ANN EDWARDS CANNON
"AND NOW FOR A LITTLE MORMON HUMOR"

&

L. JACKSON NEWELL
"SCAPEGOATS AND SCARECROWS IN OUR TOWN"

THE "BASEBALL BAPTISM" ERA

BY D. MICHAEL QUINN
__K 828 Women in Mormon History__  
by Leonard J. Arrington

__K 829 Reflections of a Mormon Bookseller__  
by Curt Bench

__K 830 Absolute Powerlessness Corrupts Absolutely: The Dimensions of the Power of God in Mormon Thought__  
by Christine Meaders Durham

__K 831 How Much Is God Involved in Our Lives?__  
by Kathleen Snow

__K 832 Creating in Our Own Image: The LDS Pursuit of Godhood__  
by Dee Green

__K 833 What Is Real and How Do We Know It?__  
by Robert Nelson

__K 834 Anti-Mormonism in Idaho__  
by Leonard J. Arrington

__K 835 Panel: Teach the Children—Well__  

__K 836 The End Is Not Near — You Must Learn to Cope__  
by Karl Sandberg

__K 837 White Mormon Principal, Black Segregated School: One Woman's Battle against Racial Injustice__  
by Mary Ellen Romney MacArthur

__K 838 Writing Toward What You Don't Know: Poetry Reading and Commentary__  
by Dixie Partridge

__K 839 Panel: Because I Told You So: Tolerance and Tension in Spiritual Relationships__  
Panelists: Devery Anderson, Karl Sandberg, Kathleen Snow

__K 840 Pillars of My Faith: Owen Clark, Carolyn Dalton, Sue Phair__

---

**1993 TAPE ORDER CARD**

**PACIFIC NORTHWEST SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM**

Please send me a tape for each number circled below:

K828 K829 K830 K831 K832 K833 K834

K835 K836 K837 K838 K839 K840

Name ____________________________
Address __________________________
City __________________ State ______ Zip ______

Phone (____) ____________________

Check (payable to Audio Productions)  
No Credit Cards, Please.

Total # of tapes x $9.00 /tape = ______ + Shipping ($1.25/tape, up to $15 max.) = ______  
Total = ______

Send form or photocopied form to address at right. Phone or fax order to number below.

Phone Orders: (800) 488-5455  
Fax Orders: (206) 334-7866
## SUNSTONE
MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, AND ART

December 1993 Volume 16:7 Issue 93

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Contributors</th>
<th>Category</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Our Readers</td>
<td>READERS' FORUM</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>Ann Edwards Cannon</td>
<td>FEATURES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22</td>
<td>L. Jackson Newell</td>
<td>SCAFEHOATS AND SACRIFICES IN OUR TOWN: WHEN THE INTERESTS OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COLLIDE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29</td>
<td>Penny Allen</td>
<td>MISSION RULES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>D. Michael Quinn</td>
<td>1-THOU VS. 1-IT CONVERSIONS: THE MORMON &quot;BASEBALL BAPTISM&quot; ERA</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Michael Fillerup</td>
<td>THINGS OF THIS WORLD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>Hartmut Weissmann</td>
<td>INTERVIEW: A NEWSLETTER OF OUR OWN</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>David Clark Knowlton</td>
<td>POETRY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Virginia Ellen Baker</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>Virginia Ellen Baker</td>
<td>SUSURRO DEL SAUSAL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>Sean Brendan Brown</td>
<td>ARIZONA GEOMETRIC</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28</td>
<td>Holly Welker</td>
<td>MIST ON GARMISCH SLOPES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53</td>
<td>Douglas M. Jole</td>
<td>REPOSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>57</td>
<td>Holly Welker</td>
<td>PARACHUTE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>59</td>
<td>Ingrid Fuhrman</td>
<td>THE MOUND AT BRYN CELLL DDU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>Sean Brendan Brown</td>
<td>OF SACRIFICE A SHRINE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Elbert Eugene Peck</td>
<td>IF YOU WANT TO CRY, TOUCH ME</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>Susan Staiber</td>
<td>COLUMNS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54</td>
<td>Frank Alan Bruno</td>
<td>FROM THE EDITOR</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>58</td>
<td>Peter Sorensen</td>
<td>Hiking to Kolob</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>61</td>
<td>Courtney S. Campbell</td>
<td>TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>64</td>
<td>Massimo Introvigne</td>
<td>WAITING FOR WORLDS END: WILFORD WOODRUFF AND DAVID KOresh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Sunstone Correspondents</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### FEATURES
- **AND NOW FOR A LITTLE MORMON HUMOR**
- **SCAFEHOATS AND SACRIFICES IN OUR TOWN: WHEN THE INTERESTS OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COLLIDE**
- **MISSION RULES**
- **1-THOU VS. 1-IT CONVERSIONS: THE MORMON "BASEBALL BAPTISM" ERA**
- **THINGS OF THIS WORLD**
- **INTERVIEW: A NEWSLETTER OF OUR OWN**

### POETRY
- **SUSURRO DEL SAUSAL**
- **ARIZONA GEOMETRIC**
- **MIST ON GARMISCH SLOPES**
- **REPOSE**
- **PARACHUTE**
- **THE MOUND AT BRYN CELLL DDU**
- **OF SACRIFICE A SHRINE**
- **IF YOU WANT TO CRY, TOUCH ME**

### COLUMNS
- **FROM THE EDITOR**
- **Hiking to Kolob**
- **TURNING THE TIME OVER TO... WAITING FOR WORLDS END: WILFORD WOODRUFF AND DAVID KOresh**
- **THIS SIDE OF THE TRACTS**
- **He Is a Prophet of God: A Personal Encounter with Ezra Taft Benson**
- **LIGHTER MINDS**
- **Flannel Boards and Flip Charts**

### REVIEWS
- **A CALL FOR MORAL TRADITION**
- **ANTI-MORMONISM FOR VOYEURS**
- **Secret Ceremonies: A Mormon Woman's Intimate Diary of Marriage and Beyond**, by Deborah Laake

### NEWS
- **CHURCH DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS CONTINUE TO GENERATE HEAT**
- **OAKS: 'I'VE BEEN VICTIM OF DOUBLE-DCKER DECEIT**
- **OAKS DISSEMBLED PACKER'S ROLE IN TOSCANO EXCOMMUNICATION, BENSON SAYS**
- **UPDATE • PECULIAR PEOPLE • SUNSPOTS • SUNSTONE CALENDAR • OXYMORMONS**

---

This magazine is printed on acid-free paper.

Copyright © 1993 by the Sunstone Foundation.

Cover Brian Bean
SCREWWY DECIMAL SYSTEM

THE OTHER DAY I dropped in at the Deseret Book Store at Salt Lake's 2CM Center. When I saw the LDS book section, I thought of Elbert Peck's editorial, "God the Librarian" (SUNSTONE 16:6). Peck may think that God's judgment will be as democratic as the alphabet, but that isn't how His book store operates. For years Deseret Book has segregated general authority books from other Mormon books, on what I am sure are separate but equal shelves. Now, however, not even all general authorities are equal: Their books are arranged to reproduce the pull-out G.A. photosheet in each conference Ensign. The top shelf has books by the current First Presidency ordered in seniority. The next shelf has books by current members of the Quorum of the Twelve, again arranged by seniority. Books by the Seventy fill the remaining shelves, but are arranged alphabetically with no regard for the first or second quorum or for the seven presidents. Emeritus general authorities are placed at the end of the bottom shelf—Elders Paul Dunn and Marion Hands, side by side.

As I stood there pondering the meaning of this hierarchal arrangement, and almost resigning myself to it, I said, "Where are the dead G.A.s?"—Were there no shelves for past prophets, counselors, and apostles, in seniority? The late President Spencer W. Kimball and Apostle Bruce R. McConkie were filed alphabetically with the Seventy.

What screwy results hierarchy brings. I hope that God's judgment doesn't reflect the confusion that status brings in this world.

GEOFFREY ARTHUR JONES
Salt Lake City

GIFTS FOR THE SEASON

IN LATE SEPTEMBER, I requested my name be removed from the rolls of the Church (see "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," SUNSTONE 16:6). I had come to the conclusion that I could not retain both my integrity and my membership. I do not believe the Brethren are prophets. I find the system of Church "justice" abusive. The emphasis on obedience squelches the Spirit of God. And the traditional formulation of basic Church doctrines reflects neither my experience nor my hopes.

I couldn't have asked for more considerate hearings from my bishop, stake president, and home teacher. Naturally, they disagreed with my decision. They bore their testimonies to the truthfulness of the gospel and the divine mission of the Church. They did not argue, patronize, or demean. They agreed to honor my request and invited me back sincerely. I continue to participate at my previous level of activity. Last week I played the viola for the Relief Society; this Saturday I'll play for the ward Christmas party. I continue to enjoy good social relations with ward members.

My bishop, stake president, and home teacher are good men. They perform their stewardship about as well as anyone could in the orthodox environment. In appreciation, I am sending each a Christmas gift.
You don’t need to agree with everything you read in SUNSTONE to advocate the forum it provides. Stand up for honest inquiry and open discussion. Send two gift subscriptions to persons in authority over you. Call 800/326-5926 to place your order, and have your credit card number ready.

This year make your giving commensurate with the value you receive.

