RELIEF SOCIETY BLUES

What are the Relief Society blues? When you not only know that what the teacher is teaching is true, and that everyone else not only understands the principle but totally lives it, and you wish you had stayed home. Nothing can make me feel more guilty than a lesson on something that is just not going right in my life.

Now, before you conclude that I'm some terrible sinner, stop! I'm probably a lot like you. I'm an active member. I can honestly pass the temple recommend questions. I love the Church. Yet, sometimes I struggle with guilt, depression, and inadequacy.

For some reason, Relief Society brings out these feelings more than any other part of the Church. The teachers are usually so well prepared. I've taught Relief Society, and no sooner would I finish my lesson than I'd start worrying about my next one. If a "super-teacher" syndrome exists in the Church, it is when nice ladies teach Relief Society.

As a young-adult convert, I was quite smug about making the celestial kingdom. I was so zealous I couldn't imagine anything blocking my path. It all seemed attainable: I'd marry in the temple, as would my children—alter they had all served honorable missions.

I did get married in the temple. We had six active and lively children. Soon I was no longer smug. These loved ones that make up the biggest potholes in my celestial path. I'd smugly think about making the celestial kingdom. I was so zealous I couldn't imagine anything blocking my path. It all seemed attainable: I'd marry in the temple, as would my children—alter they had all served honorable missions.

Picture this: it's Sunday morning and the house is clean. I've cooked all that can be cooked the night before, and set the table. We've had family home evening lessons on the importance of being on time—I can honestly say I have done my part. I am right on schedule and the children have been called plenty of time. Even when I call them the second and third time there's still plenty of time—they would just move! When I finally convince them to get going, they only have one speed—their speed. Children are always sure there is plenty of time, and parents know there is never enough.

One teenager has decided that church is dumb and will not move at all. My teenage daughters are willing, but take forever to get their hair done. They run all over looking for combs, brushes, clothes that they have misplaced. They want to borrow mine, but it's too late because they've already lost them. The little children just want to play.

Any of these life scenes can be handled well the first few times. It's the ones that happen over and over that are the killers. I'm not a rut runner; in fact, I'm quite creative. I have tried many things: games, incentives, bribes, treats, prayers, scriptures, and, yes, sometimes yelling myself hoarse.

To have a really bad morning, all I need is to feel that the Relief Society lesson is being given just to me. This doesn't happen too often, but enough to know how hard the guilt can be. I feel all alone and very low.

One morning the Relief Society teacher was impressing us with the importance of sending our children on missions. Everything she said was true but wasn't working for me. My son wasn't interested. With every success story, I sunk deeper into my chair. Finally, I stopped the teacher and said, "Please, all of this is hurting me." My honest plea set off an interesting reaction. Hearts opened up and the room filled with love. I thought of what the old quizzing bees might have been like as everyone shared feelings and struggles. One sister shared how frustrating it was to be a working mother. Another, of how she hated lessons on temple marriages with no marriage partner in sight. The saddest story came from a sister whose family had experienced the pain of suicide. Almost everyone had something that made her feel insecure and lonely.

We all have areas that frustrate us. We need to feel free to share. We need to be reminded over and over that love is the best medicine. We do not have to be perfect. We are working toward perfection. We all need help to love ourselves so that we can love others. Relief Society can be a place where we can find help. This sisterhood can strengthen us. We need to be real with each other. The best way to fight the Relief Society blues is to share our cares. Care enough to say, "Stop, we are not quite there yet; come back to where we are and love us through this." Teachers, pull us out and bring us into your lessons. Nothing fights the blues better than knowing that even if we slip we aren't alone. We can get back up with the help of our sisters and our savior Jesus Christ.

SANDY HIRSCH
PROVO, UT
SUNSTONE TYPES

SUNSTONE IS MY biggest source of aggravation and confusion. It's obvious the staff and contributors are informed and open-minded. Every issue brings the question, Why do such informed Mormons keep their foot in the Church door? Mormonism continues unthwarted in its progression and unchallenged by these ideas because they rarely, if ever, involve action.

Whatever is a reader to do with these written provocations? The SUNSTONE-Sword has no sting because you fight the Church while remaining in her ranks Do any of you have the grits to step completely out of the closet and go your own way?

While the darker side of Mormonism is big news to me, it's common knowledge to you "Sunstone types". This troubles me. You couldn't care about or examine these matters without a thorough understanding of the Church. So I ask: Why do you continue to debate its lesser merits when you know the foundation is inherently flawed? What is the value of these articles if the light that is shed leads nowhere?

CORA TAYLOR-JUDD
Irvine, CA

Elbert Peck replies:

This indisputable "Sunstone-type" keeps his foot, head, and heart in the Church because he senses God working with and through the LDS church and people. That the Church is a dynamic, effective, yet flawed community of believers in Christ is not a "lesser merit"—it is a rare gem that some roam the world in search of and do not find.

The darker sides of Mormonism are nothing but the lamentable human aspects of any social endeavor. And the open, in-house, charitable discussion of these issues aren't nasty revelations that prove Mormonism's unworthiness, but are acts to check and improve and to heal and purify the Latter-day Saints in their quest to be the people of God.

ANSWERS & QUESTIONS

IT'S A GOOD feeling when you read articles where members of the Church express their ideas and convictions, and you find out that you are not the dark horse but that other people come to the same conclusions. Especially over here in Europe we are in close contact with many religious denominations and can't afford to sweep problems under the carpet. Only when we open our eyes and use our brains will we understand the gospel and strengthen our faith. We should be more critical of ourselves than of others because that seems to be the only way to change things and improve our situation.

I have a group of friends, all members in good standing, serving in different positions in our ward and stake. We meet regularly in our homes to discuss the gospel as well as the organization of the Church frankly and without reserve. Because we know each other, we can estimate the positive intention behind every statement. In this circle, SUNSTONE very often gives the background for long debates. We see the inspiration in essays like those on "Alternative Voices" (SUNSTONE 14:2, 15:4), Janice Allred's "Do You Preach the Orthodox Religion?: A Place for Theology in Mormon Community" (15:2), Sheila Davaney's "Trends in Feminist Theology" (15:2), and many others. They offer answers to questions that we can scrutinize and investigate and finally make up our own minds about better than the often flat answers and questions in Sunday School.

WERNER H. HOCK
Tiefenbronn, Germany
INTELLECTUALS

IN LIGHT OF the Brethren’s comments about symposia (“Church Issues Statement on ‘Symposia,” SUNSTONE 15:4), I have a comment on the intellectual in the Church.

The scriptures say that it is impossible for a person to be saved in ignorance; a philosopher once said that an educated man and an ignorant man are like the difference between the living and the dead. The Lord commands us to learn of things that are in the earth and beneath the earth (D&C 88:79), so there can be no doubt that he, too, is concerned that we be educated. But if we are really concerned with enlightenment, we must ultimately come to understand what true knowledge is and how to attain it.

“This latter day work is spiritual. It takes spirituality to love it, to discern it, and to comprehend it.” These words by President Ezra Taft Benson encompass how and only how one can come to enlightenment in this gospel. We assimilate information by reading or seeing. Our conclusions are formed in our minds. But when one is spiritually informed, the conclusions come from an external source filling our spirits with truth. It can come in no other way. Yet how many symposium papers have come about in this way?

For example, I once read a symposium paper about the endowment and how it has changed through the years. Yet, I also heard a counselor in a temple presidency say that anyone who tries to interpret the endowment is a fool, that the spiritual nature of the endowment is revealed in a personal way. Having one or one thousand degrees does not bring us any closer to spiritual truth.

I endorse education, but there is a difference between the humble seeker of truth and the “intellectual.” A common thread in many symposium papers is criticism of the Brethren. That attitude is contrary to revealed truth: “And the voice of warning shall be . . . by the mouths of my disciples. Whether by my own voice or by the voice of my servants, it is the same” (D&C 1:4, 38). And, “whatsoever they shall speak when moved upon by the Holy Ghost shall be scripture, shall be the will of the Lord,” (D&C 68:4). Regardless who is in that office or what faults he may have, that office represents God. Those who criticize the Brethren criticize God.

Many intellectuals believe they can write better revelations than President Benson about priesthood, motherhood, or whatever else bothers them. The Lord has often preferred the unlearned to be his servants. The intellectuals are too busy listening to themselves to listen to God. This is why they will never sit in the high councils of the Church.

Thankfully, the Holy Ghost is available to all. When we tap into that power, he will do nothing more nor less than confirm the words of the Brethren. We will know in the depths of our souls that official Church policy is God’s policy and that if we need confirmation that Ezra Taft Benson is a prophet of God we will know it. I attended the first general priesthood session at which President Benson spoke and knew by the spirit he was a prophet. After that, anything he spoke from the pulpit I knew came from God. That knowledge does not come from one’s credentials or thesis. It comes on one’s knees.

Mike Lovins
Bountiful, UT

THE RESTORATION MOVEMENT

AS A FORMER member of the LDS church and a convert to the RLDS church, and as a new subscriber to SUNSTONE, I am concerned about the content of your intellectually stimulating magazine.

While SUNSTONE centers itself within Mormon thinkers, I expected a broader content. We, the Reorganized Latter Day Saints, are as “Mormon” as the Latter-day Saints. We share a common heritage, the Book of Mormon, the Doctrine and Covenants, the principle of modern-day revelation, and other beliefs. Our churches are part of “the Restoration Movement.” That “the Church” became the broader “Movement” is demonstrated by the fact that far less than half of the membership followed Brigham Young. At one point, James Strang’s followers were as numerous as Brigham Young’s.

I do not suggest that SUNSTONE alter or diminish its LDS emphasis. I would, however, appreciate a greater amount of coverage of and information on the Reorganization.

Scott L. Gibson
Salt Lake City

A POLITICAL BALANCE

Sunstone does provide a useful forum. The liberality and openness in looking at theological issues of our Mormon culture is reassuring. But I have less sympathy with the predominant “liberal-left-statist” political theme in the magazine. It reminds me of the dogmatic orientation in the social science departments of universities—the “PC” syndrome. Conservative and libertarian voices should be heard from for a better balanced presentation.

Brent Mikesell
Salt Lake City

Editor’s Reply:

To a degree, the articles in Sunstone reflect the submissions we receive. I would like to consider more “conservative” articles. Sunstone’s role is to provide a forum for all perspectives of Mormon thought and experience.

LDS CHILD ABUSE

I AM WRITING to share my small weight of evidence regarding the furor over ritualized child sexual abuse within the LDS community ("Leaked Bishop’s Memo Spotlights LDS Ritual Satanic Sexual Abuse," SUNSTONE 15:5). I have worked with many

Mrs. Smith...This is Elder Jones, you’ve been chosen for a free trial membership!
children who have been sexually abused as well as adults who were molested as children. Of the adults I have worked with, four reported satanic abuse involving LDS church members that was very similar to that reported by Bishop Glenn Pace of the LDS Presiding Bishopric. Six of my clients in cases of incest were daughters of former bishops. As Dr Don Price commented in the Salt Lake Tribune on 26 October 1991, it is only to be expected that satanic abuse will imitate rituals of predominant religions.

What I have noticed, however, is the increase in children reporting ritualized sexual abuse involving groups of children and adults. These reports may or may not relate to satanic rituals and the more bizarre activities associated with satanic worship, but they generally seem to occur within LDS church-linked neighborhood groups.

A little over five years ago, at about the same time the Hadfield case emerged in Lehi, I, along with five or six other therapists, interviewed approximately twenty children from a Bountiful ward. In this same ward, other children had made allegations about Bret Bullock and other adults in what appeared to be a group sex ring. Bullock was subsequently convicted. Others were not charged. In this same neighborhood, totally different adults were named by totally different children. This, of course, sounds like an hysterical witch-hunt.

However, the children who reported the second, non-Bullock sex ring did not know what the children in the Bullock case had said and were too young to come up with the consistent, spontaneous, explicit detail and congruent emotional affect that they manifested. These two Bountiful sex rings were never linked by any children as far as I know. Both groups involved ritualized sex acts but to my knowledge, not satanic rites.

The bishop arranged investigative evaluations for all the children in the Bullock case. None of these children reported being abused. However, they were seen only once by the therapists, and given the nature of the reported abuse (pornographic filming, animal killing, group sexual acts of all kinds, etc., and the threats for "telling" reported by the children who had "talked"), it would be surprising if a therapist could elicit information in one interview.

One aspect of the second alleged sex ring was that a daughter and son-in-law of a general authority were named as the main abusers by at least seven children. Explicit detail was given about this couple's activities by all of these children. When the couple's names surfaced, the Bountiful police, for all practical purposes, dropped the case.

Witnessing how the children in the then-contemporary Hadfield and Bullock cases suffered, all the parents of the children who made allegations refused to allow their children to testify in court. At the time, the stake president and others in the Church system said they believed the children, but no Church action was ever taken against any of the alleged perpetrators.

The Church is in a legal bind in cases of this sort. No doubt fearing lawsuits by those who are disciplined or by future victims if further abuse occurs by previously alleged perpetrators now holding Church office. The Church is also in a difficult position when it comes to adults now seeking Church action against a perpetrator for abuse that may have occurred years ago when they were children. Nevertheless, Utah has one of the highest child sexual abuse rates in the nation, and much of the sex ring activity being reported allegedly has taken place within LDS congregations and is perpetrated by active LDS members. The Church must warn its members of the vulnerability of youth even to the Church's own youth leaders and to family members. Within the Salt Lake Valley alone, sex abuse rings have been reported in Midvale, West Valley, Salt Lake, and Bountiful.

In talking with colleagues, I have heard several factors mentioned that may place children at risk in the LDS culture. Utah's high birthrate in Utah and low per-capita income place extra pressure on family systems. LDS neighborhoods generally encourage a lot of adult/child interaction outside the family. While this may create a supportive environment, it also puts children more at risk for abuse. The patriarchal system where the priesthood holder's authority is not questioned allows pedophiles a unique opportunity. Bishops often support the perpetrator because he is a priesthood holder. Unfortunately, children cannot trust everyone, including Church leaders. The Church needs to change its implied message that its leaders are morally infallible.

There is the LDS attitude that marriage should be preserved at any cost. LDS denial of anything being wrong within family or
Church systems is exceedingly strong. I believe that a Church cover-up occurred in the case of the general authority's children, although I have little admissible evidence to support my opinion. If there has been a cover-up, obviously it is intolerable to Mormons and non-Mormons alike.

Sexual abuse will decrease when the public becomes informed and acts to protect its children. I plead with LDS leaders to help make this information accessible.

MARRION B. SMITH
Former Director
Intermountain Sexual Abuse Centers
Salt Lake City

SPIRITUAL ABUSE

IN RESPONSE TO the articles regarding Elder Paul H. Dunn ("The Baseball and War Stories of Elder Paul H. Dunn," SUNSTONE 15:3). As a questioning and skeptical adolescent, I felt strengthened and spiritually moved by the stories and the inspiring man who delivered them. I wanted to believe that there were unseen forces that protected and guided the righteous just as Elder Dunn had said. I wanted to be righteous in order to merit the same kinds of experiences. Now, I realize, I was spiritually duped, not by the concepts but by the content of those stories.

I falsely trusted a general authority's faith-promoting stories that were intended to stir me to higher purposes. I trusted because general authorities are "keepers of the faith." Many have said that when Elder Dunn spoke, they felt the spirit validating his words. What must it do to people's faith to later learn that they were deceived, believing that they once felt the spirit and now must doubt their ability to discern the spirit. The general authorities are to the Church what older brothers, uncles, and grandfathers should be to families. We want to open ourselves to them because we believe they are nurturing, wise, and trustworthy. When that trust is violated in families, emotional, physical, and sexual abuse can be the consequence, including denial of any wrongdoing. Am I stretching to feel spiritually abused by those I trusted and to whom I opened my spiritual self? Like other victims of abuse, many will find their openness to future stones replaced with scars of skepticism and doubt.

R. SCOTT RHODES
San Diego, CA

JUST THE FACTS

IN THE NOVEMBER 1991 Writer's Digest there is an article about how to conduct interviews. One of the points should be of interest to those who were intrigued by Paul Dunn's "synthesized" personal history.

"Check every fact," author Hank Nuwer cautioned. "If your subject's life story sounds too good to be true," it likely is. Nuwer cites The Detroit Free Press's Susan Ager, who reported that many people fictionalize events "to make themselves more important in their own eyes," sometimes inadvertently—sometimes not. Such stories, Nuwer notes, "sound wonderful until they appear in print, and angry letter writers pin the subject with these falsehoods." He illustrates with the story of Bob Irsay, who as long as "a businessman . . . got away with telling journalists about his glowing military record. But when Irsay became the owner of the Baltimore (now Indianapolis) Colts, Sports Illustrated blew the cover on his phony background."

He cautions writers to "check out everything" their subjects say, "no matter how convincing they sound." He concludes, "I doubt that I research one story in ten where every claim, fact, date, and statistic given me by an interviewee checks out." Perhaps Paul Dunn is more like the rest of us than we might want to think.

PAUL H. SMITH
Laurel, MD

MEANS TESTING

IN ENDS AND MEANS, Aldous Huxley argued that "Means are ends in the making," that if the means are compromised and impure, so too will be the end. Similarly, the scriptures are replete with the notion that correct intentions, as well as the good act, are necessary to obtain the blessings of the Lord.

Paul Dunn and his inspirational anecdotes illustrate this. His stories, brief morality plays, were intended to stir our sense of potential and direct our actions to greater heights. The desired end couldn't have been worthier—more righteous behavior among the Saints. So in Brother Dunn's mind, the means were justified. But the means were tainted because the stories were exaggerations. Therefore, the end was weakened.

Brother Dunn's approach is occasionally repeated in other ways in the Church: Home teaching is performed for statistics, stake priesthood meeting attendance is rewarded with pie and ice cream, scripture reading is rewarded by a longer line on the bar graph. The ends are worthy, but the means are perverse and unworthy. We're doing the right things for the wrong reasons.

There are few absolutes in this life. But genuine morality must arise from a clear understanding of good and evil, must be achieved through faith and obedience to the principles (true and accurate) that govern the highest orders of the universe. To be valid,
righteousness must be performed because of selfless love and a devotion to truth. Anything short of that will reduce or eliminate the blessings. God does not lie to get us into his kingdom; Satan does.

S. Porter
Palmdale, CA

STANDARDS OF REALITY

SOME PARALLELS WITH the motivations for Paul Dunn's stories may come from the writings of Loren Eiseley, one of the world's most respected and beloved nature writers. In a posthumously published volume of his notebooks, his editor and friend describes Eiseley's methods:

Although Loren was always writing about himself, he, like many other creative writers, manipulated the accounts of his life. In his essays, he occasionally invented characters, rearranged events, and composed conversations in search of a larger reality. His intention was not to deceive or falsify, but rather to clarify, and he managed to give reality the vividness of fiction by the way he reported an incident. (Kenneth Heuer, ed., The Lost Notebooks of Loren Eiseley [Boston: Little, Brown, & Co., 1987], 76.)

Eiseley's many readers would not have wanted his stories impoverished by a too rigorous standard of reality. These are natural parables, and, like other parables, they are valued for their description of a larger reality, their clarity, and their vividness rather than for their historicity.

Jack Worlton
Salt Lake City

A STUDY IN DENIAL

THE PAUL DUNN episode affords the rare opportunity to see a situation where there is simply no justification or rationale.

It was interesting to see how several essays described Elder Dunn's behavior. Terms included exaggerations, misrepresentations, fabrications, ethical shortcomings, embellishments, myth-making, combined truths, half-truths, or, my favorite, "untruth." Only occasionally did anyone describe what they were—lies.

Also interesting is how those affected react. Some call a spade a spade, some play dumb, and others wallow deeper and deeper as they make pitiful attempts to defend him. I applaud Lynn Packer's courage in telling the truth but wonder how many other "Lynn Packers" there are who buckled under the pressure and condoned such abhorrent behavior by obediently remaining silent.

Randall Bell
Santa Monica, CA

A TABLOID EXPOSÉ

WHILE I DISAGREE with the decision to publish the news piece about Elder Dunn, I support SUNSTONE for the additional discussions which provided more context and wisdom for interpretation and understanding.

I see no good reason for public revelation of and discussion about the personal faults of a human being, especially one who has given years of good and faithful service to God's children and kingdom. I see no value in publishing details of journalist Lynn Packer's personal tribulations. I expect such exposes in tabloids, not in periodicals which aspire to scholarship and serious exploration of gospel principles and Zion-building.

I want to share another type of experience with Elder Dunn. For two years I taught at Boston University while Elder Dunn was the New England Mission president. He ordained me a seventy and I served as a ward missionary leader. On numerous occasions I worked with President Dunn, visited his home for firesides, attended meetings where he preached, taught, and counselled missionaries and members. I also witnessed a temple wedding he performed.

I remember little about war and sports stories; these were not what impressed me. And I was much impressed, more so than by most other general authorities with whom I have had direct experience (including more than a dozen apostles and seventies). Elder Dunn was frequently inspired as well as inspiring, and he was better informed and more instructive in gospel principles and practices and Church organization and operation than most. I witnessed on two occasions extraordinary power and revelation from him. Is he imperfect and flawed? No doubt. More so than some other Church leaders and biblical prophets? I doubt it. Less so than most of us? Certainly.

I witness that he was called of and served God as an excellent priesthood and missionary leader. Would that we could all do so well as he did (and learn from him how to overcome weaknesses inherent in mortality).

Is it not possible to discuss the issues that concern us as a community without debunking personalities and amplifying pain and division? For example, what good was served by the public pursuit of the Clarence Thomas-Anita Hill affair? Were not all degraded thereby: accuser and accused, media and messenger, judge and jury, process and procedure? If that matter was badly served by its public nature, how much more so the humiliation of one who served the Lord and his people?

T. Allen Lambert
Ithaca, NY
TV IDOLS

THE OLD ADAGE that one picture is worth a thousand words has much truth in it, for a picture can communicate more, faster. The dark side is that the picture’s power can either enlighten or deceive with a thousand more lies. And the machine gun rapidity with which picture-lies can be told makes them almost impossible to refute. With VCRs, you can tell them yet another thousand times as fast.

I am an iconoclast—a breaker of images. A picture “cements” a concept far more than does a word, and since the need to change intellectual concepts from our birth to our death is required to follow the commands to “study and learn” and to “repent” of less desirable concepts, such cementing of concepts may actually impede (damn) us.

We are all obligate idolaters, for we can worship and/or believe only what we are able to conceive (to “see” in the “mind’s eye”) and our concepts should improve as we mature. I was appalled when my class of nine-year-olds “knew” which were the “pictures” of Jesus from among several portraits.

A picture, especially if it tries to be too explicit (as in contemporary movies), loses much and satiates quickly, for the power of suggestion is neglected. All attempts at overrealistic portrayal of feelings both strongly positive and strongly negative fall short—or seem outright phony (at least to me, a family doctor with forty years association with the highs and lows of real people in real life).

The Sunday School VCR portrayal of the King James Version of the New or Old Testament, especially when attempting to be very literal, is often painfully silly and usually loaded with error (see Sheldon Greaves’s “Joseph’s Amazing Technicolor Dream-Church: Interpreting Scripture in the Video Age,” Sunstone 15:2). I am offended, angry, and ashamed by these cheap substitutes for honest study (which is really hard work). Our Sunday School (sic) is only an indoctrination machine, where cowed and/or incompetent teachers use insipid anonymous manuals and farm out paragraphs or “scripture bits” to be stumbled over by the unfortunate called on to “read” them. Now, they roll out the TV set and the cerebration centers are put in neutral.

The latest manuals tell us what to think about, what thoughts to think about the things they tell us to think about, and then the conclusions we should have reached after thinking the thoughts they told us to think about. This is total disrespect for the God-given intellect and free agency which is the birthright of each individual human being. There is sore need for repentance.

LEW W. WALLACE
San Gabriel, CA

IN OUR OWN IMAGE

I AM DISCOURAGED by the increasing references in Sunstone and similar forums to the “new awareness” of “Heavenly Mother” (see “President Hinckley Renounces Praying to Mother in Heaven,” Sunstone 15:3; Carol Lynn Pearson’s “Chiasm to God the Mother,” 15:3, and “Panel Discusses Praying to Mother in Heaven,” 15:4), prompted in part by the isolation some women feel because of the absence of a heavenly female role model to comfort and inspire them.

Latter-day Saints who call for greater emphasis on Heavenly Mother, and who deem such a belief to be enlightened (i.e., politically correct) and progressive, should pause and reflect upon the concept’s origins. The teaching of a wife joined to our Father was first introduced in conjunction with the practice of polygamy and is inextricably bound to the concept of not a single Heavenly Mother, but rather Heavenly Mothers, who are all wed to a single Father in Heaven. How can this teaching bring comfort or strength to any twentieth-century Latter-day Saint, male or female?

The essence of being a disciple of Christ is to emulate the Messiah in every way, including the worshipping of his God, called by Jesus “my Father” and “Abba.” It is to this Father that Christ told us to direct our supplications, to whom he cried at Gethsemane, and on the cross, and to whom he commended his soul at his death. Why should any Christian—male or female—need more than the God of our Savior? How can Christ’s Father not be enough to fill any soul with faith, hope, charity, and vision?

Some might argue that a man cannot understand how it feels to be a woman relying upon a male God. I have never viewed prayer as a male bonding experience. I have found that during those rare, sacred moments in my life when I have truly felt the presence of God, it has not been as one man communing with another, but rather as a child in the presence of wondrous love and wisdom.

Perhaps the problem is the oversimplified LDS concept of God as a man, “just like you and I.” In forgetting the “otherness” of the Almighty (“[his] ways are not our ways, and [his] thoughts are not our thoughts,” Isaiah 5:8) and the incomprehensibility of God’s glory, we create a collective mental image that is all too describable. When we picture God’s physical features in our minds, we must realize that at best the image is a crude metaphor. As a practical matter, if our minds behold a human face just like ours, then we have imagined something other than our Heavenly Father, since his glory defies all description, including the image conjured up by our feeble minds. And by reducing God to our own moral image, and our own moral likeness, and in worshiping that image, we turn our faith into a type of idolatry.

This problem manifests itself in the portrayal of God in the media as a cross between Charlton Heston and Dan Haggerty. A God that transcends description is not well served by being portrayed as a robust, fully-
bearded image of twentieth-century masculinity. If the object of one's prayers is a vision created by the lights and cameras of modern cinema, then a feeling of profound spiritual isolation is to be expected not only by women but by men as well.

The scripture "God is love" (1 John 4:8) is far deeper than we know. We call this Love "Father" because our Savior called Love "Father." However, to impose upon God the physical attributes of our current perception of a masculine, father-like figure is to miss the mark and to confuse the object of our worship. To dwell in God's love is to behold God's presence, and this gift is in no way restricted or defined by gender. In fact, Christ has far more in common with Mother Teresa than the Marlboro Man, and to feel the freedom that comes from kinship with him does not require XY chromosomes but rather the simple desire to follow in his footsteps. Those who feel that the manhood of Christ somehow limits a woman's capacity to rejoice in a Christ-like life ought to remember that the qualities that define him and his Father (compassion, mercy, wisdom, and love) are completely unrelated to gender.

When Christ calls a man or woman, he bids them come and die. Part of what must die are the preconceptions and demands we would place upon the author of salvation. Those who require the additional presence of "Mother(s) in Heaven" to assist them in their devotion to Christ or communion with God appear to be sipping from an empty cup. This is unfortunate when the source of living water is so readily available.

**BYU'S LINE BREAKERS**

Tim Behrend's otherwise excellent review of John Bennion's Breeding Leah & Other Stories (SUNSTONE 15:4) was marred by wholly gratuitous and completely inaccurate slurs against BYU and its faculty. He asserts that the powers of BYU's Don Marshall and Doug Thayer "have dimmed," that, until Bennion, "it has been a long while since a full-time faculty member at BYU has published a major work (or collection) of fiction to critical acclaim," and accuses even the "much-decorated Margaret Young" of lapsing into "sentimentality and moralism," apparently because she recently dared to publish with Deseret Book. He concludes that Bennion is thus the only BYU writer who has earned "a place beside Judith Freeman, Levi Peterson, and Pauline Mortensen at the forefront of Mormon fiction."

Give me a break! Two collections by BYU faculty have been published in recent years by national presses and to critical acclaim: Thayer's Mr. Wahlquist in Yellowstone (which many, including John Bennion, think includes some of the best Mormon fiction yet) and Darrell Spencer's A Woman Packing a Pistol (he publishes regularly in many prestigious literary journals and has a new collection under consideration). Young has a collection (most of them previously published in national literary journals) and a novel coming out this year, both from non-Church presses. Louise Plummer is winning national prizes for her young adult fiction. And Pauline Mortensen did her collection for her master's degree at BYU! No other faculty or program even comes close to producing the quantity or quality of Mormon fiction that BYU's does. For Behrend to tax Young and Marshall and Thayer for also trying to improve the quality of popular or didactic Mormon fiction is snobbery.

Behrend closes his review with a hope that Bennion "will continue to write at BYU with the same intense honesty and insight that typified his work . . . at the University of Houston"—obviously implying that it's unlikely given the nature of the place and its faculty's tendency to go "dim" and sell out.

Give me another break! For one thing, Bennion wrote or completely revised some of the stories Behrend likes after coming to BYU. For another, there are at least ten colleges or universities in Utah and Idaho with student bodies over 50 percent Mormon. By even modest standards of educational responsibility to students' ethnic and cultural backgrounds, every one of those places should have courses in Mormon literature, faculty members who produce and champion it, and graduate creative writing programs that encourage it. BYU is the only one that does any of those. And, with the exception of Levi Peterson (Weber State University) and possibly Frank Fisher (University of Utah), BYU has at least six faculty regularly writing Mormon fiction with more "honesty and insight" than any at the other places.

EUGENE ENGLAND
Prov, UT

**CULTURAL HEGEMONY**

Don Redd and Eugene England ("A Benevolent Racism," SUNSTONE 15:3, and "Eugene England Replies," 15:1) take the only defensible positions regarding the racist construction of the Book of Mormon: either God used a "benevolent racism" as part of the
Jesus taught against the belief in Israel that what is a group but a collection of individuals of a loving God of all people. (Are All Alike Unto God, Sunstone 14:2)

Redd further suggests that racial groups are treated differently according to the divine favor they have incurred, but as individuals all people are alike unto God regardless of race, color, or gender. This logic escapes me. What is a group but a collection of individuals? John the Baptist, the Apostle Paul, and Jesus taught against the belief in Israel that God favored one group over another (Romans 9:6-8; Matthew 3:9 and 8:10-12).

It may be argued that the curse of blackness that fell upon the Lamanites was never meant as an eternal judgment but only as a temporal sign that wickedness was never happiness. Yet even this reasoning stretches credulity among all of God's great powers, a skin of blackness was the most effective tool he could find that would make the Nephites think twice about rebelling. If this was the case, God's plan failed wonderfully in stopping Nephite apostasy as well as impartially meting out the penalty for rebellion. Even though the rebellious Amlicites, for example, marked their foreheads to distinguish themselves from the righteous Nephites; this kind of marking was a qualitatively different "curse" than an indelible skin of blackness, particularly with respect to their sins. The Amlicites knowingly rebelled against God, while the dark children of the Lamanites erred only through ignorance. Indeed, the white Nephites who consciously turned from God were the true heirs to Laman's curse, not those who sinned in ignorance.

