch given by Mrs. Doubleday. As I was getting ready, there was a knock at my door and he was standing there. He told me he thought I might just as well meet him there as at the lunch, and then we could walk to the dining room together. After the lunch, he rented a buggy and we went for a ride in Central Park; after the ride we walked in the snow. It was cold and he picked up my hand and put it in his pocket. He was a very romantic man. He invented vitamins, you know.¹⁴

I didn't know. Maurine's recollection was close: Spies was famous, not for inventing vitamins but for his research in the

use of multivitamins in treating pellagra and other vitamin deficiency diseases. Maurine also told me that she had read about Spies in the *Reader's Digest* long before she met him. *Digest* had done an article on Spies for his research on vitamins, but it was not the only periodical to feature Tom Spies. *Colliers* did an article on him in 1948 for his work in diet and vitamin research, and *Time* did the same in 1946. Paul de Kruif's *Life Among the Doctors* was written primarily about Spies and his work in multivitamin research. All of these pieces described him as a charming, gregarious man, a generous man who "was said never to have accepted a fee from his patients."¹⁵ His full column obituary in the *New York Times* stated that "he was a bachelor who called home a hotel room in any city where he was engaged in medical research."¹⁶

Maurine describes Spies as the only man she ever really loved. When asked about other men in her life the answer was an enigmatic smile and an "Oh, yes. But Tom was the only man I ever really loved and he was married to his work."¹⁷

Her letters to Spies are unabashedly passionate. Undated, the copies in the archives seem to be worksheets to help her decide what she was going to say to this man she loved so much. Written in pencil on newsprint, the letter drafts are a record of those long ago feelings that were not returned in kind. Spies's letters to Whipple are closer to telegrams. They were all dictated and some even begin with the salutation "Dear Miss



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Whipple." From the letters that Whipple wrote, it seems that Maurine Whipple and Tom Spies were lovers. They met many times over the course of several years, but Maurine believes now that he would not have made a good husband. "He didn't have time for marriage in his life; he didn't know how to have fun."¹⁸

But she also stated in the letters that she wasn't interested in legalizing their relationship by marriage. All she wanted was to maintain the relationship, to see him whenever she could. She told him that she was not the kind of woman who needed the security of marriage.¹⁹

I asked about her relationship with the LDS church, reading to her an excerpt from a letter she had written to her agent in New York while she was supposed to be writing the sequel to *Joshua*:

If you will remember I told you I couldn't do the book in St. George. But in New York, I didn't suspect things would be as bad as they were out here. I have told you over and over that *I don't live in America*. That statement is truer than you would believe—anywhere outside of Nazi Germany. Before, I had always written in a little room in the Public Library. When I got home last fall the local mayor called upon me to tell me that I could no longer have the room, that he "hated my guts", and asked me to leave town. He had been visited by a member of the Mormon church hierarchy who was incensed over my book *This is the Place*—specifically, the passage wherein I said Utah had no free speech. Time has vindicated that book but last fall everybody went crazy and I was the object of their craziness. If you've never been the object of mob psychology—don't.²⁰

Maurine still feels persecuted by the Church. She found it hard to believe that *Joshua* was being taught at BYU in a class

on the American novel.

She told me that she had never been through the temple and had no plans to do so in spite of pressure from various members of the Church. She quoted interviewer Curtis Taylor as telling her in a letter that she "should see your bishop, that good man, about your endowments."²¹

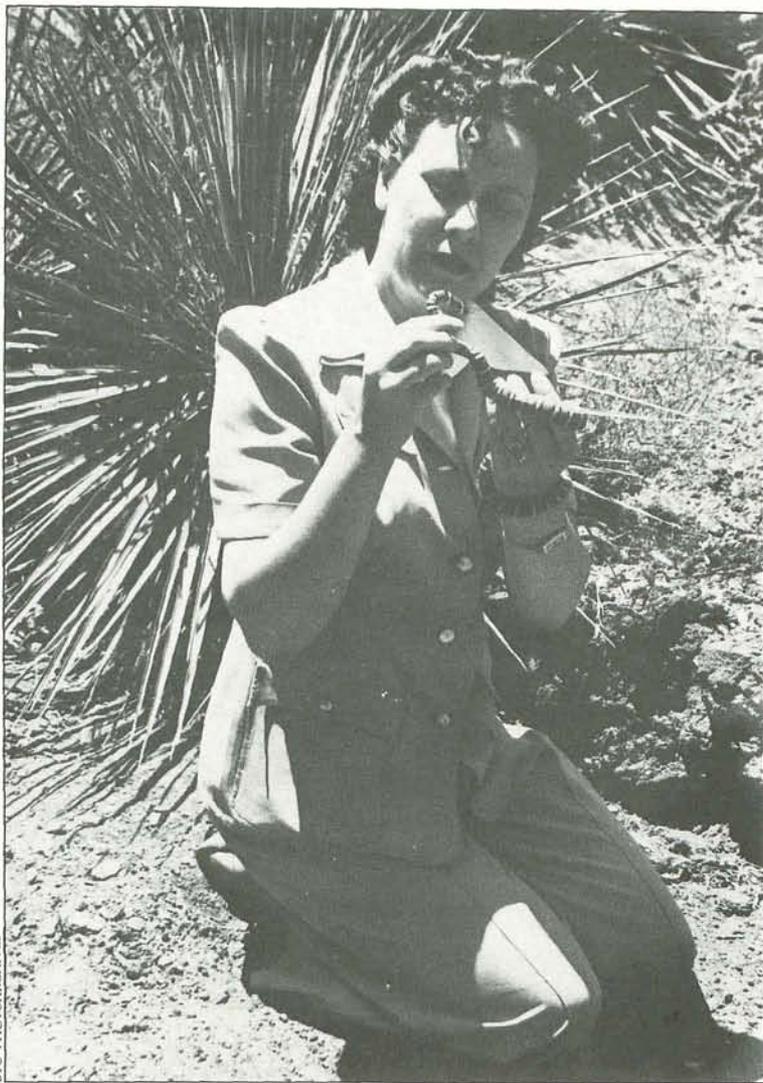
Maurine has bitter memories of former First Presidency member J. Reuben Clark. She thinks that it was he who told her he didn't like anything she did. She remembers in replying that she looked him in the eye and said that she thought

that everything he did was wonderful. As she recalls the incident, President Clark was rendered speechless by her retort. She also feels that he was influential in keeping down the Utah sales of *This is the Place Utah* by refusing to let ZCMI carry the book. Maurine even thought that President Clark phoned Houghton-Mifflin in Boston asking to suppress the book because it didn't present a flattering picture of Mormons.

A comment she made over and over during our interview was that one of the things she likes the least about all organized religions—not just the Mormons—is the lack of humor in most sermons. "You have to be able to laugh, especially about yourself."²² Maurine has retained that ability to laugh although her life has not been easy.

There have been rumors floating around for several years that the reason Maurine Whipple never wrote the sequel to *The Giant Joshua* was because she was an alcoholic.

Maurine had a brother who had problems with alcohol, but as far as I have been able to find out, she has never had such a problem herself. The source of those rumors may be from the early sixties when Maurine attempted to set up a foundation for the treatment of alcoholism in Las Vegas, Nevada. She felt that a place like Las Vegas had a need for such a treatment center simply because of the environment there. Unfortunately, she was never able to secure adequate funding for her foundation, and it was never built.



ST. GEORGE

MAURINE has a real and abiding affection for St. George. She knows the town and the surrounding countryside very well and many tales about the people who live there. She and her guardian insisted on taking me on a tour of St. George, Hurricane, and to one of their favorite places, an old Mormon fort at Pipe Springs—some two hours from St. George. The fort was deserted except for a few tourists and a gaggle of resident geese. Maurine sat on a shaded bench by the pond under some huge old cottonwood trees and reminisced about her reporting days.

She told me that several publications commissioned her to do stories on the Arizona strip (the northwestern corner of Arizona). She especially remembered staying overnight in the Arizona town of Colorado City, entirely composed of polygamous families. During the fifties, Governor Howard Pyle of Arizona arrested all the men from Colorado Springs. He also separated the children from their parents and took them into protective custody. Understandably, these actions caused considerable uproar.

Maurine stayed in the town to cover the story, and because there were no hotels, lodged overnight with one of the families. She recalled that the woman with whom she was sleeping woke her in the night screaming, "I see blood." When Maurine questioned the woman the next day, she replied that she was terrified of the consequences of the raid, fearing blood atonement. Maurine thought that the persecution of these families was terrible and recalls that she so informed the governor.

Maurine had hoped that a film of *The Giant Joshua* would make the last few years of her life financially easy. She sold the film rights as an option several years ago but nothing had been done when the time limit ran out. When that effort failed, she then sold the film rights outright and not as an option. The prospective producers have tabled their efforts for the time being for lack of backing. She was told by the current owners of the

film rights that *Joshua* will be a blockbuster of a film—a Mormon *Gone with the Wind*; they want to wait until they can make a film of which both she and they will be proud.

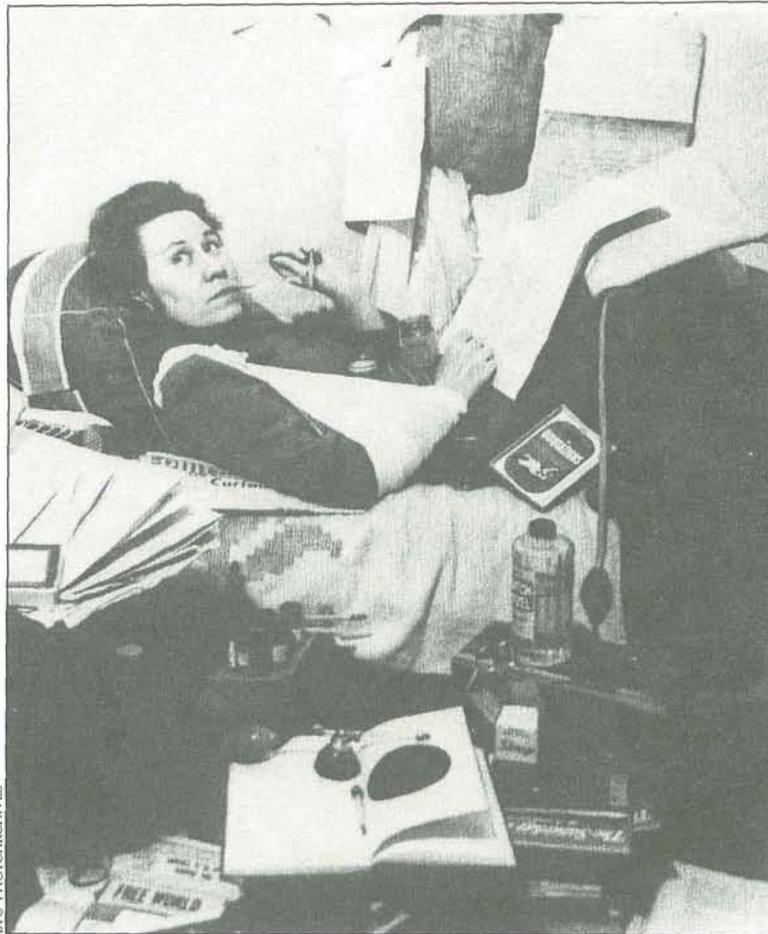
Maurine was informed by a family friend who works for Redford Enterprises that Robert Redford will direct the film because *Joshua* is the one book that he would most like to see made into a film. Maurine wants very much to believe this because she is a big Redford fan, but there has been no verification on this information either by the prospective producers or Redford Enterprises.

The money Maurine received for the film rights to *Joshua* is gone. Her home was taken from her when a former caretaker went into bankruptcy. She and the caretaker had an agreement: in return for Maurine's physical care, the caretaker was given the deed to Maurine's house which was owned free and clear. When the caretaker declared bankruptcy, the home and its contents (all of which still belonged to Maurine) were put up for sale. The sale of the film rights brought her the only income she has had over the last few years. She has always been self-employed. Never having paid into social security, she doesn't qualify for social security benefits. In order to receive state aid, she must leave the retirement home and go into an acute care facility. She was placed in such a facility a few years ago when she was in need of skilled medical care and, according to her guardian, became very depressed. But there seems to be no other solution at the moment.

Maurine has no close family. Her guardian has agonized over the decision, but sees no alternative.

CONCLUSION

LITERARY critics Eugene England, Curtis Taylor, Bruce Jorgenson, and Patricia Aikins have called *The Giant Joshua* "arguably the best LDS novel ever written." It was intended to be the first book of a trilogy. I feel that Maurine never finished



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the trilogy because of anger: anger at the Mormon community which rejected her work, anger at her family for not supporting her, and anger at the literary community which seemed to forget her for so many years.