**SCOTT KENNY**
Alpine, UT

---

**POOH ON WRITING**

One kindness of good editors is that they protect writers from themselves. For example, a recent letter flaunted words like “aphotic,” “jejune,” and “trendy nostrums” (“What Is Man?” SUNSTONE 16:5). As we stroll further through that issue, we find phrases like “seduction of the summa” (40) and “grant the donné of faith” (56). Seeing writing like this is like seeing people with too much makeup—some of us want to laugh; more of us are embarrassed for them.

Please encourage writers to converse with clear, concise language. We like the advice of William Strunk and E. B. White: “Avoid fancy words. Avoid the elaborate, the pretentious, the coy, and the cute. Do not be tempted by a twenty-dollar word when there is a ten-center handy, ready and able. Since writing is communication, clarity can only be a virtue.” (*The Elements of Style*, 76, 79.)

As Winnie the Pooh might say, “I like good writing. It makes for good reading.”

**MIKE DANG**

**Kitty Irvine**
Santa Ana, CA

**PURITANICAL TOLERANCE**

When the Puritans got to the New World (seeking religious freedom) they set up a system to suppress everybody else’s religious freedom. Maybe the scale isn’t as grand today, but acts of bigotry are often still tolerated, even welcomed, by people who seem contemporary and enlightened.

Consider the guidelines offered by the Mormon Alliance (“Dealing with Spiritual Abuse: The Role of the Mormon Alliance,” SUNSTONE 16:5). Under “proposed definitional language” to be used in determining who has committed excommunicable apostasy, Paul James Toscano and Fred Voros suggest “the knowing and unauthorized performance or procurement . . . of an ordination, endowment, or marriage sealing . . .” (36). This clause is aimed directly at those odd-dressing, anachronistic, holy goofs we know as Mormon Fundamentalists. In effect, the stated guidelines would allow the Church, as it has for decades, to neatly dispose of people with whom it feels uncomfortable—dissenters who pay tithes, attend sacrament meetings, and believe wholeheartedly in the Book of Mormon, including latter-day revelations contained therein that govern plural marriage, revelations that some modern-day Mormons feel are archaic and embarrassing.

Face it, we’re a peculiar people, no matter how well we masquerade as Protestants. We have believers who follow the Old Ways. We can either tolerate them or help those in authority sweep them out of the way. The question is whether the liberal dissenters are ready to accept the fellowship of very conservative dissenters.

**JOE FASBINDER**
Santa Monica, CA

---

**TOSCANO STEREOTYPES**

Let me apologize for the editorial error in my review of Phyllis Barber’s non-fiction book *How I Got Cultured* (SUNSTONE 16:5) that I neglected to de-correct. Phyllis’s work is decidedly not a novel, but her own wonderfully resonant and honest voice, telling her own experience as a Mormon. It is a voice that bids us feel as well as see. She sets the example I wish more SUNSTONE writers would use—specifically Paul Toscano.

I know Toscano has some terribly impor-
tant, deeply felt—even earth-shattering—things to tell us, but, though his voice is refreshingly personal and honest at the beginning of his essay, it quickly degenerates into lawyer talk. He’s doing a brief on the whole Church disciplinary system, and ironically (I hope inadvertently) urging his readers to do to Church leaders exactly what he begs Church leaders not to do to so-called dissenters: reduce and stereotype. As Toscano portrays them, bishops, stake presidents, and especially general authorities are uniformly insensitive, unresponsive, and not to be trusted. He not only describes “The Brethren” thus, but provides them motives: fear and faithlessness, and pontificates at length on how—in their tail-chasing antics—these leaders show the all-too-human trait of objectifying others, “treating them as categories of evil rather than as individuals with hopes and fears . . . then deal[ing] with them as enemies, or apostates, or anti-Mormons, or liberals, or right-wingers, fundamentalists, or intellectuals.” Yet in this particular article (and even more so in his essay in a recent Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought), he treats the amorphous “objectifiers” as “categories of evil rather than as individuals with hopes and fears” and deals with them as enemies, blind iron-rodders, bigots, or misogynists, etc.

My own experience brings up the specific faces and voices of my ecclesiastical leaders and says that Toscano’s view is dangerously generalized. He moves so easily from what he does know to what he doesn’t, from his own soul to his leaders’ souls, that he probably doesn’t realize he’s doing it. And not all readers will catch him. Sadly, his fictions will precipitate a greater swell of our current, amorphous “objectifiers” as “categories of evil rather than as individuals with hopes and fears” and deal with them as enemies, blind iron-rodders, bigots, or misogynists, etc.

How I Got Cultured.

So enough of his circular arguments. Enough campism. Enough reductionism. These are the byproducts of pride. What we need is genuine peacemaking—and I’m not at all persuaded that the only alternative to “covering up” conflict is facing it head on. What kind of attitude gives us tabloid television, not eternal life. We are capable of seeing beyond our differences and finding a way to speak the truth in love. To fuel fires or use combative language in the name of peace is simply hypocrisy. The gospel teaches us that the greatest gift is charity, which takes us beyond our instincts, beyond debate, beyond accusation, beyond vindication, to a place where we can converse in love. We—all of us, not just Church leaders—are commanded to love even those who have offended us. Christ’s answer to the “Yeah buts” was “As I have loved you, love ye also one another.” To do that, we sinners need to see every person as a “you,” not a category of evil. (Sadly, I am remembering some who have actually used the word “evil” to describe particular Church leaders.)

I urge Paul Toscano to read Phyllis Barber, and then write from his own heart, rather than presuming to explain his bishop’s. As C. S. Lewis might put it, “Tell your own story, not someone else’s.” I want to see the “you” who is Paul Toscano.

MARGARET YOUNG
Lāie, HI

HORNS O’ PLENTY

I enjoyed Elbert Peck’s “Cornucopia of Things” (SUNSTONE 16:4) and I hope that he can make SUNSTONE be more overflowing in goodness in future issues than he has in the past. His statement that the items held at the hands of the Nauvoo temple stones were horns of plenty was new to me. I had always heard that they were trumpets announcing the Restoration.

KATE CANFIELD
Sparks, NV

Elbert Peck’s reply:
In an early issue of SUNSTONE, Peggy
MORMON WRITING

A FRIEND SAYS she can't work up a passionate opinion about any issue because she always sees both sides. I had a similar sentiment as I read Jorgensen's and Cracroft's opposing views concerning how Mormon literature should be judged.

I've been irritated by Mormon playwrights who think missionary fociation is the only topic worthy of consideration; by Mormon poets whose weary cynicism is the only theme; and by Mormon critics who assume doubt is literarily superior to faith. I dislike holier-than-thou attitudes, whether displayed by "true" believers or "sophisti-
cated" doubters.

But the longer I thought about the viewpoints of these two literary brothers, the less convinced I became of Cracroft's version of "the way things should be." I submit four questions for Cracroft's consideration:

1. Who is the "orthodox" Mormon group that is being done a disservice by unorthodox writers? Levi Peterson's The Backslider provided a profound spiritual experience to some rather "traditional" Mormons I know, while leaving others of a more "liberal" bent relatively unmoved. Much as we decry the homogeneity of Mormon society, we are more various in viewpoint and world view than we imagine.

2. Even if we could identify Cracroft's "orthodox" Mormon audience, should literature be assessed on how well it meets the expectations of that audience? Technical documentation must be judged this way: does it tell the users everything they need to know to perform a specific function? But literature is neither an instruction book nor a sermon. Good literature speaks beyond place...
and time.

3. Is a story about an unbelieving, confused, or "humanistic" Mormon any less a Mormon story? A tale about an apostate living under a rock and stockpiling weapons is no less Mormon than one about the Relief Society president who sees an angel in her dying daughter's hospital room.

Mormons are immersed in the culture around them and cannot help but be affected by it. "Outside" influences are not always positive, but must all outside cultural viewpoints be considered a "negative" to guard against? After all, the latest visiting teaching message I gave was about treating the earth with gentleness, an idea surely found in scriptures but not in the hearts of most Mormons until the "outside" influence of the ecological movement.

4. Should critics judge a work of art based on its "orthodoxy"? During the Inquisition, works of art (and artists) were judged on their theological correctness. Mormon writers, like any others, are exploring life, not necessarily religious doctrine. The scriptures do the latter. Mormon writers, like any other writers, cannot, without maiming their art, consider who will or won't be moved, offended, gratified, or angered by what they write. It is not the critic's job to judge the "Mormonness" of a Mormon's writing, but to judge its literary merit.

LISA MADSEN DE RUBILAR
Atlanta, GA

THE BASIC UNIFORM

It's a small corps of LDS scholars who harbor the illusion that academic freedom thrives only at institutions other than BYU. Without exception, other academic communities have their own commandments, sacraments, and holy ground.

The doctrines and practices that currently hold sway at most institutions of higher learning stem primarily from the worldly creeds of humanism, intellectualism, individualism, or even hedonism. These find expression in the sects of social-liberalism, environmentalism, feminism, multiculturalism, etc., and open opposition to them places a scholar's academic freedom at risk. This is understandable. Ultimately, no belief system holds sway at academic institutions until its limits to academic freedom.

BYU forbids no one from examining the latest trendy fashion show of intellectual thought. They're just regularly reminded that the basic uniform is a "suit of armor," not the academicians' "new clothes."