One way around the problematic Book of Mormon construction of race and good and evil is to take England's position that the Nephite prophets and record keepers somehow misunderstood God's role in the formation of the "curse," as well as the full meaning of Christ's atonement. But such an interpretation only opens a Pandora's box. Why, for example, did God allow such a tragic flaw to be interwoven into the bulk of modern scripture? England suggests that any divine intervention to correct the racist ideology of the Nephites would have violated their free agency. But surely a few explicit words from God to the Nephites would have been no less a violation than was his giving the Ten Commandments to Israel. With few exceptions, the Nephites appear to have been oblivious to what God told ancient Israel about physical appearances. "Look not on his countenance, or on the height of his stature;..." (1 Samuel 16:7)

For the Nephite prophets to have misunderstood some of the most fundamental tenants of the gospel challenges the foundation upon which the Book of Mormon presently stands. If their record is "the most correct book on Earth" except when it comes to the way in which the Nephites understood the Atonement, and except in the way they conceived of God's dealings with the children of Lehi, then we are left with an uncomfortably qualified "most correct" book.

Another way around a reading of the curse is to interpret phrases such as "dark and loathsome" and "white and delightsome" as metaphors for lifestyles rather than actual descriptions of skin color. However, by suggesting that the construction of righteousness is built upon the idea that God bestows his grace according to the way different groups relate to their environment and how they manipulate their resources, implicitly privileges white, Northern European conceptions of civilization, culture, and religion over native beliefs and practices. A nomadic lifestyle is, in itself, intrinsically no less conducive to righteousness than an urban culture. Yet the relationship between social organization and conversion, in fact, seems to have played a fundamental role in the way that sin and righteousness is conceived in the Nephite record (Enos 1:20-21, 2 Nephi 5:24, Mormon 9:11, 12:4, 14). The prophetic chronology of the Book of Mormon fully anticipates that when the "correct" religion is brought to the modern "Lamanites" by their white brothers, the "scales of darkness" that blinded the American Indians for so long would begin to fall from their eyes "and many generations shall not pass among them save they shall be a white [or pure] and delightsome people." (2 Nephi 30:5-6) But what is to be the key element in this chain of events that would not only change the person but change the race? The story of the sons of Mosiah, perhaps the greatest Nephite missionaries, provides a clue.

After an ecstatic conversion, the king of the Lamanites allowed the sons of Mosiah to freely preach the word of God, "and thousands were brought to the knowledge of the Lord, yea, thousands were brought to believe in the traditions of the Nephites" (Alma 23:5). The sons of Mosiah organized the Church and consecrated priests and teachers to minister to the converted Lamanites, and "they did lay down the weapons of the rebellion... yea, all their weapons of war" (Alma 23:7, 13, 25:14-15). On the surface, the sons of Mosiah are following a seemingly natural course by organizing the mass of converted sinners. But in bringing the Lamanites out of the moral wilderness the Nephites impose an external ideology...
that results in the eradication of traditional Lamanite religious power structures and belief systems. After the Nephite missionaries convince the Lamanites of the wickedness of their native traditions, they give them a new heritage and a new ethnic identity (Alma 17:9, 15; 26:17). Perhaps those weapons of rebellion included the weapons of the mind—their traditional beliefs, modes of worship, history, and sense of identity.

The cultural assimilation expected in the Lamanites’ conversion was also expected of their descendents. As with the Lamanites, the Indians must also acknowledge that they had been rebels to God and that their cultures and identities as a people were the result of wickedness. By accepting the “correct” interpretation of history as contained in the records of the prophet-historians, and by leaving behind their “idle,” “idolatrous,” and “iniquitous” ways, the Indians would become born again. They would have a new history, a new culture, a new identity, and a new skin (3 Nephi 2:12-16). Certainly, as Redd points out, all who convert must undergo an acculturative process to some degree, but it is a qualitatively different experience for many “Lamanites” of today who, if we are to follow the proscriptions in the Book of Mormon, must become “white” (or “pure”) in custom, lifestyle, and religious worship. Often what has helped the native peoples of North and South America and the Pacific Islands survive the trauma of conquest and colonization has been the strength of their tradition and culture and a strong sense of self. That the Book of Mormon is a history of a white nation now extinct, brought to the “Lamanites” of today by white missionaries who carry the “good news” that they too may become physically “white” and spiritually “pure” if they live according to the teachings of a church that just happens to be predominantly white seems to perpetuate the cycles of conquest and domination within the spiritual realms, and comes uncomfortably close to the philosophy that motivated the “Indian schools” established by other Christian sects at the turn of the century: “Kill the Indian to save the man.”

Contrary to Redd’s suggestion that the restored gospel is culturally neutral, or at best culturally unique, the cultural hegemony of white America permeates Mormonism. I don’t think, for example, that there will ever be a general authority sitting on the stands in general conference wearing his hair and clothing after the traditional manner of the Navajos. Instead, he will be required to don the “appropriate” attire of the corporate Church. Navajos do not commune with the heavens as do white Americans, but Navajos are not allowed to express their religious feelings in church in the traditional form. Navajos are not allowed to bring into chapels or temples their sacred drums and other instruments used to send prayers to heaven, nor their ancient dances, prayers and songs of the soul that they have performed around the campfire for centuries. Why? Because Northern European cultural forms of worship predominate in the LDS church, and any other cultural form is considered at best inappropriate and at worst illegitimate.

I don’t believe that God cares a whit if I pray to him in English or in Navajo, or whether I feel to sing the song of redeeming love in the rehearsed cadences of Mormon prayer or chanted in the manner of my Yaqui ancestors. One way that we may begin to “come to a unity of the faith” that Paul spoke of in Ephesians 4:11 is when the arrogance of Ephraim is tempered sufficiently to realize that God’s ears are big enough to hear all who pray “with a sincere heart [and] with real intent” (Moroni 10:4).

The current approaches to the racial and cultural construction of good and evil in the Book of Mormon leave the modern “Lamanites” with difficult choices: either we accept that, like so many other words our white brothers have brought to us, the Nephi record does not mean what it says it means, or that salvation awaits us only when we lose our racial and cultural distinctiveness and identities. If we are to begin to reconcile these textual and conceptual discrepancies with the belief in a loving, impartial, and just God, then I believe that England’s approach to interpreting the Book of Mormon may be the most promising. Redd’s letter, however, illustrates some of the formidable challenges a hermeneutical approach to latter-day scripture poses for most Mormons. Indeed, the real power in Redd’s position is that there are few “authoritative” voices to counterbalance the racial and cultural construction of good and evil in the Book of Mormon.

EDUARDO PAGAN
Princeton, NJ

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 unopened to them.

The weary ward member was spent;
The visitors finally went;
His wife heard him say,
“The next time they stay,
We’re charging our home teachers rent!”

KAREN ROSENBAUM

DECEMBER 1991

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FROM THE EDITOR

COWBOY POETRY AND BOOTS

By Elbert Eugene Peck

FOR THE PAST two years I have spent a long and delightful January weekend in Elko, Nevada, at the granddaddy Cowboy Poetry Gathering. Each visit prompted thoughtful comparisons to my Mormon culture.

The gathering is just what one might expect it to be—a conference of, by, and for cattlegoers. In concurrent sessions throughout the day at the Elko Convention Center, cowboy poets presented their poems to like-experienced buckaroos who laughed and cried in recognition.

What makes the conference so attractive to outsiders is the powerful sense of authenticity—no academic posturing here, although eight years of gatherings have made the poets more self-critical of their poetic style. These are real cowboys writing about their day-to-day lives. The poems are genuine products of the cowboy culture and are also agents that nurture and sustain it. Whether writing about being bucked from a horse, outhouse romance, finicky trail cooks, novice cow-milkers, wives who are not “part of the crew,” the lonely trail, or a eulogy to the best dog ever, these poets celebrate the life of ranching. In sharing humor and sorrow, pathos and bathos, the trivial and cosmic, the world-forgotten cowboy community is told that it is valued and valuable.

Continual pokes at outsiders—environmentalists, big-city folks, the Bureau of Land Management, farmers (who have a place), and literary people—help establish the community’s boundaries and remind them what they are and who the outsiders are.

And what an oral tradition! These poets have countless poems memorized, not only their own but also others’ that they prize. They know the classic poems of the great cowboy poets before them. For three non-stop days aficionados sit in rooms listening to recitations (with breaks for some cowboy songs). They intently follow the stories’ narratives, laugh at the corny jokes, and applaud the sentimental topics, the common experiences, and simple all-American morals. The stories shape them.

And they shape the stories. The gathering has refined this folk tradition. While they all celebrate the folk aspects of the poetry, the poets are more sophisticated with the literary devices they employ: theme, meter, rhyme, assonance, metaphor, and enjambment. They work to express their ideas better and chide poets who don’t own a dictionary. Nevertheless, critical analyses are left to prefatory comments, hallway chatter, and pre-conference workshops. The sessions are simply polished performances, almost dramatic theater, with incredible audience attention and appreciation. These stories tell them who they are and how they should act.

In the midst of this creative energy and vitality, it is hard to discount the importance of these poems as mere entertainment, even though many still have the sing-song rhythm and predictable rhyme that my English teachers castigated. These poems are read and reread by everyday people for meaning, validation, and insight—not just by other poets and literature critics and teachers—and they shape and define their lives. Listening to poets perform, I became caught up in celebrating the cowboy life. Because of the experiential origins of the poems, even the most didactic verses were acceptable, and poems where the message was integrated into the story were delightful. In contrast, poems with similar literary style but not rooted in personal experience, such as those often quoted in sacrament meetings, lose that authenticity and are only hard-to-endure doggerel.

On my first visit, after listening to the cowboy poets, I felt part of the cowboy community, that I understood them and in a substantial way was connected with them. Of course, I wasn’t, but by hearing story after story, for most cowboys poems are narratives, about the common experiences of ropin’ and bunkin’, buckin’ and herdin’, being free and out under the stars, and the “cowboy code” of integrity, I bought into the larger cowboy story and their way of viewing the world. What power stories have to bind individuals to the community’s traditions and to each other! Even after only three days.

I THOUGHT of how a similar folk tradition of oral performance could enrich Mormonism. Wouldn’t it be grand for LDS gatherings to be graced with humorous and serious poems by ward members celebrating everyday Mormon life? Is it possible to make poetry—folk poetry—a popular art again? Or is poetry destined to be the purview of a small elite LDS literati? We need to resurrect our pioneer oral traditions of telling, listening, and retelling fun-to-hear rhymed stories. The sharing of such stories could help integrate into a ward converts and new move-ins by simultaneously instructing them in community values and introducing the local personalities. There could be poems on home management, farmers (who have a place), and visiting teaching, missionary work, ser-
vice projects, home evenings, presiding, teaching, rearing children, scripture reading, tithing settlement, accepting calls, prayer, missionary work (most missionary poems are so sober), genealogy research, Mutual, Scouts and Scout masters, general conference—fun and serious stories with which we can identify. Instead of a poem on "The Cowboy's Christmas Ball" there'd be "The Ward Birthday Dinner", instead of "Windy Bill" we'd have "Testimony Sally"; "The Cowboy's Prayer" would be "A Mormon's Psalm"; and "Hat Etiquette" would become "Rules for Asking Questions in Sunday School." Some poems would present the ideal; others would celebrate our quirky humanness in being God's people. Imagine how hearing brothers and sisters perform such works would help socialize everyone into the dramatic Mormon story and worldview and engender a tolerance for the human diversity among us.

In contrast, though the sharing of experiences in fast and testimony meeting is often dynamic, much of what happens now at Church is didactic and boring—the rearranging of platitudes, and the chanting of stock answers. And this weakens our connections to other members and to the larger Mormon culture, especially when compared to the pioneer Church. Our duties in fulfilling the Church's three missions (including ordinances and commandments) define our contemporary religious life, not the sociality with the community.

But could our Mormon culture, even just in the United States, incorporate a tradition such as poetry performance? If cowboys can adopt poetry (an incongruity that prompts Johnny Carson to feature one each year), perhaps Mormons can too. Given our pioneer tradition of Saints dedicating their artistic skills to create a culture, there are customs to draw upon. But given the current absence of showcasing locally produced arts in today's Church, I wonder if we could adopt folk poetry—especially when one considers how sober a people we are. Would members in the congregation become a surrogate core of cowboy values (individualistic, stoic, anti-governmental, anti-environmentalism), and ranching experience that poets must casually mention prior to reciting (if it's not current you've got to have a good reason for giving it up, like financial disaster). It became clear that as much as these stories cowboys poems helped me embrace their culture, even with its distasteful sexism and racism, I would always be an outsider. There was a clear line, and that was okay; I was a weekend cultural tourist and outsider. There was a clear line, and that was okay; I was a weekend cultural tourist and didn't really want to be a cowboy. But maybe because I grew up in the sixties, I hate being excluded by such small externalities (then it was long hair and grubby clothes).

I used to think that the Church's official watchcare was essential because of its democratic nature—not a soul was overlooked from the systematic home teaching or open-invitation ward services. But I now think that with a ward roster and encouragement, members are sophisticated and sincere enough to invite the "lost sheep" over on their own also. Indeed, one of the implications of a lay priesthood empowering all adult men and women is that we are shepherds of Israel, and we can compliment the Church's mission by gathering Zion in our homes for a meal and some hokey folk poetry.

LIKE all cultures, the cowboy culture includes more than poetry, and the same group processes that makes individuals feel included and connected will unavoidably exclude others. This was also strikingly evident at the gathering, particularly with the all- pervasive cowboy costume required of everyone inside the community. Cowboys scrutinized each others' attire to gain information and classify. I watched one buckaroo check me out as he entered a room to see if I was a cowboy to talk to, a member of the group. He started at my hatless head, then down to my scarfless neck, my passable shirt (fortunately I wasn't wearing a Polo pony), the nonde script leather belt and jeans, which weren't Wrangler's but they also weren't Calvin Klein's. Up until that moment there was a slight chance I was at least a marginal cowboy. But, then, those white deck shoes! What cowboy wears Sperry Top-siders? I was definitely an outsider, and he walked past me. That hurt a little because the stories made me feel connected with him, but not vice versa. The same culture that produced the cowboy poetry that beguiled me also produced the exclusivity that rejected me.

There are other things that mark the boundaries between the cowboy world and the rest of humankind: an accent, holding a critical mass of cowboy values (individualism, stoicism, anti-governmentalism, anti-environmentalism), and ranching experience that poets must casually mention prior to reciting (if it's not current you've got to have a good reason for giving it up, like financial disaster).
but I suspect boundary items are also inescapable; they are part of the package deal of culture and community. This fact makes me ponder the challenges and implications of trying to be a world-wide Church in which everyone can find place.

For religion, the existence of exclusive boundary items is probably not serious if you’re a Protestant and don’t fit into one congregation’s style—you simply find one that better suits your tastes and social class. But what if you belong to a world-wide church with the belief that it should be a work in progress. Hence, while I dream of the utopian idealist in me wants to create a Mormonism where only the few core Mormon beliefs and practices are enforced boundaries and where we can overlook if not embrace other differences. Where we can incorporate all customs, languages, and where class distinctions can be equally included within any local congregation. Where no one is a stranger or a foreigner in any ward family because of his or her outward differences. Increasingly, this passion drives my theological ponderings and institutional critique.

But the pragmatist in me acknowledges that there are and always will be differences that cannot be totally transcended. We must then utilize them to cultivate and sustain religious community. And that means wards will differ in their socio-economic make-up and hence in their sustaining customs and traditions and boundaries. This follows a Catholic model for the international LDS church, and increasingly for the American church, which explicitly recognizes many very different churches under the umbrella of one church. Hence, within stakes we can have an affluent suburban ward, a poor inner-city ward, several different language wards, as well as wards for single adults, for marrieds with children, and for older Saints without children—each with slightly varying norms and boundaries. Within such communities, traditions similar to cowboy poetry can flourish and help create and sustain genuine community. Yet, there exists the danger of creating too strong of boundaries.

The social reformer in me would like to eliminate the maintenance of trivial boundary items—smoking, drinking, swearing, dress—and focus on the important things like Christian service, simple living, forgiving, not judging, being kind—the criteria listed in the Sermon on the Mount and 1 Corinthians 13. But the individualist in me would revolt even more against a community that formally or informally evaluated me on those criteria to the extent that I am placed on the margins or even on the outside based on my behavior. How could they truly judge? And, anyway, wouldn’t it be premature? I’m a work in progress. Hence, while I dream of the day when Mormon communities are known as Christian communities because of their love, we must not make that goal an explicit criteria for membership. If boundary issues are unavoidable, I’d rather be included because I don’t smoke than be excluded because I’m too selfish.

Having said that, observing trivial boundary items is still a complicated dance for me. I’ll conform to them enough to be included, but defy them enough to show that I don’t accept them as all-important and also to expand the boundaries of acceptability to create room for a larger variety of God’s children in the gospel tent.

Trivial boundary issues enable us to live in the world and yet be separate from it. They provide a commonality that allows Saints to confront the world together with our package Mormon values. But ultimately what makes us Mormons cannot be merely abstaining from coffee but also our unique view of God and humankind’s role in life. And as cowboy poems illustrate, stories convey a worldview better than anything else, including cowboy boots and hats and other trivial externalities. The renaissance in the importance of stories, popularized by mythologist Joseph Campbell, has Mormon folklorists, sociologists, anthropologists, and even historians talking about the importance and vitality of storytelling in Mormonism. The telling of Mormon stories, including performed folk poetry, are what will make our separateness healthy, creative, social, and communal, not an overemphasis on exclusive externalities or even rituals, as important as they are.

Nevertheless, to fit in better at the Cowboy Gathering, next year I’m wearing boots and buying a hat!

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**MORMON FOLK POETRY**

The August 1992 Sunstone symposium in Salt Lake City will feature folk poetry celebrating everyday Mormon life—everything from birthing to dying, humor, pathos, spirituality, even the slightly irreverent. We’ll consider an entry as long as it eulogizes, humorizes, or harmonizes things Mormon. Poets must perform their works at the session.

Send submissions to:
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I have my reasons for believing in God. The beauty, goodness, and rationality that I find in life bespeak an intelligent personal source.

Both statements acknowledge that faith rests on hope in the existence of things not seen. Faith is not knowledge. Knowledge is based on experience, on repeatable, verifiable experience either in science or everyday living. In this modern, scientific age we have learned to trust experience and to be skeptical of wishful and speculative thinking whether in philosophy or theology. There are many people who, believing that the whole of religion rests on faith in the unseen world, prefer to live by knowledge, even though admitting that life divided by reason leaves a very large remainder. Faith does not fill the void for them.

All religion does not rest on faith. There are principles taught and exemplified by the Hebrew prophets and Jesus which from experience we can know that they are good and life-fulfilling for the individual, for the community, and for society. I refer to justice and mercy taught by the writing prophets of the Old Testament—Amos, Isaiah, Micah, Hosea, and Jeremiah—and to the love and humility which were all-important to Jesus.

I have observed what the presence and absence of these principles do for individuals and human relationships. I have in my own life tasted of their influence and also know what it means to fail to live by them. I know they are basic principles of good living. I no longer exercise faith in them, for I know their value.

A humanist without a religious faith can keep his or her integrity and cultivate love, but this fact does not discount the role these principles play in religion (where they were born) and without which the Judeo-Christian LDS faith is quite meaningless.

There are, however, some very significant aspects of Christian religion which rest on faith. They are:
1. The existence of a personal God.
2. The divinity and atonement of Jesus Christ, and
3. The immortality and eternal life of human beings.

I have reason to accept these concepts as aspects of reality, but I have not experienced them with the same certainty that I accept humility, integrity, and love. I have not seen Deity nor have they spoken to me.

Some people believe that they know the reality of God’s existence, Christ’s mission, and personal immortality by the witness of the Holy Ghost, but I have to exercise faith that the Holy Ghost is bearing witness to me.

I have my reasons for believing in God. The beauty, goodness, and rationality that I find in life bespeak an intelligent personal source. It is difficult for me to believe that they are the products of impersonal, blind forces. I believe I have felt on occasion inspiration from my Father in Heaven, but I have to exercise some faith in interpreting what I call religious experience.

My faith in God rests in good measure on my understanding of his purpose and attributes. His words to Moses on the purpose of life inspire me: “This is my work and my glory to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man” (Moses 1:39). His attributes are very appropriate to his divine role. “The glory of God is intelligence” (D&C 93:36); he is a
person of justice and mercy and has all the attributes appropriate to his title of Father.

My faith in Christ is based on several things: The testimony of those who claim to have known him—the authors of the gospels, Paul, and Joseph Smith—and the truth and beauty of his life and teachings. Because I have verified the truth and value of Christ's teachings, I feel that I can also trust his insight into the nature of his mission.

My faith in the immortality of individual human beings rests on personal experience with them. I marvel at their intelligence, integrity, and love. They bear witness of the intelligence and goodness operating in the universe. I cannot believe that they are the product of blind, impersonal forces. I believe that the intelligent power that created them has the power to preserve them. I like W. P. Montague’s statement: "Religion is the faith that the things that matter most are not ultimately at the mercy of the things that matter least, such as the impersonal forces of nature that lead to death.

My religious faith in God, Christ, and human immortality is based on both knowledge and faith. In my more skeptical moments I recall the words of Socrates when he was sentenced to die. His friends wanted to save him by aiding his escape. He acknowledged their good intentions, but refused their offer saying, "No harm can come to a good man in death. For death is either the best night’s sleep a person ever had undisturbed by dreams and nightmares, or he goes to a place where justice reigns and where he can converse with great minds who have preceded him." Religion appeals to me because it contains principles fundamental to life. We can know of their truth through experience and direct acquaintance with them. They also give us reason to have faith in God, Christ, and humankind’s immortality. Faith remains a vital part of religion, but it should be supported by knowledge based on experience as well as on hope.

In conclusion, I reiterate that not all of religion rests on faith. Justice and mercy, or integrity and love, can be known and tested through experience. Some basic beliefs in religion can only be established on faith. These include faith in a personal God, the divinity and Atonement of Jesus Christ, and the immortality of human beings.

Faith remains an essential, fundamental part of religion. Faith is greatly strengthened, it seems to me, if it is related to the knowledge aspects of religion: God’s character, purpose, and attributes. Keeping one’s integrity and loving all humans bring one into touch with a new dimension of reality.

---

**PSALM**

**THE POET’S PRAYER***

God of my fathers! Friend of human-kind!
Almighty molder of creative mind,
That sit'st enthroned aloft from mortal ken,
Showering thy mercies on the sons of men!

Thou who, of old, unloosed the prophet's tongue,
While Daniel prophesied, while David sung;
That saiest to all—oh, simple, pleasing task—
"if any lack for wisdom, let him ask."—
If prayer like mine find favor in thy sight,
If I have loved and longed for wisdom's light,
And thou, to whom no creature cries in vain,
Hast deemed my soul deserving care or pain,
To thee, my Father, hands and voice I lift,
And crave of thee, Almighty God, a gift.

Not worldly wealth, though wealth of worlds be thine;
Nor gilded rank, 'mong human worms to shine'
For wealth might fail, and rank might purchased be,
But not the guerdon I would win from thee

Be thou my muse! None other would I know,
Eternal Fount of all inspiring flow,
Whose voice it was bade seer of Patmos "write"
Such things as ne'er could mortal mind indite,
Or, grander than old ocean's glorious swell,
Rolled through Isaiah’s themes on Israel
On whose high altar flames the sacred fire,
Whose vivid rays inventive dreams inspire,
Unhonored oft, yet evermore the same,
Omnific light that lumines earth with fame.

On bended knee before that altar now,
In Jesus’ mighty name I meekly bow;
Great God! give ear; judge thou my heart's intent,
For I am weak, but thou Omnipotent
While o'er my task in feeble frame I bend,
Be thou my guide, my counselor, my friend;
Teach me true gold to separate from dross,
And count for gain what many scorn as loss.

Thou who endowedst me with receptive soul,
O'er all its powers possess me of control,
From off my mind remove each hampering coil,
Or image vain that lingers but to soil.
Let heavenly thought descend as Hermon's dews,
With loftier themes my thinking to infuse.
From off my mind remove each hampering coil,
Or image vain that lingers but to soil.
Let heavenly thought descend as Hermon’s dews,
With loftier themes my thinking to infuse.

Roll on my days responsive to thy rule,
This tongue thine oracle, this pen thy tool;
Designed to soar, or doomed to lowly plod—
Amanuensis of the mind of God

—ORSON F. WHITNEY

*London, January 1882. From Poetical Writings of O.F. Whitney
(Salt Lake City: Juvenile Instructor Office, 1889).
WE'RE COMING. TO OUR PALACE OF GREEN AND gold pool-room-carpet we move, where awaits us our mobile pulpit and fold-up, stained-plastic window and veneer background facade. The carpet contours to our not-so-weighty rubber-and-spoke wheelchairs beneath our slouching, wrinkled figures which are drawn, and often pushed, to the pulpit, in this room of stale cigarette smoke and long-lost urine. Like a convoy, we come; we few who propel ourselves wind the wheels of our final chariots, then pull to the side to rest, while those stronger shuffle toward the pseudo-chapel, and those weaker glide by, the project of a light-footed priest or deacon. At the door our handsome branch presidency and their silver-blue-haired wives stoop and shake our hands; some faces we recognize, some seem only familiar, distant, like a mild, misplaced flavor. We assemble ourselves, maneuver into place, and some of us sleep while others talk—one of us plays with a lifelike rubber baby.

To the side, the priests and deacons settle deeply into miniature sacrament preparations and await, in silent trepidation, the next step of this routine they find uncomfortable. The branch president smiles from the pulpit, touches the microphone, and the speaker inside cracks and hisses. He welcomes us—It's so nice to see all of you again, he tells us. One of us lights our cigarette on the front row, and the first counselor's wife, remembering what she has forgotten, retrieves the stand-up ash tray from across the room and sets it down next to the footrest of our wheel chair. The branch president's wife sits at the portable organ, and plays the opening song, while none of us sing and most of us look at our laps or nap before the sacrament and the sermon.
sacrament and the sermon.

The opening prayer comes first, then the sacrament song, then the blessings. The one with the baby shakes the deacon as he brings us the bread. We want to know, and very loudly, so as to hear oneself, when they are going to bless our baby. We hold our doll above our head and try to stand. The branch president who always waits at the pulpit for this very event, reminds us that our baby was already blessed—he uses the microphone to avoid the tone-of-voice shouting at the near-deaf often brings. Stepping over our leg-rests, the deacons continue. They nudge our shoulders here and there, they take the bread and the water and feed it to some of us, at arm’s length, as though, perhaps, avoiding a contagious malady. Others they can’t stir from our sacrament sleep—the boys look at the branch president who nods them on; they move to the next.

One of us can play the organ—we stand after the branch president announces our name, and the second counselor helps us to our bench. He turns on one light, two lights, points them at our tattered manuscript. We play the melody slowly, our face nearly against the paper, and we stop along the way to rest so as to play the last chord as long as our arthritic hands will allow. Our foot still on a bass pedal, the note trying to &e away, we gather together the music, relinquish the organ, and waddle back to our chair under the arm of our escort.

The branch president announces the speaker, a visitor from the stake presidency. The visitor bellies up to the pulpit—grins broadly. One of us stands up and begins to speak.

“I want to bear my testimony,” we say. The stake visitor looks at the branch president and back to us, says something unheard, and strides back to his seat to await his turn. “Ninety-six good years now and all I want to do is hold out to the end. I just want to hold out for whatever I got left. In the name of Jesus Christ, Amen.” We sit down and the visitor stands up again. He thanks us for our testimony and sends love to us from the stake president. One of us slides down into our chair until our head is nearly to the seat and our bottom is hanging in space. A nurse pulls us back into place and buckles our seat belt. The visitor reminds us about service—tells us that kind words, as we pass in the halls, make us happy. It’s never time to stop serving, he tells us. He sits down.

The branch president tells us he has a surprise for the closing song. His wife goes to the organ and plays through the introduction, and the two counselors come stand beside the branch president, next to the pulpit.

“God be with you till we meet again,” they sing and smile. One of us begins to sing along. “Till we me-ee-et, till we me-ee-et,” more of us sing, “till we meet at Jesus’ feet.” The one of us with the cigarette adds the bass “till we meet.” Our stooping figures bounce slightly as we begin the second verse—most of us are singing now, our thin voices caressing something urgent on the back sides of our hearts, and we only remember the chorus of the second and third verses and must hum or mumble everything else: “till we me-ee-et, till we me-ee-et, till we meet at Jesus’ feet (till we meet!). Till we me-ee-et, till we me-ee-et, God be with you till we meet again!”

A priest says the closing prayer, though most of us don’t realize this, for we are asleep, our chins riding comfortably on our breasts or our cheeks on our shoulders. And when we awaken, we are moving, quietly squeaking, through the long halls of our mutual habitation.

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WRITHA*

Day’s light dies early on deep December nights;  
It is day’s death, and year’s death, too.  
Twilight wanes and wastes to embered waness,  
And sunset’s sighing breath expires.

Shepherd stars emerge from amber stables  
To watch where wandering night might stray;  
They spread their sheen on shadowed land or sea—  
Ice-furred, they fling their light-filled frost.

We gather in the white-soft glow of stars;  
We weave our words—bare crystal wraiths—  
To wreaths of winter carols, low and clear,  
That bind with boughs of mistletoe.

Dark night, deep stars, and descant evergreens  
All merge in Christmas mysteries  
To bring us to that Night, that distant Birth,  
And sing us sweetly to His cradleside.

—MICHAEL R. COLLINGS

* Old English ‘That which is wound around’

DECEMBER 1991
The home and family structure currently preached in the LDS church has a history—it is not a timeless ideal, something innately right that we have strayed from and need to return to.

WOMEN, THE MORMON FAMILY, AND CLASS MOBILITY: NINETEENTH-CENTURY VICTORIAN IDEOLOGY IN A TWENTIETH-CENTURY CHURCH

By Dorice Williams Elliott

RECENTLY A WOMAN IN MY ward needed a ride to the hospital during the afternoon. The bishop asked the Relief Society to find one of the sisters to take her. Since most of the women in my urban ward (like those in more and more wards in the Church today) work outside the home, they had a difficult time finding someone who was available in the middle of the day. Finally one of the few almost-full-time-stay-at-home-homemakers in the ward was found to do the job—my husband. Though most of the women in my ward work outside the home, however, few of them work at power jobs, or even fulfilling ones. They work, as the majority of people in the world do, and have always done, because they need the money to live. Their working is not a matter of principle, or even of choice, for most of these women, working outside the home is a matter that has more to do with class than it does with religious beliefs or feminist consciousness.

The Victorian ideal of the happy, smiling mother-angel in the home is, and was from its inception, a middle-class phenomenon. In England especially, lower-class (working-class, as it’s also called) women have always worked—on farms, in shops and factories, or, most commonly during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, in the homes of more privileged “stay-at-home” women. Working-class women, in fact, were the old-fashioned version of the “modern conveniences” that allowed middle-class women the time to dote on their children and engage in things like church service and volunteer work. But it was primarily among the working classes, rather than their “betters” of the upper and middle classes, where early Mormon missionaries in England found their numerous converts—converts who, like many in my ward, turned to the Church as a beacon of hope to lead them out of the squalor and hopelessness of their lives.

For these people, as for many still today, a woman who could afford to stay at home and create a happy haven from the world for her husband and children was both a major ingredient and an important symbol of the “better life” they sought.

The smiling mother on the cover of the contemporary LDS church’s Family Home Evening Resource Book, who sits with her arms around her children as they listen to the father expound scripture, has among her roots the early nineteenth-century Evangelical movement in England. The Evangelical reformers, led by William Wilberforce and others both within and without the established Church of England, aimed to revitalize religion and rid the world of the vices that
had become commonplace, especially among the aristocracy since the monarchy was restored. Evangelical politicians were responsible for outlawing slavery, passing the first labor laws, and legislating Sabbath observance. They were also involved in the first extensive missionary efforts to the “heathens” abroad, as well as in promoting education for the lower classes at home. Their influence was tremendous in England and in America; many historians point to the Evangelicals as the source of much of what has come to be called “Victorianism.” Though the Evangelicals were heavily involved in parliamentary reform and numerous charitable and civic organizations, the new brand of religion they preached was, as historian Ian Bradley puts it, “above all else the religion of the home.”