So now you don't have to wonder as I did, "whatever happened to Maurine Whipple?" She is alive albeit elderly, a little wobbly but otherwise well, living in obscurity with her colorful memories and Kitty in St. George. ☺

NOTES

1. "Maurine Whipple's Story of *The Giant Joshua*" as told to Maryruth Bracy and Linda Lambert, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 6:3 & 4 (Autumn-Winter 1971): 57.
2. Maurine Whipple to Jerry Jones, 1973, letter. Copy in author's possession.
3. _____ to Tom Spies, undated, unpaginated. The Maurine Whipple Collection of Personal and Professional Papers, Western Americana Archives, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo.
4. _____, *The Giant Joshua* (Salt Lake City: Western Epics, Inc., 1976), preface.

5. John A. Widsøe, *The Improvement Era* 44, no. 2 (February 1941): 93.
6. Widsøe, 93.
7. Curtis Taylor, "The Giant Joshua and Latter-day Fiction," *LDS Booksellers Association Newsletter* (February 1989):6-7.
8. Widsøe, 93.
9. Carl Brooks, telephone interview by the author, 31 March 1989.
10. Maurine Whipple, interview with author, 4 April 1989. St. George, Utah. Tape in author's possession.
11. Ferris Greenslet to Maurine Whipple, letter, 25 July 1939. Whipple Collection at Brigham Young University.
12. Roy Bongartz, "Yaddo at 60," *Publishers Weekly* (13 June 1986):32-35.
13. Whipple interview, 1989.
14. Whipple interview, 1989.
15. Tom Spies, Obituary notice, *New York Times* (29 February 1960).
16. Spies, *New York Times*.
17. Whipple interview, 1989.
18. Whipple interview, 1989.
19. Whipple to Tom Spies.
20. Maurine Whipple to Maxmilian Becker, November 1946, letter. St. George, Utah. Whipple Collection at Brigham Young University.
21. Curtis Taylor, interview with Maurine Whipple, 1989.
22. Whipple interview, 1989.

DOING IT

Beth, too, would like some ice cream, and, as Elise says, church is quite through. So they are out the door and across the street.

Licking busily to keep the city heat from stealing their sixty-cent scoops, they meet Sharon outside the store. Sharon of the shaved head, blue eyes vacant as the cloudless sky. Sharon, who panhandles their street, bare feet dirty, her breasts tattooing their own beat under a brown jersey dress hanging ankle length, every inch festooned with peel or juice from culls tossed at dawn by Vietnamese grocers arranging corner stands with bananas and oranges, snowpeas, tomatoes.

"Gottaquarterforacuppacoffee?" Sharon intones. Elise reaches for a dollar, but Beth takes charge. This time she's onto Christ's way of assisting street people. "No . . .," she says, tremulously, "but we'll buy you something to eat."

Sharon considers this, then leads them down the street. Elise turns in at Burger King, but Sharon won't go. A deli's next; Sharon won't go. Another seven blocks. Sharon rejects pizza places, yogurt delights. Beth and Elise hold out hope for Zabar's, but Sharon skirts even that door.

"We're going to end up in the Russian Tea Room," Elise mutters. "Let me give her some money." But Beth persists, whispering that Sharon's probably been thrown out of most places along Broadway. Sharon's not saying. They've asked her every polite thing they can think of, and Sharon wordlessly marches them on. Finally she stops at a deli and goes in, the two sighing behind her.

At the counter, Sharon invokes, "Flounder filletwithsalmonmousse,peasandpearlonions withcheesesauce,fettucinialfredo,fried rice with pork,beefenchilada,mostaccioliwithmeat sauce,crabaugratin,broccolifanfare,aneclair, chocolatecroissant,kiwifruitsalad,waffle, twoblueberry muffins,hamburger,frenchfries, quartofmilk,fourcoffee,twelvecreamandsugars."

Recognizing style, Elise reaches for her Visa Card, but Beth says, "No . . . you may have a sandwich, a salad, and something to drink." Sharon settles for pastrami on rye, antipasto salad, two coffees, six cream and sugars.

As the three go out the door, Beth and Elise turn toward home; Sharon heads downtown. The two start to say goodbye, but Sharon cuts in, "Gottaquarterforacuppacoffee?" Before Beth can try the right way again, Elise slips Sharon a quarter. And they start counting the blocks to Zabar's and a piece of chicken cordon bleu to share with Willene while telling her of the blocks required to do it unto the least of them.

—LORETTA RANDALL SHARP

REVIEW ESSAY

OVERWORKED STEREOTYPES OR ACCURATE HISTORICAL IMAGES: THE IMAGES OF POLYGAMY IN THE GIANT JOSHUA



Review essay by Jessie L. Embry

WHAT IS THE relationship between history and literature, especially where they seem to overlap in historical novels? David Cowart in his study *History and the Contemporary Novel* argued, "Every culture expresses itself more definitively through its artists than through its historians. . . . Mark Twain and Walt Whitman capture the American spirit better than does Francis Parkman. . . . Artists provide the myths by which any cultural body defines itself, the myths that historians mistakenly seek to unravel. Thus history makes its greatest contribution when it supplies the creative artist with raw material."¹ He cautioned novelists, though, to avoid producing "a distant mirror of their own fantasy lives" and thus "achieve historical actuality less often than they think."² Morroe Berger's *Real and Imagined Worlds: The Novel and Social Science* concluded that since frequently novels follow the events of the past, "readers . . . accept the novelist's conclusion . . . as applying to social life outside as well as inside the story." He added, however, that "there do exist historical and social science studies . . . with which to test the insights found in novels."³

One way to analyze novels is to see how closely the characters match the popular images, the stereotypes, of the historical time period. According to Walter Lippman's classic 1922 study, "The subtlest and most pervasive of all influences are those which create and maintain the repertory of stereotypes. We are told about the world before we see it. We

imagine most things before we experience them. And those preconceptions, unless education has made us acutely aware, govern deeply the whole process of perception."⁴ This type of education requires a careful study of "when our ideas started, where they started, how they came to us, why we accept them." That information "enables us to know what novel, play, picture, phrase, planted one conception in this mind, another in this mind."⁵

Some Mormon fiction has been especially full of stereotypes. As Neal Lambert explained, "The popular notion about what a Mormon is has not lent itself to great literature. Polygamy, secret rites, blood atonement, priestly orders—all such have made the Mormon slip easily into a stereotype for slick fiction and gross comedy."⁶

This paper will examine the stereotypes in one Mormon novel, Maurine Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*. Are her images of polygamy overworked stereotypes or accurate historical images? First, it will discuss Whipple's view of history and then look at how various reviewers have reacted to her historical information. After a brief description of the characters, it will point out some of the popular stereotypes of polygamy which Whipple reinforced in her book. Hopefully this exercise will provide the education Lippman talked about and avoid the temptations "of the casual mind . . . to pick out or stumble upon a sample which supports or defies its prejudice, and then to make it the representative of a whole class."⁷ For as Gordon W. Allport explained in his study of prejudice, "We can distinguish between a valid generalization and a stereotype only if we have solid data concerning the existence of . . . true group differences."⁸

In a review of Amelia Bean's *The Fancher Train* (1958), Maurine Whipple explained Bean had "unusual" narrative skills but added, "I do hope her next book is all fiction. For while as a story [it] is entertaining, as history it comes near to being cause for libel."⁹ Historical information was very important to Whipple. In a letter to the actor John Ford she explained, "I thank the gods daily for a man who refuses to bow to the stereotypes but has the courage and genius to suck the real right juice out of this West I love."¹⁰ Avoiding stereotypes and giving what she felt was accurate history was especially essential to her in writing *Giant Joshua*. As she explained in an interview published in *Dialogue*, "I looked up every word, every historical reference. . . . It seemed to me that if I created an era, I had to be true to it. So I had to look up costumes and clothes, even the dialect they used."¹¹ Within this historical framework, she wanted to tell the story as accurately as possible, but she wanted to avoid "paint[ing her ancestors] with too white a brush."¹² Ferris Greenslet, Whipple's editor with the publishing company, also recognized the importance of accurate historical information: "It is going to be important to get the chronological historical background of the story copper-fastened, both because . . . the hen-minded readers would object if it isn't and because solid foundation of the sort makes for better architecture in the super structure."¹³

Despite Whipple's and her publisher's attempts to avoid historical error, Nels Anderson, a sociologist and historian who had lived in St. George, pointed out some errors that might offend Church leaders, "brethren who have the facts." In a letter to Juanita Brooks, he said that Patrick E. Connor, a U.S. army officer who came to Utah during the Civil War, was referred to as both O'Connor and Conner throughout the book, St. George was referred to by the name too early, school children recited the Washington state capital, Olympia, in 1862, long before Washington became a state, and "stew bum" and "chewing the fat" were modern terms that would not have been used at the time.¹⁴

These minor errors escaped most readers, including the "brethren." Most of the contemporary and more recent reviews applauded Whipple's novel for its use of history; only Apostle John A. Widtsoe was not pleased with her portrayal of polygamy.¹⁵ While he felt that the novel described the "high spiritual motives" for polygamy "with some degree of fairness," he felt that "the example selected, a life defeated because of polygamy, leaves a bitter, angry distaste for the system" which

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Widtsoe felt was "unfair" since, he argued, "there were fewer unhappy marriages under 'Mormon' polygamy than under monogamy."¹⁶ Edward Geary, however, questioned whether Widtsoe could give information on the success of polygamy, but then argued, "The validity of a work of fiction does not depend on its adherence to a statistically accurate representation of reality but on its conveying a genuine sense of human possibilities."¹⁷

While, of course, Geary is right and fiction does not have to be "statistically accurate," some readers have accepted *The Giant Joshua* as an example of the "typical" Mormon polygamous family. With reviewers such as Bruce Jorgensen and Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, these readers have felt that "few other Mormon novels match its historical scope and solidity" and called it "an excellent place to begin in developing an understanding of pioneer life."¹⁸ While the MacIntyre family are "complicated people" who "live in their own element,"¹⁹ they also have many of the stereotypes about Mormon polygamy that both Mormons and non-Mormons have come to cherish.

A BRIEF summary of the MacIntyre family reveals some of these stereotypes. The MacIntyres raised Clorinda, the voice of the novel. She affectionally referred to them as Uncle Abijah and Aunt 'Sheba after her father passed away. When Clory developed a relationship with a gentile from the Johnston Army and when the MacIntyres were asked to move to St. George, Brigham Young suggested that Abijah marry his 17-year-old foster daughter. Young and full of excitement, Clory brought life to everyone including the first wife, 'Sheba, who hated to admit "there was something like bells in Clory's voice, a lovely warmth and roundness, a smoothness—like fresh-churned butter after you've worked it awhile with your hands."²⁰ 'Sheba was a domineering first wife who occasionally showed compassion for the other wives but, as Willie explained to Clory, "wore the pants in the family."²¹ Willie, the second wife, was a "duty" wife, someone who was in the home as a immigrant when Brigham Young asked Abijah to marry a plural wife. Homely and without much personality, her virtues were far below the surface. As Clory explained, it was only "when pity or love kindled the hidden depths in her eyes [that] her face was gently beautiful."²² Abijah was the Mormon patriarch who was trying to follow the Pro-

phet, advance in the Church, and keep his families in order.