JIM CATANO
Provo, UT

FAITH OVER REASON

Scott Abbott's lament about anti-intellectualism has stirred my thoughts ('One Lord, One Faith, Two Universities: Tensions between 'Religion' and 'Thought' at BYU,' Sunstone 16:3).

It is clear to me what problems BYU's trustees are trying to solve, and, in general, they are going about it in the best way possible. Abbott's vision of the all-inclusiveness of the gospel is well founded, but he targets the wrong community.

The trustees encourage an all-inclusive gospel and academic atmosphere at BYU, but discourage disdain of things spiritual that pervades the scholarly world. Perhaps we cannot have it both ways. The Brethren have learned the lessons of history: by far the greatest damage done to the primitive Church was done by insiders and "defenders" of the faith pursuing intellectual acceptance.

The three main things Abbott found most relevant in James Burchael's article ("The Decline and Fall of the Christian College") were telling. However, I interpret them differently than Abbott does:

1. Intellectual ferment is not a problem, until it "raises... challenges to theology." Churches are essentially theological institutions. The Brethren have learned the lessons of history: by far the greatest damage done to the primitive Church was done by insiders and "defenders" of the faith pursuing intellectual acceptance.

The three main things Abbott found most relevant in James Burchael's article ("The Decline and Fall of the Christian College") were telling. However, I interpret them differently than Abbott does:

1. Intellectual ferment is not a problem, until it "raises... challenges to theology." Churches are essentially theological institutions. The Brethren have learned the lessons of history: by far the greatest damage done to the primitive Church was done by insiders and "defenders" of the faith pursuing intellectual acceptance.

2. "There was a transfer of primary loyalty
from the church to the academic guild.” Why? Because the “angry General Conference had narrowed its view of what it meant to be Methodist.” How about just sticking to a definition? Is that the same thing as narrowing? Being a Latter-day Saint does not mean being fearful of scholarship and inquiry. But Mormonism is a system of beliefs; membership is defined as sharing and adhering to those tenets. And who are the keepers of dogma? A fundamental principle of Mormonism is that the apostles and prophets are the primary defenders and definers of the faith.

(3) “There was a progressive devolution of church identifiers.” Why? Because “an effective bond to the Methodist Church instinctively evoked references to bigotry, exclusion, narrowness, sectarianism and selfishness.” Abbott finds BYU at risk because of its bond to the LDS church. He is right, and it is here that I despair of a solution that will make all parties happy. By the world’s definition, Mormonism is bigoted and exclusive. We clearly believe that some forms of behavior and thought are evil and unacceptable. We have plainly announced that some sectarian doctrines are not true. To become acceptable (and therefore less bigoted and exclusive) to the world would mean to give up essential parts of our identity. We cannot be all things to all people.

Nowhere is the problem that the Brethren are trying to solve made plainer than in the article by David Wright, who was fired from BYU for his beliefs (“Historical Criticism: A Necessary Element in the Search for Religious Truth,” SUNSTONE 16:3). Wright explains how historical and critical approaches to the scriptures have led him to the conclusion that, among other things, the Book of Mormon is the product of Joseph Smith’s nineteenth-century mind.

Nothing that Joseph Smith or his contemporaries ever said allows this conclusion. To believe this, in the face of unequivocal and repeated claims to the contrary, is to believe that Joseph Smith was the monstrous liar and the fraud his critics have always charged.

Historical criticism, or any other scholarly academic and intellectual pursuit, is not a problem. People create problems when some endeavors cause the neglect of others, such as engendering attitudes that put one’s soul (or those of others) in danger. The Brethren caution against scholarship that neglects or denigrates faith. Academics would have us believe that there can be no soul-danger in scholarly pursuits. Does anyone who reads this magazine not know someone who believes that they have found an intellectual reason to overrule faith, leave the Church, neglect the ordinances of the priesthood, and change their behaviors in ways that are critical to the eternal soul?

Michael A. Thompson
Felixstowe, England

WHAT OF THE CHILDREN?

David P. Wright fails to answer the hardest question we face as members of the LDS church: what do we tell our children about the authorship of the Book of Mormon? There are all kinds of ways that we as adults justify participation in the preservation of this imaginative tale of golden plates and visiting angels, but do we have the right to allow our children to struggle with these same faith-endangering stories when they reach the age of discernment and begin to question their truthfulness?

If we have wrestled with these questions and reached conclusions not in agreement with Church dogma, don’t we parents have the obligation to tell our children the truth? Admittedly, it’s only the truth as we know it, but to do less is to forsake our duties.

Where would we be today if not for the likes of Galileo, Darwin, Luther? Each followed his conscience and spoke against established dogmas—and sometimes paid dearly for it. Is this not exactly what Jesus himself did?

Jim Phillips
New Castle, WY

AND THE CHOIR SANG ON

I have been a regular reader of SUNSTONE since its first issue. I believe strongly that the community of Saints needs periodicals like SUNSTONE and Dialogue for the exploration and expression of ideas and issues that official Church publications will not approach. I have often been mystified, annoyed, perturbed, or troubled by the hostility expressed by some general authorities toward SUNSTONE and Dialogue.

Until now, I have never considered these two publications “alternate” voices, just “other” voices singing a different part in the choir of the LDS community. The official Church may be likened to the melody of a hymn; SUNSTONE is part of the harmony.

“Heads, you have to teach Rachel the Law of Chastity.”
that makes hymns richer and more complete. The LDS community hymn must be one of faith—faith in a living God who sent his Son to redeem the world, and faith that this same God called an ignorant, obscure farm boy to be his prophet in these latter days so we could be fully blessed by the redemption of his Son. Ed Firmage Jr.'s article (“Historical Criticism and the Book of Mormon: A Personal Encounter,” SUNSTONE 16:5) was interesting, but he certainly does not sing the LDS hymn of faith. While Firmage may believe that his “life is richer,” even as his belief “grows more uncertain,” and that he can continue as a Mormon in a state of such nonfaith, most people, including myself, are much more practical. If I reached the same conclusions as he did about the work of Joseph Smith and the origin of the Book of Mormon, I would put my money and energy into membership at the country club instead of the LDS church. The country club membership would seem to have as much power to bring me and my family eternal life as membership in this church.

Firmage's article probably would not have bothered me had it not followed so closely the similar article by David P. Wright. Wright's article is also interesting, but he does not sing the LDS hymn of faith either. SUNSTONE has previously published articles by "aging" intellectuals who describe their loss of faith. None of these articles have ever offended me; each has always challenged me.

When I read Firmage's article, the cumulative effect finally struck me. I asked myself: Is SUNSTONE really part of the choir of the LDS community? Can I sense from its pages a commitment to our faith in God, his Son, and his Church, or has it finally become an "alternative" voice, singing a different hymn? I was not sure.

What I perceive missing in SUNSTONE is a "context" of faith. Elbert Peck writes flowery, spiritual sounding articles, but most of them could be published in any liberal Protestant magazine with just a few changes. William Hamblin wrote an excellent refutation to Wright's ("The Final Step," SUNSTONE 16:5), but that is not enough to create a context of faith. That context of faith is created from the cumulative effect of the content and tone of the articles published issue after issue. It is this sense of a missing context of faith that concerns some general authorities. Perhaps SUNSTONE has become so interested in pursuing the "truth" that "faith" has been sacrificed. They are not mutually exclusive.

I hope SUNSTONE will continue to publish articles such as those by Wright and Firmage. However, I hope it will be in a context of faith, created by the magazine as a whole, so that all the readers will know that SUNSTONE is committed to the faith of the LDS community. In the meantime, I am going to withhold my annual contribution. I will continue reading SUNSTONE, and I hope in a year I will want to contribute.

ANTHONIE H. WOLLER
Beaverton, OR

REFORM VS. RESTORE

EDWIN FIRMAGE JR. discusses, among other things, how the chronological order of translation of the books of the Book of Mormon can provide clues as to when Joseph Smith decided to form a new church.

Firmage correctly points out that "nowhere in the Book of Mormon's many detailed prophecies of the last days is anything ever said about the establishment of a new church in the latter days." To take this idea further, nothing in the revelations received by Joseph Smith before the completion of the translation says anything about it either.

A few examples from the 1833 Book of Commandments, the first publication for most of the revelations of Joseph Smith, show that a new church was nowhere in the agenda. Here’s what the revelations say was to be done: Joseph’s only calling is to translate (2:4, 4:2); the purpose of the Book of Mormon is to bring the Lamanites to a knowledge of the gospel (2:6, 9:11); Joseph is to preach the gospel (3:4, 5:13, 9:16, 10:4). Nothing is said about creating a new church, although a few verses could be interpreted to support either a reformation or a restoration (5:16, 9:14, 9:16, sec. 15). Admittedly, this is negative evidence, but, as Firmage points out, Joseph's first calling to translate appears so often that certainly something as important as creating or restoring a church should be discussed.

Firmage suggests that Oliver Cowdery's work on what is now Doctrine and Covenants 20, starting in June 1829, may point toward Joseph Smith's thinking about creating a new church. A revelation received in March of that year, first published in the 1833 Book of Commandments as section 4,
then later with extensive editing in the 1835 Doctrine and Covenants as section 5, shows that, at least in March, Joseph was still thinking along the lines of a reformation of existing churches: “And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will bring down all liings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envying, and strife, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old” (Book of Commandments 4:5; italics added). (This important clue didn’t survive the editing of the revelation before it was republished in 1835.) Then, as now, the dictionary definition of the word “establish” could support either the creation of a new church or the building up and strengthening of an existing church. So the question still remains: When did Joseph Smith first encounter the idea of establishing a new church? If Firmage is correct that Cowdery’s work on section 20 demonstrates a calling to create a new church, then the time the idea was born could be narrowed to between March and June of 1829 because of the ideas expressed in section 4 of the Book of Commandments.