The Evangelicals, Bradley claims, “succeeded in establishing the home as the centre of nineteenth-century English life.” Many others besides the Evangelicals were involved in promoting the kind of family patterns we have inherited, but the pattern set by the Evangelicals for family life was in many ways characteristic of middle-class family life in nineteenth-century England and America. It is also similar to the family ideal of the modern LDS church.

The Evangelical most involved in promoting the family ideal of the movement was Hannah More. Perhaps the most famous woman of her time, More wrote thousands of pages aimed at teaching people how to run their lives and their families. Her conduct book, *Structures on the Modern System of Female Education*, and her novel, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, both focus on the special mission of women to manage their homes on the principles of domestic economy and frugality and to exercise their native temperaments as agents of charity. While in More’s ideal family the husband is always the head of the household, providing both income and direction, the role of wife and mother is of equal, if not greater, importance. Women and men, says More, “in many essential points” resemble one another. In drawing a map of one, the geographer must inevitably “introduce some of the neighboring coast.” Although More was far from revolutionary in introducing such ideas, the fact that she goes to great lengths to outline the importance of a woman’s role in the family and to stress a wife’s basic equality with her husband shows that these were by no means obvious or universally accepted truths for her audience. In fact, *Coelebs in Search of a Wife*, the story of an eligible young bachelor’s encounters with numerous young women of various types, reads like an 800-page advertisement aimed at convincing men to desire and select the kind of wife More promoted in her earlier conduct books. The book also, of course, instructs women in how to be this newly desirable “feminine” woman. As feminist scholars Nancy Armstrong and Mary Poovey have so convincingly demonstrated, books like those More wrote actually helped to create and define both a new kind of woman and a new kind of family.

In large part through the influence of hundreds of conduct books and novels like More’s, the late seventeenth-century “Mother of our Miseries” was transformed into the delicate but vital mid-nineteenth-century “hope of the age.” Seventeenth-century writer Joseph Swetnam, for instance, titled his pamphlet on the subject of choosing a wife “The Aragement of Lewde, idle, froward, and unconstant women: Or the vantie of them, choose you whether.” He begins his first chapter with the then-accepted view of woman’s use and origin:

Moses describeth a woman thus: At the first beginning (saith he) a woman was made to be a helper unto man, and so they are indeede, for she helpeth to spend & consume that which man parefully getteth. He also saith that they were made of the ribbe of a man, and that their froward nature sheweth; for a ribbe is a crooked thing good for nothing else, and women are crooked by nature, for small occasion will cause them to be angry.

Again, in a manner she was no sooner made but straight way her minde was set upon mischiefe, for by her aspiring minde and wanton will she quickly procured mans fall, and therefore ever since they are & have been a woe unto man, and follow the line of their first leader.

His tirade continues with a series of animal metaphors that he uses explicitly to describe the faults common to many women, and implicitly to describe the animal nature of all women. Though Swetnam included in his book “a commendation of wise, vertuous, and honest women,” he makes it clear that their only purpose is to be “pleasant to married Men, profitable for young men, and hurtful to none.” Though Swetnam’s pamphlet was controversial and sparked a number of rebuttals from those who held differing opinions on the nature of women, his attitude was characteristic of many, and his pamphlet was often reprinted well into the eighteenth century.

By contrast to Swetnam and other seventeenth-century writers and thinkers, Hannah More’s friend and contemporary, Sarah Trimmer, expounds at great length on “the importance of the Female Sex in society.” As one of Trimmer’s correspondents claims, “All must admit the importance of the Female Character in every rank of life. The principles and conduct of women . . . stand in very close connection with the Well-being of Families, and the good of the Community.” Thus, by the time Trimmer and More wrote, women no longer existed only for the convenience and profit of men, but instead had a vital function to ennoble society. The seventeenth-century “daughter of Eve,” who had to be curbed and watched over lest her native sexuality and disobedient nature should endanger a man’s lineage and destroy his peace, became the “blessed lady” who creates a heaven on earth in the home and is responsible for preserving all that is good within it.

Besides their insistence on a new and more noble kind of woman, the conduct-book and novel writers also described a different style of family life, one in which the home becomes the woman’s sphere to reign in and preside over. While women have almost always had major responsibilities within the home, the emergence of a capitalist economy increasingly separated the home from the workplace. This trend was marked spatially both in the move to the suburbs for those
who could afford it, and by the increasing specialization and separation of rooms within a home: the kitchen was separated from the parlor; the shop was clearly divided from the living quarters; the farm implements, animals, and business were moved to the barn; and outside "offices" were separated from the house. Socially and emotionally, men's and women's spheres became more separate and more defined—and the richer the family was, the more the spheres could be separated. While lower-middle-class wives, daughters, and sisters might still tend the shop, produce the goods for sale, or feed and board the farm laborers and tend the dairy, the goal for most of these people was to achieve a level of income that would free the women of the family from the taint of the workplace and allow them to embellish the home and manage the servants who would do the labor there.

Increasingly separated from the harsh, brutal world—as the workplace came to be represented—the home became a "refuge" and a "haven" presided over by angelic but efficient women. It was to be a place of safety, of comfort, and of beauty. Children, another category undergoing redefinition, were increasingly the focus of their mother's attention. For instance, unlike earlier women of position, middle-class women rarely employed wet-nurses, while toys and children's literature became an industry. Loving family portraits, or pictures of mother and child, became popular. And the household, now defined as a separate, privatized space associated with and largely presided over by women, was depicted by the novels and conduct books as the context for normal behavior. This, says Armstrong, was a "telling cultural move."

The middle classes, which had little power politically in the eighteenth century, initially defined themselves against the dissipated aristocracy and established their own cultural supremacy through the power of a moral stance centered on this kind of home. Later, say historians Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, the middle class maintained its position by defining itself against the lower or working classes, again on the ground of a moral superiority based on the home—the separate, privatized, and feminized sphere on which, said middle-class writers, the security of the nation rested. The power to regulate human behavior, then, shifted from the political, legal, and military world peopled exclusively by aristocratic men to the feminized middle-class world of the home. Thus, aristocratic women of the eighteenth century were represented as spending all their time at watering places, balls, and pleasure gardens, neglecting their homes and leaving their children to be raised by superstitious servants, while aristocratic men frequented coffee houses, gaming clubs, and political societies. The new middle-class ideology, which More and the Evangelicals helped to create, urged both men and women to come home to their families and hearth sides where happiness, health, and security lay.

While More and her contemporaries, both Evangelicals and other authors of conduct books and novels, urged the upper and middle classes to follow this new pattern for domestic life, they were also busy promulgating the same values to those beneath them—the working classes. Both More and Trimmer, for instance, were renowned educators of the lower classes. More initiated and administered two extensive Sunday school systems that attempted to teach the poor to read and to keep them from mischief on their one day off. She also wrote an extremely popular series of pamphlets for the lower classes entitled The Cheap Repository Tracts. In these tracts, More instructed the poor through engaging stories and poetry on how to do their duty, live religiously, and manage their homes economically. Interestingly, More's tracts show the poor behaving with the same values and running their homes on the same plan, though on a reduced scale, as "their betters." In other words, the poor were to reproduce the same lifestyle as the middle class, but on a smaller scale. Accordingly, More portrays poor but thrifty housewives who manage their slim resources so effectively that their homes, too, are scrupulously clean little havens from the harsh world outside—and their husbands are so attracted to these scaled-down versions of middle-class life that they return home from the pubs and cockfights and spend their leisure hours learning to read the
extremely simple and limited....and plain practical Christians....Her aim was "to train up good members of society to study the Bible and to employ their leisure time more productively. Her aim was "to train up good members of society and plain practical Christians.... My plan of instruction is extremely simple and limited.... My object is not to make fanatics, but to train up the lower classes in habits of industry and piety." Thus, educating the lower classes in the writers' own images was seen by middle-class educators like More as the key to ensuring national security and a stable, sober work force, as well as a means to save the souls and increase the happiness (i.e., contentment) of the working classes.

Laborers who learned to read and cipher, however, might also be in a position to raise themselves economically and socially. This was a point of some anxiety for many educators, including More, who "allowed of no writing for the poor" in her schools. Knowing how to write might indeed make servants smarter than their masters, as one farmer feared. In other words, workers who could read and write might be able to get better jobs than brute labor. Or, even more dangerous, they might read seditious literature, such as Tom Paine's *The Rights of Man*, which could lead to uprisings or labor organizations. This, in fact, is exactly what happened among large sections of the working classes who learned to read in Sunday schools like More's. Promulgating middle-class values and lifestyles among the working classes was a two-edged sword: on the one hand, it could work for stability and security by making the poor more content in their lives; on the other, it could also make the poor less satisfied with their lot and lead to dangerous desires, desires not only to emulate but also to share the wealth and lifestyles of the middle classes.

Further, the middle-class religious ideology that the Sunday and charity school students imbibed focused on the value of the individual and taught both men and women to form their self-identity on the basis of qualities of heart and mind rather than on birth and status. While such values worked to distinguish and valorize the middle classes in their struggle with the old aristocracy, when applied to the lower classes they created a paradox. The soul of even the most lowly was precious in the sight of God, and all should strive to attain the qualities of sobermindedness, thrift, common sense, and sensibility; on the other hand, if all were equally precious and all had the same valued qualities, what was to distinguish the middle classes from those beneath them? Thus the education offered to the poor by More and fellow educators was potentially subversive of the very stability it was supposed to shore up.

**MORMONISM AND ITS DOMESTIC THEOLOGY**

NOW that I have made this long digression into early nineteenth-century social history, I will make some connections between the emerging domestic ideology I have been describing and modern Mormonism. The immediate connection came for me while I was studying Hannah More's career. More's schools caused some controversy among the local farmers and clergy in the depressed areas in which she was working. In two of the villages a bitter conflict arose, resulting in a fierce war in the press between supporters and opponents of More's schools. The name of one of these villages was familiar to me; it was the home of my own ancestors. As I read about the incidents centering in that little town, which I visited a few years ago to trace my own roots, I realized that it is extremely likely that my ancestors, who themselves were poor laborers, attended and learned to read in More's schools—a skill that, in their case, most likely enabled them to read the Book of Mormon (which would have been most horrifying to More) before they joined the Latter-day Saints and emigrated to Utah. And my ancestors, along with thousands of other working-class converts to Mormonism, got what education they had from Sunday schools and charity schools in the early nineteenth century, schools that taught them to read the Bible while they imbibed middle-class values—and desires.

In fact, the family history of another of my working-class ancestors describes how the mother read Harriet Beecher Stowe's *Uncle Tom's Cabin* aloud to the assembled family. Though renowned for its focus on the slavery issue, I know of no book that more powerfully promotes domestic middle-class values, including the centrality of the home (versus the political sphere) and the power of the angelic mother/wife to reform society through the home—and to contribute to the social and economic mobility of the family as well.

Another example of the kind of literature my working-class ancestors were exposed to is Hannah More's *Cheap Repository Tracts*. The tracts were sold at a remarkably cheap price so they could be purchased and read by even the poorest readers, and they sold more than two million copies (a publishing phenomenon). Through reading the various stories, poems, and sermons, my working-class ancestors would have learned to desire a neat, clean, nicely decorated home with a smiling, frugal, sweet wife; a brood of cheerful, loving, helpful, well-dressed, and educated children; and a father who left the home to provide financial support, but returned at night to give spiritual guidance. Through working in the homes of their "superiors," they would also have learned to desire an array of material goods to support and enrich this spiritual lifestyle.

During the first half of the nineteenth century, a time of economic stress and societal upheaval, this dream was simply unavailable to most of the working classes. Hannah More's recipes and household hints notwithstanding. Women and children worked long hours beside men in factories, farming, cottage industries, or the homes of the well-to-do—or they worked as prostitutes. Their wages were low, their jobs uncertain, their food often substandard, their living conditions unsanitary. Many turned to alcohol or, even cheaper, opium. Thomas DeQuincey's autobiography describes the druggists laying counters full of opium pills for the Saturday night rush when the factory workers got off. Some, as educational critics feared, did form workers' organizations where they organized riots and, eventually, strikes. And some embraced religion. Although it carried a certain social stigma and even likely economic distress, thousands, as we know, were drawn to...
Mormonism, a new and exciting religion that promised not only spiritual power and independence and a strong sense of community among believers, but also gave people a reason to hope—and a reason to leave their lives of drudgery and emigrate to America to build a new life, where they could own property and earn enough money to live in middle-class nuclear families.

I am not going to trace in detail what happened to these converts and their domestic dreams as they emigrated to the American frontier. Certainly the kind of domestic unit envisioned by More and the conduct-book writers was not the model for first-generation American frontier homes, nor was it compatible with plural marriage, an issue that feminists Joan Iversen and Julie Dunfey have addressed—though, as they outline, there is good evidence that the ideal domestic unit was still a cherished goal for many women who lived under far different circumstances.

Nor am I going to address in detail what factors caused some to turn to religion, specifically Mormonism, instead of opium, alcohol, debauchery, or social activism. Perhaps those who did embrace Mormonism were those who most successfully internalized the middle-class values taught in charity schools and reading matter for the poor. Perhaps the Church’s lay ministry, in which personal and spiritual qualities rather than birth or education qualified one to serve, appealed to them. Perhaps the Mormon afterlife, based as it is on a three-class system, promised status after death that seemed unavailable in earthly society.

John F. C. Harrison gives evidence that many were already religious seekers, having joined several churches before they encountered Mormonism. Whatever spoke to the thousands of individuals who joined the Mormon church, history bears out the fact that for most of them, joining eventually brought increased economic and social status along with its spiritual rewards.

At any rate, by the time the Church reached the middle of the twentieth century, when these emigrant families were in their second or third generations, the Victorian family, marked by the “angel-in-the-house” role for women, was firmly established both in American and Mormon cultures. Most of the descendants of those emigrant converts, converts who learned to read and to desire such a life from schools and books like those of Hannah More, had risen to middle-class status and could afford the labor-saving conveniences that replaced working-class servants and allowed the women of the family to keep out of the workplace and stay at home.

I have sketched, in very broad strokes, just one of the strands in the history of the Mormon ideal of family and motherhood. The point that I would like to make with this short bit of history is that the home and family structure currently preached in the LDS church has a history—it is not a timeless ideal, something innately right that we have strayed from and need to return to. This particular family ideal happened to grow up during the same period that the LDS church did. Though I focused on England, a similar ideal was developing in America. More’s books, for example, sold more copies here than in England. The first mothers’ clubs and mothers’ magazines in America, whose purpose was to support and educate mothers and convince them of the importance of their role, began in upstate New York, not far from Palmyra. Thus many of our leaders and members, both male and female, advocate the kind of homes for which their nineteenth-century ancestors sought and sacrificed because such homes symbolized social mobility and increased status as well as convenience. They preach this kind of home, however, as if it were as timeless as the message of salvation they link it to.

In the May 1990 general conference, for instance, Elder Rex E. Pinegar’s talk explained that “Our Heavenly Father has organized us into families for the purpose of helping us successfully meet the trials and challenges of life. The home also exists to bless us with the joys and privileges of family associations.” While this statement may seem self-evident to
most American Mormons today, the concept would have been foreign to some of our ancestors. Even in the late eighteenth century, "family" could as easily refer to servants, laborers, and other employees as to a group of people related to each other. On the contrary, in Ann Radcliffe's *Mysteries of Udolpho*, an extremely popular novel in the last decade of the eighteenth century, the master of a small estate calls "the family" together for "family prayer." The only person not required to attend this ritual is the only person in the household actually related to him—his daughter.25 In fact, in the early eighteenth century, no word existed that meant "only kin" within a household.26 "Family associations" would have included not only nuclear and extended family members, but also servants, visitors, lodgers, pupils, and anyone else living or working in the household.

Elder Pinegar goes on to describe the home, in language that could have been penned by Hannah More or Sarah Trimmer, as "our safety place, our support network, our sanctuary, our salvation."27 The fact that he does not say, for instance, "the seat of our business," "the scene of our labors," or "the house from which we rule our neighbors and tenants," indicates that he is speaking from a nineteenth-century ideology of the home rather than from that of a previous era. Though Elder Pinegar, quoting President Joseph F. Smith, claims that the home's foundation "is as ancient as the world, and its mission has been ordained of God from the earliest times," neither he nor President Smith seemed to recognize that the kind of family and the type of mission have changed throughout history—even recent Mormon history—and have been defined differently by different classes and cultures living at the same time. Pinegar's statement that "there can be no genuine happiness separate and apart from the home" may be true for our age and culture, but it certainly does not seem to reflect the portrayal of the human condition in, for instance, the Bible, where the home—and the women associated with it—seems as often to be a hindrance as a help to men's happiness.

Similarly, Elder Russell M. Nelson's October 1989 general conference talk specifically echoes Victorian ideals for women in promoting ideal Mormon family life. Says Elder Nelson, a "faithful woman" is "more concerned with being righteous than selfish, more anxious to exercise compassion than to exercise dominion, more committed to integrity than to notoriety."28 While such values are undoubtedly Christian, his selection of these particular qualities precisely follows the Victorian ideal of womanhood—a woman is compassionate, unselfish, true, and she avoids notoriety or dominion at all costs, because those are qualities of the public rather than the private sphere, the male rather than the female. She may not have, as Elder Nelson claims, "exclusive dominion over the heart," any more than a man has a "monopoly on the mind," but the tendencies in either direction are certainly made clear. Again, in words which More or Trimmer could easily have written, Elder Nelson describes the place of the woman and the home that are her sphere:

When her husband, children, grandchildren, nieces, or nephews return from a day marred by the world's rude realities, a loving woman can say, "Come unto me. I will give you rest." Wherever she is can become a sanctified place, safe from the storms of life.29

Elders Nelson and Pinegar, and countless others, preach from their own experiences on the east side of Salt Lake City and similar places where their mothers, wives, and daughters didn't and don't work outside the home for pay. Here the women have every convenience, including, in many cases, household help, while the men do "go out" into a workplace that is often harsh and even brutal, where profit rules and power is often ruthless. For many in contemporary American society, home is something of a refuge from this world, but for many others, home is at least as harsh as the workplace. I do not mean to criticize the middle-class "refuge" lifestyle—it provides happiness and meaning for many. But I do object to prescribing this life as the gospel ideal for all—all families, all women, all classes, and all cultures in all times. All situations are not, as I have shown, like the middle-class family popularized in nineteenth-century Britain. Nor are they like post-World War II America, when the Victorian family took on a renewed vitality and when, again, having a wife at home was a measure of a man's success in the world, economically and socially. I am not trying to eradicate the Victorian family, as long as the individuals involved have the economic resources and the cultural values to support it. But in this last decade of the twentieth century, we find ourselves again—like those in the last decade of the eighteenth century—in a time of cultural and economic transition that is redefining the family, and the role of women within it, in significant ways.

Thus I am concerned about Church leaders preaching sacrifice, home production, going without even what most today would call necessities in order to keep women, especially married women, out of the workplace and at home at all costs. Many women, of course, have done this in the past. I, too, am moved by stories of poor and/or widowed mothers who raised large families with little money and many sacrifices, imparting values to their children that enabled them to escape such hard lives in the next generation. But those women lived in different times. Today we push women, Church women, in many subtle and overt ways, toward education, accomplishment, excellence in a "worldly" sense, and then, once they have said a simple "yes" at the marriage altar, ask them to step back into another age. Such advice looks backward rather than forward, and does little to help women or families adjust to the complex conditions of today's world.

The message of the gospel is salvation through Christ, but from the earliest days of our church, part of its promise, in practical terms, has been social mobility, marked as much as anything by a wife who doesn't work outside the home but instead stays home to create a separate place, a haven from the world. In the United States, we are by and large a church of people who realized this goal within one or two generations, and we are now left with an uneasy mix of past and present values and attitudes toward home, women, work, and financial security. Our ancestors did not idealize their lives of
poverty and privation—as we sometimes do in retrospect. They wanted up and out; that's why they came to America. We can learn from and should value their efforts and their sacrifices, but we don't need to romanticize them—and we should not confuse cultural values and attitudes with beliefs we hold to be timeless.

Certainly, we should work to preserve what's good about the “family”—that is, the historical notion of family we have inherited—but trying to return to a past model is not the solution to the pressing problems of our time. Accepting and promoting the Victorian family uncritically may in many cases work to increase problems and decrease the happiness we claim to seek. Perhaps we would be better off teaching our members to use their relationship with God as their haven from the world—a haven which they, male and female, can take with them anywhere—rather than relying on a mother and a physical home to provide such security. Perhaps we could actually promote a new family model in which nurturing, loving unconditionally, and feeling compassion are not associated just with mothers or women, in which the home is indeed based on love and security—among whatever particular configuration of people happen to live there. We do sometimes preach this, but we still hold up the Victorian nuclear family as the best possible version of it. Could this be, at least in part, because of its residual class associations?

FINALLY, I return to my ward. Living in my urban ward is in some ways like living in the early Church. Missionaries in my ward are baptizing more people than in any other in the mission—most of the new converts come from lower classes, many black or Hispanic, and most live in the central city. In my ward, there is some of the same fervor and the same hope and energy those early Church members fresh from the textile factories and coal mines of England must have felt when they arrived in Nauvoo or Salt Lake City or Ririe, Idaho. They seem to feel both the promise of spiritual regeneration and of social and economic growth. But our ward is also a difficult one to staff and maintain. A lay clergy, as our largely middle-class ward and stake leaders have learned through experience, depends on certain middle-class values—dependability, promptness, persistence, and self-reliance—and on middle-class education, which teaches how to read, to speak articulately, to teach, to manage. It also depends, as leaders are realizing throughout the Church, on having women who are not employed outside the home who have the time to perform many of the functions of the Church's programs.

Another difficulty our ward and others like it face is that once disadvantaged urban members gain experience in the Church and, sometimes with help from excellent Church programs and leaders, make gains vocationally and economically as well, they usually move to the suburbs—to live the life they see pictured in the Ensign and the Church's Reader's Digest inserts. Those who don't move are usually those who don't and can't fit that image—many are seriously undereducated, troubled with crippling problems, victims of racial prejudice, or simply single. A few are families who have tried to follow the Church's counsel to live the middle-class ideal before they have joined the middle class economically—families with many children living in small quarters on one inadequate income with a tired but valiant woman at home, still hoping that at least her children will not have to live as she has done. While I respect the woman who lives like this, revering her personal dedication and willingness to obey what she fervently believes, I am still troubled at the mixed messages of a church that sometimes seems to confuse socio-economic symbols with spiritual rewards, and tends to generalize the experience of American pioneers to other cultures, both outside and inside present-day America, where hard work and sacrifice don't always bring economic advancement, and where spiritual salvation may not involve a middle-class nuclear family at all.
On the other hand, I am also troubled about what to do with those who, unlike my ancestors, don't seem to desire the middle-class life the Church seems to promise—those who don't really want to work up to the middle class, even if it were within reach, because they don't share the values of the white American middle-class, including its ideals about family life. Can such people be assimilated into a church that takes American middle class values for granted, or are they necessarily excluded from salvation? I am also troubled by the many who come to the Church with hope, and then drift away because of the hope—spiritual sometimes, but almost always linked to the temporal—dies. Many expect prosperity, expect their problems to be solved, or expect the spiritual high they first experience to continue to serve as an opiate to assuage the pain in their lives. When the Church fails to fulfill these expectations, they leave.

Ironically enough, the ward I live in now is the most spiritually alive and growing ward I've ever lived in. There is a feeling of community in the gospel; calling each other "brother" and "sister" does not feel like just another form of polite address. Yet there are few "traditional" families in our ward—families with two parents who are still married, are both active members, and have children at home. Even among these, most of the mothers work outside the home. In my ward, at any rate, spirituality and sainthood are not tied to "Mormon" family life, however much such a family may symbolize success. Certainly we should be working within the Church to help our members improve their lives temporally as well as spiritually, for ultimately the two are not separable. And certainly we should encourage strong and happy families. But we should also be careful not to confuse the spiritual hope the gospel offers with the socio-economic promise that many want to tie to it as well. And we should be careful not to impose a particular historical model of successful family life onto our theology. Women in the work force, even married women with children, are not a sign of a falling away from God; they are merely a deviation from the ideal of a previous age. The spirit of God may burn ever brighter even where women work and families don't sit around and wait to be "so glad when Daddy comes home." My ward is a living example that while nuclear families may not necessarily be forever, the spirit of love between brothers and sisters in the gospel can and ought to be.

NOTES

1 Despite the current debate about the issue of class, this essay is based on the notion of a three-class system in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century England. I am not, however, using the term in a Marxist sense as much as I am using the terms actually employed by writers of the period, who wrote of "the middling classes," "the upper classes," and "the lower orders." For more about these writers, see Thomas Laqueur, Religion and Respectability: Sunday Schools and Working Class Culture 1780-1850 (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1976) and Jeremy Black, The Mysteries of Udolpho (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1985). 8


4 More, Vol II, 3

5 Familiar Home Evening Resource Book (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, 1983).


13 Armstrong, 24.

14 Davidoff and Hall, 30.


22 See Davidoff and Hall, 31.


25 In the Works of Hannah More (London: Cadell and Davies, 1801), x-xi.

26 Judith Nisbet, 14-15.

27 See Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall, Family Fortunes: Men and Women of the English Middle Class 1780-1850 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987) for a thorough treatment of this phenomenon.


31 I am indebted to my friend Kim Rogers for this astute suggestion.


39 Nelson, 22.

PSALM FOR WOMAN

Blessed the woman who counsels with herself, who finds shining in the pots and pans her face, and there among the laundry sorts the chaff away, who in her pockets finds the power of change who washes soon her windows for the light, who listens with long ears and sees with many eyes, who dances to the songs of herbs who walks across the fields in holiness whose table is an altar for a sacrament of roses set with a place for He who knows her best.

—Carol Clark Ottesen
TOWARD “PSYCHOLOGICALLY INFORMED” MORMON HISTORY AND BIOGRAPHY

By Gary James Bergera

As self-reflective men and women, all of us encounter moments in our lives when the burden of humanity weighs heavily upon us, when we must confront as best we can the dilemmas of our being. As students of Mormon history, we must sometimes face these bewildering complexities in others. The responsibility we share in struggling to understand our past means that we cannot ignore the possible insights of modern psychology. For both history and psychology contend that the past influences the present; both engage in historical reconstruction; and both advocate plural approaches and methods in explaining human behavior. If viewed as primarily heuristic rather than scientific, at least from the perspective of the historian, psychology can help us refine our knowledge of the past, thereby greatly improving the entire historical and biographical enterprise.

The use of formal psychology in history, including Freudian psychoanalytical theory and subsequent related schools of thought, has been popularly termed “psychohistory.” Yet it would be a mistake to think of psychohistory as a new field or as a rigid science with its own methods. Rather, the psychohistorian—“a student of history with a sharpened sensibility”—produces what American and Mormon historian Richard L. Bushman prefers to call “psychologically informed” history. Psychohistory draws upon general and specific theories of human personality which lead to a “meaningful complexity” that helps to integrate the various aspects of any biographical problem: unconscious impulses and processes, the conscious self, and one’s setting. Psychohistory can help us better understand the “meaning” of a particular event, even if it cannot provide a simple explanation of it. Nor does any one psychological theory have a monopoly on empirical support or offer a completely adequate and satisfying unified theory of human behavior.

Not surprisingly, most psychohistory is actually psychobiography, since psychohistorical analysis is best suited to men and women about whom psychological explanations can be developed and tested. What is especially distinctive about psychohistory is that the historian or biographer usually attempts to understand and explain the entire life, or notable periods of it, of his or her subject in “terms of a consciously thought-out psychological interpretation (or interpretations) of that subject’s personality.” Simply put, psychohistory represents the application—explicit or implicit—of psychology, usually theories of human personality, in trying to understand the behavior of individuals and groups in the past.

Serious interest in psychological approaches to history began in 1896 when British writer Havelock Ellis described biography as “applied psychology.” Interestingly, both in regards to Mormon historiography as well as to American psychohistory in general, one of the earliest American psychohistories was I. Woodbridge Riley’s 1902 biography of Joseph Smith, The Founder of Mormonism: A Psychological Study of Joseph Smith, Jr. (New York: Dodd, Mead). Although flawed by today’s standards because of its heavy dependence on the “scientific” psychology of the turn of the century, Riley’s psychobiography nonetheless raised important questions about Joseph Smith’s childhood, his relationship to his parents, his adolescence, and his responses to his environment.

Other “psychological biographies” followed Riley’s study and especially Sigmund Freud’s 1909 visit to the United States.

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and the American publication of his seminal *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* in 1920. These included Freud’s own pathbreaking but flawed analysis of Leonardo di Vinci’s childhood, Katherine Anthony’s “psychological biography” of Margaret Fuller, Preserved Smith’s “psychoanalytical” study of Martin Luther, Ralph V. Harlow’s biography of Samuel Adams, Joseph Wood Krutch and Marie Bonaparte (separately) on Edgar Allen Poe, Gerald W. Johnson on John Randolph, Leon Pierce Clark’s “psychobiography” of Abraham Lincoln, and Lewis Mumford on Herman Melville. Yet despite some useful insights, most scholars today agree that these psychoanalytical studies—filled with jargon and highly judgmental—“deserved the cool reception they met.”

Learning from the excesses of their predecessors, more recent psychohistorians have succeeded in producing some fine biographical writing—psychohistorical or otherwise. Representative examples are Leon Edel’s monumental five-volume biography of Henry James, Alexander and Juliette George’s perceptive analysis of Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, R. C. Tucker on Stalin, psychiatrist John E. Mack’s study of T. E. Lawrence, appropriately titled *A Prince of Our Disorder*, W. Jackson Bate’s masterful biography of Samuel Johnson, R. G. L. Waite’s analysis of Adolf Hitler as a “psychopathic God,” and M. Solomon on Ludwig Beethoven.

AS an interpretive tool, the use of psychology in history has proven problematic, its value condemned and praised. Applying psychology to the past can mean tackling irrational and unchanging features of human nature, whereas most readers would no doubt rather encounter a “record of reason and optimism fulfilled, evidence of progress, a chronicle of challenges successfully met.” Specifically, psychological theories—especially Freudian psychoanalysis—have been criticized for being too flexible and easily misapplied, based on unreliable data, too narrowly focussed on the neurotic and psychotic, excessively reductionistic, or judgmental. In inexperienced hands, psychological approaches to history can produce one-dimensional, simplistic, even cruel portraits; circular analyses, postulating childhood events from adult actions; jargon-laden studies, “as if the use of a private and developed professional language could endow [historians] with a professional identity”; or “a clinical exposition instead of a true biography.”

Since the 1950s, a consensus has emerged that the Freudian emphasis on the unavoidable effects of childhood experience on adult behavior no longer has, if it ever did, the status of a “fact.” Thus historians and biographers would do well to evaluate carefully their analyses before assigning theories of psycho-sexual development a significant causative role.

Indeed, for many psychohistorians, psychobiographical reconstruction—that is, the assumption that a specific adult behavior requires a specific childhood trauma, even where historical evidence is lacking—is usually unjustified. In fact, one thoughtful psychohistorian recommends, “the case for banning [it] altogether in psychobiography is a fairly strong one.” Finally, the historian or biographer using psychology must keep in mind that their own psychological reactions can distort their materials so that their discussion may actually reveal more about themselves than about their subjects.

Most of the criticisms leveled at psychology in history result from misunderstanding. Psychologists (including psychiatrists) are usually untrained in history and more liable to pay insufficient attention to primary source material, to historical and cultural differences, and to misinterpret social-historical context. At the same time, historians typically have a limited knowledge of psychological theory, lack firsthand clinical experience, and tend to rely on popular approaches to psychological theory which may or may not be supported by research. Clearly, however, the remedy is not to ignore the possible advantages of psychology, but to have individuals get training in both historiography and psychology or to develop working relationships between historians and psychologists.