But that was only a hard public shell. "Clory had come to believe he really was the most tender-hearted of men underneath—like a coconut a missionary had brought back once from the Sandwich Islands, tough and hairy outside and needing a lot of opening up before one could get at the sweet good core."²³ Yet she also felt that "bullied by his first wife, Abijah in turn bullied his younger wives and found in that his greatest reward for polygamy."²⁴

An obvious question, based on Widtsoe's review and Whipple's novel is how successful was polygamy. Kimball Young, a sociologist who wrote *Isn't One Wife Enough?*, attempted a statistical measure. Based on his study of 175 families, representing plural marriages performed during the Utah settlement period, he found nearly 53 percent were "highly successful" or "reasonably successful," one-fourth were "moderately successful with some conflict but on the whole fair adjustment," and 23 percent had "considerable conflict" and "severe conflict."²⁵ While all of the problems Whipple presents in her book did occur in some polygamous families, many studies show that polygamy was "surprisingly successful."²⁶ In her book *This is the Place*, Whipple agreed. Based on her study of her own polygamous grandparents and other St. George residents, she concluded: "In spite of gentile opinion, plural marriages were often happy." With a "patriarch" father, plural families had "achieved such dignity and contentment, such a sense of family solidarity" that the children considered themselves all part of one family.²⁷ Despite this observation of polygamy, that was not the image she portrayed in *The Giant Joshua*. From Brigham Young and Erastus Snow to Abijah, men had favorite wives and there was a great deal of jealousy. Only Clory's childhood friend and a first wife, Pal Wright, even approached a "happy" experience. And Pal explained to Clory polygamy "was hard. There's no denying that."²⁸

While "unequal matches, jealousy, favorites, irresponsibility . . . were not unknown,"²⁹ neither did they happen all the time as some might expect. In fact, while polygamy played an important role in relationships, it often increased problems rather than being the initial concern. In discussing men who married sisters, Kimball Young found, and my study agreed, "personality divergence, economic problems and sense of differential treatment by the husband"³⁰ were more important than simply being married to

the same man. Of course, in all polygamous families there were moments of jealousies just as in the MacIntyre family. There were also cases where one wife dominated and another wife was very submissive (similar to the relationship between Bathsheba and Willie). There were cases, of course, where one wife (sometimes the first wife such as Bathsheba) was very jealous of a younger, more attractive wife (such as Clory). However, there were fewer cases of jealousy than one might expect and because of their religious motivation and desire to make the marriages work, many troubling experiences were overlooked or suppressed.³¹

Determining the "success" of polygamy is probably the most difficult stereotype to find "solid data" to substantiate. Other areas are less subjective. For example, how many plural wives did Mormons usually have? During nearly all of the novel, Abijah had three wives (although he marries a fourth at the end of the book). One 1983 novel even stated, "Three was the number most Mormon men had if they were polygamists."³² But my study, covering marriages performed between 1880 and 1904, shows that three, or even more as some might think, was not the typical number of wives. About 60 percent of the men married only one plural wife. Approximately 20 percent had the magical three wives, and only 20 percent had more than three.³³

A common image was also that most plural wives were immigrants. Sociologist Nels Anderson found that only two of seventy-one polygamous husbands and fifteen of 150 polygamous wives in Washington County in 1880 were born in Utah. Other studies do not support that conclusion. D. Gene Pace, who studied the wives of 835 bishops between 1847 and 1900, found that it was the polygamous husbands who were more likely to be immigrants than the wives. My study found approximately half of the husbands and first and second wives were born in Utah or Idaho and over 70 percent were born in the United States; approximately two-thirds of the third and fourth wives were American born and over one-half were from the Mormon Corridor of Utah and Idaho. This matched studies of Mormons in general during the same time period. Dean May's demographic portrait of Cache Valley showed that from 1860 to 1880 about two-thirds of the population was U.S. born.³⁴ Although these studies represent different time periods, the figures suggest that at no time during the Utah polygamous period were most plural wives immigrants.

Willie also fits another stereotype that Mormon plural wives were older women who were very homely and polygamy might have been their only chance to marry. Anderson said that the immigrants were "older women, many of them ranging between 25 and 35 years of age. . . . Polygamy was a boon for them."³⁵ Mark Twain wrote in *Roughing It* that he was ready to "achieve a great reform" against polygamy "until I saw the Mormon women. Then I was touched. My heart was wiser than my head. It warmed toward these poor, ungainly, and pathetically 'homely' creatures." He believed "The man that marries one of them has done an act of Christian charity . . . and the man who marries sixty of them has done a deed of open-handed generosity."³⁶ Determining what plural wives looked like is too subjective, but it is much easier to examine if plural wives were "older women." According to my study, men chose plural wives who were approximately the age of his first wife at the time of their marriage even though he was ten to thirty years older. For example, a husband was usually between twenty-one and twenty-five when he married his first wife, and she was between fifteen and twenty. The man was between twenty-six and thirty-five when he married a second wife, and she was between fifteen and twenty-five years old, usually closer to 19.³⁷ Plural wives were usually not older like Willie or young teenagers like Clory.

The popular contemporary view and sometimes reported historical understanding has been that no man would be interested in marrying more than one wife except to increase his sexual opportunities. Therefore, nearly all novels about polygamy have a young wife that the older man is chasing or has just married. Because of Victorian America's views of marriage and sexual relationships, I don't know that those reactions to polygamy were ever recorded. While the descriptions of a plural husband's lustful desires for his new young wife probably led to an increased readership of the novel, there are no historical records to justify them. James Hulett, Kimball Young's research assistant, found out how unwilling plural husbands, wives, and children were to discuss sex. The standard reply he received was that intimate relationships were only used for procreation.³⁸

Whipple describes fairly accurately the living arrangements in Mormon polygamous families. Except just after a plural marriage or in times of economic stress, wives lived in separate homes usually in the same community. Frequently the houses were on

adjoining lots, and there was a well-beaten path between the two homes. The husband alternated nights or weeks with his wives. Except just after Abijah consummated the marriage with Clory (when he spent nearly all of his nights with her, causing town gossip), he alternated between the homes. Early in the book it was on a nightly basis; later he visited each wife for a week. However, Whipple implies that the only reason Clory had her own home was because she insisted on it; Abijah would have preferred all the wives living in the same home.³⁹

With separate homes and a regular visiting schedule, plural wives usually were "queens" of their own castles. Economic resources as well as affections were divided; attempts were usually made so that they would be equal. There were times of loneliness for each wife when the husband was gone to another home or especially when husbands were on missions. A study of monogamous families during the same time period shows that those wives had many of the same concerns. Monogamous husbands were often off on their jobs; they were also called to serve missions where they were separated from their wives and children.⁴⁰ Whipple seemed to blame all of these feelings of loneliness on polygamy without recognizing them as part of the Victorian lifestyle.

Some historians have argued that Victorian ideals actually discouraged close relationships between husbands and wives. According to Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, a feminist historian, during the nineteenth-century "rigid gender-role[s] . . . within the family and within society as a whole" led "to the emotional segregation of women and men."⁴¹ Whipple recognized some of the closeness during the nineteenth century between women. Clory, for instance, frequently confided her feelings to Pal Wright.⁴² Women also met together to quilt, gossip, and celebrate.⁴³ Yet Whipple's women were not always part of the nineteenth century model; they demanded close relationships with their husbands. Pal and David Wright had a very close relationship so that Clory could complain, "David Wright's a different kind of man than Abijah MacIntyre."⁴⁴ After Abijah returned from his mission, Clory felt "a great delight at having him home. One got tired of the constant society of women. Female society grew to be insipid, like sleazy silk, only man-goods had 'body' and pith when you whanged it. Three years was a long time to be separated from one's man. . . . She could even understand how a polygamist wife with an absent husband might be tempted to run off with a too-persuasive gentile."⁴⁵

WHAT do these and other stereotypes add to *The Giant Joshua*? Are they useful or do they dominate the story? Since Whipple was a descendant of polygamous families, it is possible that she was simply telling a family story which included the "kernel of truth," the one example where the stereotypes fit.⁴⁶ Whipple's grandmother, Comelia Agatha, was the third wife of John Daniel Thompson McAllister. However, Comelia was twenty-three rather than a teenager when she married; John was forty. She was born in Philadelphia and her mother stayed there. Unlike Clory, her father did not die crossing the plains; he came to Utah and married four more wives. John's second wife, Angeline Sophronia Goforth, was not an immigrant; she was born in Illinois and was seventeen when she married John; he was thirty. (She was the teenage bride rather than the third wife.) McAllister served as president of the St. George and the Manti Temples. He had a total of nine wives, seven by 1880, thirteen years before he moved to Manti. Therefore, while Whipple used elements of her grandparents' stories in *The Giant Joshua*, it is not completely their history.⁴⁷

Another possibility is that the stereotypes say more about Whipple and her time period than they do about nineteenth-century Mormon polygamy. Maurine Whipple was part of what Edward Geary refers to as the "lost generation" of Mormon novelists "of the 1940s" whose writings "have their roots in the author's effort to come to terms with his or her Mormon heritage."⁴⁸ *The Giant Joshua* might be Whipple's attempts to understand polygamy. According to Eugene England, "The novel declines when the author's resentment takes over and she focuses self-indulgently on the horrors of polygamy."⁴⁹ Whipple's own comments reflect this uneasiness. In *This is the Place*, Whipple called polygamy "a stern doctrine, never an easy flowering sensuality."⁵⁰ In the *Dialogue* interview, she talked about the "resentment" of "my father's generation," "the sons and daughters of polygamy."⁵¹ I interviewed the children of polygamy and did not find this same resentment. Whipple's descriptions might be partially the second generation of polygamous children struggling not only to understand the principle of plural marriage but also to determine the role of Mormonism in their lives, or they might simply be her personal struggle with polygamy and Mormonism.

Whipple's stereotypes of polygamy are common in other Mormon literature of the 1940s. Virginia Sorensen's first novel, *A Little Lower than the Angels*, published one year after

Whipple's *The Giant Joshua*, included a number of stereotypes.⁵³ Mercy Baker, Simon's first wife, was not totally converted to Mormonism but stayed with the other Saints because her husband believed. A very strong woman at first, she was weakened by childbirth and was unable to take care of her children and home. After explaining his situation to Joseph Smith, Simon was encouraged to take an older English immigrant, Charlot Leavitt, as a housekeeper. Joseph suggested that in time Simon might want to marry her as plural wife. However, as Simon and Charlot were crossing the Mississippi from Nauvoo back to Simon's home in Iowa, Charlot convinced him that they should be married immediately since it would not be proper for her to live in the house with Simon without being married to him. Like Freeborn, Abijah's oldest son, Simon and Mercy's son Jarvie did not approve of the relationship. Unlike Free, who was in love with Clory, Jarvie could not understand why it was all right for his father to have sexual relations with a woman other than his mother when the previous housekeeper had been dismissed because of the advances she made to Jarvis. Mercy, who knew about plural marriage from her friendship with Eliza R. Snow, figured out that Simon had married Charlot, and while she could not do without Charlot's help, she resented it.

These stereotypes have appeared in Mormon fiction since the first anti-polygamous novels. Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt found four novels written between 1855 and 1856 "particularly important because they set the pattern, so far as theme and characteristics are concerned for most of the anti-Mormon novels and stories that followed." Arrington and Haupt point out, however, that the novelists relied on "contemporary images or stereotypes in describing Mormons."⁵³ These same characteristics, strong women who accept Mormonism because their husbands do, weak men who fall to the authority of Church leaders, and jealous wives in a Turkish harem, to name a few, can also be found in Whipple and Sorensen and other novels written during the same time period.

But, as Edward Geary explained, most of the characteristics have more to do with the "lost generation" authors' attempts to deal with their views of Mormonism. According to Geary, "The protagonist [in the novels] is nearly always a character 'in the middle': something of an individual caught between his or her instinct for freedom and the demands of loyalty and obedience."⁵⁴ Just as Mercy and Clory died with the tension

unresolved, Whipple "want[ed] in a way to become a wholehearted member of the community yet long[ed] to escape to find some mode of life less filled with hardships, more rewarding culturally and aesthetically."⁵⁵ Unlike Mercy and Clory, though, Whipple, like the children in some of the novels, attempts to leave the community "for a life both creative and individualistic."⁵⁶ Whipple never really left St. George and continued to be "caught" between her desire for freedom and love of her culture. Sorensen, on the other hand, was able to leave and come to an understanding of her relationship to Mormonism. As she explained, "As a writer and as a person, I can honestly say that I am not particularly interested in Mormons. It is by a series of accidents of birth that I must fill out the blank of myself with such words as 'white' and 'female' and 'American' and 'Mormon'. Each of these has its own complex of meanings by now, and its own perpetuity, no matter how much I might choose to alter my climate and my clothes and my beliefs and my loyalties. The more passionately I might rebel against any one of them, the more deeply it would, in actuality, be affecting me. It seems to me that most mere rebellion is a young thing, apt to be exhausting and unproductive. When it can at last be calmed down into analysis and understanding art becomes possible."⁵⁷ Because of that attitude, Sorensen's later novels which deal with polygamy in Utah avoid many of these cardboard people and show Mormons as unique individuals with common concerns dealing with polygamy but varying reactions. Whipple, however, continued to rebel against the Mormon society and was never really able to "calm down." That might partially explain her inability to complete another novel.

But not only novelists reported the stereotypes. As I have already mentioned, Nels Anderson's *Deseret Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah*, also published in 1942, contains many of the same stereotypes about polygamy as the fiction. Anderson first came to St. George in 1908 when he was on his way to work on the Panama Canal but "a freight train crew stranded me in the most uninviting of places, and after one thing and another, I came to a ranch among the Mormons, was made genuinely welcome, and felt at home." As a result of his stay, he joined the Mormon church in 1909, attended the Dixie Academy and Brigham Young University, and eventually studied sociology at the University of Chicago. In 1934 he returned to southern Utah with a grant from Columbia University

to study the Mormons, and *Deseret Saints* was the result of that study.⁵⁸ While part of his study (the number of immigrants) was based on research, others of his views (the age and homeliness of plural wives) were probably based more on impressions.