Firmage hints that the existence of the “handbook” (Moroni 1–6, 8) shows that Joseph Smith was planning a restoration rather than a reformation. Firmage’s discussion of the matter sounds to me more like a restoration than a reformation, except for the name of the Church. But if the “handbook” does point to a restoration, then dating the translation of this section of the Book of Mormon could provide some insight into the dating of the idea.

Foolishness of Men

Edwin Firmage J. R. discounts that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by nitpicking about (1) the translation order of the book; (2) whether Joseph Smith contemplated organizing a new church; and (3) why infant baptism wasn’t talked about sooner. A number of other things were mentioned, but who cares? It makes no difference. All of Firmage’s education doesn’t mean anything when he uses it to question the Book of Mormon. It puts me in mind of 2 Nephi 9:28–29: “O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vanity, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.”

Joseph Smith was planning a restoration along the lines of a reformation of existing churches: “And thus, if the people of this generation harden not their hearts, I will work a reformation among them, and I will bring down all liings, and deceivings, and priestcrafts, and envying, and strife, and idolatries, and sorceries, and all manner of iniquities, and I will establish my church, like unto the church which was taught by my disciples in the days of old” (Book of Commandments 4:5; italics added). (This important clue didn’t survive the editing of the revelation before it was republished in 1835.) Then, as now, the dictionary definition of the word “establish” could support either the creation of a new church or the building up and strengthening of an existing church. So the question still remains: When did Joseph Smith first encounter the idea of establishing a new church? If Firmage is correct that Cowdery’s work on section 20 demonstrates a calling to create a new church, then the time the idea was born could be narrowed to between March and June of 1829 because of the ideas expressed in section 4 of the Book of Commandments.

Firmage hints that the existence of the “handbook” (Moroni 1–6, 8) shows that Joseph Smith was planning a restoration rather than a reformation. Firmage’s discussion of the matter sounds to me more like a restoration than a reformation, except for the name of the Church. But if the “handbook” does point to a restoration, then dating the translation of this section of the Book of Mormon could provide some insight into the dating of the idea.

Foolishness of Men

Edwin Firmage J. R. discounts that Joseph Smith translated the Book of Mormon by nitpicking about (1) the translation order of the book; (2) whether Joseph Smith contemplated organizing a new church; and (3) why infant baptism wasn’t talked about sooner. A number of other things were mentioned, but who cares? It makes no difference. All of Firmage’s education doesn’t mean anything when he uses it to question the Book of Mormon. It puts me in mind of 2 Nephi 9:28–29: “O that cunning plan of the evil one! O the vanity, and the frailties, and the foolishness of men! When they are learned they think they are wise, and they hearken unto the counsel of God, for they set it aside, supposing they know of themselves, wherefore, their wisdom is foolishness and it profiteth them not. And they shall perish. But to be learned is good if they hearken unto the counsels of God.”

The Book of Mormon teaches us to live by the commandments of our Father in Heaven and Jesus Christ. These precepts lead to high moral values and a happy, full life. I have no doubt that the Book of Mormon was translated by Joseph Smith and was given to us for our benefit. We have no business making light of it and disregarding it. If by some remote chance it was made up by Joseph, it is still a book that if a person lives by its teachings, she will have all that she could possibly want and need in this life, and will be ready for the life to come.

Everyone has one main purpose in life: to bring to all we can a knowledge of Christ and his teachings and commandments, and to know that he died for us. The Book of Mormon helps us to do this better than any other book that I have read.

Doris Beach
Salt Lake City

Jesus Framed

I was fascinated with Martha Bradley’s “Mormon Steeple” article (Sunstone 16:3), and smiled at her appeal to the building committee to add a little beauty to our chapels. Don’t hold your breath, Martha! As bad as the outside is, the insides are also sterile and uninspiring. I hope the experience my husband and I had is not typical.

In the fall of 1953 we put a “gift on the altar” at a tiny new Mormon chapel, which my labors as a new convert had helped build, in Piney Green, North Carolina. Our “gift” was a beautifully framed print of Christ. The branch president put it in a place of honor on the wall behind the speaker’s platform on the tiny stage. On our visits during the next two years it provided a sense of spirituality to the otherwise uninspiring cultural hall.

In the late 1970s we visited Piney Green again after many years, and I noticed our Christ no longer hung on the wall behind the stage. Twelve years later I discovered from my sister Lois McCullen what had happened to our “gift.”

“I noticed the picture was down one Sunday about 1980,” she said. “I’m not sure just when it had been taken down as we had moved away. I asked the new branch president what had happened, and he told me they had a directive from Salt Lake to remove all ‘distracting’ material from the chapels, so they had moved the picture somewhere else.

I told him the action ‘really bothered me’ and that I had gotten a lot of inspiration from contemplating it as I partook of the sacrament, and that I didn’t find it distracting.”

“Sister McCullen, President Kimball would be very disappointed if he knew you had questioned that decision,” the branch president said with his stern, authoritarian voice.

“About 1989,” Lois continued, “I was cleaning up the kitchen at church and started to wipe off the top of the refrigerator. There was your picture of the Savior, face side up with an accumulation of about ten years of dust and grime. I brought it home, cleaned it up, and put it away. When our congregation moved to a new building in a larger town, I gave the picture of Christ to the new leaders, a missionary couple from Utah. The wife placed the print in the foyer and it was there for one year, along with the general authorities. Then I noticed Christ had disappeared again, replaced with a picture of the Salt Lake Temple in the same frame. I asked her what had happened to the picture of Christ. ‘The picture was faded, so I replaced it with a picture of the temple,’ she said.”

I mourn this disturbing incident. I notice few pieces of art on the inside of our chapels. However, I do notice the ever increasing number of pictures of the general authorities and temples which have replaced Christ.

Violet Kimball
Edwardsville, IL

Susurro Del Sausal

Life is like a splendid whisper.
It comes but before we truly hear its softly shaded sounds it leaves.
—David Clark Knowlton
FROM THE EDITOR

HIKING TO KOLOB

By Elbert Eugene Peck

In 1967, just as I became a teenager, my family moved from Bountiful, Utah, to Washington, D.C. The Church there typified what some scholars call the Mormon Diaspora—the establishment of Mormon colonies in major U.S. cities that recreated the Utah Church in all its glory and complexity. For the next six years my social, intellectual, and spiritual lives were all directed by a benevolent Church, which hosted an amazing array of activities that filled almost every square in the free Hallmark calendars we used to keep track of our busy teenage lives. There were ward, stake, and regional youth dances, Gold and Green Balls, bi-annual dance and music festivals, ward plays and road shows, Scout camps and other outings, Mia Maid-Explorer trips, ward camps, priest-Laurel firesides, sports, service projects, annual BYU Education Week excursions (for which we cut school), East Coast youth conferences, ward speech contests, Welfare farm assignments, and even Sunday School class picnics. Many days began with early morning seminary and its elaborate system of car pools and ended with decorating parties, dance, play, or music practices, and never-ending coordinating meetings and telephone calls.

Then there were the unofficial activities—private parties, individual and group dates, the Mormon table in the high school library and lunchroom, the annual multi-family caravans to Pageant, and the weekly after-church chats where people stood in groups scattered throughout the meetinghouse talking usually for yet another hour at the end of a long Sabbath that consisted of three separate meetings, interspersed with shuttles back and forth to home, smaller planning meetings, youth councils and choir practices, with a fireside still on the docket that evening. I recently looked at a calendar from one of those years and was surprised at how, during one month, literally every day except Monday had at least one event planned. I now appreciate how all those youth activities meant just as much adult involvement in the planning, car-pooling, and “shadow leadership.” Although we resided in cosmopolitan Washington, the Church and its programs mediated almost all the primary aspects of my life.

I blossomed in this Mormon ghetto. It gave me a strong, constructive peer group, as well as intimate association with committed, caring adults whose models I still regularly call on and strive to emulate. Today, being an “active” Mormon doesn’t command so much activity. I deeply miss that all-consuming, nurturing Church, but I am ambivalent about reproducing it.

One unforgettable, semi-annual activity that distills that kind of Mormonism was the 50-20. Two centuries ago, George Washington dreamed of attracting the growing commerce of the Ohio River Valley to the Atlantic-accessible river ports of Washington by a one-way canal paralleling the Potomac River. The enterprise eventually failed. Baltimore and Philadelphia got the ugly industry; but in time the Federal City inherited the abandoned canal with its 210 miles of publicly owned, wooded, riverfront property threaded by the diminished canal and its barge tow-path, now a popular hiker-biker amenity. The Boy Scouts granted an award for hiking the entire length and one for hiking any fifty-mile segment in twenty hours or less. Twice a year our ward’s boys trekked a different part of the route. Eventually the outing grew into an all-ward, then all-stake, event for which some prepared months ahead, and others went along on a whim. One year, Val Chapman jogged to Mutual each week to prepare to run the whole thing, but he sprained his ankle and couldn’t go.