The case for the responsible use of psychology in history, especially biography, is a strong one. While the above and other criticisms suggest that some kinds of questions probably cannot be answered about some individuals, they in no way preclude the developing of psychological interpretations for which there is adequate evidence. The psychohistorian in particular has at his or her disposal a “broad spectrum of behavior through more decades of life than has the analyst with a living patient” and may be more sensitive to particular dimensions of the life of his or her subject than the historian.

Psychology can be used in many ways other than to infer causal relationships between childhood experience and adult behavior. In fact, its greatest contributions to history and biography may lie in interpreting evidence without always attempting to relate adult behavior to childhood acts, as well as in its attention to conflict, multiple significance, and phenomena of ambivalence, identification, repression, and projection. Psychology has “thrust fingers of light into the cave of the human mind”; “deepened our sense of the complexities, the arcane tides, of personality”; and “enabled us to penetrate some of the dark corners of motive and desire, to detect patterns of action, and sense the symbolic value of word and gesture.”
Good psychohistory and psychobiography demonstrate a concern for richness and complexity; for intention versus the unintentional; for unconscious drives; and for the roots of creativity, including religious experience. Such historians are sensitive to anguish and its resolution. They explore ambition, competition, technology, achievement, and rootlessness. They also argue the "seemingly unobjectionable point, which some students of history do not accept, that the historian as scientist cannot solve every problem by attending to the most readily accessible reasons, the most 'rational' causes, alone."

Good psychohistory does not attempt to "prove" universal laws of human behavior. Rather, it suggests that "common psychological impulses and mechanisms invite attention to altogether new problems, to the multiple levels of perceived reality, and to the psychological strategies of contended and discontented alike." At the same time, when faced with a puzzling historical phenomenon, the conscientious psychohistorian does not attempt to suggest that all possible psychological explanations may be "true" but evaluates and compares alternative explanations in terms of their plausibility.

Psychology can allow the biographer to see behaviors he or she might not otherwise notice: alterations between active and passive states; how their subjects relate to others; if their behavior indicates that they retain fantasies of omnipotence; whether they are burdened with guilt; and how these enable us to understand people more clearly. Psychohistorians can increase our understanding of the private world of their subjects; they can uncover hidden patterns between their subjects' childhood, adolescence, and later feelings, without necessarily postulating causal connections; they can help us share their subjects' feelings and beliefs and perceive how their subjects' subjective worlds become externalized.

If we can agree that within us are urges we are not always aware of and that we "defend" ourselves in ways we are not always aware of, then the criticisms of psychology in history and biography are largely mitigated. For even if the unconscious cannot be examined "scientifically," few of us would deny that something like it acts within us. Increasingly, in fact, it has become difficult to justify written history and biography that does not consider psychology in a subject's life. Among historians, an interest in psychological theory has already generated studies of sexuality; of religion; of women in society; of marriage and divorce; of conflict between the generations; of discontent among the young; and of aging and dying.

More than ever, the historian who today "disdains formal psychology does so at his [or her] peril." At the same time, the psychologist writing history "simply must learn about the cultural and historical context of his or her subject" so as not to overemphasize the pathological or possible influence of childhood trauma. These shortcomings can best be avoided by integrating psychological approaches with social and historical considerations, by analyzing not just pathology but strengths and adaptive capacities, and by studying the effects on a person of the entire life cycle, not just childhood. In spite of the errors that have occasionally arisen from the dogmatic use of theories of personality, their many positive contributions indicate that they are of fundamental importance in psychobiography and psychohistory. The challenge is to use them judiciously, to avoid aspects which evidence suggests are incorrect, and to consider their implications carefully while evaluating the available biographical and historical evidence.

For instance, early childhood experience, such as breast feeding or toilet training, rarely directly affects adult personality. Rather, early experience shapes early personality, which influences the later environments, which influence later experience, which affects personality, and so on. A particular event or experience can have a variety of possible effects, depending on one's personality, environment, and the structure of subsequent environments and experiences. Furthermore, life is such that there are usually a variety of paths leading to a particular outcome.

Where evidence on early experience is available, the effects of such experiences should probably not be applied directly to adult personality, but rather "traced through a sequence of intervening stages and processes." And in the absence of such evidence one should especially avoid some early developmental explanations, since accurate reconstruction, even with the best of psychological theories, is very difficult. While some theories should probably be revised, if not abandoned, other concepts, such as unconscious motives and conflicts, identification, and defense mechanisms, may prove useful for careful biographers and historians who "probe in sympathy," defining "the myths that order [their] subjects' experience and that offer the keys to [their] natures."
No Man Knows My History, Howard Booth’s “personality study” of Joseph Smith, Robert Flanders’s insightful treatment of Joseph Smith in “Dream and Nightmare,” T. L. Brink’s article on “Joseph Smith: The Verdict of Depth Psychology,” Eugene and Bruce Campbell’s use of *anomie* in their discussion of “Divorce Among Mormon Polygamists,” Leonard Arrington’s suggestion that “projection” may help explain Brigham Young’s violent rhetoric, James Allen’s application of cognitive dissonance theory to the failed millennialist expectations of the 1860s, and my own speculative essay on Joseph Smith and the hazards of charismatic leadership.33

Most recently, C. Jess Groesbeck’s psychoanalytic analyses of Joseph Smith’s youth and the Smith family’s dreams and visions represent the most explicit and sophisticated use of psychological theory to have been attempted thus far in Mormon historiography.34

Of the above, Fawn Brodie’s 1945 biography deserves special comment. Building on earlier works, Brodie’s important biography wove together various approaches, including psychology. But because of its naturalistic assumptions, Brodie’s book has been criticized in part for being “explicitly psychoanalytical.”35 Yet Brodie’s use of psychology was implicit and indirect. She was sensitive to the subtleties of human personality development and raised issues of particular relevance to psychology—conflict, family relationships, and fantasy/reality testing, for example—without postulating necessary causal connections between childhood and adulthood. She did not rely on an explicit theoretical framework, such as psychoanalysis, and avoided psychological jargon. In fact, not until the second edition of *No Man Knows My History* appeared in 1971 did Brodie attempt an admittedly simplistic psychological discussion of Joseph Smith, and then only in three pages of her concluding “Supplement.”36

The future of psychologically informed Mormon history and biography appears promising, especially as the value of psychological insight becomes increasingly apparent to careful researchers. “The twentieth century speaks of defense mechanisms, inferiority complexes, repressions, rationalizations, and subliminations,” Mormon historian and biographer Ronald Walker has noted, “and these insights have an important and unfulfilled role in Mormon biography.”37 “Without going overboard with [psychological] terminology,” Walker’s colleague Davis Bitton continued, one should be able to introduce comparisons and insights from psychological literature that would illuminate such experiences in the life experience of individual Mormons as friction within families, mid-life crises, and tensions between the expectations created by Mormon conditioning and the often divergent realities of life, as well as the Mormon missionary experience, the process of religious conversion and the “fluctuating nature of faith,” and human weakness generally, a frank acknowledgment of which “will usually turn out to be both more interesting and ultimately more respectful toward the subject than a cover-up job.”38

Psychological theories could be profitably applied to the following areas of Mormon history and biography, at least: Joseph Smith’s relationship with his parents, especially his mother, and his siblings; the consequences of the religious differences between Joseph Smith Sr. and Lucy Smith on themselves and their children; the trauma of Joseph Smith’s leg operation; Joseph Smith’s adolescence and the so-called “identity crisis”; Joseph Smith’s early religious experiences; Joseph Smith as a charismatic leader; Joseph Smith’s practice and denial of polygamy, as well as nineteenth-century Mormon defenses of polygamy, and the phenomena of projection and conversion reaction; Heber J. Grant's response to the Word of Wisdom and conversion reaction; Heber J. Grant’s insomnia; the physical problems of George Albert Smith and their possible psychological consequences; Heber C. Kimball’s apparent insecurity during his declining years; the sibling relationship between Parley P. and Orson Pratt; parent-child relationships in nineteenth-century polygamous (i.e., single-parent) households; and father-son relationships among the Church hierarchy, especially the George Q. Cannon and Joseph F. Smith families.

One of the most intriguing recent discoveries using psychological theory is Groesbeck’s finding of an apparently genetic predisposition toward depression among progenitors and descendants of Joseph Smith and collateral family lines.39

For the present, and future, what is most needed in Mormon psychohistory is a competent grasp of historical facts, a broad understanding of historical movements, and a careful, thorough study of the spectrum of psychological and personality theories that does not rely on jargon or “popularized” approaches, coupled with compassion, caution, patience, and an ability to live, however uncomfortably, with ambiguity. Grasping a life “inwardly requires mastery of its full documentary remains” and “conversance with the whole run of personalities, institutions, and events, and the whole congeries of ideas, usages, and values, involved. To top that off, it takes an intellectual and emotional stunt both strenuous and delicate.”40

Perhaps the psychologically informed study of lives is “hopelessly complex.” True, the research called for is often difficult to come by, and *absolute* certainty in the study of
human lives is elusive. But assumptions about the causes of behavior and the long-range effects of different actions upon this behavior are inextricably a part of our personal, intellectual, and professional lives, and our society. We can only ignore the use of psychology at the cost of incomplete, inadequate, and unsatisfying analyses. Creating “a convincing blend of traditional narrative and interpretation of psychological clues will not be easy,” Davis Bitton reminds us, but the challenge and obligation are there.41

NOTES


5. Runyan, 217, Brugger, 22


7. Runyan, 217, Brugger, 22


10. For Freud’s impact on America, see Nathan G. Hale Jr., Freud and the Americans: The Beginnings of Psychoanalysis in the United States, 1876-1917 (New York Oxford University Press, 1971)


12. Brugger, 4


15. Brugger, 1

16. Cocks and Crosby, x (see also Brugger, 18); Joseph M. Woods, “Some Considerations on Psycho-History,” in Cocks and Crosby, 109; Kendall, 121; Bernner, 97; H. J. Eysenck, “What is Wrong with Psychoanalysis?” in Cocks and Crosby, 3-16 See also Mazlish, 232

17. Cocks and Crosby, 78-79 This is not to say that in some instances the judicious and conservative use of theories of psycho-sexual development is not useful.

18. Runyan, 208.


22. Kendall, 121

23. Brugger, 20

24. Runyan, 49-50


27. Brugger, 6-7


29. Runyan, 209.

30. Runyan, 212.


35. See, for example, Hugh Nibley, No Ma’am, That’s Not History (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1946), 53-55; Ronald W. Walker, “The Challenge and Craft of Mormon Biography,” Brigham Young University Studies 22 (Spring 1982), 218 For additional, more substantive criticisms, see Marvin S Hill, “Secular or Sectarian History: A Critique of No Man Knows My History,” Church History 43 (March 1974). 1, 78-96.

36. Fawn M. Brodie, No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 2d ed. (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1976), 418-20. Brodie may be criticized for restricting such an important discussion to only three pages

37. Walker, 189


40. Bitton, 70

41. Bitton, 11

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In six known journals from 1840 to 1853, William Clayton left an eyewitness account of early Mormon life, including the remarkable episode of plural marriage in Nauvoo, Illinois.

WILLIAM CLAYTON: JOSEPH SMITH’S “PRIVATE CLERK” AND EYEWITNESS TO MORMON POLYGAMY IN NAUVOO

By George D. Smith

WILLIAM CLAYTON—JOURNALIST, POLYGAMIST, companion to the Prophet Joseph Smith—emigrated from England in 1840 and witnessed the secret practice of plural marriage in Nauvoo, Illinois. He served as the Prophet’s personal secretary and recorded his sermons and activities. Clayton appeared to be serious, highly motivated, and concerned about society’s moral decline as well as his place in the hereafter. And, like Smith, he enjoyed the company of attractive women.

Clayton’s writings, although scattered among various articles, books, and library collections, have for years been generally inaccessible to all but a few favored scholars. The recent publication of Clayton’s texts provides contemporary accounts of early Mormon life such as missionary work in Victorian England, secret marriages of the Prophet and his close associates in Nauvoo, and the Saints’ hurried exodus across the frozen Mississippi on their way out of the United States and into the Mexican west. Clayton is an important eyewitness to a critical period of British and American history. A skilled writer, Clayton was there when events were breaking. He participated in history, and he wrote it down.

Raised by a schoolmaster father in England during the textile boom, which would transform the country’s cottage spinners and weavers into an assembly of workers in crowded urban factories built to clothe the world, Clayton secured a job in the primary growth industry of the Industrial Revolution. Competent with language and numbers, he worked as a bookkeeper at Bashall’s textile mill at Bamber Bridge near the metropolis of Preston, England, about two-hundred miles northwest of London.

When the Mormon missionaries arrived in 1837, Clayton believed their message of restoration and the millennium, was baptized in the River Ribble which separates the industrial city of Preston from his home parish of Penwortham, and began to keep a daily journal. Soon after Clayton sailed to America and joined the Mormon theocracy in Nauvoo, Joseph Smith recognized his talents and hired him as his “private clerk.” On 3 September 1842, the Prophet declared to his new secretary, “When I have any revelations to write, you shall write them.”

Clayton had already recorded daily missionary life in Manchester, England, and his emigration to America: an unforgettable ocean voyage across the Atlantic, and a journey by riverboat up the Hudson River, across the Erie Canal, and by lake steamer through the Great Lakes into Illinois to the newly-settled Mississippi River town of Nauvoo. Once at the center of Mormon polygamy, Clayton’s prose would flower.

From Clayton’s journals it would seem that he was initially unaware of plural marriage in Nauvoo. Clayton arrived in Nauvoo four months before Joseph Smith’s first officially-recorded plural marriage to Louisa Beaman on 5 April 1841, but made no mention of this event in his journal. The primary documentation of this marriage was provided by assistant Church historian Andrew Jenson. During a time when the LDS church sought to persuade the Smith family of this history, Jenson examined Nauvoo Temple records and in 1887 published records and affidavits from twenty-seven of Joseph Smith’s plural wives. During the Nauvoo years most Latter-day Saints thought that polygamy was an unfounded anti-Mormon accusation. Only about twenty-five families among the 20,000 people living in Nauvoo practiced plural marriage while Smith was alive. Clayton was not brought into Smith’s...
inner circle until autumn 1842; that he seemed unaware of plural marriage before this time confirms that the secret was indeed well-kept from Nauvoo's citizens.5

He remained monogamous until early 1843 when the Mormon prophet suggested that Clayton might invite a woman-friend Clayton had once known in England to join him in Nauvoo. At this time he and his wife Ruth had been married six years and had three children. One day Joseph Smith, a frequent visitor at the Clayton residence, came to call. As Clayton tells the story,

The prophet invited me to walk with him. During our walk, he said he had learned that there was a sister back in England, to whom I was very much attached. I replied there was, but nothing further than an attachment such as a brother and sister in the Church might rightfully entertain for each other. He then said, "Why don't you send for her?" I replied, "In the first place, I have no authority to send for her, and if I had, I have not the means to pay expenses." To this he answered, "I give you authority to send for her, and I will furnish you with means," which he did. This was the first time the Prophet Joseph talked with me on the subject of plural marriage. He informed me that the doctrine and principle was right . . . and that it was a doctrine which pertained to celestial order and glory . . . he concluded [with] the words "It is your privilege to have all the wives you want" . . . . He also informed me that he had other wives living besides his first wife Emma, and in particular gave me to understand that Eliza R. Snow, Louisa Be[al]man, Desdemona W. Fullmer and others were his lawful wives in the sight of Heaven.6

During his lifetime Smith never publicly acknowledged the polygamous relationships he had described to Clayton. A year later when "accused of committing adultery, and having seven wives," he declared before the Church that he could "find only one.7

The young English woman who Smith encouraged Clayton to send for was Sarah Crooks, a woman Clayton had met on his mission to Manchester in 1838-40 before immigrating to America. After joining the LDS church, Clayton had quit his job at the textile factory, sent his wife and daughter to live with her parents, and worked full time in Manchester as an unpaid missionary.

Clayton first mentioned Sarah Crooks two weeks into his first journal, on 13 January 1840, when she gave him twenty shillings. Clayton was totally supported on his mission by the Manchester Mormons for one year and nine months. During this time, he scrupulously recorded the gifts he received: "February 4, Sarah Crooks gave me a pint of porter [porter's ale, a dark brown beer]; February 5, Sister Perkins gave me a tea cup full of red wine; February 16, Had 14 oranges & a dozen sweet cakes given me at preaching; April 6, Supper with Sarah and Rebecca. They gave me a pint of Porter. Sarah washed my feet."

Clayton's feelings for Sarah Crooks came to exceed gratitude for gifts. On 19 January Sarah dreamed of Clayton's having a second wife. On 27 February Clayton wrote: "I certainly feel my love towards her to increase but shall strive against it." A few days later he recorded: "March 3, Sarah Crooks bath[ed] my forehead with rum and gave me some mint drops; April 8, Sarah . . . washed my feet and I then went to bed; May 19, Supper with Sarah, 1 pint porter. She washed my feet. We sat together till 2 o'clock."

Three years later in 1871, Clayton retold the story in more detail:

I did write the revelation of Celestial marriage given through the prophet Joseph Smith on the 12th day of
July 1843. When the revelation was written there was no one present except the prophet Joseph, his brother Hyrum and myself. It was written in the small office upstairs in the rear of the brick store which stood on the banks of the Mississippi River. It took some three hours to write it. Joseph dictated sentence by sentence and I wrote it as he dictated. After the whole was written Joseph requested me to read it slowly and carefully which I did, and he then pronounced it correct. The same night a copy was taken by Bishop Whitney which copy is now here and which I know and testify is correct. The original was destroyed by Emma Smith. 10

For the rest of her life Emma denied that her husband had ever practiced polygamy. Clayton's journal provides meaningful context for subsequent disputes over plural marriage, especially such denials by members of the Prophet's family.

Clayton was unique among Joseph Smith's scribes in that he actually seemed part of Smith's household and was with him almost every day of the last two years of the Prophet's life. Clayton often found himself in the middle of disputes between Joseph and Emma; he even argued with Emma, which few people dared to do. It was Clayton whom Emma suspected of delivering letters from Smith's other wives, specifically Eliza R. Snow, whom Joseph Smith had married about a year earlier. 11

Smith warned Clayton that Emma might make romantic advances toward him to get even with her husband. Clayton negotiated with Smith over marriage to the Moon sisters, and he married Smith to Lucy Walker, the ceremony identified cryptically in Clayton's journals as "m J to LW." 12

Clayton's journals also address his own personal feelings about plural marriage. He described feelings of affection for his wives and how a married man would court other women to marry. One month after marrying his third wife, Alice Hardman, Clayton dreamed that he "had received Miss [Emily] Cutler in addition to those I had already got." When he awoke he pleaded, "God if it be thy will give me that woman for a companion." 13 Although he did not marry Emily Cutler, a month later Clayton did marry Jane Hardman, Alice's cousin and daughter of the boardinghouse owner in Manchester where Clayton had often stayed during his mission. A few weeks later Clayton married his fifth wife, sixteen-year-old Diantha Farr. He again turned to God and asked, "give me favor in her eyes and the eyes of her parents that I may receive the gift in full." 14 Such repeated passionate pleadings demonstrate the personal character of Clayton's "Nauvoo, Illinois" journals. A week after this marriage he writes, "this A.M. I had some talk with Diantha in bed. All things seemed to go right." 15

The women whom Clayton married left impressions of the personal magnetism of this Mormon patriarch. In 1941 great-granddaughter Wanda Clayton Thomas asked Clayton's last surviving wife, Anna Higgs, "how a girl only seventeen years old could marry a man in his early fifties who already had so many wives and children." Anna replied that she "fell in love with him before he ever knew her [and] just had to follow him from church to church to hear him speak. I wanted to be with him in the hereafter. I courted him." When Clayton had to leave Nauvoo on the westward trail to Winter Quarters, Nebraska, without his fifth and pregnant wife, Diantha, she wrote to him in Keosauqua, Iowa: "I dream about you almost every night . . . I never shall consent to have you leave me again." 16 When Diantha gave birth to William Adriel Benoni, later called Moroni, Clayton in celebration of this event wrote the song "All is Well," renamed "Come, Come, Ye Saints." 17

IN becoming a Mormon patriarch, Clayton had significantly adapted his personal outlook formed by his English upbringing. He converted not only to religious beliefs, but also to the complex marital life practiced in the Mormon community. His writings demonstrate no internal struggle realigning his lifestyle. In his thirty-seven years of plural marriage, from 1843 to 1879, Clayton typically had four to six wives at one time. He had concurrent conjugal relations with his wives, as the birth records demonstrate, and in the single year 1857 fathered five children. He once commented: "I support a family of near forty persons on a salary of $3,600 per annum and we live well, are well clothed and very comfortably situated . . . I have six wives whom I support in comfort and happiness and am not afraid of another one. I have three children born to me during the year, and I don't fear a dozen more." 18 A daughter remembered that while her father was "not demonstrative," he showed "great love for his home and family and provided well for their comfort." 19 Clayton eventually married ten women and fathered forty-seven children.

Family members recall Clayton as ordered and meticulous. Clayton's daughter Victoria McCune, born when he was fifty-two years of age, remembered her father as "methodical, always sitting in his own armchair, having a certain place at the table . . . his person was clean and tidy; his hands small and dimpled. He wore very little jewelry but what little he had was the best money could buy . . . and his clothing was made from the best material. His children remember him best in black velvet coat and grey trousers and, in cold weather, a broad-cloth cloak in place of overcoat. . . . [He had a] love for order [and] would not carry a watch that was not accurate. [He did not tend toward] frivolity or mirth but rather seriousness and earnestness." 20

This description of a serious and orderly man portrays a person who carried out many responsibilities with care. His journals reflect this characteristic. For example, while crossing the American wilderness, Clayton recorded an elaborate picture of western lands filled with a variety of Indians and buffalo. He described numerous illnesses, such as ague, black scurvy, cholera, itch, mumps, and pox, and equally varied cures, such as hot salt, dung plaster, brandy, quinine, exercise, the laying on of hands, and rebuke of "fowl" spirits.

With equally meticulous care he recorded Joseph Smith's casual conversations and controversial doctrines which dealt with plural gods, God as a man, God as Adam, and resurrec-
tion by literal rebirth through a woman. He kept detailed records of Nauvoo Temple rituals.

As he executed the responsibilities given him by the Prophet, Clayton provided a picture of rural Nauvoo on the Mississippi, land acquired with Military Bounty Tract warrants issued to War of 1812 veterans. Since speculators bought and sold land without titles or deeds, Smith would send Clayton to make sure Nauvoo property tax records were up to date and land rights were secure. No national currency had been issued since the oversupply of “continentals” to finance the Revolutionary War; the country ran on a monetary system of private bank notes flooded with foreign coins and bogus paper, a setting reflected in the journals. Clayton also described legal techniques used to insulate the Mormon theocracy from an aroused Illinois populace, such as habeas corpus challenges to the validity of arrest warrants for Nauvoo citizens.

Joseph Smith and other church leaders must have thought highly of Clayton’s administrative abilities. He was a member of the Council of Fifty, a planning body which served as a shadow government for both Nauvoo and Salt Lake City. He was made Nauvoo Temple recorder and clerk of several trial camps. In Salt Lake City he helped cut the dies for new Mormon money. He was elected assistant secretary of the Territorial Council for the 1853-54 session and secretary of the 1854-55 legislature. He was Recorder of Marks and Brands, the Receiver of Weights and Measures, and Public Auditor for the territory of Utah for 1852.

Clayton became a partner in Salt Lake mercantile ventures. He was a bookkeeper and debt collector and engaged in mining and farming. He also became cashier or treasurer of Zion’s Cooperative Mercantile Institute (ZCMI).

These civic and business responsibilities suggest an energetic, hard-driving individual. However, he also enjoyed literature and music. Clayton’s family remembers him as having been well-read. He carried a collection of books across the plains under his wagon seat, including works of Frederick the Great and Voltaire. He subscribed to English newspapers all his life in Utah.

Clayton received early training in violin and piano. Later in Nauvoo he played violin and sang in a dance band, at times in the Nauvoo Temple, as well as on the westward trail. The band was sometimes given money, sometimes groceries. One time in Keosauqua, Iowa, Clayton reported receiving cake and beer.

In six known journals from 1840 to 1853, William Clayton left an eyewitness account of early Mormon life, including the remarkable episode of plural marriage in Nauvoo, Illinois. A believer in Joseph Smith’s visions and miracles, he wrote a straightforward and uncritical narrative of the Mormon community. His journals form a credible record of a peculiar story.

NOTES

1 Richard Arkwright, inventor of the spinning jenny, came from the nearby city of Preston and is discussed in Clayton’s journal, 24 February 1853.

Clayton History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1-2 January 1846

1842, microfilm, Marriott Library.

3 Clayton arrived in Nauvoo on 24 November 1840.

4 Andrew Jenson, “Plural Marriage,” Historical Record 6 (May 1887), 219-40, hereafter HR. From April 1841 to October 1843, Smith married as many as forty-five women, at least twelve of them before the 12 July 1843 revelation, as Jenson records. Fawn Brodie identified forty-eight wives (No Man Knows My History: The Life of Joseph Smith, the Mormon Prophet, 2nd ed. [New York: Knopf, 1971], 434-65).


8 Journal, 11 August 1843.

9 Journal, 19 October 1843.

10 Clayton to Madison Scott, 11 November 1847, Journal, 110n.

11 Journal, 21 August 1843. Smith had married Snow on 29 July 1842.

12 Journal, 1 May 1843.

13 Journal, 19 October 1844. Within two months after her 13 September 1844 marriage to Clayton, Alice Hardman married an Austin Sturgess and in an 1850 census in Salt Lake City was listed as Alice Sturgess, widow. However, beginning in 1852, eight years after her marriage to Clayton she would bear him four children. See Journal, 149 n12.

14 Journal, 5 December 1844, the marriage was on 9 January 1845.

15 Journal, 13 January 1845.


17 Journal, 15 April 1846.

18 Clayton letterbooks, 7 November 1869.


21 Journal, 28 September 1852.

22 Thomas to Smith, 25 August and 20 November 1990.

23 Journal, 1-2 January 1846.

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Mere "truth" can be a weapon to wound and increase animosity, to foster continuing adversarial escalation. But redemptive truth, spoken in genuine love, can heal.

HEALING AND MAKING PEACE—IN THE WORLD AND THE CHURCH

By Eugene England

In the fall of 1955 Charlotte and I were living in Mapusaga, a small village in American Samoa. We had been married two years and had been missionaries to the Polynesians for a year and a half. Charlotte was five months pregnant. We were teaching a woman named Taligu E'e, who had Mormon relatives and who had agreed to meet us each Wednesday afternoon. We would walk to her fale, her circular, open, thatch-roofed home, and teach her in broken Samoan one of the lessons from the systematic missionary teaching guide. She would listen politely and impassively, her eyes looking down at the mats we sat on, and after we finished would serve us the meal she had prepared.

One Wednesday we taught her the plan of salvation. We told her how we had all chosen to come to earth, with Christ, who had offered himself as our Savior, and how important it was to follow him if we knew him. Then I told her how, by doing temple work, we could help those who had died without knowing Christ, but who were being taught about him in the spirit world. Her head came up as I told this story. Timidly she asked about her own ancestors who lived before Christian missionaries came to Samoa, whom she had been taught must be damned because they did not know Christ and were not baptized.

I repeated what I realized right then was indeed the gospel, the Good News. I assured her that God loves everyone equally who comes to earth and had provided a way for all, including her ancestors, to come to him. She kept her eyes on my face, and they slowly filled with tears. I sensed that a deep sorrow, a long-standing wound, was being healed in her, and I kept repeating, “O le Atua, alofa tele ia i latou uma,” which I hoped conveyed, “God really loves them all.” Taligu was baptized the day after we left Samoa. We had been transferred, by inspiration I believe, to Hawaii for our baby to be born where there were medical facilities that turned out to be needed to save Charlotte’s life. We have heard that Taligu became the matriarch of a great Church family in Samoa, and we trust that she has done the saving work for her ancestors in the Samoan Temple.

What I know is that the revealed truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ healed her and brought her peace. Truth is an essential part of healing and of peacemaking—not just any truth and not truth administered in just any fashion. Paul talked about “speaking the truth in love” (Ephesians 4:15). Mere “truth” can build weapons of mass destruction and motivate endless quarrels, even violence, over present rights and past wrongs. Truth can be a weapon to wound and increase animosity, to foster continuing adversarial escalation. But redemptive truth, spoken in genuine love, can heal. I’ll return later to the hard question of how.

But first another story about healing and peace. When I was bishop of a BYU married student ward, one of the members asked me to talk with her friend from outside the ward who had attempted suicide and was often terribly depressed. When I met her, I quickly found that, like many young Latter-day Saints I had counseled, this woman had a strong sense of justice and self-condemnation, but a weak sense of Christ’s mercy and love. She spoke quickly and harshly about her failings and her despair. I simply read to her from the Book of Mormon those passages that teach Christ’s mercy in the Atonement and convey the spirit of that at-one-ment. After a while peace visibly came over her, and she began to weep. When she left, she had been helped and perhaps healed a little.

And that, of course, reminds me of another story. When John Taylor was president of the Quorum of Twelve, two men came to him for resolution of a bitter quarrel that had alienated them from each other. President Taylor was an exceptionally good singer, with emotional power tempered in such experiences as singing for the Prophet in the final hour at Carthage Jail. He told the two, “Brethren, before I hear your case, I would like very much to sing one of the songs of Zion for you.” When he had finished, he commented that he never heard one of the Church’s hymns without wanting to hear another and so sang one more—and then another and another. Finally the two men were moved to tears and left, fully reconciled, without

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any discussion of their problem

THE HEALING POWER OF MERCY

HEALING does happen; peace can come. These stories give me hope and some direction. The redemptive truths of the gospel of the Prince of Peace can heal—if they are conveyed in a way consistent with their own nature and such as to move others with their potential power. The central truth seems to be God's unconditional love, the unique power of mercy to heal our souls and bring peace to our lives—but it must touch our hearts and wills as well as our minds and understanding.

I remember well one of the first sermons I heard Elder Marion D. Hanks give, shortly after he was called as a general authority nearly forty years ago. He told of two Mormon families who had been alienated from each other for years by an offense and then revenge—not speaking to each other, nursing their wounds and inflicting new ones. Finally, the father who had been first and most sinned against went to the other father and asked for forgiveness and the two families were reconciled. I remember clearly how stunning it was for me to understand for the first time, from that simple anecdote, the claim of Shakespeare's Portia, in *The Merchant of Venice,* that mercy blesses the giver as well as the receiver. Mercy is, in a phrase Elder Hanks may have learned, as I did, from Lowell Benmion, "the homeopathic medicine of the soul."

However, the medicine of mercy does not work automatically or easily, though I believe it works directly and consistently when we really work at it. Again, understanding is not enough. Portia herself is a case in point. Disguised as a legal consultant in the court where Shylock the Jew has gone to claim his pound of flesh from the merchant Antonio for a defaulted loan, she admits that Shylock's claim is legal and in the name of justice must be honored, but she pleads nevertheless for mercy:

The quality of mercy is not strain'd,
It droppeth as the gentle rain from heaven
Upon the place beneath. It is twice blest:
It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.
It is an attribute to God himself;
And earthly power doth then show likest God's
When mercy seasons justice... consider this
That in the course of justice, none of us
Should see salvation.

That is, of course, the basic point of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. We all sin beyond any ability to make amends, to make anything like full restitution, if we are left only to the demands of justice. The demands of justice, which our consciences make on ourselves and on each other, as well as the unanswered demands of a just God, leave us forever divided, unhealed, unatoned. The Atonement, originally pronounced At-one-ment, is possible only because of Christ's power to reunite us to ourselves, to heal us, through his self-sacrificing mercy, and we can only be reunited with each other through similar acts of mercy for each other.