Another possible reason for Whipple's stereotypes is that she wanted to deal with the emotionalism which had haunted her about life in a polygamous families. While the formal story has been Widtsoe's "polygamous families were as successful as monogamous families," Whipple, being a descendant of the principle, felt scars that she believed were caused by polygamy. She explained in an interview, "You see, the thing about polygamy is that the spirit that prompted it didn't die out. Men went on thinking that they should do this. It sort of bred a feeling that they—at least among the Mormons in Utah—that women were lower than men; they were chattel. Well, I had been brought up on these early stories, and especially from talking to the old people, I knew that their dreams, their realities, their goals, were a lot different than the things that had come about." She felt that the Church needed to "get rid of its authoritarian attitude. It had its place in the early days, but it doesn't now. You can't say to people, 'Do this because I tell you to do it.' You can't do that anymore. This generation just isn't going to accept it."⁵⁹ Her novel was one of the first attempts to deal with what might be called the darker side of plural marriage and some of the unspoken negative emotions of women. According to Linda Sillitoe, these feelings were very apparent as late as the 1980s when she and Allen Roberts researched the Mark Hofmann forgeries and still haunted many of their interviewees.⁶⁰

Whipple also strongly believed that the Church had left its original goals. Rather than striving for brotherhood, the leaders were only interested in material concerns. She believed that *The Giant Joshua* and the two books of the trilogy which were to follow would trace the "Idea" which supported the Mormon pioneers and which seemed to have been lost by the Mormon leaders. In correspondence with everyone from fans to editors, she explained her concerns about the direction the Mormon church was going. "The question seems to be: Is the idea of brotherly love so naive and impractical that it must be sacrificed if Success is to be achieved? I do not believe that such a postulation is inevitable despite events, despite Church snobishness."⁶¹ She felt that many Latter-day Saints opposed the materialism of the Church leaders and "there is a gulf between the

Mormon people and their leaders.⁶² But just as a "pendulum" had swung toward "success," she felt that it would swing back to the Mormon "Idea" of brotherhood. "I also believe (in fact, I know—as many humble people have insisted so long) that my books will help bring about their consummation; will help readjust and clarify Mormon thinking, will help reestablish this Idea."⁶³

FINALLY, although the stereotypes have probably been around for years, it is possible that Whipple's characters were very much her own, and have become the images of polygamy because the novel has been read so widely. It becomes the age-old question of which came first—the chicken or the egg. As I have lectured on polygamy throughout Utah, people have frequently asked me if I have read *The Giant Joshua* and then told me how well they felt it portrayed polygamy. Many of the views that we have of polygamy might come from readers searching for images and then translating them into historical fact. As one reader wrote to Whipple, "Like most grandchildren of the Pioneers, I've been raised on tales of . . . the early days in St. George, but it wasn't until I read your book that I fully appreciated the hardships those good people faced and the faith that must have been theirs."⁶⁴ A special temptation for some descendants of polygamous families has been to assume that their family was "typical," and if a novel such as *The Giant Joshua* supported that claim, it only strengthened their conclusions. One reader wrote to Whipple, "Strangely, in THE GIANT JOSHUA you have written the life story of my antecedents. Or it may be that there was not so much difference in all of them. My own grandfather was married to both a 'Sheba and a Clory; my other grandfather was married to a Willie."⁶⁵ From polygamous descendants to other Mormons struggling to understand polygamy, a doctrine so foreign to their understanding of marriage, to other readers with a curiosity about Mormons, *The Giant Joshua* seemed to answer all of their questions and appear to be historically accurate.

Which brings us back to the original question. What is the relationship between history and literature? While they are two separate disciplines, using very different methods, there are procedures to understand history as literature and literature as history. The study of literature and history can help us see that at times "it is useful to see our pioneer grandmother in multiple"⁶⁶ so that we can understand the similarities of experiences. At the

same time it is important to remember that "different people, at different times and places, perceive the world differently";⁶⁷ there is virtue to understanding the uniqueness of individuals and, for readers especially, to avoid transferring novels' characters from "a genuine sense of human possibilities" into "accurate representation[s] of realit[ies]." ☐

NOTES

- David Cowart, *History and the Contemporary Novel* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1989), 25-26.
- Cowart, 31-32.
- Morroe Berger, *Real and Imagined Worlds: The Novel and Social Science* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1977), 161.
- Walter Lippman, *Public Opinion* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1961 ed.), 89-90.
- Lippman, 90-91.
- Neal Lambert, "Saints, Sinners, and Scribes: A Look at the Mormons in Fiction," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 36(Winter 1968): 64.
- Lippman, 151.
- Gordon Allport, *The Nature of Prejudice* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1958), 188.
- Maurine Whipple, "Review of *The Fancher Train* by Amelia Bean," *Utah Historical Quarterly* 27(October 1959):416-417.
- Maurine Whipple to John Ford, February 16, 1949, Maurine Whipple Papers (uncatalogued), Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. (Hereinafter cited as Whipple Papers.) The collection is in the process of being catalogued and was used by permission of Dennis Rowley.
- "Maurine Whipple's Story of *The Giant Joshua*," as told to Maryruth Bracy and Linda Lambert, *Dialogue* 6(Autumn-Winter 1971): 59.
- Maurine Whipple, *The Giant Joshua* (New York: Houghton-Mifflin, 1941), preface.
- Ferris Greenslet to Maurine Whipple, February 1, 1938, Maurine Whipple Papers.
- Nels Anderson to Juanita Brooks, February 25, 1941, Juanita Brooks Collection, Box 1, Folder 5, Utah State Historical Society Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- These are some examples of the literary criticism. According to Bruce Jorgensen, "Flawed by soft pockets of anachronistic sentiment, *Joshua* poises unsteadily between popular genre of history-as-fiction . . . like *Gone with the Wind*, and the more . . . serious genre" like Willa Cather (Jorgensen, 7). William A. (Bert) Wilson felt, "As a philosophical treatment of Mormon doctrine, . . . the novel fails. But as a rendition of the Mormon experience, or at least part of it, it succeeds. Those of us who have read the novel have probably learned very little of Mormon philosophy. But we have had the pleasure of rubbing shoulders with real people, struggling with real problems, in a real world" (William Wilson, "Folklore in *The Giant Joshua*," *Proceedings of the Symposia of the Association for Mormon Letters, 1978-79:63*). Edward A. Geary explained, "*The Giant Joshua* despite its faults . . . is a powerful and moving novel which is accessible to both Mormons and non-Mormons" (Edward A. Geary, "The Poetics of Provincialism: Mormon Regional Fiction," *Dialogue* 11[Summer 1978]:22).
- The reviews, however, praised the historical information. In a contemporary review, Ray B. West, Jr., in *Saturday Review of Literature* said, "The author has followed historical fact with admirable accuracy" (Ray B. West, Jr., "Mormon Story," *Saturday Review of Literature* 23[January 4, 1941]:5). Bruce Jorgensen felt, "Certainly few other Mormon novels match its historical scope and solidity" (Jorgensen, 7). Cracroft told Whipple, "The brilliant blend of artisty, Mormon folkways, Mormon history, and the humanity of its characters makes this a memorable book" (Cracroft). Only John A. Widstoe in *The Improvement Era* questioned *Joshua's* historical accuracy and Edward Geary questioned whether he had any support for his argument (John A. Widstoe, "On the Book Rack," *The Improvement Era* 44[February 1941]:93; Geary, 22).
- John A. Widstoe, "On the Book Rack," *Improvement Era* 44(February 1941): 93.
- Edward A. Geary, "The Poetics of Provincialism: Mormon Regional Fiction," *Dialogue* 11(Summer 1978):22.

- Bruce Jorgensen, "Retrospection: *Giant Joshua*," *SUNSTONE* 3(September-October 1978): 7; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, "Fictional Sisters," *Mormon Sisters: Women in Early Utah*, Claudia L. Bushman, ed. (Cambridge, MA: Emmeline Press Limited, 1976), 254.
- Jorgensen, 7.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 4.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 27.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 6.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 121-122.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 295.
- Kimball Young, *Isn't One Wife Enough?* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1954), 56-57.
- Stephanie Smith Goodson, "Plural Wives," *Mormon Sisters*, 105.
- Maurine Whipple, *This is the Place: Utah* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1945), 138-139.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 550.
- Geary, 22.
- Jessie L. Embry, *Mormon Polygamous Families: Life in the Principle* (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1987), 142.
- Embry, 142-146.
- Kathryn Smoot Caldwell, *The Principle* (SLC: Randall Books, 1983), 18.
- Embry, 34.
- Embry, 32.
- Nels Anderson, *Deseret Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1966), 400.
- Mark Twain, *Roughing It* (Avon, Conn: The Heritage Press, 1972), 75.
- Embry, 34-36.
- Photocopies of the notes James Hulett took during his interviews are available in the Kimball Young Collection, Manuscript Division, Harold B. Lee Library, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah. In several interviews he asked about sexual behavior and this was the common response.
- Embry, 73-82; Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 118-119.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 134-136.
- Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The Female World of Love and Ritual Relations Between Women in Nineteenth-Century America," *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective*, Michael Gordon, ed. (New York: St. Martin Press, 1978), 339.
- There are numerous examples when Clory tells her feelings about polygamy to Pal. Three examples are Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 71-73, 548-550, 612-613.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 360, 420, 424.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 550.
- Whipple, *The Giant Joshua*, 463-464.
- Stan L. Albrecht, Bruce A. Chadwick, and Cardell K. Jacobson, *Social Psychology* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1987), 252.
- The information about Whipple's family is from family group sheets submitted as part of a four-generation program of the LDS Church. Copies of the group sheets can be found in the Family History Library, Salt Lake City, Utah.
- Edward A. Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation: The Novelists of the 1940s," *BYU Studies* 18(Fall 1977): 92.
- England, 19-20.
- Whipple, *This is the Place*, 138.
- Virginia Sorensen, *A Little Lower than the Angels* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942)
- Virginia Sorensen, *A Little Lower than the Angels* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1942)
- Leonard J. Arrington and Jon Haupt, "Intolerable Zion: The Image of Mormonism in Nineteenth Century American Literature," *Western Humanities Review* 22(Summer 1968):244-248.
- Geary, "Mormondom's Lost Generation," 93.
- Geary, 94.
- Geary, 94.
- Virginia Sorensen, "Is it True—The Novelist and his Materials," *Western Humanities Review* 7(1953): 291.
- Anderson, preface.
- "Maurine Whipple's Story," 60-61
- Linda Sillitoe, conversation with Jessie Embry.
- Maurine Whipple to John Crowe Ransom, The Kenyon Review, November 6, 1957, Maurine Whipple Papers.
- Whipple, *This is the Place: Utah*, 166.
- Whipple to Ransom, 6 November 1957.
- Maud F. Reiser to Maurine Whipple, 12 March 1941, Maurine Whipple Papers.
- Mrs. Isabel Moyle to Maurine Whipple, 1 June 1942, Maurine Whipple Papers.
- Ulrich, 242.
- Arthur G. Miller, *In the Eye of the Beholder* (New York: Praeger Publishers, 1982), 7.

DEBUNKING PUNCH AND COOKIE CULTURE

BENEDICTION: A BOOK OF STORIES

by Neal Chandler

University of Utah Press, 1989, 194 pages, \$14.95



Reviewed by John Bennion

I CAN IMAGINE a resurrected J. Golden Kimball struggling with our correlated, image-oriented Mormon society. The force and shock of his words might deflate the pompous and unsettle the deceitful. While Neal Chandler's language is more sophisticated than Kimball's, he possesses the same irreverence for the complementary rhetorics of naiveté and pious power. His stories explore and satirize what one character describes as the "Koolaidization" of Mormon society; his wit makes for great fun, but also reveals the manipulative nature of those who create syrupy and slick images. Man may not live on sugar cookies and red punch alone, Chandler says, so watch out for anyone who says you can.

The stories are generally set somewhere east of Utah and are a mixture of satiric and straight pieces. They show Mormons at work discoursing and imagemaking, as they struggle to reinvent a position in but not of the world. Two missionaries, who pause in Berlin on their way home for a preliminary taste of freedom, resist entering any of the skin shows until they are enchanted by the literally painted smile of one poster girl—"sweet, wholesome, ever so softly made-up, bright-eyed, high-cheekboned, prim, and oh so promissory . . ." (63). However, after they enter and the woman appears in the flesh, they find that the smoothly processed image is radically unstable, surprisingly transformed into "a JOHN BENNION, an assistant professor of English at Brigham Young University, has published stories in *Dialogue*, *SUNSTONE*, *Ascent*, and *Utah Holiday*.

vision, a specter, a phantasm, and a living crooning, cavorting erotic cartoon" (65).