One particular hike stands out in my memory. We gathered as usual at the chapel at 11:00 p.m., and were shuttleed to the up-river midnight starting point, where we were assigned a number, and set forth on the dark, tree-canopied trail with friends, flashlights, and assorted croaky, splashy forest and river noises. Throughout the night we walked and talked; I ran ahead to join in one group conversation, then switched to another at the checkpoint campfire just after we crossed the Monocacy River stone aqueduct. Some dropped out at the five- and fifteen-mile checkpoints, but most continued on. As the night progressed, batteries failed, eyes and hearts adjusted to the moonlit walk, and conversations carried more personal burdens. The tardy mom slowly emerged. The seemingly never-ending glimmers of light prompted repeated Henry V laments, “Will it never be day?” Eventually, the sounds and smells of the twenty-five-mile breakfast camp quickened our sluggish, pace. At a canal lock we greeted the hikers ahead of us, already eating scrambled eggs and bacon. Those who had earlier dropped out were helping. While I was sitting on a log drinking orange juice, Sister West kneeled before me, took off my shoes and socks, and massaged my tired feet with rubbing alcohol. The cooling evaporation carried the night’s toll into the brisk morning air. Her light-hearted spirit spurred me on. It was the best birthday of my life.

About half of the troops quit at breakfast and were shuttled home. The remnant set off with cheery encouragements. As morning wore on, the battle lines were drawn, and the contest between our weakening flesh and desiring spirits became equal and then precarious. Fortunately, I was with a jovial group of friends. Our slap-happy banner carried us forward with little thought of time, distance, pain, or fatigue. At each milestone we did note how many more until the forty-mile lunch break; but we were cockily confident that we would persevere. After the mom’s easy light had turned to humid heat, we punchy few encountered some dispirited comrades sprawled out beside the path. They had given up, but knew they still had to crawl a couple of miles to their final rest. Like shipwrecked survivors grabbing at lifeboats, they joined our group. Instead of us cheering them up, their moans, complaints, and debates about whether lunch was wearied our bodies that just after a few miles the Carderock lock finally did appear all of us quit—ten miles short of the goal. We were shuttled home to the far corners of our ward, whose boundaries now encompass four states, to nurse our wounds and prepare our stories for the next day at church when theCarderock locks finally did appear all of us quit—ten miles short of the goal. We were shuttled home to the far corners of our ward, whose boundaries now encompass four states, to nurse our wounds and prepare our stories for the next day at church where exaggerated tales were retold and the veterans painfully shuffled to class, some with swollen, shoeless feet.

For years, a forcible, personal moral of that aborted hike was the lesson of how a sorry attitude affects a group and causes it to fail. It helped hone what I think is my generally sanguine disposition. I thought of this
experience during a recent discussion about Mormonism's "gripping intellectuals." It is possible to demoralize the work of the Restoration with accurate but dispiriting criticisms.

But the 50-20 also symbolizes for me the nurturing community I grew up in, the fruitful social interaction where the united work to make an activity successful is its real success. On a heavily used public trail, this separate, blessed collaboration of hikers, checkpoint checkers, food preparers, foot massagers, frenzied organizers, and shuttlers all made the adventure work for each other. What happened during the event was what was important, not achieving the fifty-mile goal. Perhaps the quality of our journey is our true destination: the means are the ends.

My early church life consisted of vast energies devoted to getting us together, making sure the lost sheep were at the gathering, attending to each other's needs, and having a fun time throughout—whether it was decorating dances, pulling weeds out of the church's ivyless hill, sneaking "cheer up!" notes into school lockers, or taking the sacrament to the sick. As a result, much of what I consider spirituality is simple Christian sociality (the interpersonal attributes of the Sermon on the Mount)—living together in love (D&C 42:45). There is truth in what the minor prophet James Taylor sings: "The secret of life is enjoying the passage of time."

And were I hiking that same 50-20 again, I would still pick up the dispirited hikers, travel with them those few miserable miles, and if necessary skip the last ten miles.

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Susan Staker

WAITING FOR WORLD'S END:
WILFORD WOODRUFF & DAVID KORESH

So much of what is painful for me in the nineteenth-century legacy of the LDS church can be found in Wilford Woodruff's language of excess and violence.

But his talent for waiting made of him the leader who could teach his church to change and compromise, and thus live on and on into the twentieth century.

WHILE THE STANDOFF between law enforcement officials and the religious seekers at Ranch Apocalypse in Waco, Texas, was first playing itself out, I had been going weekly to the dentist. "What crazies!" the dentist exclaimed one day at the television screen which was always flickering in his rooms and which he watched while he worked on my root canal. "I just don't understand people like that." I remember his comment because I knew he was Mormon. I'm always quietly amazed when I hear Mormons comfortably distance themselves from the violent contemporary issue of their own believing tradition—the father throwing his children from the balcony of a downtown hotel, the brothers slitting the throats of their sister-in-law and baby niece, loyal followers murdering a rival prophet in his office. As I lay in the chair and watched the images of that guarded perimeter, I knew that David Koresh, whose religious quest had begun

ARIZONA GEOMETRIC

Plane Arizona along the vernacular line.
Zzyzx Road winds past California into parallel lengths to desert-bent horizon:
360 degrees straight,
a box of earth, sky,
and perpendicular walls
that rise
like an empty isthmus
above the finite board
into nothing.
squared.
—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER

SUSAN STAKER, a former SUNSTONE managing editor, is finishing her Ph.D. in English literature and narrative theory at the University of Utah. She is the editor of Waiting for World's End (Signature Books, 1993), a one-volume version of the journals of Wilford Woodruff. She lives in Sacramento, California, with her husband, Don Stout, and various assortments of their eight children.
among the Seventh Day Adventists, could easily have been one of our own. And I worried that things would turn out badly. True belief has become for me a signal of danger.

My strong sense that day of watching a familiar had its roots in what has become, in retrospect, a defining experience in my own spiritual quest. Nearly ten years before, I had met my Adventist mirror double, and that encounter had unmoored me. I don't mean the experience itself was that extraordinary. It was small, accidental, insignificant. But coming at the end of a series of small, accidental, insignificant events, the accumulation had issued in one of life's mysterious sea changes: a gulf opens up between one moment and the next, and somehow it is impossible to bridge the gulf, to go back.

I choose the phrase "mirror double" advisedly. A mirror both recapitulates and reverses an image. It is difference as much as sameness that defines the uncanny experience of looking in a mirror. At the time I met my mirror double, I was working as managing editor of SUNSTONE with Peggy Fletcher. For the SUNSTONE symposium, we organized a panel bringing together scholars researching and writing about the "prophet" of their own religious traditions. We invited Donna Hill, who had recently published a biography of Joseph Smith, a Christian Scientist scholar working on Mary Baker Eddy, and a Seventh Day Adventist scholar working on Ellen White. After the panel I went to lunch with my new Adventist friend. Over a lunch of bacon, lettuce, and tomato sandwiches, a guilty pleasure for a required vegetarian (I understood guilty pleasures), he described growing up in the tight-knit Adventist community, receiving an advanced degree in religious studies at the University of Chicago, working for the church university in Loma Linda, California, writing about his prophetess, receiving flack from the institution for his work, struggling with his own increasingly complex feelings about his church, dealing with the difficulties this caused for his marriage and for his family in a community which dictated lifestyle as completely as it dictated belief.

It was a familiar story: growing up and coping in the one true church. I had heard that same story many times from my own struggling Mormon friends. It was my story, too. But that very familiarity, the sameness, was what made the difference so painful and so substantive for me that day. His one true church facing my one true church, his prophetess facing my prophet, his promises for a world out of time, the Kingdom of God, facing the promises of my Mormon kingdom. The encounter was so unexpected—I came without warning upon the plurality, familiarity, of what I was struggling with difficulty to keep singular and unique. My defenses were down. Today I look back on that encounter with my double, my familiar, as the weird catalyst for a series of far-reaching changes in my personal, professional, and spiritual lives.

That uncanny experience a decade ago with my Adventist familiar was at the back of my sense of entanglement with what was unfolding in Waco. But my sense of entanglement with David Koresh's obsessive focus on apocalyptic ends also was intensified by the particular ending I was playing out in my own life even as I sat in my Mormon dentist's chair. I was finally coming to the end of a project which had bedeviled my life for some years—indexing and preparing a one-volume version of the sixty-year daily journal of my own Mormon prophet, Wilford Woodruff. Waiting for World's End was the title for the one-volume version of these nine-volume journals which I had chosen for the book to be published by Signature Books in the spring of 1993. Wilford Woodruff—like the nineteenth-century Millenarians who became Ellen White's Seventh Day Adventists, like David Koresh's Branch Davidians who issued from this Adventist tradition—was obsessed with world's end. He predicted that end, meditated on that end, collected evidence from the daily newspapers of the signs preceding that end, recorded "revelations" about the nearness of that end for the sixty-some years of his nearly daily journal. The apocalyptic violence of David Koresh's discourse only called up for me the violence of the images that so characterized Wilford Woodruff's discourse. After some six years of work with the journals, it was a very familiar language to me.

I was thinking about Wilford some weeks later as I sat in my apartment in front of another flickering television and watched David Koresh's Ranch Apocalypse burn, incinerating the believing men and women and children within. On that day I paid my somewhat grudging dues to my Mormon prophet-patriarch. For it was ultimately the difference—despite all of the similarity—between David Koresh and Wilford Woodruff which moved me that day Wilford Woodruff might easily have been a David Koresh, but he wasn't. Despite his commitment to the world's end, to the justice, violence, inevitability, and neatness of that coming end, it was his living on and on and on in and with the world which Wilford managed well, perhaps unexpectedly.