But, of course, though Portia speaks of mercy brilliantly when she wants it for Antonio, she is not capable of showing it in a difficult situation, that is, when Shylock clearly deserves severe punishment. By applying the letter of the law, she saves Antonio from Shylock's revenge, but then she and Antonio use the law to take revenge on Shylock, not only threatening his life and taking his fortune but, most horrible crime of all, forcing him to renounce his faith and become a Christian. I believe Shakespeare wanted us to see that they thus miss a chance to heal the enmity between Jew and Christian, to be genuine peacemakers by using God-like mercy.

There are great wounds in the Church. The Mormon intellectual community is riven in two and reduced to mutual alienation and public name-calling. There is scandalous lack of respect, isolation in mutually exclusive symposia and publications, with almost no learning from each other through dialogue or even sympathetic reading of each other's writings.
THE NEED FOR MERCY IN THE WORLD
AND THE CHURCH

There are great wounds in the world and the Church that are in need of healing; there is continuing violence that needs genuine peacemakers. The recent, poignantly hopeful developments in Eastern Europe were brought about, I believe, not through President Reagan’s military build-ups and threats, but by God’s blessings on non-violent efforts by many people. But despite those developments—which have ended the Cold War and suggest to the optimistic the great and marvelous possibility of a quick and relatively peaceful movement toward Christ’s second coming—great wounds remain, as well as a great need for healers. Wars and rumors of wars continue in the Middle East, South America, Northern Ireland, and now Yugoslavia and the former USSR. The recent so-called peace talks in Madrid (more like shouting matches) only advertise the difficulties. Both sides engaged in violence and counter-violence even as the talks began; both sides staked out non-negotiable demands, couched in the language of justice, seeking a small advantage here or there. No one seemed able to think or talk of mercy, to consider extending even small acts of trust, of simply giving up either land or demands for land—or recognition or even old slogans—as a way to change the patterns of violence to something new. No one seemed to remember that tactics based on seeking advantage, in demands for justice, have never worked, certainly not permanently. No one seemed to remember that the only two occasions when nations tried something like mercy—the Marshall Plan, which rebuilt the economies of our former World War II enemies; and Anwar Sadat’s sacrifices, which included eventually the giving of his own life, to achieve peace with Israel—those two acts of mercy indeed brought the only lasting peace between enemies in modern times.

There are also great wounds in the Church. The Mormon intellectual community is riven in two and reduced to mutual alienation and public name-calling. Most of those in the seminary and institute system, along with many BYU religion teachers, are separated from those in the unsponsored or independent sector, including much of the BYU faculty outside of Religious Education. There is scandalous lack of respect, isolation in effectively exclusive symposia and publications, with almost no learning from each other through dialogue or even sympathetic reading of each other’s writings. This division has recently gone public and escalated. The non-Mormon press has emphasized and perhaps created animosity by exaggerating the effects of controversial articles in the independent Mormon press or thoughtless or provocative expressions by independent symposia participants—and now, in response, public statements by BYU professors and even Church leaders seem to have hardened divisions and escalated antagonisms. We even have the absurd spectacle of two “alternate voices”—the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.) and Signature Books—engaged in name-calling and threatening lawsuits because, it seems to me, one is aggressively proud of its orthodoxy, the other aggressively proud of its independence—and neither are very merciful. Add to this the deepening divisions over gender issues and the wounds that many Mormon women feel—divisions between Mormon feminists and not only most Mormon men but many of their sisters. In the late sixties, when there was much turmoil within the Church and anger and even action against the Church over our discriminations against blacks, there was some evidence indicating that when attention became focused on Mormon discriminations against women we would suffer even greater turmoil within and antagonism from without. And that is happening. As Susan Faludi shows in her recent book, Backlash, The Undeclared War Against American Women, the gains women made in the seventies have been more than reversed in the eighties. Abetted by government indifference, male anxiety has tended to increase prejudice and discrimination in a way that for many finally became visible when fourteen male senators struggled and failed to deal either justly or mercifully with Anita Hill and her allegations. Now many women are responding in despair and anger, and backlash escalates against backlash. We have great need for healing and for healers.

During the same time as the national gains for—and then the backlash against—women, Mormon women seem to have experienced a reduction, in the past twenty-five years, not only of their independence and effectiveness in their own organization and publications, but even in their overt and formal healing role. In Samoa, when we were isolated as a missionary couple, Charlotte assisted me as we used our shared priesthood in administering to the sick. The official Church handbook, Elder John A. Widtsoe’s Priesthood and Church Government, quoted Joseph Smith as an authority that such a procedure was perfectly proper. Of course, many women, like Eliza R. Snow and Fatty Sessions, had healed through laying on hands and had brought peace through speaking and singing in tongues, and such gifts, including the special healing blessing administered to pregnant women, had continued up into the 1940s.

Charlotte no longer gives blessings with me. We are obedient to what seems to be an official withdrawal of the gift that LDS women once enjoyed to be formal healers. LDS women of course continue in a healing role by giving blessings to each other in the temple and have an extremely powerful role to play as informal healers and peacemakers; in fact, they bear for us all the central ideals and qualities of the healing arts, both symbolically and literally, and that function must not be lost in any backlash against women, in or out of the Church. Let me explain what I mean by that apparently sexist claim about a special healing role for women.

GOD’S WAY OF HEALING

Based on years of studying ancient cultures and their mythologies, contemporary primitive cultures, and classical literature, French anthropologist Rene Girard has provided the most convincing theory about how violence begins in all cultures and relationships, how it then perpetuates itself and
spreads like a plague, and how cultures survive by ritualizing violence in things like duels and executions and football games and by focusing their violence on individuals or groups or even animals as scapegoats. He explains how cultures continue to harbor the plague of violence because they don’t face the violence in themselves and then truly heal it by using mercy to absorb and end it.

Girard provides convincing analysis of a mechanism familiar to us all. Any two beings have desires and those desires inevitably focus on the same things—a toy, a piece of land, the highest office, global prestige, or academic honor. The intensity of each rival’s desires increases simply because the other desires the same thing. In the process, the two rivals become more and more like each other in their actions and emotions, literal doubles, imitative of each other in what they want and the violence they are willing to use—until there is all-out war or a scapegoat is found on which to discharge the violence and then hide it for awhile until it breaks out again.

Every childhood quarrel, if you’ll think back to your siblings or cousins or playground friends, goes through this process—and so does every war in history. Imitative desire or jealousy leads to an offense, which must be answered in the name of justice, with additional blows or force for good measure, to make certain justice is done, then reciprocation, revenge, again with added force in the name of justice, etc. Meanwhile, the antagonists increasingly adopt the same evil means, no matter who was most “right” at first or most self-righteously accused the other of being evil. For instance, by the end of World War II, first the British and then the United States adopted high-level saturation bombing of civilian populations—which we had condemned as evil and barbaric when the Germans used it earlier. Such imitative escalation culminated in the killing of hundreds of thousands in Hamburg and Dresden, and then Hiroshima and Nagasaki in what President J. Reuben Clark called the “crowning savagery of the war.”

The mechanism of imitative rivalry followed by escalating violence seems inevitable, but Girard’s study has led him to a remarkable conclusion: There is one and only one successful way to stop it, and that is through the example and teachings of Jesus Christ. Girard, who started as an agnostic, has come to believe that the Bible is the truest book in the world, in fact, divine. It alone reveals, rather than suppressing in rituals or scapegoats, the violence in humans and gives the solution, it shows God struggling against this universal human mechanism through his chosen people and his divine son. God fails to make much headway throughout the Old Testament, much of which is a record of human violence and human attempts to blame their violence on God. In the story of Joseph, extending mercy and forgiveness to his brothers who sold him into Egypt, in the suffering servant passages (such as Isaiah 53), and in other breakthroughs of the voice of God to prophets, and culminating in the life, teachings, and death of Christ, we have gradually been given the answer, which is simple to say but not at all simple to really believe and apply.

The answer is contained in the Sermon on the Mount, which teaches the ethical solution; in Christ’s malcdictions against the Pharisees (Matthew 23:13-39), which require the Jews to recognize the violence in themselves—that they have always killed the prophets and will kill him; and supremely and finally in Christ’s death. Christ does not die as a traditional, guilty scapegoat, who hides the sins and violence of the community. Rather, Christ insists on being recognized as an innocent victim, a sacrifice whose perfect forgiving love shows us the cost of our violence and the only way to stop it. He lived out his teachings and sealed his testimony with the divine authority of his perfectly innocent blood.

The teachings are crystal clear: “Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.”
(Matthew 5:44-45); “Do good, and lend, hoping for nothing again; and your reward shall be great, and ye shall be the children of the Highest: for he is kind unto the unthankful and to the evil. Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:35-36); “Resist not evil” (Matthew 5:39); “Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good” (Romans 12:21).

The Book of Mormon clearly reinforces those teachings with ample historical evidence, as Hugh Nibley has pointed out, that conflict of any kind, including war, occurs only when both sides have sinned. When either side is willing to obey Christ’s commands, to lay down their weapons or angry words and stop fighting or competing, even if they sacrifice their lives, as Christ did, they stop the violence and convert their enemies (Alma 24:17-26).

Modern prophets have reinforced this answer. President Kimball chose June 1976, during the very height of the United States’s self-congratulatory celebration of its bicentennial, to remind us, in a First Presidency message in the Ensign, of the violence in ourselves as Americans and Mormons:

We are a warlike people, easily distracted from our assignment of preparing for the coming of the Lord. When enemies rise up, we commit vast resources to the fabrication of gods of stone and steel—ships, planes, missiles, fortifications—and depend on them for protection and deliverance. When threatened we become anti-enemy instead of pro-kingdom of God. He then called us to trust the Lord and do the only thing that has ever brought peace: “to carry the Gospel to our enemies, that they will no longer be our enemies.” President Kimball, of course, did not mean simply to send missionaries to Russia or China or Iraq, but to proclaim in all we say and do the gospel, the Good News that healed the Samoan convert Charlotte and I taught—that God loves us all unconditionally and expects us to be act like Christians toward our enemies by working for and showing consistent mercy.

Christ taught, “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:7; emphasis added). In other words, we should give mercy instead of justice to enemies because that is the only hope to move them to give mercy back rather than returning retribution for our “justice” until we have continuing war, as we certainly still have in the Middle East.

Modern prophets have not only reminded us of the answer to violence, but also of the mechanism by which we unleash that violence if we refuse that answer. Hear the First Presidency in 1942, at the beginning of World War II:

There is an eternal law that rules war and those who engage in it. . . . The Savior laid down a universal principle (“all they that take the sword shall perish with the sword”) upon which He placed no limitations as to time, place, cause, or people involved [whether righteous or wicked]. . . . [T]his is a universal law, for force always begets force. Each of us can think of many examples. Remember when the United States bombed Ghaddafi’s capital city in Libya in 1986, killing perhaps forty people, many civilians. That action, we claimed, was a justified response to evidence that Libyans had killed perhaps five Americans in bombings in Europe. But of course Libyans could have claimed they were only responding to America violence in aiding with and helping Israel in its occupations of Arab lands and continuing raids that had killed hundreds of Palestinians and others in Lebanese villages. Whatever the case, after the raid our government claimed that through force we had successfully stopped Libyan force, and most Americans seemed to agree. Now evidence has come to light that the airliner downed over Lockerbie, Scotland, in 1988, killing more than 250 people, was destroyed by a Libyan bomb, and our leaders are now talking about how we might achieve a “just” revenge. So we have gone from a general perceived injustice, our lethal tilt toward Israel, to five Americans killed, to forty Libyans killed, to 250 randomly killed, as force has not settled anything, but has begotten even greater force. And what will be our next step?

Why is it so hard for our government—and apparently most of the rest of us, who continue to support its deadly policies in the Middle East—to learn what Tom Sutherland, one of the American hostages recently freed in Beirut has learned? In an interview in December 1991 on National Public Radio, he was asked how he felt about the call by some other former hostages for revenge and about government efforts to glean from the hostages information about their captors that would help achieve that. He responded, “I disagree totally with those who want to punish hostage-takers. Revenge or retribution of any kind is wrong.” His wife, Jane, added, “We have prayed and worked for years for this resolution, an unconditional release. When people in the Middle East have been saying, ‘You’ve done this to me and I’ve done this to you,’ and this has been going on for thousands of years, it’s time to just break it and stop!” Amen.

VIOLENCE, MERCY, AND HEALING IN SHAKESPEARE

RENE GIRARD claims that, next to the Bible, the clearest revelations of the violence mechanism are in William Shakespeare and Fyodor Dostoevsky. Think of how often Shakespeare shows doubles becoming rivals and then becoming more and more alike and more violent, from the twins in the Comedy of Errors to Iago and Othello to Hamlet and his uncle to the Trojans and Greeks in Troilus and Cressida. I’ve studied Shakespeare closely, and Girard is right. I’m convinced most of the plays show that revenge, in the name of justice, is always tempting, seems morally justified to the avenger and the audience, and always escalates in self-righteous violence. The revengers become more and more like their targets, though each first saw that target as a thoroughly evil perpetrator of crime. In the name of righteous justice, the revenger inevitably loads the stage with corpses by the end—and the violence does not stop then, but merely continues in the next generation of reciprocal revenge.

Shakespeare also knew how hard it is for even rational Christian people to stop this cycle. He developed a dramatic
device to teach and shame his audiences into understanding and a change of heart. I call it the “bandwagon effect.” He starts by showing a wrong being done by some despicable character whom we all love to hate and enjoy seeing get his comeuppance. As the victims and their friends begin to take revenge, say on the self-righteous prog Malvolio in Twelfth Night or the blood-thirsty Shylock in The Merchant of Venice, we cheer them on. We get on the bandwagon of justified revenge. However, a point comes when a sensitive, moral audience sees or feels that things have gone too far, that the revenge spirit has exceeded all possible justice, has perhaps inevitably done much more harm than good and so should never have even started. We want to get off the bandwagon and wish we never had gotten on.

Shakespeare’s drama moves us to feel what it is like to approve violence—and then to be ashamed we have approved it. That point comes in Twelfth Night when Malvolio is put in a dungeon and begins to go mad. It comes in The Merchant of Venice at least by the time Shylock is forced to become a Christian. It should come in Hamlet at least by the time Hamlet refuses a chance to kill the king at his prayers—because then he might go to heaven. Hamlet refuses this chance to obey the ghost not out of mercy or indecision, but in what Elizabethan audiences—and genuine Christians of today—would recognize as a blasphemous desire to destroy Claudius’s soul as well as his life. That, of course, was what the ghost said was the most horrible thing Claudius had done to him, killing him in his sins before he could repent. So Hamlet has become just like his uncle, just as evil, just as poisonous and dangerous and even soul-destroying.

But Hamlet is a greater and more complex soul, and he has a moment of turning back that is crucial to our understanding of the role of women in healing I mentioned earlier. Near the end of the play, he confronts Laertes, whose father Polonius he has killed and whose sister Ophelia, whom he supposedly loved, he has destroyed in his obsession with revenge. For the first time, during that confrontation in Ophelia’s grave, Hamlet sees, through Laertes, exactly what he has become—a rash, bloody revenger in the name of justice, ranting and wrestling in a grave and trailing death and hell in his wake. In the next scene, Hamlet says to Horatio, “I have a [mis]giving, as would perhaps trouble a woman . . .—the readiness is all . . . let be.” Exactly. He experiences what men have, to their own injury, relegated to the feminine and accordingly devalued in Western culture—that is, mercy, compassion, patience, a willingness to be. As he earlier debated in his famous soliloquy, “To be, or not to be,” he has struggled to determine whether it is nobler to “suffer/The slings and arrows of outrageous fortune,” that is, to patiently accept God’s world, to live in mercy, to be, or on the other hand “to take arms against a sea of troubles, and by opposing, end them,” that is, to take revenge in the spirit of justice and likely be justly killed, not to be. The question whether to be or not to be is exactly the fundamental religious and moral question whether to live by “womanly” mercy or to die by “manly” revenge. Often, in Hamlet, men disclaim their tears as “women’s weapons” and take heart that after weeping “the woman will be out,” and then they can proceed with male honor to revenge.

In his speech about a “misgiving,” Hamlet, for a moment, lets the woman in him turn him back, but it is too late. The mechanism of violence he has unleashed by killing Polonius and threatening Claudius soon catches him up again into the revenge spirit in the bloody ending of the play.

Shakespeare knew that the only solution to the revenge mechanism did in fact lie with “the woman” in us—or literally women in Western culture, who have been left relatively free from the male cycles of violence and continuing war.
tional love for him. And Shakespeare makes the only ultimate source of healing perfectly clear. At one point he has Cordelia say, "O dear father, / It is thy business that I go about."

She thus invokes, unknown to herself but clearly in the audience's minds, the young Christ in the temple. Later a gentleman says to Lear, as he runs away, "Thou hast one daughter / Who redeems all nature from the general curse / Which twain have brought her to," invoking not only the two evil sisters and Cordelia but also Adam and Eve and Christ, and, therefore, unmistakably showing Cordelia's parallel to Christ as healer. And Paulina, in The Winter's Tale, is given a unique Christian name in a play in which all other names are Greek to invoke directly the Pauline Christian way of salvation, which she applies to a sinful, violent man—healing him to the point of a stunning resurrection on stage.

Shakespeare's healers have much to teach us. They are not simple dreamy wimps. Like Christ, they not only love but speak the truth in love. Cordelia refuses to play her father's public game of getting his daughters to flatter him for their inheritances, she is thus able to reveal to him his fundamental sin of equating love with quantity and quid pro quo—with justice in some form. Her sharp refusal unleashes storms of guilt and madness in Lear that are finally healed only by her persistent mercy. Likewise, Paulina forces Leontes to face the moral harm his violent jealousy has done and then to do penance for sixteen years—until he is ready, and willing, to accept mercy.

But Shakespeare clearly had the enormously powerful insight that the crucial, final barrier to repentance, and thus to genuine healing and peace, is precisely the shame that sinners feel because of the barbs of truth and justice. Lear, for instance, runs away from Cordelia's efforts to save him from her sisters' cruelty and his own madness because "a sovereign shame so elbows him: his own unkindness . . . these things sting his mind so venomously." Only absolute mercy, eventually only the infinite mercy of Christ, has the power to break through the bands, the shame, of that sense of justice so we can be healed.

MAKING PEACE THROUGH PAINFUL TRUTH

CLEARLY, the art of healing involves helping someone through a painful process of both facing the truth and taking on new constructs, new ways of thinking and being. The 1991 winner of the Nobel Peace Prize is Aung San Suu Kyi, the non-violent leader of Burma's democratic opposition movement. Now under permanent house arrest, she once led a protest past kneeling soldiers aiming directly at her and was saved only by a last-minute cease-fire. The military junta offered to let her leave the country if she would stay out of politics, but she has refused. Remaining totally isolated, she apparently sells her belongings to pay bills. She has likened her dream, her vision of being a peacemaker, to a traditional Burmese poem:

Emerald cool we may be
As water in cupped hands
But oh that we might be

As splinters of glass
In cupped hands.

"Splinters of glass" sounds like an image of violence rather than healing or peace, but I believe it captures one crucial element of the non-violent healing process that leads to genuine peace. Martin Luther King was often accused of inciting violence, but his disciplined practice of non-violent direct action only brought out into the open the violence already operating within racism. He thus not only provoked our consciences toward healing racism in this country but prevented a terribly violent civil war that could easily have happened if that overt racism had continued. In Reverend King the United States was blessed with more than many of us deserved.

Similarly, the Mormon independent sector and non-Mormon press have been accused of opening wounds and inciting harsh and even violent antagonism through publishing information and opinions about people and issues that we would rather not face. Indeed, when the September 1991 SUNSTONE appeared, detailing Elder Paul Dunn's fabricated war and baseball stories, I was offended. I have known Elder Dunn for many years and respect and love him as a kind and generous man and a moderate and sane theologian, and I wondered if he couldn't be spared all this. But as I read the extremely thorough and balanced package that the editors had put together, including Elder Dunn's own interview with the press and essays by William A. Wilson and Richard Poll which placed the matter of improving on stones in larger context, I changed my mind. Thinking this through could be—and was for me—a painful, yet healing process. It will help me both be more careful with the truth and be more forgiving of others in their efforts to tell redemptive truths. On 26 October 1991, shortly after the SUNSTONE issue, Elder Dunn published a letter of apology in the LDS Church News, and I realized again how healing a simple admission and apology can be. I have seen evidence that the healing has multiplied throughout the Church as many, who before were angry, defensive, or inclined to seek justice, have responded to Elder Dunn with mercy and forgiveness and increased love.

Besides requiring sharp truth, healing requires change. Shakespeare knew well a Renaissance tradition of healing the soul, based on helping people imagine new possibilities for themselves. The therapists were skilled in convincing their patients to try on new constructs by telling them stories or even inventing dramas for them to literally or imaginatively participate in. For instance, Andre Du Laurens, in 1599, published a book on "Melancholike Diseases" that tells of various ruses therapists use to cure patients' delusions. One case tells of a man who was dying because he would not urinate for fear "all his towne would be drowned." Rational arguments failed, but finally the physicians set a neighboring house on fire and had the town officials come in and plead with the man that the only way to save the town was for him to urinate upon the fire, which he did—and he was healed of his delusion. Other medical books of the time, which Shakespeare obviously knew, indicate this kind of therapeutic device was not only a common and accepted part of the healing tradition, but that
there was a theory to explain it. William Vaughan, in Approved Directions for Health, both Natural and Artificial (first published in 1604), clarifies the theory:

Wherein consists the cure of the spiritual maladies? . . . The Physician . . . must invent and devise some spiritual pageant to fortify and help the imaginative faculty, which is corrupted and depraved; yea, he must endeavor to deceive and imprint another conceit, whether it be wise or foolish, in the Patie〈t's〉 brain, thereby to put out all former phantasies.16

Shakespeare's plays are full of such "spiritual pageants," plays within the plays that various healers design to help cure the souls of their patients. I am more and more convinced that Shakespeare saw his plays as such spiritual pageants, designed to imprint new conceits upon the imaginations of his audiences and thus cure their spiritual maladies. He was especially concerned about how to heal the spirit of revenge, the willingness to do harm in the name of justice, which I believe he saw as our chief human evil, the one that led to all the others, including sexism. I think he not only wanted us to see how Cordelia and Paulina heal sinful and violent men through telling them the truth and loving them unconditionally, even sacrificially; I think he wanted us, in Gloucester's words, to "see it feelingly,"17—that is, to understand with our emotions so that we would be healed through mercy as well.

HEALING THROUGH IMAGINATIVE MERCY

How then can we be healers? One way is to create and repeat stories, dramas of the imagination, that enable us to imagine new possibilities for ourselves. Levi Peterson, presently our finest Mormon storyteller, does this. Rather than preaching at us, he tells us stories that dramatize the consequences of believing in a harsh God of justice as opposed to the rewards of accepting and passing on God's tender mercy—his redemptive love even for human nightsoil.

From such stories we can learn about imaginative mercy. A few years ago I saw the results of a failure to be imaginative about mercy. A bright young LDS state department official, on a visit back to BYU, was telling me, with some deserved pride, how he had been selected to be part of a two-hour session, just before the Reagan-Gorbachev Summit in Iceland, to plan strategies for Reagan to use. He related how the group discussed various bargaining gambits for Reagan, to use to get some small advantage or even trick Gorbachev into a disadvantage. I finally asked my friend if anyone, during those two hours, had suggested one proposal that Reagan might make for a way our two nations might cooperate, say in solving some vexing Third-World problem of disease or hunger, with a view toward building trust between us through a useful cooperative endeavor. Had anyone suggested a unilateral offer that we might make to reduce tensions by reducing weapons, some act of pure mercy we might make in hopes of a similar response? With surprise and then remorse, he said no to both questions.

Rene Girard gives us a theory for what the scriptures and modern prophets say plainly: force, even "righteous," justified force, almost always begets force; mercy at least sometimes begets mercy. Shakespeare dramatizes the consequences of revenge, of any kind of adversarial undertaking, even for "justice," and shows us how to heal by telling the truth in love and by being inventive, creating new imaginative constructs, rather than being confrontive and adversarial. Here's an example of how. For some time, even long before President Hinckley's recent advice against them, I have thought public prayers to Mother in Heaven were not a good idea. They tended to be taken—and perhaps offered—as political statements rather than as means of uniting believers in worship. But
what a wonderful alternative, an imaginative new construct, that Carol Lynn Pearson reports a Relief Society president in California practices. She prays, sometimes even publicly, to Heavenly Father about Heavenly Mother, expressing love to her through him and asking for more knowledge about her. Certainly no one can be offended, and I believe her prayers will be answered. Such imaginative devices, developed through inspiration because they are in the merciful spirit of peace, can help heal us and bring peace in this difficult time.

There are other practical means. We can all try to practice, even when others do not, the fundamental counsel of the scriptures for handling differences or perceived offenses: Go to thy brother or sister alone and talk it through, in prayer, in love, with a song, with apologies, with whatever it takes. This means we do not write to higher authority or go to the press not means we do not have chosen, in assigned roles that produce problems that must be solved with mercy. In this context, we can learn the most important human lesson, the one (and only one) which makes it possible for us to accept the Atonement: to love unconditionally as a preparation to be able to accept unconditional love from Christ.

Let me try to dramatize this point with a little quiz (as a teacher I can’t resist; just put a yes or no by each question):
1. Have you ever endured a boring Sunday School lesson?
2. How about a politically or theologically offensive priesthood or Relief Society presentation?
3. Have you sat through a badly-prepared, even embarrassing, sacrament meeting talk?
4. Have you been the victim of unrighteous dominion by a leader over you?

Now, while you are feeling perhaps a bit put upon by other Mormons, remembering all you have endured in our unprofessional, sometimes bumbling, lay Church, let’s try a few more questions:
1. Have you ever given a boring Sunday School lesson?
2. How about a one-sided and offensive presentation?
3. A badly-prepared or inept talk?
4. Have you ever exercised unrighteous dominion in the Church? (Probably only those who have had a chance, like myself.)

That’s my point: The Church is true in large part because it provides an opportunity, for all who are willing, to endure all these things—and also to be guilty of them—and thus to learn how to be merciful, to be patient and forgiving, to accept forgiveness and help, to love unconditionally so we can accept the unconditional love of the Atonement and be saved. Martin Luther called marriage “the school of love.” Because the Church is like marriage in its unrelenting exposure of people and their weaknesses to each other in a context where covenants help us stick with the process of working through those problems, it too is the school of love, a place to learn to heal and make peace.

The Church makes us responsible for the personal, marital, physical, and spiritual welfare of people we may not already love (or may even heartily dislike), and thus we learn to love them. It stretches and challenges us, when we are disappointed and exasperated, in ways we would not otherwise choose to be—and thus gives us a chance to be made better than we might choose to be. “Blessed are the merciful: for they shall obtain mercy” (Matthew 5:22).

But finally we must be willing. Let me conclude by telling some stories about people in (and out of) the Church who were willing to be merciful. Kenneth Godfrey is a fine Mormon historian and a Seminaries and Institutes area supervisor in Northern Utah. When he was about five he would walk out each night to meet his father, who drove a school bus and had to park it a mile from their home, which was on a small farm. One night, just as Ken ran the last few yards to his father’s arms, a large high school senior came up out of hiding in the weeds near the road and started calling Ken’s father names. He had kicked the boy off the bus that evening for causing trouble, and now the boy was intent on revenge. He threatened Ken’s father, who first held him down and tried to talk quietly and quell his anger, but then let him up. Suddenly the boy, who was actually bigger than Ken’s father, hit him in the face. Ken remembers how terrified he was and then how amazed when his father simply stood and let himself be hit in the face again before the boy turned and ran away. He remembers his dad, with the blood drying on his face, taking him by the hand and walking home. He remembers hearing for a long time the gossip that spread through the town about his father’s cowardice, and he remembers feeling ashamed for him. For years, as he passed the house where the boy lived after he married, he felt that shame and a helpless rage, hoping that some day he could grow large and strong enough to avenge the beating of his father, but he never did.

When Ken was a high school senior himself, eating in a cafe with his date after a dance, the man who had hit his father twelve years earlier came into the cafe drunk. He went to Ken’s booth and sat by him and began to cry. “Your father gave me the worst beating of my life twelve years ago,” he said, “and someday, when I am sober, I am going to be man enough to tell him how sorry I am for what I did and ask him to forgive me.” However, it was Ken’s father, ten years after that, when he was called as a patriarch and felt he could not function in his office until he had completely forgiven and been forgiven, who went to the man who had hit him, asked to be forgiven, and was reconciled.

Another fine Mormon historian has also told me about a
healing person in the Church. A few years ago stake presidents were instructed to call in the editors and some writers for SUNSTONE and Dialogue and talk with them about their activities. Stake presidents responded in a variety of ways. The historian's stake president called him on a Sunday afternoon and asked if he could visit him. My friend, who himself had recently finished a term in the stake presidency, wondered if he was to receive a new call. The new stake president arrived, with his counselors—and asked him if they could give him a blessing. The stake president blessed my friend that he could continue to do his important work as a historian with integrity and skill and continue to be a blessing to the Church.

In the fall of 1990, shortly after attending our stake conference, I received a letter from a BYU faculty member who lives in my stake. He reminded me of the powerful spiritual presence in our Saturday evening session and then told of a particular impression that had come to him when he saw me there. He had felt simultaneously scolded and blessed: scolded because he had let his differences in doctrinal perception keep him from feeling and expressing the kind of gospel love we ought to have for each other; blessed to feel that love for me right then, along with a desire to express it and put other things in perspective. He reported to me that he first thought, "But Gene believes and teaches doctrines which I think have serious, even dangerous implications for those with tender or unsettled spiritual roots," and then felt a quick response to that thought: "That is not the issue here. The issue is love. All people have doctrinal misperceptions that will someday need correcting." He told of pondering that experience again and again and finally deciding to share it with me—"acknowledging my own inadequacies, and seeking to do what is right." I say, God give us all the courage to be such good disciples of Christ as this dear and now even dearer colleague and thus to make the Church a place of healing and peace-making, not by ignoring differences or errors, but by loving and talking despite them—because we are willing to be merciful.

Emma Lou Thayne is an eminent Mormon poet and essayist and constant laborer for peace. She has a new book about healing and being healed that I hope all will read. Ten years ago, in Exponent II, she shared an example of willing peace-making experienced by her friend Jan Cook:

She and her husband were for three years in Africa, in "deepest Africa, where The Gods Must Be Crazy was filmed." His work had taken them and their three small children there, and any meetings attended were in their own living room with only themselves as participants. By their third Christmas, Jan was very homesick. She confessed this to a good friend, a Mennonite; Jan told her how she missed her own people, their traditions, even snow. Her friend sympathized and invited her to go with her in a month to the Christmas services being held in the only Protestant church in the area, saying that there would be a reunion there of all the Mennonite missionaries on the continent.

It took some talking for Jan to persuade her husband, but there they were being swept genially to the front of the small chapel. It felt good, being in on Christmas in a church again. The minister gave a valuable sermon on Christ; the congregation sang familiar carols with great vitality. Then, at the very end of the meeting, a choir of Mennonite missionaries from all over Africa rose from their benches and made their way to stand just in front of Jan and her family. Without a word, they began singing, without a leader, without music, without text, they sang, "Come, Come Ye Saints." Every verse.

Disbelieving, totally taken by surprise, Jan and her husband drenched the fronts of their Sunday best clothes with tears...
with being carried home on Christmas. . . . When they finished, Jan's friend said simply, "For you. Our gift."