In "Space Abductors" a father is caught breast gazing in a video store: "the front of her sweater collapsed irresponsibly downward and he found himself staring point-blank into the very center of the universe. It was breathtaking. Literally. He stood there transfixed and anaerobic, unable to move or to breathe at all until it was too late" (9). The woman looks up and discovers the angle of his gaze, embarrassing him so much that he yells at his son. His son has rented a movie where a monster commits various acts of violence, including ripping off the blouse of the heroine. He tells his son to pause the machine at the blouse part. "We're not just anybody here. We have standards in this house, and rules. . . . Your electrocution is fine, son, but there are certain things in this world a boy was just not meant to see" (12). Chandler's irony is heavy-handed, perhaps, but I read with pleasure because he explores with fresh eyes the behavior of Saints who long for Zion but worry that they are entrenched in carnality. Natural food fanatics, anti-intellectuals, pseudo-scientists, sexual Victorians, dry and windy speakers—all fall into the net of his satire.

Chandler is most vigorous when he satirizes those who propagate a strange hybrid of thought and discourse he calls Christian capitalism—the managerial school of Mormonism. "It's God's own plan, Thelma, put here in a free country with a free market and free enterprise," says Carmen Stavelly in "The Only Divinely Authorized Plan for Financial Suc-

cess in This Life or the Next." She continues, "That's what a pyramid is, it's capitalism—Christian capitalism . . ." (19). As proof she whips out a dollar bill. "Honorable men like George Washington, whom God raised up for that very purpose, put it in the constitution and on the back of that dollar bill so that every eye might see and every tongue confess the truth of what I'm telling you right now. Of course it's a pyramid!" (19).

She is portrayed as a foolish innocent; she simply repeats language she heard from Kevin Houston, "the young wizard behind the organization that sold and distributed 'the product'" (18). Chandler's satirical method is to exaggerate the tendency of image-makers to blend disconnected systems of thought and language. In this case, the goals of sales are achieved through association with the emotions of religion. "There were meetings, seminars with flip charts and flow charts and ardent testimonials, and Carmen Stavelly went more willingly, almost, than to church, for she returned truly encouraged and uplifted" (18). The story makes light of her misplaced devotion, but it also illuminates the duplicity of entrepreneurs who prey on the naive, perhaps increasing their effectiveness because they believe their own rhetoric.

Characters introduced early in the book appear later, linking the stories. In "Benediction" we hear Houston's rhetoric in undiluted form as he teaches Sunday School, blending the languages of sales, sports, patriotism, and religion: "Now take Peter . . . the very first chief executive officer of the church, the George Washington of Christianity, so to speak. Now just what kind of a man was this Peter? Was he an all-American? Ask yourselves! Was he a genuine, all-conference all-church champion, or was he just some guy off the street looking for a job?" (35). Houston presents Peter as Petros, little rock, in its diminutive form—Rocky, all-American prophet. The story is a debate between this kind of shallow rhetoric and the deeper social and historical analysis performed by the ward's intellectual, Damon Boulder.

Boulder uses three methods in his effort to repudiate Houston's rhetoric: he lays out his own analysis of Peter in language designed to confound Houston; he shrugs his shoulders and washes his hands; and he simply mocks Houston. His eventual victory is as gratifying as a daydream, but it feels to this reader as contrived as some daydreams. Chandler makes Houston so insipid that Boulder lowers himself by association. He undertakes the combat on Houston's ground, using Houston's methods of language manipulation, and does

so without any evident self-irony or other kinds of textual layering which could create more complex satire.

Something similar happens in "The Righteousness Hall of Fame." Damon Boulder is confronted by a group of powerful Mormon businessmen who have organized themselves into "a dedicated, disciplined para-missionary organization" about "to turn the tactical tables on the Bolsheviks" (109). They have created the Freedom's Holy Light Foundation: "Here is where we will honor the unsung field generals and quarterbacks and designated hitters in the great contest between revealed free-market Christianity and godless atheistic communism" (107). They want Boulder to authenticate their foundation by researching whatever he wants—another intellectual's daydream. However, once again Boulder is only a listener, he doesn't dramatically engage them in talk. His only action is to reject and retire.

In "The Last Nephite" the battle is taken up by someone who has lived through centuries of discourse, a man who is much like J. Golden, blunt, practical, and wry. The last Nephite has wandered the country warning the Saints against the dangers of "nutritional supplements, recreational vehicles, the law profession, schools of management, color analysis, inspirational cassette tapes, Tupperware, [and] voting Republican in Utah" (183). But he has finally gone too far—giving away a truckload of apple cider to the poor, mistaking Welfare for charity.

The modern Church cannot understand him, and he is sought and finally captured by a kind of Mormon secret service. A diplomat caliber G.A. presumes to think that he can release the Nephite from further duty: "I have called you here today to thank you on behalf of the brethren for your long and faithful service, and to tell you that the programs and policies of the Church have changed. We are centralized now and correlated. The times are different and your talents are needed elsewhere" (186). He goes on to give his motives: "Faith is a fragile thing . . . a house plant. It does not easily survive the extremes of weather in a callous world. In the household of faith, we operate a nursery. We manage and control the climate, artificially sometimes, but always to protect and nurture the flower of faith" (185). This rhetoric, stripped of levels and layers, is what Chandler warns against. The last Nephite leads a charge on the Freedom's Holy Light Foundation, underneath which lies a toxic dump. And slick systems of thought are like waste dumps of Koolaidization, hidden and dangerous, but

revealed by satire.

I agree and cheer. Chandler's writing is apt and innovative. However, the situations sometimes seem contrived and significant commerce doesn't occur between the people who represent the two ways of thinking—they simply stand listening to themselves talk. Perhaps in both cases I'm criticizing something which is simply the nature of satire—contrivance and disconnection. What is more contrived than Lilliput and Brobdingnag? However, Swift's framework in *Gulliver's Travels* is more deeply and completely connected to the culture it satirizes than Chandler's work.

The other problem is related. Because the people representing the discourse systems don't connect significantly in talk, neither system is fully developed for readers. Hence some of the stories seem to go on too long because they circle at the same level of complexity instead of deepening. Perhaps that is the point: some discourses can never connect. Perhaps Chandler's satire simply reveals superficial thought for what it is, and any deepening would defeat the purposes of this satire. However, Chandler could take the people more seriously, even if he doesn't accept their ideas. There is a kind of universal sympathy which recognizes the complexity of one's enemies and the foolishness of oneself and which allows even those who are the butt of the satire the shock of recognition. The protagonist's (and hence the reader's) perceptions of these people could progressively deepen, making the satire more subtle.

Fortunately, many of the stories are deepened in this way. In "Whole Life Policy," which is a full and balanced narrative, a man has his retirement planned in perfect detail, as if he has simply proceeded to paradise. But mortality reenters in the form of his daughter who is separating from her husband, and a son who is going bankrupt. He is trapped by his love for his children, but also by all the forces which control his life. Chandler keeps the story strong, never weakening, never allowing the protagonist a way out.

Two of the strongest characters in the book come together in "Thelma in the Sky with Diamonds." The story is successful because here the characters are allowed to engage each other in conversation which is complex—intelligent and foolish, mutually transforming. In other words, they are allowed to be human rather than being just models of discourse. Damon Boulder, the scholar, meets Thelma Ridley, a woman who since "her early teens . . . had been indentured to a body whose breathtaking and bountiful femaleness was

itself a destiny, so that for decades she had exerted little more than damage control over her own life. But now, at last and inevitably, her earthly vessel had begun to run awkwardly aground" (14). The characterization is sympathetic, largely because the characters are able to see their own limitations, and a warm, humorous story results.

In "Roger Across the Looking Glass" Chandler gives one answer to the question of how to write significant fiction about practicing Mormons: he turns inward to the complex tensions between sexual intimates. The story begins as Roger Talmage and his wife make love and ends as they finish. Their apparent intimacy only masks emotional detachment and buried anger. Roger thinks of sex as combative, a "ritual struggle with the woman" (47). In this battle, he who has the most control wins, so Roger removes himself, becoming "as much spectator as partner" (49). He "takes command of the pleasure in his body, accepting from his senses precisely and only that which he has first meted out with his will" (47). As their love-making accelerates, he brings his wife to climax first, directing "her glide further, further out until the anticipated shudder erupts, shaking her body with the six-seven-eight seconds (he counts them) of silent, rocking violence that leave her gasping and disheveled on the pillow beneath him" (49). His self-mastery is a deception; he actually misunderstands his own motives and behavior. As Roger approaches climax himself, he is only half-aware of "a satisfaction even greater than the pleasure his body is intent upon. If Roger Talmage were a less scrupulous man, he might recognize it as the exhilaration of revenge" (49). In Roger Talmage Chandler has created a full and complex character, a good man who only dimly sees the ways love, anger, and sexuality are tangled in his mind. The middle of the story is an extended flashback which explores the buried sources of Roger's defensive anger.

From adolescence he has clung to a smoothly processed image of "woman" which makes him unable to comprehend his wife as a person. The first time he sees her, he manipulates what his eyes receive, as if he is composing a photograph. "Her back toward him, she was leaning forward with an ear pressed to the crack between the yellow birch doors. Straight brown hair fell loosely to the middle of her back over a print dress which, pulled tight against one knee, revealed the long pale thigh of the other, extended leg. He stared involuntarily at the white flesh against the dark tiles" (49). He finds himself attracted to her physically but disturbed by her

BETWEEN THE LINES

“UNTO THE LEAST OF THESE” –
ANOTHER GENDER GAP

By Dorice Williams Elliott

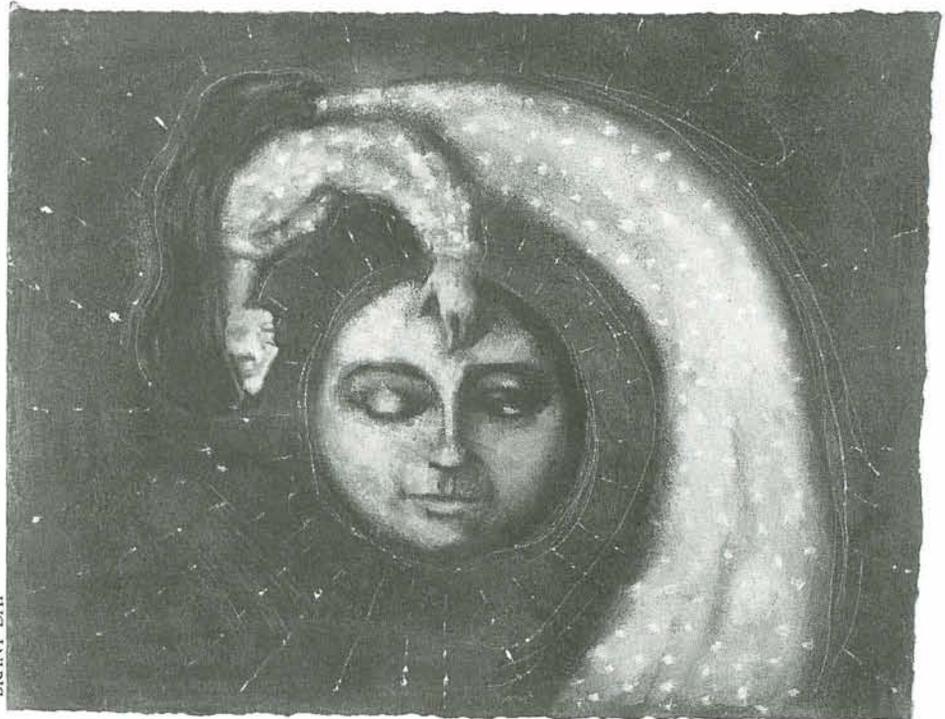
personality—what is essential inside *her* head: her interest in O'Neill and D.H. Lawrence, the writing of poetry which is “overheated, full of naive indignation” (50), and her social strangeness which doesn't quite compensate for her prettiness. She is “an enigma,” “obscure,” “difficult”; her voice is “more brittle than he would have liked” (52). Even though she offends him, Roger carries “her strange memory like a small knot of scar tissue which one rediscovers from time to time in surprised moments of self-examination” (51).

After his mission, they marry, motivated by affection, duty, and physical attraction. But he still has a sense of “foreboding about their marriage; he sees something in her which is startling and severe,” something which doesn't fit his stereotyped image of womanhood, elements “he was not prepared to accept yet apparently was unable to exorcise” (54).

The story works because this tension is sustained. At various times Roger realizes that his perception of his wife is dangerously restrictive, “a fixation, a kind of graven image . . . rigid and ritual . . .” (52). But at the same time he is unable to change, to open himself to her. Instead, even into middle-age he nostalgically clings to the fixed image which he created years before. For Roger “his young wife's pale thighs against the pale sheets became a vision he would carry into the dreams of old age as the burden of what had been lost” (54). As he makes love he uses the lack of light to recreate her in her ideal form. The “darkness begins again to yield up her body; and not just her body, but a renewed, ideal body, somehow abstracted and transformed from the manifestly forty-one-year-old woman who had reached for the lamp switch” (47). His ability to make smoothly formed images of his wife replaces his ability to imagine, to use her speech and actions to reveal her soul.