Wilford's conviction that Jesus Christ would come quickly, bringing a cataclysmic ending to the sufferings of the Saints, and wipe revenge on their enemies, was inextricably linked to his testimony of the restoration. Wilford's first church call was as soldier of Zion's Camp, armed to defend God's people against the evil and threatening world. "The men were armed with dirks pistols Swords & rifles for Self defense," wrote Wilford in the first pages of his journal. There he also described his own first gift to the Prophet Joseph Smith—his sword. On his first missionary journey, only months later in the South, bringing the good news of the restored Mormon gospel became intertwined with cursing its enemies. Repeatedly Wilford and his missionary companions retired to the edge of a stream in order to wash their hands and feet of their enemies' blood: "to Perform a solemn duty that is required of all the Elders of Israel whose testimony is rejected by this generation...we then according to Commandment cleansed our hands and feet and bore testimony unto God against the...mob...and many others who had rejected our testimony." (12 October 1836.) Not surprisingly a man who imagined the world in such violent and oppositional terms would see God's hand painting the skies red with blood as a sign of the coming end. Soon after arriving in Kirtland, Ohio, for example, Wilford wrote,

At early Candlelight the heavens began to show forth the signs in fulfillment of the Prophecy of JOEL...The clouds of fire & blood began to arise..., The reflection of the Clouds upon the earth which was covered with Snow presented a vary red appearance...the heavens were covered with pure red. (25 January 1837.)

The violence and extremity of these images—apocalypse, war, blood, fire—helps to account for their power to animate and sustain believers like Wilford. Wilford records Joseph Smith's description of the animating power of such excess, of living beyond the bounds of an everyday, commonplace world. "Excitement has almost become the essence of my life," Joseph tells a group of associates over supper a year before his death. "When that dies away I feel almost lost. When a man is reigned up continually beyond the bounds of an everyday, commonplace world. "Excitement has almost become the essens of my life," Joseph tells a group of associates over supper a year before his death. "When that dies away I feel almost lost. When a man is reigned up continually beyond the bounds of an everyday, commonplace world." (14 May 1843.) In this passage Joseph quite strikingly installs "ex-
citement” as the animating impulse behind his own sense of strength and power and knowledge. He implicitly admits as well excitement as the animating impulse behind both the lure and the danger of such a structuring impulse. In the language of being “reigned up continually by excitement” can be seen a suggestion of the obsessionald (and libidinal) nature of such energy. In contrast, when he “relaxes...he looses much of his power & knowledge.” This patterning of excitement and relaxation, extraordinary and ordinary, as empowerment and loss reveals the problematic nature of Joseph’s way in this passage of accounting for power and knowledge. Enduring the ordinary, the commonplace, becomes the challenge, even the threat, to powerful existence, promoting excitement as its wishful goal.

Wilford’s belief in the world’s imminent and violent end provided such “excitement,” an animating energy for Wilford’s sense of power and knowledge for himself, for his church. Waiting for world’s end, living on and on and on in a commonplace world, enduring the accumulating decades of an ordinary human life brought the ultimate challenge to Wilford’s imagination and to his faith.

Wilford’s patience had already been tested—thirty years of faithful waiting for Christ’s return—when he spoke in Logan on 23 August 1868. “When these Boys & girls meet to gether thirty years hence in 1898 & Convers to gether upon the scenes of this visit, what will be their Conversation?” Wilford asked those assembled. He answered with the following preview of thirty years hence:

Then it was a New Country with but few inhabitants not more than ten thousand People in all Cash valley. Then we had No Tabernacle or Temple in this valley. Now we have a great Tabernacle & a great Temple built on the high Bench of Logan & we Can be drawn on the top of its Towers by machinery where we Can view the glory of this valley filled with Cities & magnificent Palaces & Towers occupied by one Million of the Saints of God who Can Come up to the Temple on Logan Bench & get their Endowments & Blessings in their turn... Then the Apostle E T Benson & Bishop Maughn Presided over us. Since then they have gone with Presidet Young others to Jackson co Mo to Build the great Temple & the New Jerusalem.

This visit was in 1868. Then we were Children. Now it is 1898 & great Changes have taken place since that day throughout Great Babylon as well as in Mount Zion. That year was the great Election for the Presidency of the United States... Then the Nation felt Strong & Powerful. Since then it has been broken to pieces. That visit was before the destruction of the City of New York By the Sea Heaving itself beyond its bounds & washing the inhabitants into the Sea & they were drowned. It was Before Albany was utterly Destroyed by fire. it was before Boston was sunk with an Earthquake. it was before Chicago was struck with lightning & burned with fire & Brimstone for their Abominations. it was before the many Millions of the People of the United States & other Nations of the Earth were destroyed with their Cities By the Great Judgments of God Because of their great sins & wickedness in the sight of Heaven & Earth.

This was Before the United States became so weakened & Broken to pieces that they called upon Brigham Young to take the Presidency of the United States to save the Constitution & the remnant of the Nation from utter destruction. If this will not be the Conversation of those little Children who were in the procession with their Banners to welcome the prophet & Apostles on their Entrance into this City, thirty years from this it will be something like it.

Wilford added that “Presidet Young said my remarks were given By Revelation.”

In fact thirty years later on 27 August 1898, Wilford Woodruff was in heathen territory—at a meeting of the Bohemian Club in San Francisco, California—rather than in New Jerusalem’s temple in Jackson County, Missouri. He died in San Francisco a few days later on 2 September. The distance could scarcely have been greater between the scenario predicted by Wilford and warranted by Brigham and the very different story which unfolded for Wilford and the Church during the 1890s (with Wilford, not Brigham, as prophet). A temple did stand on the Logan bench as Wilford predicted, but the rest of Wilford’s vision had failed. And the temples, rather than the signs of power
Wilford predicts, had become, in an ironic twist of Wilford's story, the focus of struggles displaying the Church's weaknesses within fin-de-siècle political and economic arenas.

The national campaign to force the LDS church to abandon polygamy became the first sore test for Wilford's waiting. Year after year Wilford continued to predict God's imminent intervention in the Church's struggle with the federal government over polygamy. For example, on New Year's day 1886, he wrote:

"But we still maintain that God Reigns & will untill He puts all Enemies under his feet, and He will fight the battles of his saints and He will bring Judgment upon our Enemies & destroy them in his own due time. This is the Testimony of Wilford Woodruff. At the Close of the year look to this page & see what the signs of the year has been."

At year's end he wrote from inside the St. George temple, where he was hiding from U.S. marshals pursuing his arrest on polygamy charges:

"This New years Day [1887] finds scores of the Leading Men of the Church in prison and the Presidency & Twelve & many others in Exile for obeying the Law of God. . . But the God of Israel still reigns and He will protect the Righteous and Defend his kingdom and fulfill his promises. Where the End of this year will find the Presidency & 12 Apostles of the Church & myself in particular time will determine..."

In each new year Wilford would find the hope of the Church's triumph and God's end to the world; in each year's end, another round of quiet revisions and deferrals.

Yet the violent and apocalyptic continue to animate his dreams, his visions, his "revelations." In 1878, for example, he records a horrifyingly detailed version of the vision of the dying cities. In that vision as in his talk in Logan, he writes of the extremity of New York City's ending:

"in wandering down Broadway I saw the bodies of Beautiful women lying stone dead, and others in a dying Condition on the side walk. I saw men Crawl out of the Cellars and rob the dead bodies of the Valuables they had on and before they could return to their coverts in the cellars they themselves would roll over a time or two and die in agony. On some of the back streets I saw Mothers kill their own Children and Eat raw flesh and then in a few minutes die themselves. Wherever I went I saw the same scenes of Horror and Desolation ripine and Death. (15 June 1878.)"

Two years later, the same extremes still haunt his sleep. While on the Underground in Arizona, Wilford describes receiving his "Wilderness Revelation":

"when the vision of my mind was open to comprehend the Corruptions and the Judgments of God and destruction which awaited them and when I Comprehended the great and Mighty responsibility which rested upon the Quorum of the Apostles in the sight of God and the Heavenly Hosts, My head became a fountain of tears and My Pillow was wet with the dews of heaven and sleep departed from me and the Lord revealed unto me our duty Even the duty of the Twelve Apostles and all the faithful Elders of Israel . . . while dwelling in a shepards tent in the wilderness surrounded by drifting snows of the mountains while wrapped in the visions of the night. (26 January 1880.)"

What the Lord revealed was that the First Presidency and Twelve Apostles were to compile a list of the Church's enemies, "all men & persons who have taken part in persecuting you or Bringing distress upon you or your families or have sought your lives or sought to hinder you from keeping my Commandments or from Enjoying the rights which the Constitutional Laws of the Land guarantee unto you." They were to lay this list on the prayer altar in the temple and "bring all there testimonies before my face and before the Heavenly Hosts and before the justified spirits made perfect . . . Let them go forth & Clense their feet in pure water and bear testimony of it unto your Father who is in heaven." By cursing their enemies in the temple they would guarantee God's judgments on them—just as years before Wilford's curses by the quiet streams of the South had guaranteed judgment on the enemies of God there. The revelation continued, promising the Apocalypse and God's interventions in the affairs of the Saints:

"I will not Stay my hand in Judgment upon this Nation or the Nations of the Earth. I have Decreed wars and judgments upon the wicked and my wrath and indignation are about to be poured out upon them. And the wicked and rebellious shall know that I am God. As I the Lord have spoken so will I the Lord fulfill. I will spare none who remain in Babylon but I will burn them up Saith the Lord of Hosts. As I the Lord have suffered so will I put all Enemies under my feet, for I the Lord utter my word, and it shall be obeyed and the day of wrath and indignation shall Come upon the wicked.