Jan's Mennonite friend had sent to Salt Lake City for the music to the hymn that she knew Jan loved, had had it duplicated and distributed to every Mennonite missionary in Africa; they in turn had learned it very carefully to bring the spirit of Christ to their own reunion where foreigners to their faith would be waiting to hear. 19

I believe that apostles are indeed special witnesses of Christ and his mercy. One of those who served as an apostle during my boyhood, Elder George F. Richards, bore witness about mercy in a general conference right after World War II. Many who heard him had lost sons or husbands in the war, and all had suffered in various ways and had reason to still be bitter. I remember vividly the feelings of fear and hatred that the words Jap and Nazi still evoked in me as a young teenager, conditioned by the propaganda movies and newscasts during and even after the war. Elder Richards chose this time to put aside his prepared general conference manuscript and talk instead about "Love for Mankind." He reviewed the teachings and example of Jesus Christ, "in life and in death, a voluntary gift for us, a manifestation of love that has no comparison." He professed love for all who could hear him, "in the Church or out of the Church, . . . good or bad, whatever their condition of life," and reminded his hearers that in the pre-existence we lived in love together and "ought to love one another just the same here." 20 Then he said, "The Lord has revealed to me, by dreams, something more than I ever understood or felt before." He first told of a dream from forty years before, in which he stood in the presence of the Savior and felt such "love for him that I have not words to explain." Then he told of a dream from just a few years previous, toward the end of the war, in which he and some of his associates were in a courtyard where German soldiers led by Adolf Hitler were preparing weapons to slaughter them. Then a circle was formed, with Hitler and his men on the inside facing inward. Elder Richards dreamed he stepped inside the circle, faced Hitler, and spoke to him "something like this":

"I am your brother. You are my brother. In our heavenly home we lived together in love and peace. Why can we not so live here on the earth?"

And it seemed to me that I felt in myself, welling up in my soul, a love for that man, and I could feel that he was having the same experience, and presently he arose, and we embraced each other and kissed each other, a kiss of affection.

Then the scene changed so that our group was within the circle, and he and his group were on the outside, and when he came around to where I was standing, he stepped inside the circle and embraced me again, with a kiss of affection.

I think the Lord gave me that dream. Why should I dream of this man, one of the greatest enemies of mankind, and one of the wickedest, but that the Lord should teach me that I must love my enemies, and I must love the wicked as well as the good?

Now, who is there in this wide world that I could not love under those conditions, if I could only continue to feel as I felt then? 21

I must confess that, for me, that is hard doctrine. I feel very much like the older brother in Christ's parable, who resented the "injustice" of the father's mercy for the returning prodigal. Hitler unleashed on our world the most extensive and penetrating horror we know about in human history, including a war that killed tens of millions and extermination camps in which there was degradation and suffering beyond our capacity to imagine or even think about. I have read the diaries of those who suffered and have tried to write about them, to bear witness to their anguish. To think of a "kiss of affection" for Adolf Hitler brings me close to nausea.

Yet I want to believe Elder Richards, that humble apostle of the Lord Jesus Christ. I want to believe that even Hitler is my brother, that we once lived in love and peace and that through the power of mercy we can do so again. I want to believe that the very worst is redeemable, that anyone can be healed through mercy—because then I can be too.

NOTES

1. The Merchant of Venice, 4.1.184-200. All Shakespeare references are from The Riverside Shakespeare, eds. G. Blakemore Evans, et al. (Boston Houghton Mifflin, 1974


5. J. Reuben Clark, "Demand for Proper Respect of Human Life," Improvement Era (November 1946) 689

6. For a short and accessible summary of this conviction see Girard's "The Bible Is Not a Myth," Literature and Belief 4 (1984) 3-12. This was a Forum Address given at BYU in the fall of 1983. For a thorough analysis of the Bible and as a testament against violence, see Girard's Things Hidden Since the Foundation of the World (Stanford, CA Stanford University Press, 1987)

7. Nibley develops this insight most thoroughly in chapter 12 ("Good People and Bad People") of Since Cumorah (Salt Lake City Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988), especially 342-46. See also his "If There Must Needs Be Offense," Ensign (July 1971), 54, and "Scriptural Perspectives on How to Survive the Calamities of the Last Days," BYU Studies 25 (Winter 1985) 7-27.


9. The First Presidency, One Hundred and Twelfth Annual Conference of the Church of Jesus Christ (Salt Lake City Deseret Book, 1942), 95

10. Hamlet, 5.2.213-21

11. Hamlet, 3.1.57

12. King Lear, 4.3.22-3

13. King Lear, 4.3.42-6

14. Quoted in Newsweek, 28 October 1991, 80

15. Andre Du Laurens, A Dissertation of the Preservation of Sight, of Melancholy Diseases, of Rhume, and of Old Age (London Felix Kingston, 1599). 103

16. William Vaughan, Approved Directions for Health, both Naturall and Spirituall, 4th ed. (London T. S. for Roger Jackson, 1612), 89

17. King Lear, 4.6.149


20. George F. Richards, Improvement Era (November 1946) 694

21. Richards, 758
TO SEE OURSELVES
AS OTHERS SEE US

By Noel de Nevers

I have lived in Utah for twenty-five years. I like it here; I plan to stay. What I will discuss are annoyances for me but which have apparently proven to be obstacles for others.

I am not normally a severe critic of life here. I am often part of the group trying to "sell Utah" to prospective new faculty members for the University of Utah. I can give the "pro Utah" talk on short notice, but my role in this piece is to give the bad news as clearly and plainly as I can.

Most of this talk is based on anecdotal evidence. Educated people are skeptical of anecdotal evidence; it is not comparable to the results of careful study and controlled tests. However, our most recent U.S. president, who is very popular in Utah, raised the anecdote-as-a-substitute-for-facts to an art form, so I assume anecdotal evidence will be accepted here. In any event, while my points may be exaggerations of Mormonism, and I know there are exceptions, what follows presents the perceptions of many non-Mormons in Utah. And perceptions are, in many ways, as real as facts.

NON-LDS CHILDREN

It is fairly easy for adults to deal with most of the problems in Utah, but it's harder for children. Over half of the University of Utah faculty is non-LDS; most of my colleagues are non-LDS. Most of my close friends are faculty members, so I live on a non-Mormon island in the midst of a Mormon sea. But my three children attended Salt Lake public schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade. Every day they had to leave their non-Mormon island and sink or swim in the Mormon sea.

They all had troubles with the LDS issue. My children had Mormon friends in grammar school, but that ended about the start of junior high when the Mormon children became involved in the lock-step program of their church. LDS children all go to Primary and Boy Scouts together, all have the same lessons at family home evening, and do the same things on Sunday. If some children are not in that program, then they are not part of the group. My children are adults now; they all have friends from childhood, but none has a single close Mormon friend.

Non-Mormon children are exposed to LDS proselyting efforts. Adults can brush these aside easily, but it's harder for children who do not know what we know, and who are eager to please. Any religion where everyone is a missionary is sure to put proselyting pressure on non-member children. That is a serious concern for non-Mormon parents.

My son was deprived of the benefits of Boy Scouts because there were no functioning non-Mormon Boy Scout troops in our neighborhood, and one could hardly put a non-Mormon child in the hands of a Mormon Scout troop. (If you see no problem there, consider putting your son in a Scout troop run by some other highly proselyting religion.) Our girls, on the other hand, had a worthwhile experience in the Girl Scouts because this organization made the conscious decision not to be taken over by the churches.

In high school, my children found that it was much harder for non-Mormons to get into things like pep club than it was for Mormons. If my kids had been the most qualified, then not being Mormons would not have kept them out. But since they were only about as good as the average kid who got in, it did. Adolescence is a hard time for everyone; it's harder if one is part of a disenfranchised and excluded minority.

My daughter's experience in the A Cappella Choir at East High School may illustrate the problem. Our A Cappella Choir is a credit course at a public high school in the United States. It involved singing in public, for which attendance was required, and which affected the students' grades. For the public appearances, a costume had to be selected. The choice was made on the basis that "the boys should buy dark suits, so they
can use them on their missions!” Some of the public appearances turned out to be three per Sunday for six to eight weeks in the fall, all at LDS ward houses. At these public presentations the sacrament was passed to the choir; those who did not partake were a source of wonder to the majority who saw no conflict in taking communion in a church as part of a class activity in a public high school.

I feel strongly that children should go away from home to college; it is an important part of growing up. When it came time to send our children to college, we had to send them out of Utah. For them the University of Utah would have been a continuation of Wasatch, Bryant, and East schools. Most states have more than one state university or university campus so that if one is across the street from your house, you can send your children to the other. But in Utah all except the University of Utah are almost totally Mormon. Asking my children to go to any of those schools would be like sending them to seminary. In this case a secular college education meant paying out-of-state or private school tuition. When I had three children in college, that hurt a lot.

It was good for them to go away. One came back after graduation and told me, “I don’t hate the Mormons anymore!” She found out that other people have as many faults as the Mormons. Two of the three have settled in Salt Lake City, so sending them away to college helped them adjust to life in Utah.

ADULT GENTILES

FOR adults, I think the biggest problem is isolation. Mormon neighbors are not friendly; they are simply busy. If you ask non-Mormons if they have Mormon friends, most often they report having one. On discussion, however, it becomes clear that this is really a friendly acquaintance. It’s rare that Mormons and non-Mormons become close. The demands on Mormons’ time make it impossible for them to be friends on the same basis that other people are. If there is not a critical mass of non-Mormons in your neighborhood, then you are not part of the it. When there is a neighborhood problem that needs concerted action, that action will be directed through the LDS priesthood quorum and non-members will not be involved.

One anecdote tells a lot. We used to be on the substitute list for a monthly, sociable, low-key bridge group. We played on about the same level as the other members, so we enjoyed it when we were invited. The group eventually died out. The reason was that they made the mistake of inviting too many LDS neighbors who were in the same ward. Then the usual discussion between hands and over dessert came to center on the ward to the exclusion of the non-Mormons.

At the university we do not see much job discrimination (except for the president’s job where, until now, non-Mormons did not need to apply) But off campus one hears of considerable discrimination. Most of it is in the form of the bishop seeing to it that the ward incompetent is kept and/or promoted so he can keep his wife and family fed, even if that deprives a more able and/or hard-working person of the job or promotion. I said this was anecdotal, and these are the anecdotes non-Mormons tell about Mormons.

The attitude toward women in the Mormon church is especially galling. They don’t even have any say in who is head of the Relief Society. Women do as men tell them. The Mormon world view sees the only proper role for women as wives and mothers. The Church is intolerant of women who seek other goals. As an example of this intolerance, a Mormon co-worker told a woman friend, “I don’t understand why you are working. You have a husband who has a good job. You are taking a job away from some man who has a family to support!” Consider the possibility that one of your daughters may find herself, by choice or by necessity, attempting to make a career in business or the professions and may encounter such an attitude in her boss. The Mormon view that a woman who has an exciting, contributing career is a failure if she is unmarried or is married without children deems women whose intellectual horizons extend beyond dishes, laundry, and diapers I understand things are changing, but at present the change is more obvious from the inside than the outside.

Some non-Mormons are offended by the Mormon belief in their own moral superiority often repels non-Mormons. Here I have three anecdotes. When our children were small, a Mormon acquaintance discovered that we were not providing an educational religion for them. She was appalled and asked how we thought they could grow up to be moral people without religion. We explained that we saw no evidence that religious people were more virtuous than non-religious people. Ignoring our answer, she then asked if we would let her take over the religious education of our children. In return, I asked her if she would give the religious education of our children over to us. She found that an outrageous suggestion but did not think that her suggestion had been equally outrageous.

My second anecdote concerns the junior senator from Utah. He was quoted in the LDS SMUGNNESS
press to the effect that it was proper for a convicted felon to be given a shortened stay in prison because he was a good Church member. I guess he could not countenance the idea that a good Church member could have done the evil things of which that man had been convicted, or at least was less to blame as would be a non-Church member.

My third anecdote concerns Mark Hofmann. He had a Mormon upbringing, completed his mission, and was active in his ward until he was forced to move out of it by imprisonment. After his preliminary hearing, the judge reportedly told people that Hofmann was an atheist. How would Mormons feel if someone who was raised an atheist, and had always publicly spoken in favor of atheism, committed crimes like Hofmann's and after his trial the judge spread the word that he was really a Mormon?

Now that I have said all these things, let me remind you that I plan to continue living here. Since I do not wish to be visited by the Danites, I should end on an upbeat note. Most likely, the reason I was asked to share these views is that in 1970 I wrote and privately distributed a three-page piece titled, "Suggestions to Outsiders Moving to Utah—A Purely Personal View," which concerned some of the themes covered in this paper. In that piece I said, "A sociological and historical examination of Mormon beliefs will help you understand and appreciate some of the things you see around you. Many things which might previously have offended you will now strike you as understandable and perhaps amusing."

When the piece was distributed, my Mormon colleague J. D. Williams chastised me because he thought those words constituted making fun of someone's religion. That was twenty years ago. I do not think he would make the same criticism now; we are both twenty years older. But at the time he and many other Mormons were very sensitive about anyone making fun of any aspect of their religion.

Currently one can buy the wonderful cartoon books by Pat Bagley and Calvin Grondahl which make pointed fun of Mormons and Mormonism. The play Saturday's Voyeur lampoons Mormons and draws big crowds, including many Mormons. Periodicals like Sunstone and Dialogue regularly print humorous commentary on Mormon beliefs and practices. I consider this a worthwhile development. Being able to laugh at yourself is a sign of maturity. The more Mormons are able to chuckle about the foibles of Mormonism, the less severe the problems I have mentioned will be. We would make real progress if there could be a person in the Church hierarchy who would publicly express a humorous view of Mormonism, one who could fill the position that has been vacant since the death of J. Golden Kimball in 1938.

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LIGHTER MINDS

FIVE KINDS OF MORMONS

By Robert Kirby

Directly in the middle are Genuine Mormons. The study was able to identify only fourteen Genuine Mormons in the entire world, although all Mormons think this is the kind of Mormon they are.

AFTER MORE THAN thirty-eight years, five countries, a dozen states, and approximately fifty wards, my study identified five different types of Mormons: Liberal Mormons, Genuine Mormons, Conservative Mormons, Orthodox Mormons, and Nazi Mormons.

ROBERT KIRBY is associate editor of the Utah County Journal. Between 1973-75, he served six kinds of missions in Uruguay An earlier version of this essay appeared in the Utah County Journal

LIBERAL MORMONS

Liberal Mormons comprise the broadest category of Mormons. Regardless of temporal politics, L.M.s are considered liberal by virtue of their "odd" or non-conformist notions about Mormonism. Unofficial Church policy and general membership consensus is that they are all going to hell.

Traditionally, L.M.s vote anywhere to the left of the Republican Party. On the average they have 4.9 children—a token effort in the Church's unspoken policy of Mormonizing the world through reproduction. L.M.s, when they pay it, pay tithing haphazardly with literally no idea of whether it's 10 percent or not.

Liberal Mormons are also comprised of anyone who doesn't go to church regularly or even at all and still believes the gospel to be essentially true. L.M.s who don't go to church resent being called "less-active" since the reason they don't go to church in the first place is because other Mormons there tend to be less-active themselves; although by Liberal Mormon definition this is more of a cerebral thing than an attendance thing. L.M.s do not believe that every word that falls from the lips of a general authority represents the actual, personal opinion of Jesus Christ.

A trait singular to Liberal Mormons is their love of baiting normally complacent Mormons with such stimulating statements as "We used to live polygamy because Joseph Smith was a Capricorn."

Female L.M.s also think it's highly astute of them to repeatedly point out the anatomical differences in the sexes as a subtle indicator of true priesthood eligibility. Hopeless Liberal Mormons like to think they could read the mind of God if they could only get a doctorate in something obscure and useless like Mesozoic Menstrual Studies.

Faith and obedience are onerous things to most Liberal Mormons, who demand human explanations for virtually everything with which they don't agree. If pressed hard enough, most Liberal Mormons would explain the veil placed over our eyes at birth to be the real product of sexism, cronyism, conservatism, or just plain old BYU-lism. It never occurs to L.M.s that their intellectual contrariness may be the cross they are required to bear in lieu of a Word of Wisdom or a tithing problem. L.M.s would argue gospel doctrine with an angel, the burning bush, or even another flood.

L.M.s tend to worship most diligently at the altar of their own opinion.

GENUINE MORMONS

Directly in the middle of the Mormon population are Genuine Mormons. Little is known of G.M.s because they are so rare. The study was able to identify only fourteen Genuine Mormons in the entire world including Provo. Four live in the United States with two living in Utah. Three live in South America and one each lives in Spain, France, Samoa, and China. There was a G.M. living in England last year, but she died. No Genuine Mormons live in either Idaho or California. The remaining G.M.s are the Three Nephites and John the Beloved, all
of whom were unavailable for purposes of this study.

Genuine Mormons are practically invisible because of their low-key approach to the gospel. That and because they are rarely found at home, almost always being off helping others through some trial or other.

Not only have G.M.s received a spiritual confirmation of the truthfulness of the gospel, they have developed it into a personally applicable plan totally unlike the banzai sales tactics taught at the MTC. G.M.s operate out of love instead of guilt. They rarely make a fuss about anything and when they do, God is usually on their side to the point where cities full of other Mormon types get covered by mountains or swallowed by seas.

Genuine Mormons have 2.4 children; the relatively low number results from the fact that eight of the fourteen have no children or have never married. Among those who did marry, the average number of children rose to 5.5.

G.M.s pay tithing and then some. And then some more. Some of it, 10 percent at least, goes to the Church.

Despite the low number of certifiable G.M.s, nearly all Mormons think this is the kind of Mormon they are.

CONSERVATIVE MORMONS

In reality, most Mormons fall into the Conservative Mormon group. These are the plump, short-haired Republican types with flowered dresses, suits, and bad breath that fill chapels each Sunday. They comprise 71.6 percent of the total Church membership, of which 99.1 percent were born into the Church, most within pot-luckng distance of BYU.

C.M.s can generally be swayed by a logical argument. Sometimes they rely on the Spirit to sort out gospel mysteries and multi-level marketing plans. They seem prone, however, to learning the gospel through grinding repetition, which may explain how they can sit through yet another lesson on the Spirit to sort out gospel mysteries and heartfelt testimonies on the significance of soap.

O.M.s will sometimes make tons of money off the gullibility of other Mormons who believe a lifetime of honest tithe paying has blessed them with a keen eye for such safe multi-level marketing plans as “How to be a Melchizedek Priesthood Robber Baron” or “Loot Thy Neighbor.” Despite strong popular belief to the contrary, this category of Mormon contains the highest number of convicted felons.

O.M.s are big on gospel trappings: temple tie-tacks, missionary name tags, and vinyl, American Tourister-size scripture covers. They adorn their homes with portraits of obscure general authorities and tole-painted crafts made in Relief Society. Slathered with primary drawings and meeting schedules, the refrigerators in the homes of O.M.s look like religious koaks.

Name dropping is a trait quite common to O.M.s who believe the veracity of any story or rumor, no matter how outlandish, can be sealed up to truth by the inclusion of a general authority’s name, as in, “Yup, I heard tell President Thomas S. Monson shoots a .300 Savage. Good enough for me then, I guess.”

Left to their own devices, O.M.s would make a gospel ordinance out of bringing dry cereal to church in Tupperware bowls in much the same way they’ve made the right hand more sacred than the left for purposes of taking the sacrament.

O.M.s believe that 100 percent church attendance is mandatory for a celestial glory. They would not miss the practice hymn for the death of a relative. They would not lick a postage stamp on Fast Sunday.

NAZI MORMONS

Nazi Mormons comprise roughly 8 percent of the Church’s population. They seem more prolific and tend to congregate in particular wards, although this may actually be a misperception arising from the fact that N.M.s tend to be incredibly verbose and annoying, thereby creating the illusion of numbers.

Nazi Mormons believe BYU is not only God’s university, but that He is somehow also an alumnus. Nazi Mormons hang flags, wear badges, and sport license plates all adorned with a block letter “Y”—known in L.M. circles as the “Mormon swastika.”

Nazi Mormons are prone to long-winded and weepy testimony meeting claims about things that cannot be proven either in the world of science, logic, or even the scriptures. Roughly 45 percent of testimony meetings Church-wide are taken up by N.M.s claiming they were spared a particular trial by virtue of their garments, a rolled up copy of the Ensign, or the influence of a junior high school seminary teacher.

Nazi Mormons believe partaking of the sacrament with the left hand is displeasing to God. Only vitamin-enriched white bread should be used for the sacrament, and no N.M. would ever bring anything other than the time-honored and traditional staple of Cheerios to church to keep small children quiet. Froot Loops, Doritos, and M&Ms are for the less faithful.

Nazi Mormons believe that Diet Coke is the same thing as heroin, but not as bad as self-mutilation. French kissing, even within the bounds of marriage, is unwholesome and quite possibly grounds for a bishop’s court.

Nazi Mormons pay tithing based on their gross income, including the things they receive from the bishop’s storehouse. N.M.s are also big on blessings—not so much the actual blessing itself but rather the attendant sub-ordinance of telling everyone about it.

Families are central to Nazi Mormons, who have an average of 11.9 children. This perhaps stems from an over-eager interpretation of Church counsel that families are forever, coupled with a fundamental N.M. desire to stay in constant practice. Also, N.M.s believe that all birth control including the rhythm method is of the devil and his influence, commonly referred to by the rest of the world as common sense. A counterbalance of Nazi Mormons is that N.M.s by their very overbearing nature tend to raise up a surprising number of Liberal Mormon and even non-Mormon offspring.

Nazi Mormons not only believe everything a general authority utters, they will frequently take these counsels and improve on them. For example, if no single dating until the age of sixteen is good, no single dating until the draft age is even better.

Imitative to a fault, Nazi Mormons are prone to adopting what is known as “the general authority lift” when offering prayers or testimonies. While apparently an imitative
effort to sound spiritual, in reality it merely serves to make them sound like Fred Flintstone with his calling and election made sure.

The study showed that upper-level N.M.s would not lick their own lips on Fast Sunday.

CONCLUSION

STRONG arguments for the existence of other types of Mormons may arise. It should be noted, however, that these additional types are in truth merely sub-categories of the five basic Mormon types. Publication of this study in other journals caused the temporary emergence of an additional sub-group that clamored for its own classification: Outraged Mormons. It was determined, however, that the Outraged Mormon was in reality a sub-category of either Nazi or Orthodox Mormons, depending on the level of outrage.

An important thing to remember when considering the five Mormon types is that they are not intractable. Mormons as a homogenous group tend to migrate between the five types, depending largely on peer pressure, financial obligations, and whether they are taking the proper dosages of prescribed medications.

Rarely, however, do Mormons fluctuate more than one or two categories. For example, there are no indications of Nazi Mormons ever becoming Liberal Mormons. Strong evidence exists, however, of the possibility that Genuine Mormons may become something other-worldly that the study was not able to identify properly and may, at a later date, explain why there are so few of them.

Finally, Liberal Mormons are the only Mormon group to the left of traditional Mormon conservatism. This can be misleading since it implies that all Liberal Mormons are also politically liberal. Not true. The study only found that Liberal Mormons are lumped together in a category by the last three Mormon types who traditionally have been unable to relate to anyone who does not follow the mainstream.

ADDITIONAL READINGS

"Three Types of LDS Hymn Singers"
"Four Kinds of Home Teachers"
"Five Kinds of Bishops"
"One Kind of Returned (Honorably) Missionary"

MONOLOGUES AND DIALOGUES

ON DEATH AND DYING

By Robert A. Rees

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Thinking that we will be welcomed home by being kissed and embraced by our Mother and Father not only takes the sting out of death, but it makes death even inviting.

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When the blackbird flew out of sight,  
It marked the edge  
Of one of many circles.  
—Wallace Stevens, "Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"

It's not that I don't want to die; I just don't want to be there when it happens.  
—Woody Allen

DEATH IS ONE of those mysteries we never completely comprehend, no matter how philosophically we regard it or how unctuously we talk about it. For all the assurances we give to those who have lost loved ones and all the words we speak so confidently and comfortingly at funerals, death remains a mystery.

I vividly remember my first encounter with death. I was seven years old and living in Durango, Colorado. An old Indian who was a friend of my stepfather's had been stabbed to death in a fight and my stepfather took me to see the body. I had gone to see the Indian on occasion and even ran some errands for him. He sold medicinal herbs and I remember being impressed with the strange aromas emanating from his room and the fat wad of dollar bills he unfolded when he paid me. He was a large man, and I was rather frightened of him. When we arrived at his house, we saw his body stretched out on a table. He looked somehow less intimidating

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ROBERT REES is a former editor of Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought and was recently released as the bishop of a single adult ward in Los Angeles.
than when he was alive, but more frightening I was aware that something terrible had happened. Whatever it was, I realized that it was final.

When I was seventeen I had a conversation about death with my father. Like most teenagers, I was full of truth and wisdom when it came to such weighty matters as death. Our conversation went something like this:

Me: I don't understand why people are afraid to die.
Dad: What do you mean?
Me: Well, death is just a passage from one state to another. A simple change. What is there to be afraid of if you are living right?
Dad: (Who had been through a number of battles and near brushes with death in the South Pacific and who had had considerable experiences with not living right): When it comes right down to it, everyone is afraid to die.
Me: I'm not.
Dad: You mean if you were driving down the highway tonight and your car went out of control and was about to go over a cliff, you wouldn't be afraid?
Me: Nope!
Actually, even though I didn't admit it, he had me there. I realized I would be afraid. I had contemplated death as something so removed and distant that I didn't really have to worry about it; I hadn't thought of dying then! Once, years later, my car did go out of control on an icy Wyoming highway. As it spun round and round in the middle of the road and came perilously close to going over the edge, I was plenty scared of dying.

I had thought of all this when my father died several years ago. He had come to live with us when his cancer had made it difficult for him to care for himself. Due to his illness, he was behaving badly and when I talked with him about it, in a typical rage of hurt and pride, he packed up everything he had, drove straight back to his home in Portland, and refused to speak to me for several months.

About six months after this my brother Bill called to tell me that Dad was in the hospital and was not expected to live. I flew up the next day and went to the hospital to see him. I hardly recognized him. His six-foot-three-inch, two-hundred-pound body was reduced to a bag of bones and his always-sharp mind moved in and out of a fog. That night I wrote the following lines:

My father once was strong as an oak, his hands hard as ironwood, his mind tough as mesquite. Now his arms and legs are brittle branches, his fingers twisted twigs with knotted joints. The thin brush of his mind tumbles in the wind.

As full of anger as he sometimes was, I always thought that when his time came he would “rage against the dying of the light,” but he was as peaceful that day as I thought I would be when I was seventeen.

The last time I saw him alive was Easter Sunday morning, 1984. Driving to the hospital while it was still dark, I was preoccupied with my father’s death. But then, looking around me, I suddenly became aware of the Resurrection. It seemed as if all nature was straining to bear witness of the persistence of life. The night had been washed with rain and everything seemed new and alive. Sitting by father’s side I wrote these words:

Driving to the hospital this morning, I saw a world ablaze with blossom—boxwood and cherry, dogwood and elderberry; lilac, sumac, apple and pear, blackberry blueberry, blackcap raspberry, black walnut, hazelnut, pecan and peach, and purple-blue morning glories climbing everywhere—all the trees and vines and bushes, expanding, exploding, hoisting toward light with the fullness of this new day.

Each spring Christ calls all the trees and all the flowers, and all the world’s wild weeds, and some new spring morning he will call my father forth, and my father will come, breaking through planks, shouldering through earth, alive as new grass and strong as young trees rising into the sun.

It is dark outside and spring has come.

I watch my father’s dying body, and with him I await the morning.

Watching my father dying that day, I had an eerie sense that in some way I was seeing myself there in his deathbed. Once he was gone, I realized, there would be no generation between me and death. I would be the next to meet Death at his appointed hour. I saw myself some thirty or forty years into the future and my children surrounding the bed, waiting patiently “For that last Onset—when the King/Be witnessed—in the Room,” as Emily Dickinson says so ironically about her own death. Like her, I sometimes “feel a funeral in my brain.”

At times since my father’s death, looking into mirrors or passing windows, I see his reflection looking back at me. It is his face and mine or his in mine, I can’t really tell, but somehow it is an image that seems to foreshadow my own death.

Recently I figured that I have between 1 and 13,000 days left to live. I hope it is closer to the big number, but however long it is, I know that day will come. I think I have reconciled myself to the fact that it is coming, but, like Woody Allen, I don’t particularly want to be there when it does.

When I think of dying, I am reminded of the lovely story in the Midrash about the death of Moses. As the story goes, when Moses discovered that it was his time to die, he put on sackcloth, drew a circle on the ground, and said to God, “I will not stir from this spot until You reverse Your decree.” Moses’ prayers and lamentations were so powerful that heaven and earth trembled, but God would not change his mind. Moses continued to plead and to try to persuade God, reminding him what an important role he, Moses, had played in the unfolding of sacred history, how he had seen God in the burning bush and learned the Law directly from God on Mt. Sinai and then taught it to God’s people. He begged, “Do not now hand me over to the Angel of Death.” Although unswayed by Moses’ passionate pleading, God reassured him by promising that he, God himself, would attend to Moses’ burial. The Midrash text recounts Moses’ reaction: “Moses stood up and sanctified himself like the angels. God Himself came down from the very heights of heaven to take away the soul of Moses. And God took away the soul of His servant Moses with a kiss. And God wept.”

I like this story not only because it shows God as such a tender being but because it suggests that we each might be taken back into God’s presence in this manner. In fact, it is not difficult to imagine that we might have left the presence of our Heavenly Father and Mother in a similar way: when it came time for us to travel to “this dark world and wide,” they kissed us goodbye and then they and we went together.

This brings to mind the legend of “The Song of the Salmon” told by the Lummi Indians of the American Northwest. According to this legend, when God created the earth he wept, and his tears formed the rivers
and streams that in turn created lakes and oceans. God then placed the Fish People in the rivers and streams and commanded them to go out to the Great Waters and prepare themselves to take care of the generations that were to come after them.

Each year when it comes time for the Fish People to return to their headwaters, the mother in the sea calls them all together with her beautiful song and when they are gathered, she kisses each one on the mouth and by that kiss they know exactly how to get back to the place of their beginnings.5

Somehow, thinking that we will be welcomed home by being kissed and embraced by our Mother and Father not only takes the sting out of death, but it makes death even inviting. When that moment comes and we are embraced by light, enfolded in the arms of pure love, we may feel as the new mother felt when she held her first-born infant in her arms. She said, “I felt as if I were embracing the Universe.” Perhaps that’s what we really do when we die—we embrace and are embraced by the universe, and in that embrace we receive the witness that we will live forever.

The Church

Every day was a nail. Not in the hands or feet. There was no cross, no symbolism. The nails punctured the vital parts where blood is common. And secret. As in a room full of Elders making judgement. A sort of love without foreplay. A solemn climax. I wanted none of it, only out.

—Timothy Liu

GIVE & TAKE

SHARPER THAN A TWO-EDGED SWORD

By William J. Hamblin

The major critique of Warfare in the Book of Mormon, (ed Stephen D. Ricks and William J. Hamblin, [FA R.M.S. and Deseret Book, 1990], reviewed by Mark Thomas in Sunstone 15:3, 63) is that “its prime goal is to affirm the historicity of the Book of Mormon by comparing it to the ancient Near East and Mesoamerica,” and that we “attempt to demonstrate that the Book of Mormon matches an ancient setting better than a nineteenth-century setting.” Unfortunately, the reviewer seems to have misunderstood the purpose of the volume. Far from attempting to “prove” that the Book of Mormon is an ancient document, we explicitly state that, for the sake of argument, the contributors are assuming the book is ancient. “For the present research we have taken the view, as a working hypothesis, that the Book of Mormon is what it claims to be—an ancient history… Furthermore, we are examining the book under the assumption that the text is amenable to historical analysis” (Welch introduction, 19-20). A person may believe that this enterprise is without merit. However, the book’s editors should at least be given credit for being aware that it is a logical fallacy to claim to somehow have proven to be true what we explicitly stated we are assuming to be true.