Even though I wish that the story had been deepened by making Roger even more self-aware, I admire Chandler's achievement. He has created an intense drama of relationships, not with exotic plots or places, but inside a man who is complex and who will be familiar to readers. It is a frightening exploration of the relationship between social conditioning, repressive control, and violence. Roger's fear of failing to live intimately with his wife is terrifyingly close.

I admire *Benediction* because Chandler explores subjects which few Mormon writers touch, and in a manner which few dare. The social satire is right on, revelatory. If I wish his plow had cut even deeper, I recognize that he is opening new and fertile soil. ☞



BRANT DAY

A FEW WEEKS ago my husband Bob, who was recently called to the bishopric of our urban ward, was awakened by an early morning phone call informing him that a member of our ward had been the victim of a robbery and attempted murder. As I lay in bed drowsily eavesdropping on his conversation and listening as he hurriedly showered and dressed to rush to the hospital, an old and selfish thought passed through my mind: “I'm glad I don't have the priesthood.” The thought came again later that day while I heard him recount the experience of dealing with doctors, nurses, media, and police, and of laying on hands and blessing a young man

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who had been stabbed in the neck and had not been expected to live.

During the time my husband was away at the hospital, I read Kathleen Flake's “Pillars of My Faith” lecture, “Bearing the Weight” (SUNSTONE 13:5). In the midst of this whole experience, I was especially struck by her observation that “By virtue of the fact that we (women in the LDS church) are circumscribed by the type of church callings available to us and by the ecclesiastical authority granted within those callings, we are seldom forced to go to God and to spiritually stretch to perform our duties. Like ladies of the eighteenth century, we have been educated to perform the arts of and stay within the drawing rooms of our society” (37). I realized as I read these lines that my husband, by virtue of his new priesthood calling, had just had one of those experiences which, at least under present

policies, I would never have. He had been forced to "spiritually stretch" in a quite literal way in order to perform his calling and exercise the ecclesiastical authority granted to him.

Granted, not all priesthood holders regularly experience the kind of dramatic demand for spiritual stretching Bob underwent that day; even women have them occasionally. But all of our Church leaders, on both local and churchwide levels, have had to make decisions—with little training or even information—about people's lives, involving their emotional, temporal, or spiritual well-being. Besides the more visible aspects of priesthood administration—conducting meetings, giving speeches, and making callings—all men in priesthood leadership positions have been asked to heal, to counsel, to judge worthiness, to ordain and bless, to intervene in family disputes, and to visit the dying, the homeless, the insane, and the criminal. Performing these duties requires the kind of spiritual stretching Flake refers to, and from which women, even the Relief Society president, are usually sheltered.

As I reflected on Bob's experiences as a result of his calling, I also brooded over the discussion in my Relief Society book group the week before. Members of this group, several of whom hold major positions in Church auxiliaries, were violently offended by the short stories of Flannery O'Connor because they were "depressing" and "not uplifting." Militant in their humility, such women proudly barricade themselves inside the walls of their homes and ward buildings, refusing to see films or read books that touch on the grotesque or "worldly" aspects of life even at second-hand. Some in this group even decline to read newspapers or watch the news because it is too "upsetting." I admit to having shared these impulses at some periods of my life. I, too, have wished to shield myself and my family from all contact with pain, suffering, or evil. Yet I believe that it was precisely to encounter and overcome these things that we were sent to this earth. One of the chief injustices of the current division of gender roles in the Church, in fact, is this isolation of women from the very life experiences that call them to value and reach out to God's saving power.

Although I hesitate to idealize women's roles in early Church history, one does read inspiring stories of women during periods of persecution or pioneering who, like men, learned to rely on both their own resources and the power of God to combat real and serious crises. Women faced dangers, performed healings, defied death, and overcame

grinding poverty. These women were not isolated from life inside drawing rooms—or modern equivalents such as shopping malls, PTA meetings, and Relief Society luncheons—but faced life head-on and grew in spiritual and personal strength from contact with it. I read with admiration of even very privileged nineteenth-century women visiting ghettos and prisons, and walking dangerous streets to reclaim prostitutes.

However, to most Mormon women in the United States today—though they preach service and try to seek spiritual growth—the world's problems are so upsetting that they and their Church leaders feel they must be sheltered from them. Despite the Relief Society's charter of charity and service, most women's service in many wards of the Church is confined to ward members of like social and economic status with problems which, though very real, fall within a fairly narrow range—illnesses, births, deaths, and, occasionally, poverty. Even among the affluent suburban wards on the Wasatch Front, serious problems such as family abuse, adultery, crime, and substance abuse exist—but most of the women in these wards are only vaguely aware of the existence of these problems in their midst. Only men with certain priesthood callings are encouraged or allowed to face the kinds of problems Christ commanded us to seek out—to clothe the (literally) naked, to feed the (literally) hungry, to visit the (literal) prisoner, to find and serve the (literal) "least of these."

THIS gender difference currently built into our church's practice of Christian charity is evident, for instance, in a 1989 General Conference talk I recently taught in Relief Society. The talk, given by Joy R. Evans, first counselor in the Relief Society General Presidency, takes as its text Christ's injunction to his servants to feed the hungry, take in the stranger, clothe the naked, and visit the prisoner (Matthew 25). Typically, however, President Evans suggests that most of our service will be given to "our family, our children, our husbands or wives, our parents, our loved ones." "Sometimes," she grants, "it is a neighbor or a friend in need"—and finally, "sometimes a stranger." President Evans (quoting Joseph Smith) celebrates the special mission of the Relief Society to "act according to those sympathies which God [has] placed in their bosoms." President Evans gives examples of women's service which include visiting teachers aiding a pregnant woman, comforting a woman on the death of her children

(both of these Evans herself), responding to the needs of the sick, and "especially [serving] the terminally ill and their families" (*Ensign*, May 1989, 74). While all of these are important ways of serving, and the examples touching, the interesting thing about President Evans's talk is that the details of her original text from Matthew drop out entirely. The hungry, the thirsty, the naked, the stranger, and the prisoner are nowhere to be found in her descriptions of women's service—only the sick. But these other problems, despite President Evans's assumption that "life is not so hard now in our time and generation [as it was in Nauvoo], and has been lengthened for most of us and made infinitely more comfortable," do still exist. In fact, many women in our world, even in this country, might find reason to question her optimistic assumption. Presumably, however, it is up to "the priesthood" to take care of those kind of problems—to do the service that may take them out of the home or neighborhood, or may bring them face to face with many of the evils of this earth.

Somewhat ironically, President Evans quotes Florence Nightingale, the woman who took female volunteers thousands of miles from their homes in England to face death, disease, filth, and corruption as nurses in the Crimean War. Imagine Joy Evans or anyone else in an official Church position advocating any such activity (especially under female supervision) for Mormon women today. The Church does, of course, occasionally send women with their husbands as missionaries into areas where they might encounter such problems. Some single sister missionaries are also occasionally sent on service missions, but it's been my experience that Church authorities go to great lengths to "protect" these sisters. (While of course I have no objections to legitimate concerns for safety, I see a significant difference between the words "protect" and "shelter.") And there are notable examples of individual LDS women who have sought out the homeless, the mentally ill, the poverty-stricken, and the abused—but in most cases, these women work from their own initiative, not under the umbrella of Church programs. An occasional Relief Society president may face these problems, but in general women, despite their "special call" to compassionate service, are not encouraged to take that service beyond their homes and immediate neighborhoods or to direct it toward any but a limited range of problems. Thus, Mormon women rarely experience the spiritual stretching which major crisis situations tend to foster, though many men, from young mis-

sionaries to General Authorities, have such experiences—experiences of visiting prisons, feeding the hungry, finding homes for the homeless, and calling down the powers of heaven to heal the sick as Christ himself did.

I feel somewhat ashamed to admit, however, that as my husband used his priesthood to deal with a crisis somewhat like the one faced by the Samaritan in Christ's parable, I felt relief that I would not be called upon to face such a situation. At that moment, I was emotionally and selfishly glad *not* to have to stretch—glad that I could turn over, go back to sleep, and get up later to send my well-dressed, well-fed, bright children off to a good school before I began my own day of relative ease and privilege. I have since tried to earnestly repent of that selfish relief. But selfishness dies hard. Though I might go do my visiting teaching or take a meal in to a sick member, I doubt I will go out this day on my own—as admittedly I certainly could—and “do it unto the [real] *least* of these.” I'm afraid I, like many other women in this church, *need* the priesthood or some equivalent challenge to force us to do a bit more spiritual stretching and to realize our spiritual and personal potential. We are not trained for it, not prepared for it, and have been taught to believe ourselves not capable or worthy of it, and hence it seems frightening. I still often hear strong women say, “I'm *glad* I don't have the priesthood; I wouldn't want it,” every time the subject of women and priesthood comes up. In fact, the only woman I can know who would actually feel ready now to step into a major priesthood role is a trained and practicing psychiatrist with many other talents, including spiritual ones. Of course, few men are this qualified either; but, in general, they have been raised with more cultural conditioning toward decisive action and with confidence in their ability to lead and support others, and they are *expected* to perform the tasks that priesthood requires. These tasks include making decisions and implementing programs; women, too, do have some opportunities for administrative functioning in the Church. But what is most frightening about priesthood for both women and men, I suspect, is its *spiritual power*—the power to speak for God, to act for him and in his name. This power is too important to be confined within the home or even the walls of the Church, and too important to spiritual growth to be withheld from more than half of God's church. To be fully children of God, women need the experience of learning to exercise that power, however frightening or upsetting it may seem at first. Women, too, should have

every opportunity to say to their Savior, Lord, when saw we thee an hungered, and fed thee? or thirsty, and gave thee drink? When saw we thee a stranger, and took thee in? or naked, and clothed thee? Or when saw we thee sick, or in prison, and came unto thee?

and hear his answer:

Verily I say unto you, Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me.” (Matt.25:37-40.)

POSTSCRIPT

AFTER I submitted the foregoing column, an acquaintance related a story to me

which so perfectly illustrates the way in which Relief Society charitable service is usually kept within certain narrow limits that I couldn't resist adding it here:

As my acquaintance, a practicing attorney, was preparing for the imminent birth of her fourth child, her Relief Society president called to ask how many meals she'd like brought in after the baby was born. She explained to the Relief Society president that because she had paid household help, she didn't need the offered meals, but requested that the sisters donate the traditional four meals to the local homeless shelter instead. The Relief Society president refused her request, claiming that the sisters “did not have time.” ☒

MONOLOGUES AND DIALOGUES

BEAUTY

By Robert A. Rees

BEAUTY IS TRUTH,
TRUTH BEAUTY,—THAT IS ALL YE KNOW
ON EARTH, AND ALL YE NEED TO KNOW.
—Keats

BEAUTY IS THE SALVATION
OF THE WORLD
—Dostoyevsky

BEAUTY IS ONE of the most abundant, continuous and various manifestations of grace in the world. No matter how poor we are, we are never too poor to experience beauty. As Thoreau says at the conclusion of *Walden*, “You may perhaps have some pleasant, thrilling, glorious hours, even in a poor house. The setting sun is reflected from the windows of the alms-house as brightly as from the rich man's abode . . .” Even in the snarl and slur of the modern metropolis one

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can find beauty around almost any corner and in almost any horizon.

What is the function of beauty? I believe it is one of God's compensations for having sent us into this perilous world. It is almost as if he were saying, “I know how hard it is going to be for you. The world will often be too much with you and life will be like a pathless journey through a waste land, but at every step I have put in a reminder of your heavenly home—it is called beauty.”

I believe one of the functions of beauty is to connect us subconsciously with the pre-existence. Further, I believe that the beauty we see in the natural world and the beautiful creations of men and women are akin to the beauty we experienced in the presence of God. The natural world especially is an image of the heavenly world. Locked in our deepest memories is a remembrance of colors, shapes, patterns, images, forms and sounds that, when we experience them here, somehow bind our souls to that which is spiritual and glorious. What else would explain the abundance of

beauty in nature? As Robinson Jeffers says:

Is it not by his high superfluosness
we know
Our God? For to equal a need
Is natural, animal, mineral: but to fling
Rainbows over the rain . . .
And beauty above the moon, and
secret rainbows
On the domes of deep sea-shells,
Not even the weeds to multiply
without blossom
Nor the birds without music . . .
Look how beautiful are all the things
that He does. His signature
Is the beauty of things.