Wilford submitted his revelation to Church president John Taylor and the Twelve. Wilford was asked to draw up the list of enemies and to write the prayer of damnation, which he did, a list of some 400 names. On 19 January 1881 the First Presidency and Twelve met together in this reverse prayer circle in the Salt Lake Temple, and "we all performed the ordinance of washing our feet against Our Enemies And the Enemies of the Kingdom of God according to the Commandment of God unto us."

By 1889 Wilford had himself become president of the Church. He recorded another "revelation" which continued this same defiant discourse of enemies and ends:

"I, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the world, am in your midst. . . . These judgments are at the door. They will be fulfilled as God lives. Leave judgment with me, it is mine saith the Lord. Watch the signs of the times, and they will show the fulfillments of the words of the Lord... Great events await you and this generation, and are nigh at your doors. Awake, O, Israel, and have faith in God and His promises, and he will not forsake you. I the Lord will deliver my Saints from the domination of the wicked, in mine own due time and way... Therefore be faithful until I come. I come quickly to reward every man according to the deeds done in the body. (24 November 1889.)"

Only a year later, a tormented, weakened Wilford was driven to write these chastened words in his diary:

"I have arrived at a point in the History of my life as the President of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints where I am under the necessity of acting for the Temporal
Salvation of the Church. The United State Government has taken a Stand & passed Laws to destroy the Latter day Saints upon the Sub- ject of polygamy or Patriarchal order of Marriage. And after Praying to the Lord & feeling inspired by his spirit I have issued the following Proclamation. (25 September 1890.)

A more personal register of language has captured Wilford's journal on this day. He writes of the "History of my life as the President" rather than the history of the Church. "I have issued the Proclamation," he writes, employing the first person pronoun, whereas only a year before "I, Jesus Christ, the Savior of the World," had been speaking confidently about the future of the Church from the pages of Wilford's diary. Faced with federal confiscation of the Church's political and financial troubles beyond the confines of Brigham's Great Basin Kingdom, as the end which Wilford had sought deferred itself, he found himself living in this world, ever more estranged from the thrilling future he forecast. Instead of heavens painted with blood, this eighty-something man confronted corporate ledgers marked with red of a different kind. More and more he faced not the night visions of a prophet in the wilderness but corporate decisions about whether to build a dam to generate electricity for lights and elevators and street cars or whether to invest in a newly proposed telephone company. Even his inspiration to finish the Salt Lake City temple (finally an ending he could control) contributed to the institutional debt which increasingly burdened Wilford and the Church in his final years. His days became consumed with a tenuous juggling act, keeping a stressed Mormon institution afloat financially. Repeatedly he confided his exhaustion to his journal: "I am worked altogether to hard. I don’ sleep Nights and am weary by day." (8 August 1894.) "It looks as though the Presidency would be ruined unless God opens the way. Our Affairs are in a Desperate Condition in a Temporal Point of view." (17 September 1896.) "We the Presidency of the church are so overwhelmed in Financial Matters it seems as though we should Never live to get through with it unless the Lord opens the way in a Marvelous Manner. It looks as though we should never pay our Debts." (30 December 1896.)

These poignant entries resonate with a dream which Wilford had recorded shortly after his seventy-eighth birthday in 1885, a decade earlier (some eight years after Brigham Young's death):

I had the following Dream in the night: I dreamed the Presidency & Twelve Apostles were about to take a Mission together and President Brigham Young Called on me to Pray and while Praying the spirit of the Lord rested upon me in a powerful manner and when I Closed President Young laid his hands upon my head & Blessed me & Ordained me to Sumthing. I do not remember what it was. He said I was one born out of Due time. The tears ran down my face while he was Blessing me. (8 March 1885.)

Waiting for the world's end, hoped for at first as a cosmic event but increasingly imagined as a welcome personal release, Woodruff began feeling himself a man living "out of Due time." His life story had played out on the concrete stage of life the tensions and ironies implicit in Joseph Smith's candid description of the dialectic between ordinary and extraordinary which crucially animates religious experience.

As I think of Wilford Woodruff waiting for world's end, I cannot keep from my mind the echoing experience of Estragon and Vladimir in Samuel Beckett's twentieth-century play Waiting for Godot. Each day the pair return to the same tree in hopes of keeping their appointment with Godot, who each evening sends a message that he will come tomorrow. As the waiting extends and recapitulates itself, they find it increasingly difficult to remember who Godot is, how or why they made the appointment, where they are supposed to meet him, whether they actually made an appointment with someone named Godot, whether there ever was someone named Godot, whether any of this seems like a good idea after all. At one point Vladimir muses on why they persist:

What are we doing here, that is the question. And we are blessed in this, that we happen to know the answer. Yes, in the immense confusion one thing alone is clear. We are waiting for Godot to come . . . Or for night to fall. We have kept our appointment and that's an end to that. We are not saints, but we have kept our appointment. How many people can boast as much. . . . All I know is that the hours are long, under these conditions, and constrain us to beguile them with proceedings which—

"Yes, it took hard work for the pioneers to cross the plains, but it takes just as much effort to get everyone to turn in information for the ward bulletin!"
VLADIMIR: That's what you think.

ESTRAGON: If we parted? That might be better for us.

VLADIMIR: We'll hang ourselves tomorrow.

(Pause.) Unless Godot comes.

ESTRAGON: And if he comes?

VLADIMIR: We'll be saved. . .

Vladimir and Estragon are most immediately evoked as absurd, comic figures, their rituals at worst disgusting, at best ridiculous. But Beckett's play also allows the pair a measure of pathos and dignity. Despite the absurdity of their situation, their waiting is punctuated with moments of energy and grace evoked through small events—as when they help one another off with their boots. It is something like the way I respond to Vladimir and Estragon in Beckett's play that I find myself reacting ultimately with sympathy to Wilford Woodruff. I feel such a gulf between myself and the violent and vengeful images that animate the religious energy of Wilford's pages. So much of what is painful for me in the nineteenth-century legacy of the LDS church can be found in the lure of this language of excess and violence, the structuring energy of largely male rituals of war and armies and blood. But waiting enforces on Wilford a different register of existence, the dailiness of "habit" and "proceedings." And it is in the end Wilford's capacity for human time—not God's promised world on the other side of human history—that moves me. His talent for waiting made of him the leader who could teach his church to change and compromise and thus to live on and on into the twentieth century. Like Moses, this nineteenth-century prophet did not enter the new land, but he brought the Saints to its border and made possible the conditions that would allow his church to accommodate the daily, the temporal, the natural, and thus to go on waiting for the supernatural, for God's promises and God's ends.

I thought of Wilford's talent for life that day as I watched the protected compound in Waco burn, taking its believers to their deaths. I'm no longer a true believer myself. True belief scares me. Wilford's discourse at its most extreme scares me. Certainly David Koresh's narrative confirms me in my fear of certainty, of belief. If I admit to my own contamination in the events of Waco, the familiarity of what happened there, I am also relieved to claim a difference. I am still thinking of the mirror—recapitulating, swerving from origins. Clinging to daily life, to living on, to making sense of what happens today and yesterday and tomorrow and tomorrow. That is where Wilford ultimately had to rest his faith, claim his accomplishment. It is the Wilford who lived in time rather than beyond time whose legacy I affirm.

MIST ON GARMISCH SLOPES

A ghost of mist over bright ski runs,
sloping over rooted trees, threading smoking
drafts through pine branches, its warm froth stroking
ing wings as though the habits of soaring nuns
skimmed the slopes. Mist shears into shattered suns,
fractures my vision. I stop, slide, soaking
in the clouding mists, the soft, clinging silence: poking,
I herd the mushroom-tops down hanging tons
of snow that runs deep, hard-packed and slick.
Sphere-whipped tendrils of the mist detach,
stretch beyond me. I hold the rest, sitting
my ski-edges into breaths of sans, frozen quick
and, at the end-run Schnapstaus, unlatch
a cloud that flies like music lifting.

—VIRGINIA ELLEN BAKER
A battle cry for Mormons to write funny.

AND NOW FOR A LITTLE MORMON HUMOR

By Ann Edwards Cannon

I was standing in the Acadia National Park gift shop on the coast of Maine this past summer when I overheard two college-aged store clerks discussing Mormonism. Actually, they weren't discussing. She was doing virtually all the listening, and he was doing virtually all the talking, trying his level best to impress her with the breadth and depth of his knowledge. She looked politely uninterested as only women who have been out on one too many dates with boring guys can look. I, on the other hand, was fascinated, especially when it became clear to me that this eager young man had found himself a warehouse clearance sale on anti-Mormon literature—real vintage nineteenth-century stuff.