In my opinion, short of finding new types of evidence (e.g., an inscription explicitly mentioning Book of Mormon cities, or a first draft of the Book of Mormon in Sidney Rigdon’s handwriting), it is not possible to prove or disprove that the Book of Mormon is either an ancient or a nineteenth-century document by any historical methodology. At best we can examine relative plausibility and probability. If one wishes to discuss divergent models for the origin of the Book of Mormon, the proper methodology to be followed is

1. Assume that the book is an authentic ancient record and analyze it from this perspective (which we have done in Warfare).
2. Assume that the book is a nineteenth-century document and analyze it from this perspective.
3. Compare and contrast the successes, failures, and relative explanatory power of the results of these studies.
4. Attempt to discover which model is the most plausible explanation for the origin of the text.

For the most part, the studies in Warfare are limited to phase 1 of this methodology.

Mark Thomas is disappointed that Warfare ignores the nineteenth-century evidence concerning warfare in the Book of Mormon, while he himself ignores an explicit statement on the subject in John Welch’s introduction to the volume. “More could be done in examining and comparing nineteenth-century material… Comparisons to warfare in Napoleon’s day or in the Spaulding Manuscript could be ventured by others” (19). Thus, rather than ignoring or suppressing nineteenth-century evidence as Thomas claims, our book invites others to examine it.

What, then, does Warfare in the Book of Mormon “prove”? The final two sentences of the volume read, “Hugh Nibley has called the study of military affairs in the Book of Mormon ‘a rigorous test’ to the historical claims of the book. In light of the numerous papers in this volume, we can say that the Book of Mormon does indeed pass the test” (496). Let me clarify what was in my mind when I wrote those sentences. A fundamental thesis question of our study can be expressed as: “Can the descriptions of warfare in the Book of Mormon be understood in light of ancient
Near Eastern and Mesoamerican military practices? When I wrote that the Book of Mormon "does indeed pass the test," I meant that the answer to our thesis question is yes; the descriptions of warfare in the Book of Mormon do indeed make a great deal of sense from an ancient perspective. However, I do not believe that this somehow proves the historicity of the Book of Mormon. It may, however, show that the position that the Book of Mormon is an authentic ancient text is plausible and rational in this regard.

Thomas makes a great deal of the fact that the terms "freemen" and "kingmen" were used to describe oath-taking Patriots and Tories during the Revolutionary period, and seemingly concludes that the Book of Mormon must derive from the nineteenth century. What this example really shows is that Joseph translated the Book of Mormon into nineteenth-century English. No one has ever disputed this fact. The words which Joseph translated as "freemen" and "kingmen" could just have easily been translated as "democrats" and "monarchists." One might even venture to assert that every word in the Book of Mormon (excepting proper names) was indeed used by English speakers of the early nineteenth century. But does this show that the original text of the Book of Mormon derives from the nineteenth century? By Thomas's method we could also demonstrate that since every word in the King James translation of the Bible (KJV) can also be found in the English of the early seventeenth century, there is therefore no Greek or Hebrew original from which that translation derives.

Thomas also misconstrues my argument concerning the steel bow. He claims that "the reader must . . . conclude that the Book of Mormon contains serious historical errors and mistranslations" because he maintains I believe that "Nephi's reference to his steel bow must be a mistranslation." What I specifically stated is that the word "steel bow" is used in the King James Version of the Bible to translate the Hebrew phrase "bronze bow" (nechushah), and that "Nephi's steel bow" could thus be Joseph Smith's Jacobean English translation for an original Hebrew "bronze bow." (373-74) I do not maintain that this is somehow a mistranslation. If my original statement was unclear, let me elaborate: There was an ancient Near Eastern bow which was reinforced with bronze, called the "bronze bow" in Hebrew. For whatever reasons, the KJV translators used the English phrase "steel bow" to describe this weapon (2 Samuel 22:35; Psalm 18:34; Job 20:24). Thus, in Joseph Smith's day, the phrase "steel bow" was the commonly accepted English term used to describe a particular ancient Near Eastern bronze reinforced composite bow, and should not be equated with late Medieval and early Renaissance steel bows. Indeed, I doubt very much that Joseph Smith even knew of the existence of such weapons. Even if one insists on seeing everything in the Book of Mormon as deriving solely from Joseph's imagination, it is almost certain that Joseph got the term "steel bow" from the KJV Bible (374 and notes).

Those who accept an ancient model for the origin of the text seem to ultimately have the methodologically easier task. They can make room for the existence of nineteenth-century words, phrases, and ideas in the book; Joseph Smith lived in the early nineteenth century and translated the volume for a nineteenth-century audience. It is to be expected that he would therefore use terms and ideas which were meaningful in that context. Those accepting the nineteenth-century model, on the other hand, have a serious problem accounting for the numerous minute parallels to ancient features of the book, which Joseph Smith would not likely have known.

**SWORDS INTO PRUNING HOOKS**

By Mark D. Thomas

The procedures and methodology of the various articles in Hamblin's book are varied. I find the methodology proposed by Welch (quoted above) to be quite useful. However, Welch is interested in more than placing the Nephites in an ancient historical setting for the sake of interpretation. The book helps in "assaying the historicity of this record" (17). Hamblin's conclusion is that the Book of Mormon passes the "rigorous test" of the historical claims of the book (492). However, the contents of the above essay indicate that his conclusion is dubious. If one suggests that the current translation of "steel bow" for a brass bow is acceptable because it is traditional, I do not know what constitutes mistranslation. He agreed that the KJV mistranslated the term for brass bow. But supposedly Joseph Smith is justified in using it. Then, current translations of the Bible should also find such a mistranslation acceptable. This is the absurd conclusion we are led to by this logic. The Book of Mormon came to correct biblical errors; in Hamblin's view, its real mission is to perpetuate them. Is this part of the "rigorous test"? Both the book and Hamblin's essay indicate that the methodology does not allow for a real test. He excluded, a priori, the potential for the Book of Mormon to fail the "test." The methodology guarantees the outcome.

What the book provides is not a test of historicity, but a proposed historical setting for interpretation. On this latter level, the book does an admirable job. For example, Hamblin points out that wooden clubs with imbedded pieces of obsidian were the Near World equivalent of swords. I can accept this as the referent to the term "sword" in the Book of Mormon if I believe it's ancient. But I do not think this provides any kind of test for antiquity.

I am tired of such "tests." Let us read the Book of Mormon for what it is: a book with a powerful spiritual message, as Rick's and Hamblin's book demonstrates so well. But that message must be grasped in a nineteenth-century context, because the text is in the language of Joseph Smith. Anyone who neglects the language of Joseph Smith in interpreting the Book of Mormon does so at his or her own interpretive peril. The book claims to be an ancient text that addresses a modern audience. That audience is ever present in its authorial mind and interpretive asides. In conclusion, just as one must begin interpretation of the New Testament by understanding thoroughly the early Greek texts, so one must begin interpreting the Book of Mormon by understanding the language and theology of its original latter-day audience. Then, if people wish to speculate about ancient precedents, they will do so with greater precision.

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Mark D. Thomas has published several Sunstone articles examining the nineteenth-century context of the Book of Mormon.
Reviews

Stopping the Flow
And the Desert Shall Blossom
By Phyllis Barber
University of Utah Press, 1991, 281 pages, $23.95

Reviewed by Levi S. Peterson.

Phyllis Barber once told me she didn't want the label of a Mormon writer. I hope she has now resigned herself to that label. Her recent book of short stories, The School of Love, also published by the University of Utah Press, has Mormon material in it. And now Barber has written a novel in which the Mormon flavor is distinct.

This novel is also western. If anything, it is more western than Mormon. Some writers are ashamed to be considered western. Literary fashion, like other kinds of fashion, has its geographic centers, and those centers aren't in the mountain West. That doesn't matter. Good writing is irresistible and has a way of appearing in unauthorized places. Phyllis Barber is among the good writers of the world. Her book is excellent fiction. I'm glad she wrote it, and I'm glad the University of Utah Press published it.

I'm impressed by Barber's handling of the conventions of the novel. In this book, style is functional and unobtrusive, yet scented with emotion. Description is sharp, clean, and poetic, and dialogue rings true to the cadences of actual speech. A flexible action allows for an amicable, illuminating succession of past and present. Point of view is omniscient, with emphasis upon major characters and a reappearing narrator possessed of a close-to-mystical sensibility.

The action of this novel has a dual interest. It is concerned in part with the construction of the Hoover Dam and in part with a family—a husband and wife and their children—who work out their unhappy destiny amid the heroic, collective activity by which the dam is built. The husband and wife are Alf and Esther Jensen, Mormons from Utah who arrive at the dam site on the Colorado River in the baking heat of the summer of 1931. Though Alf and Esther have been married twenty years, their relationship is tenuous and undefined. Alf has been unable to keep a job, and they have moved from town to town and ended up more than once living with Esther's parents. Now Alf has employment in the company store, and for one of the few times in the history of the family, they enjoy economic stability. Unluckily, their relationship evolves in a painful direction. The natural and social forces set in motion by the conflict between a recalcitrant river and the human beings who intend to dam it energize Alf. Those same forces all but annihilate Esther. It is as if Alf represents the human will to dominate nature and Esther the human cost of dominating rather than cooperating with it.

Barber treats the construction of the dam with such detailed accuracy that her novel belongs to the genre of historical fiction, in which actual and imagined personalities from a past era realistically interact. This is the history she recounts: a coalition of western firms called the Six Companies secure the contract, hire thousands of workers, bulldoze roads, scale cliffs, create a city in the desert, divert tunnels through solid rock, establish an on-site plant for producing concrete, pour the dam in successive layers of concrete five feet deep, and finally, some four years after beginning, convolve the president of the United States for the dedication of the finished structure. Their antagonist is nature. The hot, dusty desert which surrounds them is not benign. Potable water must be transported from far away. Roads and working spaces must be laboriously blasted from cliffs. Workers die from heat exhaustion, engines burn out, trucks plunge over cliffs. Above all, the river is an enemy. For Barber, the Colorado is a living, organic unity, as are the humans who impound its natural flow.

Like Achilles and Hector, the river and the dam builders are worthy opponents. At one moment, the river unpredictably rises 46 feet within a few hours, flushing away men, machines, and construction. This flood contributes to the growing solidarity of not only the dam builders but their dependents and all other onlookers as well. "The teeth in the cogs of each part were biting into the bigger gears, transforming the project into something much larger than anyone had ever witnessed. Six Companies became We. Theirs became Ours, and a common front faced off with The River" (154).

As I say, the heroic endeavor of building the dam affects Alf and Esther Jensen in different ways. For Alf it offers a new lease on life. To him, the very air of the construction site is alive with opportunity. In this frontier-like environment he can slough off his unwanted Mormon inhibitions. He buys company scrip at a discount, redeems it at face value, and lends petty money at a high rate of interest. He buys an expensive suit and a new car. He drinks bootleg liquor and makes a mistress of the widow of a neighbor who is accidentally killed at the dam. He absents himself from home at every opportunity, avoiding at all cost his wife's suffering, accusing eyes.

For Esther, the primitive desert and a society composed of a jostling mixture of races and customs prove unsettling in the extreme. She is poorly prepared for this place. Her body is severely scarred because her dress caught fire when she was a little girl, and desert heat therefore afflicts both her body and spirit beyond the ordinary. She is compulsive about her Mormon way of worshipping God. She feels obliged to adhere to a punctilious list of commandments, and faults her husband and eldest son for failing to do the same. She loves her little daughters but is herself so needy that she seems only marginally adequate in caring for them. During the summer she often retreats to her bed in a state of torpor; in the winter, she wanders the streets of the company town in lethargic indirection. Even in her most energetic moments she feels herself a failure. At one inspired moment, she enlists other women into a committee for procuring a schoolhouse from the Six Companies. However, in the presence of an official, her words...
fail, and one of the women whom she has enlisted speaks up. It is this woman who receives the recognition for the success of their project.

Near the end of the novel Esther has a breakdown. It is New Year’s Day, 1933. Alf has momentarily repented of his neglect of his family and has taken them on a picnic to a viewpoint overlooking the construction site, a gesture which seems only to intensify Esther’s resentment. Minor incidents involving the children quickly evoke an exchange of harsh words between Esther and Alf, and suddenly Esther attacks Alf with flailing hands and pinching fingers and he grips her in a bear hug and throws her to the ground.

It’s a painful, compelling scene, all the more so because Esther never recovers the adult will whose loss she suffers at this moment. Advised and abetted by a company doctor, Alf concludes too quickly she must be committed to the state mental hospital. She doesn’t resist and spends many months incarcerated among the catatonic and bizarre. In the meantime Alf is free to pursue his affair with Serena, the obliging widow. At last Esther’s dutiful second son insists that Alf retrieve Esther from the hospital. She seems neither better nor worse for her stay there. She can groom and dress herself and assist in the domestic duties of their home. But her initiative is gone. Emotionally, she is a child who needs protective supervision.

The novel ends with the dedication of the dam. Alf and Esther are there with most of their children and Serena. Serena sings the national anthem before the crowd while Esther quietly wilts from the excessive heat. Alf takes the suffering Esther home while Serena finds another way. This is symbolic. His marriage with Esther will endure, and Serena will go her separate way. The epic endeavor of building the dam is over, and for Alf life has narrowed from its once heroic scope. A grand moment in the history of human technology has defined their marriage. The ultimate character of their union is this: Esther is an adult child and Alf is her caretaker.

The final paragraph of the novel consists of Esther’s unconscious thoughts likening herself to the waters of the now dammed river. “If they put me in a cup, I’ll evaporate. If they hold me in their hands, I’ll slip through their fingers. It is cool and dark here with my river. Smooth over flat rocks. Fingers of water splitting into channels, finding new paths. There’s always a way through” (281). There are many passages in the novel linking Esther’s health, hope, and courage to the formerly free-flowing waters of the Colorado. As the waters are ultimately dammed, so Esther’s vitality is thwarted and turned back on itself.

At the novel’s beginning Barber has prefixed a quotation from Lao Tzu:

How can a man’s life keep its course  
If he will not let it flow?  
Those who flow as life flows know  
They need no other force...

Such words anticipate a diagnosis of Esther’s illness. They tell us, too, that in Barber’s wise estimation, human contrivance has dammed the flow of humanity’s own health, hope, and courage.

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WARREN REMEMBERS THE CHICKEN COOP

After thirty years, the dry-dank musty stench  
Of feathers rotting, layered in acrid dung,  
Fades

To soft nostalgic folds. The coop (once bedroom  
In the house where Warren’s mother first saw life)  
Squats

Again beneath a scorching August sun.  
Inside that stifling womb, Rhode Island Reds  
Laid  
Clutches in straw strewn pine-frame boxes. Some sat  
Amid the stench to harvest chicks. Others  
Caught  
The mote-thick air with stubby wings and, squawking,  
Flapped from lime caked perches on the wall and  
Made  
Their gooney-landings in the dust each time  
He squeaked the ragged screen door open. There they  
Fought  
To peck at him—it seemed—as if he were  
The morsel of the day for beaks that should have  
Played  
For worms in dusty outdoor yards. But here  
Enclosed, they fed and bred and laid their eggs and  
Sought  
Small, mindless battles in the dark. Their lives  
Became miasmal ghosts of smell that should have  
Stayed  
Embedded in dim, fly specked shreds of paper—  
Exhalations surfacing like fungal  
Rot;  
But after thirty years, the musty stench  
Of feathers molding, layered in acrid dung,  
Fades.

---MICHAEL R. COLLINGS
AN AMBITIOUS ATTEMPT

Utah Art
By Vern Swanson, Robert Olpin, and William Seifrit
Peregrine Smith Books, 1991, $49.95, xii + 252 pages
112 color, 41 black and white illustrations

Reviewed by Linda Jones Gibbs

The publication of Utah Art is the much-awaited magnum opus of the state's visual art history. Its ancestry includes two shorter surveys of Utah art (Alice Merrill Horne’s Devotees and Their Shrines, 1914, and James Haseltine’s 100 Years of Utah Painting, 1965), a pocket size dictionary of Utah art, and a handful of exhibition catalogues that have treated specific eras and individual artists. This volume with its lengthy texts and plentiful, sumptuous color plates brings a new level of completeness to the topic. Utah Art is an ambitious attempt to cover all the artists who have ever practiced in the state and to provide a history of the development of the university art departments, various art centers and museums, and even the gallery scene.

Utah Art begins with an introduction by William H. Gerdts, professor of art history at The City University of New York. Gerdts is not only a highly respected art historian, but the foremost authority on regional American art. His contribution attempts to place the development of Utah art within a national framework and raises some interesting questions concerning Utah's neglect of certain American visual traditions. Gerdts's praise for the book provides that requisite sanction by an outsider (a New Yorker, no less) that Utah always seems to hunger for. Following his own brief encapsulation of Utah art history, Gerdts posits that if there is, indeed, a distinctive quality about Utah art it is an optimistic outlook toward humankind and nature that is intertwined with Mormonism’s belief in inherent human goodness and a desire to better oneself and the environment. It is a provocative observation and one which is overlooked within the major texts.

Gerdts's essay is a detailed chronology of key events in the development of Utah art, a most helpful outline for one wishing to quickly grasp the highlights of the book. This is followed by three major chapters, also chronologically organized. In the first chapter entitled “From Pioneer Painters to Impressionism,” we are given a decade by decade account from 1847 through the 1890s of artistic activities in the state. The author, independent scholar William Seifrit, based his research largely upon newspaper articles dealing with art which he painstakingly siphoned out of every Utah publication of the nineteenth century. His efforts have turned up a wealth of heretofore unpublished anecdotes and descriptions of now lost or unlocated works of art. Seifrit's unearthing of this cache of information is admirable and contributes much new material regarding the early phases of Utah art history, particularly in the reconstruction of individual artists' careers.

Seifrit's writing is highly informative and overflows with factual detail. His account, for example, of George Ottinger's attempts to get a painting exhibited at the Centennial Exhibition makes an interesting point about the efforts of these isolated artists to gain mainstream acceptance. Only on rare occasion does the author's text err as in the case of pioneer artist William Major. Seifrit tells us that “legend has it that he [Major] painted Utah landscapes” (14). Two such paintings of Fillmore and Parowan very much exist in the collection of the LDS Museum of Church History and Art. It is primarily around the plethora of press excerpts that Seifrit weaves his text. While not a surprising approach given his tremendous devotion to the task of extracting the material, it does place unnecessary limitations upon a complex and fascinating portion of Utah art history. Many of the newspaper quotations refer to unlocated works which then cannot be discussed. Thus, there is only an occasional connection between text and imagery, a frustrating situation that occurs throughout the book. Other located works are discussed, but not illustrated. When we are told, for example, that pioneer artist's Sarah Ann Burbage Long's Brigham Young and His Friends is a "must see," why are we then not shown it?

It seems as if there is an aversion throughout the book to including any imagery that ties Utah art to the Mormon experience. (The two were undeniably connected in the nineteenth century.) Some of the most dynamic art produced in pioneer Utah, for example, was C. C. A. Christensen’s panorama which is only mentioned in passing. Intended as it is for a national market, Utah Art deprives the out-of-state reader of seeing some of the state's most evocative imagery. Other Latter-day Saint related art is mentioned such as the sculpted oxen for the baptismal font in the St. George Temple. But this project is curiously lumped together with a decorative advertisement in a barber shop and a Utah landscape by Albert Bierstadt under the phrase "unusual incidents of the decade."

There is no formal analysis of art work. Even when we are told by the chapter title that the first section concludes with impressionism, no mention of that French-derived influence appears. Instead of concluding the era with a celebration of what many consider a high point in Utah art history, when James Taylor Harwood and the art missionaries returned from Paris and enlivened the state with their renewed teaching and artistic skills, we are instead told of artistic and economic decline among the early pioneer artists. This exciting period ends with a whimper instead of a bang.

The second chapter is by Robert S. Olpin, dean of the College of Fine Arts at the University of Utah. Entitled "Tradition and The
Lure of the Modern," this section picks up the story of Utah art at the turn of the century. We are introduced to the premier sculptors Cyrus Dallin, the Borglum bothers, and Mahonri Young who were the first native Utah artists to achieve national fame. Olpin then backtracks to continue the saga of the French-trained artists of the late nineteenth century and discusses the foreign influences they brought back to Utah. As Seifrit before him, Olpin does an admirable job of moving us along the careers of many artists, and both authors succeed in showing the overlaps and influences that resulted among generations of artists.

A self-proclaimed biographer enamored with the stories of peoples' lives, Olpin's text reads much like his comprehensive Dictionary of Utah Art. He devotes a sizeable portion of his writing touting the strength of Utah's women artists and also provides information on such little known Utah arts institutions as "A Modern School of Illustration." He is perhaps most interesting when he interfaces historical context with Utah's artistic development. Yet again, the absence of text-related imagery is sorely missed. For instance, in his treatment of "Great Art in the Great Depression," an example of a WPA mural would have made a significant addition. Of particular interest is Olpin's recounting of the battle in Utah between traditional and modern art implied by the chapter's title. Set against in-state artistic/generational gaps and interwar isolationist politics in America, Olpin lays the beginnings of this struggle between the old and the new that is picked up again in the third chapter. Fascinating reading for anyone involved in Utah art today, it offers historical perspective of a conflict still very much being waged.

Vern G. Swanson, director of the Springville Art Museum, authored the third chapter entitled "The Contemporary Scene." This chapter forcibly takes on the formidable task of charting new territory from 1950 to the present. As elsewhere in the book, however, artist's names are thrown at the reader too fast to be absorbed, and the result is tedious reading that might better have been served in an encyclopedic format. When Swanson asserts that "Utah art at the beginning of the decade [1960s] might be characterized as derivative rather than unique" (194), one can't help but wonder after reading the book when this wasn't the case. However, Swanson's treatment of artists' styles within national and international trends and his fluid discussion of the internal art scene as it was continually effected by the influx of out-of-state artists is sophisticated and inspired writing, rising above the anthological bits and pieces of biography and incidental details that permeate the book. His account of the Art and Belief group that arose among the faculty at BYU in the mid-1960s is a compelling, albeit brief, history of this unique phase in Utah art when a concerted effort was made to merge art with religious ideology. Under the auspices of Dale Fletcher, graduate students Trevor Southey, Dennis Smith, Gary E. Smith, and others formulated much of the foundations for their art today.

Publisher Gibbs M. Smith acknowledges that the book was intended for a "broad audience, not a specialized scholarly audience" (Salt Lake Tribune, 13 October 1991, E6). This does not excuse the fact, however, that no footnotes appear in any of the three chapters which are replete with quotations. The flashy eye-catching cover and coffee table format certainly suggest more a commercial than academic venture. This alone cannot be faulted, but one wonders about the rationale for the choice of the cover image. While it would indeed be a difficult task to choose one representative image of Utah art, I question the use of a fauve-inspired work of the 1930s by a little-known artist, even by Utah standards, executed in a retardaire style that had minor impact in the state. Vern Swanson acknowledges within the text itself that the cover artist, Phillip Barkdull, made his greatest contribution to Utah art as a teacher of design. The image is set within a jazzy hot red-pink border which conjures up a mood quite unlike the one this former resident of Utah calls to mind when reflecting about the state. It is as if a brass band had been brought out when a symphony might have had a more penetrating effect.

The color plates within the book are of a superb quality as are the black and white photographs which include wonderful images of the artists themselves. However, the selection of art works reproduced in full color is at times disappointing. Utah Art is really two books struggling to become one—a history of Utah art and a showcase for the Springville Museum in an attempt to establish it as having the premier collection of Utah art. At the end of the publication is a comprehensive list of all native, emigrant, and itinerant artists who ever worked in Utah followed by a catalogue of the Springville Museum's collection. No secret that the book was largely subsidized by funding raised by the Springville Museum, its publication is in celebration of that institution's eighty-eighth anniversary. This liaison weakens the end product and prevents the book from being the definitive visual statement on Utah art. Of the 112 color plates, 92 are of paintings from the Springville Museum's holdings. While Springville does boast an extremely fine collection, there are numerous examples in the book where a second-rate painting from their collection has been used. There are, for example, significantly superior paintings in other collections by C. C. A. Christensen, Lorus Pratt, James T. Harwood, Maynard Dixon, and Minerva Teichert, to name a few.

Utah Art is a climactic culmination of the previously published taxonomic accounts on the subject by Horne and Haselwitt with its sorting of names, decades, styles, etc. There is much more to be done on the subject than this Vasanian approach in which Utah art is seen as the sum of individual contributions. Such an archetypical documentary methodology treats art as an object with only a tangential relationship to personality and historical context. "Readable" and "scholarly" need not always be at odds nor mutually exclusive. Through deeper probing of the images themselves, the potency of Utah art and the culture from which it emerged and continues to emerge can certainly be enlarged.
All right, it's best to say it up front: Paul Toscano and Cal Grondahl have written and illustrated a book that satirizes a broad spectrum of Mormon traits, popular beliefs, personae, and practices, and they have used as their vehicle the framework of hymns we all know and love. The book contains forty-three "broken" hymns—Toscano stanzas meant to be sung to the tunes of various traditional Protestant, Catholic, and Mormon hymns—each one accompanied by a full-page Grondahl cartoon inspired by the lyrics. Brothers and sisters, is this book irreverent? Insulting? Outrageous?

Yes. That's why it's the sort of thing that will force some people out of the closet. Sure, you start by sneaking into one, with a small flashlight, to chortle at the scandalously funny cartoons. But shortly, as you begin to read the lyrics, you feel compelled to mental leaps to vocalization and loud giggling. Suddenly the closet door flings open, and your spouse stands in a blinding rectangle of light, hands on hips. You can't hide the flashlight or book in time. There are only two things you can do: (1) pull him/her into the closet and turn off the flashlight, or (2) come out of the closet. That's why the book forces some people out of the closet. Personally, I stayed in it for a while, until my wife and I were both giggling.

So what's all the giggling about? I mean, in terms of the book? There's no simple answer: people laugh for many reasons. But the measure of humor in good satire is the degree to which it provides the painful but ultimately healing service of bringing us face to face with our own folly. And for Mormons, the domain of "our own" is broad: it embraces Church policies, programs, leaders, dissenters, social activity, art, architecture, and cultural mythologies. It includes not only our doctrines but our chronic reactions to those doctrines. It includes our common experience, our emotions and attitudes, our sins. Toscano's hymns satirize this entire range, not sparing leader or follower, male or female, young or old, insider or outsider, scholar or rube, conservative or liberal.

That's right, not even liberal Mormons escape the whip. The broken words break every one of their backslashes, too, in hymns such as "Each Carping Saint" (sung to "Each Cooing Dove," page 7), "God Speed the Left." ("God Speed the Right," 21), "Liberal Saints Love Toleration." ("They, the Builders of the Nation," 39), and one of my favorites, "Sweet Are My Doubts" ("Sweet is the Work," 65): Sweet are my doubts, my God, my King.

I love to question everything.
I challenge thee by morning light
And fondle all my qualms by night.

Sweet is the pain I've come to know.
So long as I can let it show.
For all my griefs I give thee thanks
And for my existential angst.

My heart shall triumph in my doubt.
I only pray I won't find out
The truth of all that thou hast said
(That is, at least, until I'm dead).

I thought that the man in the accompanying cartoon looked disturbingly like me—a sure sign that the identification medicine was working. But I want the authors to know that I repented some years ago: now I'm ready to believe almost anything.

Here's a sample stanza of the lyrics directed at the other side of the street, from "Behold, Our Great Statistics." ("Behold, A Royal Army," 251):

Behold! Our great statistics!
What do we have to fear?
We're clearly in much better shape
Than we were just last year.
Just look at all our converts
Who've joined the growing throng.
We've baptized O so many.
Our methods can't be wrong.
Counting sheep, counting sheep,
We look so good statistically.
Counting sheep, counting sheep,
It's nothing to condemn.
Counting sheep is so much easier
Than feeding all of them.

The song goes on to "celebrate" the material wealth and political power of the Church, while pointing up its slowness to spiritually feed its members, spiritually worship God, or spiritually convert the world, the real mission of the Royal Army. Again, the counterpoint with the original hymn adds power to the broken word.

The most frequent theme in Toscano's lyrics, however, is the Mormon problem with self-admiration and overemphasis on salvation by works. These are the songs that most clearly reveal his personal and theological beef with those who, in all kinds of self-deceptive ways, exalt themselves and marginalize Jesus Christ. Witness the song, sung to "All Creatures of Our God and King," that choruses, "We are special! O praise us! We are special!" What reader does not immedi-

Reviewed by Russel Hirst
ately feel the explosively jarring contrast to the Assisi lyrics, “Hallelujah! O Praise HIM!”?

Here, friends, we have the summum bonum of the whole matter and the evidence that counselor Toscano’s motive is not to “tear down the Church” or mock sacred things or any other such nonsense. If Music and the Broken Word seeks to break down anything, it seeks to break down our own pride, greed, prudishness, chauvinism, insensitivity, and foolishness, so that we may better kneel down to the One glorified in all those wonderful hymns we grew up singing. I was surprised when someone mentioned to me her offense that Toscano had “made light of sacred things” and realized that she referred to the original hymns themselves. Nothing could be further from the truth; Toscano does not satirize the sacred hymns, but through the broken hymns he holds up a mirror to our own deviance from the faith, humility, charity, sacrifice, and single-minded devotion to God enjoined upon us by the originals. The metaphor of “music and the broken word,” an obvious play on the Mormon radio and TV broadcast “Music and the Spoken Word,” turns out to hold a far more profound meaning than first strikes the ear, especially when one begins to consider all the scriptural instances and meanings and purposes of breaking.

Toscano’s effort is not without precedent in Christendom. In nineteenth-century America, for example, popular “dissenters” from the religion of the seminary-bred Calvinistic clergy produced a great deal of anticlerical and anti-Calvinist verse and song. There was a great upwelling of popular disdain for status-quo Protestantism that came along with a general opposition to the privileged, university-educated, gentrified classes. Historians such as Nathan Hatch include Mormons along with Methodists, Baptists, Disciples of Christ, and others among those whose rhetoric of dissent found very effective expression in satirical verse, verse often sung to hymns and popular tunes. This verse lampooned Calvinistic doctrines such as absolute predestination (“There Is a Reprobation Plan”) and especially the foibles, hypocrisies, and abuses of those in charge of the Church establishment (“Priest-Craft Float Away,” “The Modern Priest,” etc.). Let me quote you a few selected stanzas of one of my favorites, “Bigotry Reported”:

A horrid thing pervades the land,
The priests and prophets in a band,
(Called by the name of preachers,) Direct the superstitious mind,
What man shall do his God to find,
He must obey his teachers

Their proselytes around them wait,
To hear them preach, and pray, and prate,
And tell their growing numbers;
They love to hear their preachers tell,
The adverse sects will go to hell,
All laid in guilt and slumber.

They are directed to obey,
And never treat another way,
All others are deceivers;
All those who do dissent from this,
Are not within the road to bliss,
Nor can be true believers.

Let Christians now unite and say,
We’ll throw all human rules away,
And take God’s word to rule us;
King Jesus shall our leader be,
And in his name we will agree,
The priests no more shall fool us.²

Of course, the orthodox clergy sometimes shot back with verse of their own

Ten thousand Reformers like so many moles
Have plowed all the Bible and cut it [in] holes
And each has his church at the end of his trace
Built up as he thinks of the subjects of grace.³

Great stuff, eh? Dare we hope that the orthodox Church Correlation Department will respond to Music and the Broken Word with a volume of verse and cartoons of its own? It would undoubtedly be a best seller! In the meantime, however, pick up a copy of Paul’s and Cal’s book and belt out a few songs, whether your voice is alternate or not. If we all do it together, some interesting things might happen. They did last time.