As Jeffers says elsewhere,

. . . we know
that the enormous invulnerable
beauty of things
Is the face of God . . .

I am convinced that one of the main reasons modern man is so estranged from himself and from God is that he has destroyed a great deal of the natural beauty of the world and replaced it with that which is unseemly and ugly. As Wordsworth said more than a century ago when overlooking the polluted and squalid city of London, "We lay waste our powers/Little we know in nature that is ours."

From what the scriptures suggest, there is a significant relationship between beauty and spirituality. The Psalms admonish us to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (29:2) and tell us that God "will beautify the meek with salvation" (149:4). To experience the truly beautiful has the effect of deepening our sensitivity, including our sensitivity to spiritual things.

I have a personal witness of this truth. I grew up in an environment that was singularly unbeautiful. We were quite poor and my

parents uneducated. There was in our home none of the fine arts, little of the refining sensibilities. In fact there was an inclination to put these things down as high brow. While I was made aware of the beauty of nature, our home, in spite of my father's attempts to make it otherwise, was not beautiful. In such an environment, my literature was comic books, my music country western, and my art a print of a wolf howling on a snowy hill in the moonlight. I knew nothing of the fine or classical arts. I don't remember having seen a real painting, listened to classical music, or, except for pass at *Hamlet* in high school, read a classic work of literature. By the time I went to college I had never been to a concert, seen a play or visited a museum. My cultural life up to that point might best be summarized by H. L. Mencken's appellation of the South as "The Sahara of the Bozarts."

And yet deep inside me there was a sensitivity to beauty. My first real awareness of this came when I received my patriarchal blessing when I was fifteen. I don't remember much about the day I got my blessing, but upon later reflection I realized it was a remarkable turning point in my life because of what the patriarch said when he laid his hands on my head. He said, "Seek for the beautiful in literature, the beautiful in thought, the beautiful in music. Seek after these things and you will be led into paths of truth and righteousness." Several times in the course of his blessing he admonished me to "seek after the higher and finer things of life." To a large extent, my life has been a flowering of those words. I believe there is a connection between what Patriarch Davis called "the higher and finer things of life"—the arts—and the higher and finer things of the Kingdom. And yet, in spite of the efforts of many, I don't think in

the Church we fully understand this connection. We do not yet comprehend how truth and beauty can become one.

The Psalms equate Zion with "the perfection of beauty" and say that God shines out of that beauty. In an ultimate sense, we cannot be perfected without beauty and our perfection will be the most beautiful thing in creation because our beauty and our holiness will be one with the beauty and holiness of God. It is to give us a taste of that perfection and its attendant joys that God has created the beauty of the world and given us all the gift to become artists of the beautiful, either in expression or in appreciation.

Perhaps all elevated artistic expressions work to the same effect—to somehow, subtly, draw us back to our heavenly home. Here I think of the great expressions of the human spirit—those in art, music, literature, dance, drama. We believe that the Holy Ghost enlightens understanding, reveals beauty as well as truth, and pours out light from heaven not only on individuals but on entire epochs. Who in experiencing the profound beauties of Shakespeare's *King Lear*, Bach's *St. Matthew's Passion*, or Dante's *Paradiso* could doubt the inspiration of God in these sublime expressions?

If, as Dostoyevsky says, "Beauty is the salvation of the world," then clearly we cannot consider it something we casually pursue, something peripheral to our lives or an adjunct to our religion. It must be central to our whole lives, including our spiritual lives. This is why the Lord makes imperative his declaration, "Zion must arise and put on her beautiful garments" (D&C 82:14). ☐



NEWS

CATHOLICS CRITICIZE "UNFAIR" LDS PROSELYTING

THIRTY ROMAN CATHOLIC bishops in California and northwestern Mexico accused Mormon missionaries, along with representatives of other "sects or new religious groups," of "unfair and coercive" proselytism targeted at Hispanic Catholics.

In an Ash Wednesday "pastoral exhortation" released 28 February the California Catholic Conference in Sacramento said that such groups "make a great effort to increase their membership at any cost, exerting pressure of all types (psychological, moral and economic)."

Such "proselytism" was contrasted with "evangelization . . . giving witness to God as revealed through Jesus Christ in the Holy Spirit, in a simple and direct manner. . . . to carry the Good News to all areas of human life and through its influence transform from within and renew humanity itself, but without pressure."

The "historical churches" [Catholic, Anglican, Orthodox and Protestant] generally engage in evangelization, the statement said, are ecumenical, search for Christian unity, and respect all religious beliefs.

By "sects or religious groups," the bishops referred to "those religious organizations, founded in the past century, which have grown progressively stronger and which reject or directly oppose the historical churches. We refer especially to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Mormons), Jehovah's Witnesses, Seventh Day Adventists, Pentecostals in a variety of forms, and others."

These groups "do not appreciate temporal values. They manipulate historical and biblical data. They tend toward religious legalism, and they do not project a plan for the future, as they

believe the end of the world is imminent."

The bishops are alarmed at the estimated 100,000 U.S. Hispanics who leave the Catholic Church every year. They cited several reasons for the growth of Hispanic membership in sects, including: a "misunderstood form" of ecumenism resulting in Catholics "letting all guards down, despite the constant and systematic attacks on the Catholic faith made by new religious groups"; a misunderstanding of the church's preferential option for the poor; a "poor experience of God" due to merely ritualistic worship or insufficient pastoral care; and considerable outside funding of sectarian proselytism.

The message was directed at inactive Hispanic Catholics, "Catholic clergy, religious and lay leaders" who minister to Hispanics, and "leaders and members of sects and other religious groups who invite Hispanics to leave the Catholic

Church to join them in the practice of their own beliefs."

The bishops urged Catholic clergy to implement the National and Regional Plans for Hispanic Ministry, to have "door-to-door home visits by well-prepared and zealous Catholics," to promote public and private prayer for the unity of all Christians, to use Sunday homilies to clarify issues related to sectarian proselytism, to use books, pamphlets, audio and video cassettes to respond to the sects, and to increase the church's pastoral activities in rural areas, outlying sections of large cities, and among immigrants.

In response to the statement, LDS spokesperson Don LeFevre told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that the bishops's opinions were "pretty much an internal matter," and that it would not be "appropriate for us to comment on the counsel they're giving their people. . . . I'd also like to emphasize the love and respect we have for the Catholic people.

We've worked with Catholic clergy and lay people on a number of social issues. We've dealt with the Catholic Relief Services in coordinating aid to Ethiopia and other needy parts of the world.

These have all been positive relationships."

LeFevre noted that Mormon "convert baptisms last year, when all reports are in, will likely show a 25 percent increase over the previous year. It's only natural that some of those would come from other churches."

Rev. Robert Bussen, vicar general of the Catholic Diocese of Salt Lake City, said he feared the California statement would be interpreted as hostile to Mormons. "It's helpful to all Catholics in distinguishing proselytism from evangelization," he said. "I think the document does lay out fairly clearly the problems we face, as Catholics, with proselytizing religions."

Rev. Ricardo A. Chavez, director of Hispanic affairs for the California Catholic Conference, implied that the statement could facilitate dialogue between Catholics and other religious groups. "My personal feeling is that, as Christians, we all should work together for ecumenism and unity in doing God's work. That's my prayer and my hope, that this [document] not be a point of argument or controversy, but a clearing of the air." ☒



"So... WHAT'S ORSON SCOTT CARD WRITING ABOUT THIS TIME?"

JOURNALIST ELLERBEE AND PRESIDENT HINCKLEY DIFFER

PRESIDENT Gordon B. Hinckley, told a conference on working women that young women should educate and train themselves, but that their first priority should be taking care of children at home to halt "a tragic and widespread breakdown in family life."

But syndicated journalist Linda Ellerbee told the same group that working women are not responsible for that breakdown and have improved the working world.

The two speakers gave the keynote addresses at the opening day of the "Women in the Work Force" conference at the University of Utah. Selections of the speeches were broadcast on Salt Lake television news, as well as a question and answer session with President Hinckley and news-reporter Ellerbee which had the feel of a press conference between President Reagan and Sam Donaldson.

President Hinckley, first counselor in the First Presidency, detailed the problems of neglect and abuse of children, abuse and abandonment of wives, and rising crime among women. "It is my opinion that the very situation of an ever-increasing number of mothers out of the home and in the workplace is a root cause of many of the problems of delinquency, drugs, and gangs, both male and female," he said.

Noting that many women have been compelled to find work because of rising expenses, he said that working still extracted "a terrible price. . . . When she does return, too often she is tired and under such stress and frustration that . . . she cannot give to her children the attention and the affection which they so much crave and need."

But he encouraged women to seek all the education they can, noting examples of women who had made "tremendous contributions," historically and today. He

said that his "heart reaches out to women who are struggling to provide for families," but that there was opportunity for them: "Almost the entire field of human endeavor is now open to women, in contrast with the difficult restrictions felt only a few years ago."

He asked that the seminar "keep marriage and motherhood in perspective" during its consideration of working women. "The fact is that a happy marriage is the hope of every normal young woman."

He said he supported equal pay for equal work, as well as equal responsibility for children. "I decry the situation where men father children and then run from the responsibility," he said. Asked about the Church's role in child care, he said that the idea of using Church buildings for that end "sounds simple" but presents complications including liability concerns. "We haven't been blind to what's happening. . . . But I repeat, one of our great efforts has been to educate, and at the same time teach that the home is the anchor point to society."

Linda Ellerbee, broadcast journalist and newspaper columnist, said she agreed with President Hinckley "wholeheartedly" on the importance of education, but that job training was a legitimate end of schooling, though not its primary purpose.

Recalling her own college years, she said she was sent for two reasons: "to find myself a husband [and] . . . to get an education so that if my husband died or left . . . I would have, in the words of my time, 'something to fall back on' . . . usually a teaching certificate."

Quitting school after her second year to get married, she was later stranded by her husband, left "with a 1-year-old and a 2-year-old, and I had no job and I had no education."

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

DAVID WOOLLEY AND BEATRICE CANNON EVANS BIOGRAPHY AWARD for 1989 went to Roger D. Launius for *Joseph Smith III: Pragmatic Prophet*. The award is \$10,000 for the best "scholarly and professional biography on persons playing a role in the history of Mormon Country" and is administered by the Mountain West Center for Regional Studies at Utah State University. Launius's study looked at the life of RLDS Church President Joseph Smith II and provides valuable insight on his experiences in the RLDS church and his policies as president.

THE MOUNTAIN WEST CENTER FOR REGIONAL STUDIES at Utah State University, BYU's Redd Center for Western Studies, and the Utah Endowment for the Humanities will sponsor a day-long conference, 20 July 1990 at Utah State University on Lowry Nelson's *The Mormon Village*. Nelson, a leading authority on rural communities in the United States, served on the faculty at USU, helped organize a rural sociological association, and was consulted by FDR about rural communities. The morning sessions will address Mormon communities in the 21st century. Contact the Mountain West Center, USU, Logan, UT 84322.

THE NORTH AMERICA INTERFAITH CONFERENCE will focus its second multi-religious conference on the theme "Ethics in Action: In the Home, the Workplace, and the Environment" and include "interfaith discussion, presentations, celebration and prayer" and participation by diverse religious traditions, including Bahai, Buddhism, Christian, Hindu, Islam, Jewish, Latter-day Saint, Native American and Shinto. Outgoing U.S. ambassador to India and noted Hindu Scholar Karan Singh will give the opening address at the 3-day conference which will be held at the University of Washington in Seattle on 1-3 July 1990. Contact: Conference Management, University of Washington Extension, GH-22, Seattle, WA 98195 (206/543-0888).

SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM XII will be held on 22-25 August 1990 at the University Park Hotel in Salt Lake City. Proposals for papers and panels are now being accepted at the Sunstone office.

THE UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY will hold its annual meeting 13-14 July 1990 in Salt Lake City on the Family in Utah. Contact: USHS, 300 Rio Grande, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

WASATCH WESTERNERS sponsors a monthly social hour, dinner, and lecture on the third Thursday of each month at the Fort Douglas Officer's Club in Salt Lake City. Regular membership dues are \$15, single; \$20, couple; corresponding membership dues \$5, single; \$7.50 couple. Contact Linda Thatcher, Utah State Historical Society, 300 Rio Grande Street, Salt Lake City, UT 84101.

WOMEN'S RESEARCH INSTITUTE and the CENTER FOR THE STUDIES OF THE FAMILY at BYU are sponsoring a conference on Gender and the Family to be held 6-8 February 1991. One page proposals of original research or position papers of conference sessions (several papers with the chair submitting the proposal) must be received by 1 August 1990. Conference participants will be notified by 31 October 1990. Contact: Barbara Vance, WRI, 945 SWKT, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-3338; FAX 801/378-5279).

The Sunstone Calendar reports events and notices of Mormon-related organizations. Submissions are requested.

The financial pressures pushing more women into work are not their fault, she said. "We weren't in charge when the mortgage rates went up." And she disputed that the problems of absentee parents should be put at women's feet, saying that it's time for men "to plant a few of those flowers." She admitted that both working and non-working women pay a price.

"When my father died, my mother wilted and died. . . . She had based her whole life on her children, and when that was gone, she couldn't find a base for herself," related Ellerbee.

She said that working women more readily acknowledge the demands of life outside the workplace. "Women know firsthand from our own experience that a sick child is important, a lost love is important."

She admonished President Hinckley for merely acknowledging problems such as child care. "I heard him say at least six times

that we are fully aware of the problem.' . . . I respectfully submit that unless you are a woman, you cannot be fully aware of the problem, and second, I couldn't help but think of that old expression from the '60s, the one that went: 'If you are not part of the solution you are part of the problem.' "

Ellerbee later reflected on her Salt Lake stay in a March 11 column. She cited University of Utah figures that "women in Utah still earn a whopping 54 cents" to every dollar earned by men as opposed to 65 cents nationally, and reported that a higher percentage of women work in Utah than any other state. "In other words, they have a situation in Utah," she wrote, and asked, "Is there a connection between these sorry figures and the attitude expressed by Mr. Hinckley?"

Comparing that attitude to the Jewish ritual of ceremonially laying the people's sins on a scapegoat, Ellerbee called it "oversimplistic, immoral and most of

all, inaccurate. Changes in the family are a result of other changes in society, not the cause." But, she continued, "this attitude isn't limited to one man or one religion

or one state—or one sex. . . . everyone goes around wanting to believe someone else is to blame for whatever's wrong with our lives." ☐

ONE FOLD

MERRY HANUKKAH

HOLIDAY CARDS which combine Christmas and Hanukkah symbols have been criticized by the American Jewish Committee and the National Conference of Christians and Jews as "an affront" to both faiths. In a joint statement, the two organizations said that "true inter-religious relations require respect for the integrity of distinct faiths and a repudiation of syncretism." One offensive card features Santa Claus and a bearded Jew with a menorah, over the caption "Happy Whatever." (*Ecumenical Press Service*).

GOG, MAGOG, AND ISLAM

WITH THE thawing of the cold war and Eastern Europe's new benevolence toward religion, an increasing number of Evangelicals are reinterpreting biblical prophecy so as to see Islam as the main threat to Christianity in the last days. Over the last fifty years, the Soviet Union has often been viewed as a world power linked with the coming of the anti-Christ; but as the communist totalitarian system appears to be breaking down, evangelical concern over communism is decreasing, at a rate almost matched by the increase in concern over worldwide Islam.

In an interview with *News Network International*, charismatic interpreter George Otis uses Ezekiel 38, often interpreted as foretelling a Soviet invasion of Israel, to predict an Islamic invasion (in which a converted Muslim USSR will theoretically participate). (*Religion Watch*).

" . . . AND THE WORD WAS ALLAH"

LEADERS OF the Baptist World Alliance have sent a letter to Bangladesh President Hossain Ershad asking him to lift a ban on the importation of a Bengali translation of the New Testament, called Injil Sharif, which uses the word "Allah" to refer to God. Christians constitute about .3 percent of the 110 million people in Bangladesh, where the official state religion is Islam. (*Ecumenical Press Service*)

CHINESE INTELLECTUALS SEEK CHRISTIANITY

IN THE aftermath of the Tianamen Square massacre last June, there are reports of a "remarkable phenomenon" of thousands of Chinese intellectuals turning from Maoism to the Christian faith, and some speculate that the trend may engender an "entirely new strand of Chinese Christianity."

While intellectuals were drawn to Christianity throughout the 1980s, now in many cities as much as 10 percent of all students have converted to "house churches," which are unsanctioned by the government. Drawn to the doctrine of original sin, these students have grown skeptical of traditional Chinese religions' emphasis on humanity's goodness, which could not explain the brutality of the massacre. Comprised in the past of predominantly rural, less-educated believers, the house church movement may revise its theological agenda that some have criticized as anti-intellectual. (*Religion Watch*)



"Remind the prophet that this year is Old Testament, not Book of Mormon!"

JUST DON'T LEAVE
PAMPHLETS
ON THE WINDSHIELD

A LITTLE-KNOWN Church pilot program has entered its second year. In Alpine, Utah, the Church is testing renting out a Church building parking lot on week days as a second source of income, originally to assist in local budget expenses. The parking lot is being used by Kencraft, a local candy manufacturer, to park 40-60 employee cars each weekday. Explaining the pilot program in a town meeting, Ronald Rasmussen, former mayor of Alpine said, "Kencraft is doing the Church a favor, because everyone knows that if you park on asphalt it will last longer." Local realtors are hoping that the program will be extended to include the stake center in Alpine.

SPACE: THE FINAL
MISSION FIELD. . .

MIXING RELIGION, state, probability, and pragmatism, Senator Jake Garn (R-Utah) has recently elaborated on his conviction that extraterrestrial life exists in the universe, which he first voiced last year while fighting to save the Air Force program looking for non-Earth life.

Garn told a 5,000-member convention of American Legion Auxiliary women in Washington recently that "There are people out there just like you and me. They don't have pointed ears or green skin and they're not called Spock, either. They're human beings and children of God just like we are."

Speaking about the space program and his experiences aboard the space shuttle, Garn said, "Consider the vastness of space, and then we think we are important? And we have the arrogance to say

we are the only living beings in this universe. Absolutely not. . . . God just didn't place his children on this earth. . . . why would God build all that out there—isn't that a lot of overkill? Stop and think about that."

He added that his opinions are not shared by others in the Senate, including at least one colleague who told Garn he believed in the Creation but that the Earth was the only planet where humans were put.

But, Garn said, sheer statistics refuted that position, "even if you're an atheist mathematician."

PRO-LIFE BYU
PROFESSOR ASSAILED

PRO-LIFE Brigham Young University law professor Richard G. Wilkins says he's "worried about pipe bombs in the mail" since being denounced by anti-abortionists for counseling Utah and Idaho governors against proposed legislation that would have made nearly all abortions illegal.

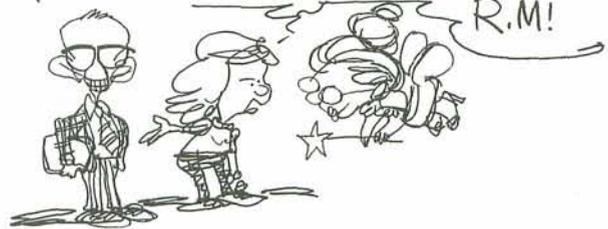
"The level of ire I've raised has been disproportionate to what I've been saying," said Wilkins, who said he has received dozens of angry and abusive telephone calls and letters. Requests have been made to Mormon Church authorities to excommunicate him, and to BYU to fire him from his position teaching law.

But Wilkins insists he has not changed sides. "In my professional judgement, the Supreme Court would not permit the Utah or the Idaho legislation [drafted by the National Right to Life organization] to stand," he said. He has drafted a proposal that he believes could pass constitutional muster, which provides for the same cases as did the Right to Life bills—cases of rape, incest, severe fetal deformity, and endangerment of the mother's health—but defines them less narrowly.

OUR STORY...

CINDY'S FAIRY VISITING TEACHER HAS CHANGED A RAT INTO AN R.M. TO ACCOMPANY HER TO THE STAKE DANCE...

I DON'T WANT TO GO TO THE GOLD & GREEN BALL!!
I DON'T WANT TO BE SET UP WITH ANYONE!!
I DON'T WANT TO BE SEEN WITH THIS... THIS...
R.M!



TO BE CONTINUED...

1990 Washington, D.C., Symposium

AUDIO TAPES

- 1. SAINTS IN HELL: THE REALITIES OF WAR
-Panel-Skabelund, Christy, and Matheny
- 4. INTIMACY: ACHIEVABLE IN LDS MARRIAGES
-Renee Carlson
- 5. DOES THE CHURCH HAVE A PERSONALITY?
-Robert S. Wrathall
- 6. MORMONS AND THE ENVIRONMENT
-PANEL-Smith, Kearin, and Shipp
- 7. STRUCTURING CLOSURE THROUGH TECHNOLOGICAL DISCOURSE: THE MORMON PRIESTHOOD CORRELATION PROGRAM
-Tarla Rai Peterson
- 8. RUDGER CLAWSON: A JOURNEY INTO MORMON HISTORY AND OUR OWN
-David and Roy Hoopes
- 9. MORMON PERSPECTIVES OF REGIONAL CONFLICTS AND HUMAN RIGHTS
-Diane Tueller Pritchett and Scott Smith
- 10. IF I'M DOING EVERYTHING RIGHT, WHY DO I FEEL SO BAD?
-Jane Geller
BYU AND BABYLON: SURVIVING INTELLECTUALLY OUTSIDE THE MORMON ACADEMIC STRUCTURE
-Krista West
- 12. SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PLAN OF SALVATION AND THE PROCESS OF SCIENTIFIC INQUIRY
-Eric G. Hansen
EVOLUTION OF THE SPECIES: A CONTENT ANALYSIS OF SUNSTONE MAGAZINE
-Elbert Peck
- 13. A MORMON EVOLUTIONIST AND THE WILD GOD'S GRACE
-Levi S. Peterson
- 14. HEBER J. GRANT: A PICTORIAL BIOGRAPHY
-Ronald W. Walker
- 15. MEDITATION AND MORMONISM
-Mark Edward Koltko
- 16. JOKES: MORMON LORE AND LAW
-Adam Blackwell
- 17. BOOK OF MORMON STORIES THAT MY TEACHERS KEPT FROM ME
-Neal Chandler
- 18. A DIVINE CALL FOR ENTRIES: FOSTERING ARTISTIC EXCELLENCE IN THE CHURCH
-Brad Teare
- 19. THE STORIES OF OUR LIVES: NARRATIVES AND BELIEF IN MORMONDOM
-Richard Bushman
- 20. ILLUSIONS OF AUTOCRACY: WHY THE LDS CHURCH ISN'T AS DICTATORIAL AS IT SEEMS, BUT WHAT SOMETIMES MAKES IT LOOK THAT WAY
-Paul H. Smith
- 21. THE PERSISTING SIGNIFICATION OF RACE: NATIVE AMERICANS IN MORMONDOM
-Bonnie Lynn Mitchell
- 22. OBEDIENCE AND REVOLUTION: REFLECTIONS ON THE MORMON'S OBLIGATION TO THE STATE AND THE LAW
-Edward A. Harris
- 23. THE SURPRISING NEW WORLD CIVILIZATIONS
-Ray T. Matheny
- 24. THE PEOPLE VS. THE PROPHET: JOSEPH SMITH AND THE LEGAL PROCESS IN NAUVOO
-Marshall Hamilton
NEITHER ELITE NOR NOTORIOUS: THE COMMON PEOPLE AND EVERYDAY LIFE IN THE BRIGHAM YOUNG ERA
-William G. Hartley
- 25. CHURCH LEADERS AS COUNSELLORS: A PSYCHIATRIC PERSPECTIVE
-L. Marlene Payne and Peter Jensen
- 26. SPIES IN OUR MIDST: IS ESPIONAGE MORALLY DEFENSIBLE BY CHRISTIAN STANDARDS
-Michael Barrett
- 27. FROM HERETIC TO HOUSEWIFE
-Rebecca Linford
JOSEPH SMITH VISITS REDWOOD CITY FIRST WARD
-Samuel W. Taylor
- 28. WORKS IN PROGRESS
-Peterson, Chandler, Rhoton, and Norman
- 29. MORMON WOMEN SPEAK: SUGGESTIONS FOR CHANGE
-panel-Elliott, Pearson, Tietjen, and Smurthwaite
- 30. THE PRICE WE PAY FOR SELLING THE CHURCH
-Janet Brigham
- 31. JEWISH PROCEEDINGS IN THE TRIAL OF JESUS OF NAZARETH
-Edgar C. Snow, Jr
- 32. MAMMON IN THE 90S: A PHILOSOPHY OF WEALTH AND MONEY FOR MORMONS/FINANCE AND THE WORKING SPOUSE
-Terry M. Lloyd
- 33. HOW RELIGIOUS BELIEFS AFFECT PSYCHOTHERAPY: THE EXAMPLE OF MORMONISM
-Mark Edward Koltko
- 34. IS IT TIME FOR PERASTROIKA IN THE CHURCH?
-Merlyn John Clark
- 35. LDS WOMEN AND THE INSTITUTIONAL CHURCH
-Marie Cornwall
- 36. SONGS OF NAUVOO
-The Times and Seasons String Band

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