NOTES
2 Hatch, 242-43
3 Hatch, 81

AFTER THIRTY YEARS AS WARD ORGANIST

It’s still a love affair. Warm sounds wrap me
Velvety. Strident chords shatter soul-ice
Scaffolding a rigid spinal barrier . . .
A touch of music—tentative—suffices to restore.

Power flows from thee to me,
From me to thee—reciprocity ignites
Flesh, chills turgid blood, and
Smoothes like graceful oils on blistered skin.

Power flows. Thou art power; I am power.
Synergy demands power squared,
And, trembling, when I desert my place
I leave behind the better part of me.

A wrenching now three decades long enduring—
Split, torn . . . hating fumbling fingers,
Clumsy feet . . . but drawn obsessive, willing.
To the keys—still a love affair.

—MICHAEL R. COLLINGS
CONFERENCE CONTRASTS
RESTORATION TRADITIONS

HOW DOES a religious tradition committed to replicating the early Christian experience cope with the modern world? For three June days last summer, scholars and laity from various U.S. restorationist traditions, including Mormonism, explored the dynamic of pure-religion vs.-excluding Mormonism, explored U.S. restorationist traditions, In-scholars and laity from various three June days last summer, with the modern world? For early Christian experience cope committed to replicating the HOW DOES a religious tradition behind them." He then focused and Western Europe where "the Christian tradiuons in Eastern University traced the decline of the in Modern America.

METHODOISM
In the keynote address, Franklin Littell of Temple University traced the decline of the Christian traditions in Eastern and Western Europe where "the façades remain but there is little behind them." He then focused on two current American restorationist traditions.

Modern Methodism, he asserted, has lost John Wesley’s vision of church discipline as part of the training of spiritual athletes. Without outside persecution, American Methodism eliminated their standards of discipline and crossed from "New Testament restitution to culture-religion 

Similarly, Alexander Campbell and his Disciple followers have been seduced by the the "manifest blessings and vital appeal of America. . For many Disciples and Methodists, Protestant America replaced the primitive church as the midwife of the Millennium "

As these traditions lost eschatological focus they also lost their reason to detach from the things of this world. Littell quoted Rufus Jones: "The fields are so wide and the fences so low that the goats inside are as wild as the goats outside!" Many generic Christians are open for anything that comes along that seems to be "spiritual." New age "spirituality" is not unlike the powerful "spirituality" of the German Nazi movement, Littell said. But in Latin America and "in Africa where Christianity is growing most rapidly, the vigorous churches are restitutiom to culture-religion 

STONE-CAMPBELL MOVEMENT
Speaking on the Stone-Campbell Restoration Movement, Leonard Allen of Abilene Christian University said the movement was neither pristine nor early Christian: In spite of his desires, Alexander Campbell was influenced by the philosophy of his times and interpreted the Bible in a distinctly modern way. Yet, when his followers split, each accused the other of compromising with American culture. Emphasizing the equality-of-all-believers doctrine in the Stone-Campbell tradition, David Harrell of Auburn University said that with the Bible as the ultimate source of authority, followers were freed from creeds and aristocracies of the old apostate churches, resulting in congregations which were "wonderfully individualistic and divisive." As differences arose, the congregations splintered into three groups: the more liberal Disciples of Christ (influenced by the progressive Northeastern U.S. culture); the Church of Christ (influenced by the conservative Southern U.S. culture); and the independent Christian congregations. Both Robert Fife and Mike Cope, ministers from this tradition, emphasized that Alexander Campbell’s goal was to effect Christian unity through the Bible. They noted, however, that pharisaic emphasis on biblical precision missed the biblical message of God’s grace available to a dying world. And that while denouncing churches with creeds and ecclesiastical jurisdiction, many in the tradition unconsciously created their own. Fife and Cope called for more recognition of the activity of God among all Christians, a broader scope of fellowship, and a focus on living under the burden of the cross in a modern materialistic world.

HOLINESS TRADITIONS
The Holiness Traditions (Church of God, Nazarene, Holiness, Free Methodist, etc.) were addressed by Melvin Dieter and Susie Stanley, both from Holiness Traditions seminars. The Holiness movement developed as a reaction to the leftist-leaning Methodists and other churches which turned from a biblical emphasis to a modernist social orientation. It also rejected the fundamentalist orientation which focused on biblical inerrancy and rigid doctrine over the Bible’s message, welcoming modern biblical scholarship as long as it allows for the supernatural. Holiness Traditions challenge racism and sexism in all its forms—"the Spirit made no sexual distinction on the Day of Pentecost, nor does it today," said Stanley, one of only two women on the program.

Also, Holiness Traditions would not be bound by a church organization and sought the spiritual gifts experienced by biblical Christianity until Christ’s second coming. But until Christ’s return, this question remains, “How do you cope with an organized, modernist society?” Some in the traditions say that the church should not be structured but that you can organize the work of the church. But others feel that this is a compromise with modernism. How do you promote spiritual unity and simplicity in a diverse and complex world? The question is yet to be answered by the Spirit, Dieter and Stanley said.

MORMON RESTORATIONISM
Mormon restorationism was addressed by four LDS scholars. Grant Underwood, an LDS historian and institute director, explained that the Latter-day Saint restoration was founded on: (1) restored biblical authority; (2) spiritual gifts experienced in

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apostolic times; (3) biblical practices such as plural marriage, temples, patriarchal blessings, etc.; (4) the gathering of Israel to Zion; and (5) living prophets.

What are Mormonism’s major strengths? First, individual certitude—knowing one has found the only true church. Second, relying on prophetic guidance— the LDS see no need to capitulate to modernity. What are its weaknesses? First, myopia—it is difficult for LDS to recognize the cultural influences on revelations. Second, a dependence on authoritarian structures leads to spiritual stagnation.

Thomas Alexander, author of Mormonism in Transition, said that for its first sixty years Mormonism was in conflict with the dominant Protestant faiths and government leaders who enshrined modern capitalist republican social mores, which tended to compartmentalize the temporal and spiritual issues that Mormons made no distinction between. In the 1890s, under extreme governmental pressure and through divine guidance, the Church adjusted to the pluralistic society by changing its marriage, political, economic and other practices and became a successful participant in the twentieth century.

BYU history professor James Allen stated that the past twenty years show that the Restoration is a dynamic process. While maintaining strict standards for personal conduct and a doctrinal focus on Jesus Christ and the scriptures, the LDS tradition has remained relevant while becoming a worldwide, multicultural, multiracial church. One reason is a dependence on bureaucratic procedures, toward a focus on community service and away from exclusivity.

Joseph Smith biographer Richard Bushman said that many who respond to the Mormon missionaires seek to improve themselves not only spiritually, but also socially and economically. In the low-risk Church environment, they learn skills and values essential to the modern world: accepting responsibilities, delegating, teaching, keeping records, punctuality, etc. At the same time, people find meaning and purpose in their lives and develop spirituality and self-discipline. Integral to the restoration theme is the concept of apostasy. Early Christians did not purposely discard truth but lost it gradually; modern Christians must be under constant vigilance. Can such a conservative church respond to all current political and social issues? No, said Bushman. Participation in the political process may compromise basic values. The Church is prepared to bless individuals but not to politically change the world.

In a question and answer period, the LDS scholars were asked about being guided by divine revelation. Allen shared examples from being a bishop. Bushman said that from his youth, he has been counseled to “follow the Spirit.” After Underwood enthusiastically shared his convictions, the moderator quipped that he must conclude the session before the Mormon panelists issue an altar call.

BIBLICAL PLURALISM

In the closing session, University of Chicago American religion historian Martin Marty compared the modern world to a large forest in which people are groping. The primitivist Christian traditions each claim to have found a clearing in the woods. Only by standing in the clearing can you see what the woods are all about. They call to others lost in the forest to join them in the clearing. The trouble, he said, is that every “clearing” also has some “trees”—all interpreters bring their own background to their interpretations. Is it ever possible to recognize and eliminate these “trees” and have a real “clearing”, he queried. He said the primitivists do not want to escape to the pristine past: they want to have the primitive Christian experience with the advantages of the modern world. Is it possible to do this without modernist contamination?

James McClendon from the Fuller Theological Seminary ended the conference with a plea to hang on to biblical roots: “When we lose our memory we lose our identity.” He admonished all to identify with significant biblical people and events. He challenged all to be faithful without being sectarian, to be truthful without being dogmatic, and to be visionary without being speculative.

PECULIAR PEOPLE

RATIO OF HE/HIS TO SHE/HER IN SCRIPTURE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SOURCE</th>
<th>Ratio of He/His to She/Her</th>
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<tr>
<td>Old Testament</td>
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<tr>
<td>New Testament</td>
<td>Higher</td>
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<td>D&amp;C</td>
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<td>P of GP</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<td>B of Mormon</td>
<td>Low</td>
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<tr>
<td>Small plates</td>
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<tr>
<td>Abridged</td>
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THE RELATIVE frequency of reference to males and females can be used as an indicator of gender bias in textual analysis. In this regard, it is interesting to compare LDS scripture with the Bible. This graph compares the ratio of occurrence of the words “he” and “his” to “she” and “her.” In the Old Testament, “he” and “his” appear 6.5 times more often than “she” and “her.” The ratio increases to about 9.5 in the New Testament. This ratio of male reference is higher in the LDS scriptures. The ratio is only slightly higher in the Doctrine and Covenants and somewhat higher in the Pearl of Great Price compared with the New Testament. But the ratio exceeds 35 in the Book of Mormon. Interestingly, the ratio in the text coming from the small plates (1 Nephi through Omni) is moderately higher than in other LDS scripture, but the ratio for the remainder of the Book of Mormon is an overwhelming 46. Moreover, “she” and “her” often refer to animals (hen, sheep, goat, and sow), cities (Jerusalem, Zarahemla, Babylon), the earth, virtues (wisdom, charity, mercy), Zion, the great whore of the earth, and Hell. Except for these nonhuman references, Abish and wives of Lamanite kings, women are nearly nonexistent in the abridged portion of the Book of Mormon. Perhaps abridgement by a great military leader and his son has something to do with the invisibility of women.
BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY STUDIES has announced that John W. Welch, noted religious scholar and professor of law, has been named to replace Edward Geary as editor of the journal. Welch recently served on the board of editors for the Encyclopedia of Mormonism and is the former director of the Foundation for Ancient Research in Mormon Studies (F.A.R.M.S.). Welch told the Salt Lake Tribune that he plans a cumulative index of the journal from its 1959 beginning to the present. “We are also exploring the possibility of giving the publication a larger format, more departments, improved graphics and broader appeal to general readers,” he said. BYU Studies is a juried or refereed academic journal, meaning that it has a board of editors of BYU faculty who decide what articles are published.

JOHN WHITMER HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION will host BYU professor of history Marvin Hill, who will speak on his book, Quest for Refuge, at its annual spring banquet on 4 April at the Park Place Hotel in Kansas City, Missouri, the day before the RLDS World Conference. In addition, the association is accepting proposals for papers to be presented at its annual meeting the last weekend in September at Shenandoah, Iowa. The meeting will focus on the Cutlerite tradition but welcomes other topics as well. Contact: John Whitmer Historical Association, Grace College, 700 College Avenue, Lamoni, IA 50140.

MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION will hold its annual meeting at the Dixie Center in St. George, Utah, on 14-17 May. There will be sessions “on the cutting edge” of Mormon history along with panels and workshops. This year the Tanner lecture will be given by Protestant-primitivism expert Richard T. Hughes of Pepperdine College. James V. D’Arc will discuss the changing images of Mormonism in film; Leonard Arrington will discuss his book as Church Historian in 1972; Pulitzer Prize-winner Laurel Thatcher Ulrich will give the annual Brooks lecture on how the methods she used in writing A Midwife’s Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard, Based on Her Diary, 1785-1812 can be used to better understand sources on Utah women. Charter buses will leave the Wasatch Front and will feature bus lectures by Mormon scholars and stops at Mormon historic sites along the way, including Mountain Meadows. Buses will also depart from the Las Vegas airport. Anyone interested in Mormon history is invited to attend; annual membership in the association costs $15 or $12.50 for students. Contact: Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602 (801/378-4048).

SINGLESaints is a newly announced quarterly newsletter for the “Mormon singles network” of single, divorced, and widowed LDS church members. It will feature articles, related stories, and classified ads. Editor Suzy Conditt Schuy and publisher Elizabeth Smith, both married, initially plan to target Arizona, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, Utah, and Washington, but plan to expand into other areas later. Contact: Suzy Conditt Schuy, 16104 128th Ave. SE, Renton, WA 98058 (206/235-6422).


SUNSTONE LECTURES AND SYMPOSIA

1992 BOOK OF MORMON LECTURE SERIES will feature Eugene England speaking on “Means Unto Repentance: The Book of Mormon’s Unique Teaching on the Atonement” on Wednesday, 15 April, at 7:30 PM. Glenna Grimm will speak on “The Material Culture of the Book of Mormon” on 13 May, also on Wednesday. Both lectures are at the Social Work Building auditorium at the University of Utah at 7:30 PM. Two dollar donation is requested.

1992 WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held on 10-11 April on the American University campus. For more information, contact: Don and Lucinda Gustavson, 413 Clearview Avenue, Torrington, CT 06790 (203/496-7090).

1992 SALT LAKE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held at the Salt Lake Hilton on 5-8 August. Proposals for papers, panel discussions, stand-up comics, and musical numbers are now being accepted. Contact: Cindy Dahle, Sunstone, 333 South Rio Grande Street, Suite 206, Salt Lake City, UT 84101 (801/355-5926).

Call for Papers
Proposals for papers and panel discussions are now being accepted.

CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM
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Naperville, IL 60540-0348
(708/778-9551)

NORTHWEST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM
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Seattle, WA 98112
(206/325-6868)
An Award in the Novel

ORSON SCOTT CARD

Xenocide


Xenocide reveals on each page the shape of Card's orthodox Mormon Christian faith. Xenocide continues to improve on Card's earlier contributions to science fiction by creating a genuine novel of complex point of view and densely detailed individual and family and group life, centered in the continuing issues of violence, redemption, and the possibility of peace, even love, between very different species of life.

An Award in the Novel

GERALD N. LUND

Like a Fire Is Burning

Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991
(The Work and The Glory, v. 2)

Lund has set for himself the unprecedented task of a multivolume set of novels covering the entire saga of the Restoration. Lund has done careful research in religious and political history and in the relevant social and material culture and has created an interesting, diverse, and constantly developing fictional family that is believably close to the great events and figures of early Church history and thus able to give us a fresh and moving view.

An Award in Biography

LAUREL THATCHER ULRICH

A Midwife's Tale

New York: Knopf, 1991

The success of this endeavor is based on the artful crafting of a story surrounding bits, pieces, and notes of journal entries. By utilizing complementary sources, Ulrich has skillfully drawn readers into an amazing woman's story. The literary creativity makes this story engrossing and unforgettable.

An Award in Young-Adult Literature

LOUISE PLUMMER

My Name is Susan Smith. The 5 is Silent


"When Uncle Willy left, I was Susan Smith. Now, ten years later, I am Susan Smith. The 5 is silent." Thus we meet one of the most delightful characters in young adult literature. Plummer never intrudes into the novel, never preaches. Susan and her family are LDS but not obsessively so. Their values are ones the Mormon audience will identify with but not cringe over.

An Award in Poetry

PHILIP WHITE

"Island Spring," Dialogue, 24:1

and

"The Perseids," Dialogue, 24:4

White's poems are informed with ideas. This, combined with deft imagery, careful line-breaks, and subtle lyricism, give us poetry that fuses craftsmanship with emotion and intellect in the appropriate proportions. In "Island Spring," images are woven together to convey the vulnerability of the child as her dark, rustling world seems to almost overwhelm her tenuous existence. "The Perseids" is complex and mysterious, despite the familiar undertone of death. It is poignant in its quiet grief and austerity.

An Award in the Short Story

MICHAEL FILLERUP

"Lost and Found"

in Christmas for the World:

A Gift for the Children


Fillerup's stories are often about Mormonism in that direct way that subverts probity with good intention—or would, if the writing were any less wary, or any less open to complication, misgiving, ambush. His characters find themselves marginalized in a culture already marginal, where what they do and are is sustained by religious commitment, and religious commitment is imperiled precisely by what they find themselves doing. Faith, in these stories, is a terrible gift. "Lost and Found" is a hard-nosed, rawly detailed, icy coercive read. And ends however improbably still quite believably in magic. In revelation.

An Award in the Essay

TERRY TEMPEST WILLIAMS

Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place

New York: Pantheon, 1991

With Refuge, Williams defines a new rhetoric for healing. She has woven the story of the rising of the Great Salt Lake, its natural and political ramifications, into the story of her mother's death from cancer. Williams gives voice to a deeply personal side of herself, a gift of passion and integrity both unique in its details and structure, and universal in its messages: that human beings are often devastatingly careless in their use of resources, and must learn not to be; that we can heal from such carelessness when we invest ourselves in nature; and that healing sometimes means accepting death.

Special Recognition

SIGNATURE BOOKS, as publisher, and
RON SCHOW, WAYNE SCHOW, and
MARYBETH RAYNES, as editors

Peculiar People:

Mormons and Same-Sex Orientation

The editors have provided a major service in collecting essays and resource materials on same-sex orientation in and out of the Church. Personal essays by men and women who have had to make difficult choices concerning their lives and lifestyles, and by family members or ecclesiastical counselors, open our eyes to the fundamental truth that each is a suffering, desiring human being, heir to God's love and deserving of compassion.

Honorary Life Memberships

MARDEN J. CLARK

Emeritus professor of English at Brigham Young University, he has published poems, essays, literary criticism, and stories in Dialogue and numerous professional journals, as well as a book of poems, Moods: Of Late (1979), and a book of short stories, Morgan Triumphs (1984).

EDWARD L. HART

Rhodes Scholar, widely published scholar and influential teacher, and professor emeritus of English at Brigham Young University, and former president of AML, he has written Minor Lives and Mormon in Motion, a biographical study, and a volume of poetry, To Utah.

CLINTON F. LARSON

He is professor emeritus of English at BYU, influential teacher of creative writing, prolific playwright, poet, and editor. He has written plays (The Mantle of the Prophet, Mary of Nazareth, The Prophet, Moroni, and Cariontum), and collections of poetry (The Lord of Experience, Counterpoint, The Western World, Selected Poems), and the anthology with William Stafford.

WILLIAM MULDER

Professor emeritus of English at the University of Utah, he has directed students toward literary exploration of Mormon topics, and has written important essays, including "Mormonism and Literature," co-edited Among the Mormons, and wrote Homeward to Zion, the story of the Scandinavian immigration to Utah.

HELEN CANDLAND STARK

Teacher, mother, feminist, activist, environmentalist, poet, essayist, and self-proclaimed "rebellious spirit," she is still growing and contributing in her nineties—recently raised her head above the battle to report that through it all she has developed "a sense of awe at the goodness of God, and . . . the power of redemption at the heart of the universe."

VIRGINIA EGGETSEN SORESENSEN WAUGH

To our sorrow, she died on 24 December 1991 not long after receiving notification of this honor. She wrote six important books of fiction about the Mormons: A Little Lower than the Angels, On This Star, The Evening and the Morning, Many Heavens, Kingdom Come, Where Nothing Is Long Ago, and Memories of a Mormon Childhood. In 1956 she won the National Study Award for Plain Girl and in 1957 the Newbery Award for Miracles on Maple Hill.

MAURINE WHipple

She is the author of This is the Place: Utah, articles in Collier's, The Saturday Evening Post, Look, Life, Time, Pageant, several short stories, and the prize-winning The Giant Joshua, still considered by many as the finest Mormon fiction.

AWARDS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

1991 awards given at the annual symposium, 25 January 1992, with excerpts from the awards
**ONE FOLD**

**HUNGARIAN EVANGELIST PREACHES FAITH, FREE MARKET**

"GOD CREATED you so that you may have material blessings and a successful life," Hungarian pastor Sandor Nemeth preaches to his evangelical congregation. "God is a god of growth. Renouncing growth means renouncing God." Nemeth's message is being eaten up by enthusiastic Hungarians as their country turns the corner from communism to capitalism.

Nemeth's Faith Church emphasizes fundamentalist spirituality and freemarket economics. Since founding the church in 1979 with fewer than a dozen members, Nemeth has added 15,000 members, and the church ranks as Hungary's fastest-growing religion.

"We want to convince our [church members] not to envy the rich but to become like them," Nemeth said in an interview with the Washington Post. "It does not mean we should give up taking care of the needy. But at this present time, we have nothing to give the needy. We must let people live and prosper so that they have money to give."

Nemeth is generating born-again capitalists by assuring them that the once-forbidden accumulation of wealth is good. Most of his followers are young and wear Western clothes and jewelry; many drive expensive cars. The church's office is in the fashionable heart of Budapest.

"This type of religion is more emotional than intellectual," says Miklos Tomka, head of the Hungarian Catholic Church's Religious Research Center. "Hungarians are very tired of ideologies, but they have a great emotional need. The Faith Church provides this emotional help." (Washington Post)

**1992 RELIGIOUS FORECAST**

THE RELIGIOUS developments and conflicts that unfolded last year promise to make 1992 markedly different from earlier years. Below are some of the contentious developments and significant trends recently outlined by Religion Watch.

1. In the Episcopal church last year, a traditionalist group known as the Episcopal Synod of America sought to become a separate diocese. The action may mean that the staunchly orthodox intend to go their own way, even if it results in a schism in the near future.

2. Issues of sexuality, especially concerning the ordination and acceptance of practicing homosexuals, moved on to center stage in mainline denominations last year. No clear resolution seems imminent, and such issues are likely to gain visibility in the next few years.

3. Eastern Orthodoxy appears to be entering a period of isolation from other religious traditions. In February, Orthodox participants threatened to pull out of the World Council of Churches, charging the promotion of theological syncretism. Later, the American Eastern Orthodox denominations suspended their membership in the National Council of Churches, opposing liberalizations such as the ordination of women and homosexuals. Finally, several key Orthodox leaders turned down invitations to attend a Vatican synod on re-evangelizing Europe, charging that the Catholic church invaded traditionally Orthodox territory in the former Soviet Union.

4. Euthanasia emerged as an issue that may become as divisive between religious conservatives and liberals and between religious groups and the wider culture as abortion. Catholics and evangelicals form an increasingly close alliance against euthanasia, while the more liberal wing of the mainline (including the Unitarian-Universalists) often actively support such measures.

5. Religious bodies recently began addressing the issues of multiculturalism. The religious left criticizes the influence of "Eurocentrism" and argues for an acceptance of diverse world cultures and views in churches and other institutions. The Catholic church and other groups appear to be taking a more centrist position, emphasizing American unity and identity, while accepting cultural diversity on the local level (such as in the liturgy and in their schools). Those on the far right are responding to multiculturalism by reasserting the supremacy of European and Western cultures, and condemning pluralism, often finding a religious base for such positions.

6. Pat Buchanan's candidacy represents a trend of the Christian Right which desires to build a Christian-based political movement for the future. This constituency supports a new nationalism that puts the concerns of America first and emphasizes Judeo-Christian and traditional American values. The religious conservatives who support Buchanan have called for an American based Christian culture and a rejection of cultural pluralism and the "New World Order." (Religion Watch)

**MOST AMERICANS ARE RELIGIOUS**

A STUDY by the Graduate School of the City University of New York found that nine out of ten Americans identify themselves with a religious denomination. The study was unique because of the large number of people studied (113,000) and its focus on religious self-identification, which tends to produce results different from church-generated membership statistics.

According to the study which was reported in the New York Times, 86.5 percent of Americans are Christians. Roman Catholics make up the largest group, with 26 percent of the nation's population, followed by Baptists, Methodists and Lutherans. Jews represent less than 2 percent of the population. Muslims 0.5 percent. Only 7.5 percent said they had no religion at all.

Although these broad outlines were known before the survey, Martin Marty, American religion scholar, said he still considers it "astounding that in a high-tech, highly affluent nation, we have 90 percent who identify themselves as religious." (Ecumenical Press Service)

**BALTIC CHURCHES FACE TRANSITION**

A COMMITTEE of the World Council of Churches visited the Baltic states in January 1992. Committee members reported that the transition to independence in the Baltic states confronts churches there with many challenges. Elizabeth Salter, a committee member, says that with the new freedom in all three countries, "people are coming back to the churches and Sunday schools in large numbers." Another committee member, Anna Marie Aagaard, noted that many of those whom the delegation met spoke of "a cultural-spiritual vacuum: the spread of consumerism, fascination with rich Western para-church groups, New Religious Movements and U.S. groups like the Mormons." Access to the media goes to those with money; and a recurring plea from the church leaders was, "we need training of untrained enthusiasts." (Ecumenical Press Service)
MORMON MEDIA IMAGE
MEXICAN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE NEWSPAPER FEATURES MORMONS

IN JANUARY 1992, The News, a Mexican English-language newspaper, highlighted the LDS church, emphasizing its phenomenal growth in Mexico from 6,000 members in 1950 to over 600,000 in 1990.

The first of the two-part series reported the origins of the Church in northern Mexico, its lay clergy, its "austere set of beliefs," theological issues such as the pre-existence, baptism for the dead, eternal progression, and genealogy. The article then mentioned that the tenet of church doctrine which perhaps strikes the deepest chord in Latin Americans is the belief that Christ surfaced in the New World after his bodily resurrection.

Missionaries and the growth of the Church were the focus of the second part of the series. The paper reported that there are 2,500 missionaries in Mexico, most of them native. It stressed their "hard work from sunup to sundown." Speaking of the missionary training center in Oaxaca, Mexico, the paper stated, "Missionaries appear neat, wholesome and idealistic. All say they are eager to share their faith with others."

The paper quoted Mexico City mission president Montt Garrett, who said, "During two years on [sic] the mission field, every Mormon can expect to bring between 100 and 150 new members in the church."

BOOK OF MORMON IN TOP TEN

AMERICAN READERS said the Book of Mormon was one of the most influential books in their lives, according to a 1991 survey of Book-of-the-Month Club subscribers conducted by the club and the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress. The Bible received the most votes, followed by Ayn Rand's Atlas Shrugged, M. Scott Peck's The Road Less Traveled, Harper Lee's To Kill a Mockingbird, and J. R. R. Tolkien's The Lord of the Rings. Following these titles, there was a three-way tie for sixth place, which included Margaret Mitchell's Gone With the Wind, Dale Carnegie's How to Win Friends and Influence People, and the Book of Mormon.

Survey respondents said their book choices had enhanced their intellectual or spiritual understanding of life, led to new interests, or resulted in major career decisions.

The other winners, in a five-way tie, were Betty Friedan's The Feminine Mystique, Anne Morrow Lindbergh's A Gift From the Sea, Victor Frankl's Man's Search for Meaning, Gail Sheehy's Passages, and Harold Kushner's When Bad Things Happen to Good People.

MORMONS MAKE RELIGION EDITORS' TOP 10 LIST

AT YEAR'S end, the Religion Newswriter's Association and Christian Century magazine, which deals with contemporary religious issues, each compiled a list of 1990's top ten religion stories. Included in both lists were the reactions of religious groups to the Supreme Court's ruling to prohibit members of the Native American Church from continuing a tradition of using the hallucinogenic peyote in worship services. Also included in both lists were the ordination of homosexuals and the results of a decade-long conflict between conservatives and moderates in the Southern Baptist Convention. While Christian Century saw the religious clashes in India, Bangladesh, and Israel as the top story of the year, the Newswriter's Association listed as their top choice the revival of religion across Eastern Europe. They noted that American religious groups, "led by the evangelicals and Mormons," jumped at the opportunity to establish missionary work in the new frontier. Both lists emphasize the revival of religion for individuals and the difficulty of reconciling those individual beliefs into a larger religious tradition.

UPDATE

CHURCH BECOMES VISIBLE PART OF INTERFAITH COMMUNITY

ALTHOUGH THE Church has traditionally distanced itself from ecumenical organizations, over the past several years it has become a key player in several interfaith committees, councils, and coalitions that promote faith and champion projects consistent with gospel principles, reports the Salt Lake Tribune.

Much of the present involvement can be traced to 1978 when President Kimball urged LDS leaders to work with other religious groups toward mutual goals: "Where solutions to these practical problems require cooperative action with those not of our faith, members should not be reticent in doing their part in joining and leading those efforts which are consistent with the standards of the Church."

When the consolidated meeting schedule was introduced in 1980, the members were exhorted to use their extra time in serving the community.

The Church made its first official interfaith commitment in 1986 by joining with official representatives of the Jewish, Greek Orthodox, Protestant, and Roman Catholic traditions to form the Religious Alliance Against Pornography (RRAP). The concerns of RRAP are twofold: eradicating child pornography and violence against women.

In 1988, the Church signed with Vision Interfaith Satellite Network (VISN), contributing financially as well as helping to craft the policies which govern the consortium of twenty-eight member churches representing fifty-four faiths. Apostle M. Russell Ballard, an adviser for VISN, says, "We are committed to the common purpose: to bring faith and value-based programming to a national audience."

"From the moment this coalition came together, the Mormons have been at the forefront of working with VISN to develop programming that not only meets the needs of their members, but also responds to the spiritual needs of the country at large," said Jeff Weber.

On the 24-hour daily service, the Church purchases 7.5 hours a week, including "Music and the Spoken Word" and a modified Sacrament Meeting.

The Church also supports the National Interfaith Cable Coalition and has joined the Coalition for the Free Exercise of Religion, which is sponsoring a bill before Congress. In addition, the Church has expanded into the local Salt Lake interfaith scene. Eunice Stevenson of the Interfaith Peacemaking Resource Center, which provides educational materials on peace and justice issues, says LDS officials have helped find a member to sit on their board with seven other denominations.

Such interfaith activities are not, in any sense, on a doctrinal level. The Church has joined these organizations to promote common and pratical ends. To be involved, insisted President Gordon B. Hinckley in a 1990 speech, "We do not in any way have to compromise our theology, our convictions, or our knowledge of eternal truth as it has been revealed by the God of heaven."
RECENTLY, BYU EMPLOYEES were surprised when they noticed the university's slogan, "THE GLORY OF GOD IS INTELLIGENCE," missing from BYU's letterhead stationery. According to University Publications officials, BYU's President's Council ordered the deletion for a variety of reasons. Some people feel the statement offends for a variety of reasons. Some people feel the statement offends the mentally retarded while others assert foreign translations render the verse awkward. Still others contend that the slogan has nothing to do with the beehive embossed above it on the letterhead. University Publications maintains that the change is not part of any recent anti-intellectual trend in the Church or at BYU. The motto is still used on official documents.

HEAVEN DEFINED

COLUMNIST Michael J. Farrell of the National Catholic Reporter writes, "A smart British cleric recently asked everyone he could think of to describe heaven, and nearly everyone did, including an 8-year-old who replied: 'It's a place where animals don't bite.' The straight stuff about heaven is in a book by Cardinal Joseph Ratzinger. 'Heaven is in itself eschatological reality. It is the advent of the finally and wholly Other Its own definitiveness stems from the definitiveness of God's irrevocable and indivisible love. Its openness vis-à-vis the total eschaton derives from the open history of Christ's body, and therewith of all creation which is still under construction.'" Farrell retorted, "If this is heaven, what about hell?"

The 10 states with the lowest percentage of white women employed in traditionally white male occupations in 1985.

SOURCE: Southern Labor Institute

JUST WHISTLING DIXIE

IN A survey to determine the cultural borders of what has traditionally been labelled the U.S. South, sociologist John Shelton Reed illustrated the South's distinctiveness in its collectively having the lowest number of dentists, the fewest flush toilets, bathtubs, and hot and cold running water, the highest rate of "Dixie" in names of commercial establishments, nearly all the birthplaces of country music writers and performers; and almost all the lynchings in the United States. In all those rankings, Mormon Utah did not join the South; however, it was among the ten states with the lowest percentage of white women employed in traditionally white male occupations in 1985. (Washington Post)

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