With a growing sense of perverse delight, I eavesdropped on their one-way conversation, which wasn't hard to do since he, quite frankly, was pontificating in a voice loud enough to violate noise ordinances throughout the state of Maine. He told her about blood atonement and blood sacrifice. He warned her that gentiles sometimes had their throats slit in our streets. And, of course, he repeatedly mentioned the P-word, polygamy. Indeed, I half expected him to tell her that fair maidens, kidnapped and dragged back to Zion in gunny sacks by lustful missionaries, regularly hurled themselves from the spires of the temple into the murky waters of the Great Salt Lake in an attempt to escape the horrors of plural marriage.

"And do you want to hear something else weird about the Mormons?" he asked, his eyes gleaming.

The girl gave him the go-ahead with a non-committal smile.

"They don't eat or drink anything hot," he told her. "It says right there in their Book of Mormon that they can't drink tea or coffee or hot chocolate. Hey, they can't even drink soup!"

I could contain myself no longer. I walked up to the pair of them and said, "Excuse me. I am a Mormon from Utah, and I just want to let you know that the part about the soup isn't true."

I think it is a fair assessment of the situation to say that I made them gape, and given what they both knew about the way Mormons deal with mouthy gentiles, they were in no hurry to trifle with me.

It was a moment, don't you know.

My amusement persisted for a time after I joined my husband, Ken, who had been waiting patiently for me in the parking lot out front. But as my giddy mood wore off, I was mildly conscious of the sense of displacement one feels when realizing that in a particular instance, at least, he or she is clearly on the outside.

FUNERAL HUMOR

Let there be anecdotes—the funnier the better

ODDLY enough, I experienced the exact same sensation
in a Mormon setting not long afterwards. Ken, who was then the second counselor in the ward bishopric, came home and told me that a visiting high councilman had given the bishopric a pop quiz about Mormon funerals and how to conduct one appropriately. Now I think you will agree with me when I say that the thought of a bunch of grown guys in suits sweating over an unannounced quiz like they were all in junior high English class again is, in and of itself, not an unfunny thing. What did disturb me, however, was question number 23, which went as follows: "As a general rule, which of the following topics are appropriate for speakers at funeral services?"

A. Resurrection
B. Mediation of Christ
C. Certainty of life after death
D. Humorous anecdotes or vignettes from deceased's life
E. All of the above."

To my profound shock, the correct answer was not "E. All of the above." Apparently, these days, only answers A, B, and C are deemed appropriate subjects of discourse for funerals. The telling of humorous anecdotes or vignettes from the deceased's life, on the other hand, is to be gently discouraged.

"But Mormon funerals are supposed to be funny," I wailed. "Remember how my Uncle Lew got up at my grandfather and uncle's funeral and told the story about the time Uncle Don and Grandpa had to chase all those escaped chickens throughout the entire town of Ferron?"

My grandfather was a truck farmer who used to drive through the southern part of the state, peddling fruit from door to door. Cash was preferred, but he would take payment in kind, too, which explains how he ended up with a truckload of chickens. When he and my uncle stopped in Ferron, Utah, for lunch, the chickens, as they say, flew the coop. Upon discovering this state of affairs, my grandfather and uncle raced through the streets and alleys, the private yards and public grounds, the houses, school, church, and fire station of Ferron, bagging every single chicken they could find. Later as they drove out of town, my grandfather turned to my uncle and said, "Donny, I do believe we are leaving this place with more chickens than we arrived with."

Naturally family members at the funeral had heard the story dozens of times, but it still made us laugh, and on this occasion it gave us comfort, too. Indeed the shared vision of that sweet-souled man, Philo Edwards, racing through the streets of Ferron, swearing and threatening bodily harm to a flock of fleeing hens, made him seem alive and warmly present to those of us in the chapel, mourning his death. In a very real way that afternoon, our laughter healed us.

That's why Ken's news about funerals stunned me to such an unpleasant degree. In fact, the thought that the public observance of my death just might be turned into another boring sacrament meeting, heavy on doctrine and light on humor, alarmed me to such an extent that I promptly wrote down my wishes for my own funeral. They are as follows:

I do hereby declare my desire for the good old-fashioned Mormon funeral of my Utah County youth.

First, let there be food—lots of it—so that family and friends who drive long distances can be assured of a fine, fortifying meal in the cultural hall after my funeral is over. Let the good sisters of our Relief Society presidency assign everyone in the ward to bring a dish—later tot casseroles and green bean casseroles and chicken-finchin' casseroles and every other casserole ever invented that has Campbell's Soup as a primary ingredient.

And let there be Jell-O, too. Jell-O with little marshmallows and Jell-O salad with fruit cocktail and most especially that monument to gelatin engineering, which takes no less than twenty-four hours to make, Rainbow Jell-O Salad!

Let there also be musical numbers, the neighbor lady with the imperfect but sincere soprano voice singing my favorite hymn, the primary children, sweet and silly, singing my favorite Primary song.

And finally let there be anecdotes—oh, yes, let there be anecdotes—the funnier the better, after which please arrange for the Salt Lake Scots to follow the caisson bearing my casket to the cemetery. (Author's note: I realize that, strictly speaking, bagpipes are not a part of traditional Mormon funerals. They do, however, appeal to my sense of the dramatic.) Remember to bury me deep, then place a tombstone at my head which reads, "Here lies Ann Edwards Cannon. She did as she damn well pleased."

Perhaps it's that I grew up in a Latter-day Saint family full of storytellers, but I've always thought that Mormons have a way with anecdotes, some of them obviously growing out of an individual's personal experience, others culled from the body of jokes and stories that Mormons tell each other, which, in fact, as Bert Wilson pointed out in his article "The Seriousness of Mormon Humor," Mormons "have probably always told..."
each other about each other.”

Indeed, one of the few earthly possessions my aunts found in the drawer of my extremely faithful grandmother when she died—I can’t seem to get away from the death thing—was a mimeographed collection of Mormon bloopers. These were embarrassing things that people supposedly have done or said or written while at church, such as a bishop standing before his congregation and saying “gold-rimmed testicles” when what he really meant was “gold-rimmed spectacles.” You know the sort of thing I mean. Frankly, I like to think of my little blue-haired grandmother sitting on the back row during sacrament meeting, passing out copies of this silly and mildly naughty collection to all her little blue-haired friends.

As both Wilson and Richard Cracroft have pointed out in their essays on Mormon humor, Mormons, like most groups, have a tradition of oral humor which serves a variety of purposes ranging from self-congratulation to self-deflation. In a Mormon context, humor helps defuse sensitive subjects such as sex, as well as latent resentment toward the Church’s authoritarian and sometimes autocratic power structure. Perhaps most important, it can act as a safety valve, enabling believing Mormons, in the words of Cracroft, to “lessen the tension and the incongruity between ourselves and the high and demanding standards of our faith and the Church which houses our faith.”

**WRITTEN HUMOR**

*Unintentional humor is better than no humor at all*

What Mormons don’t have to quite the same extent is a tradition of written humor, and much of the written humor we do have is purely accidental. I agree with Cracroft’s assessment that, with a few notable exceptions, “one must search far into the first half of the twentieth century before turning up any intentionally sustained published humor.”

Actually, unintentional humor is better than no humor at all. When I was in high school, I used to think *Fascinating Womanhood* was a scream, especially when it advised female readers to pout, stamp their feet like vexed little girls, and beat their “puny fists” against their spouses’ chests in an effort to make them feel more manly.

Later, when I was in graduate school, I occasionally turned to the fiction of the old *Juvenile Instructor* for entertainment, although a part of me was genuinely moved by its earnest attempt to assist young people interested in self-improvement. The *Juvenile Instructor*, which billed itself as “an illustrated semi-monthly magazine designed expressly for the education and elevation of the young,” routinely published stories of high adventure, intrigue, melodrama, and romance. They were, for the most part, much livelier than anything I ever remembered reading in *The New Era* while I was growing up. I remember one western story in particular called “Flaxie,” which featured cowboy characters with names like Black Sam and Bronco Dick. It was, as you can imagine, an extremely educational and elevating story.

Later still, after I quit teaching and stayed home to raise children, I came to savor the unintentional humor of ward cookbooks. I especially enjoyed the exotic names of many dishes including “Mexican Chicken Kiev,” “Fondue Mexicanana,” “Speedy Chop Suey,” “Turkey Tetrazzini,” “Chinese Hamburger Casserole,” and “Waikiki Meatballs.” But, of course, what else would one expect from a worldwide church? I deeply regret that Roger Salazar and Michael Wrightman got around to doing a parody of Mormon cookbooks before I did. I am, of course, referring to *No Man Knows My Pastries*, recently published by Signature Books.

Unintentional humor is fine, but so is intentional humor—especially when it works. Because I’m beginning to feel as British essayist Nancy Mitford did when she said she only wanted to read a book if it made her laugh, I just wish there were more intentional Mormon humor. Indeed, as I was preparing this address, I asked a number of people inside and outside the Church to name Mormon humorists. With very few exceptions, they responded with the same short list of individuals. Furthermore, they invariably mentioned Mormon cartoonists before Mormon writers, which is entirely understandable, given the immense talent and wide-spread exposure these individuals enjoy.

When Calvin Grondahl arrived on the scene in the seventies, he was a breath of fresh air, was he not, poking gentle and not-so-gentle fun at Mormon ways.

When Calvin Grondahl arrived on the scene in the seventies, he was a breath of fresh air, was he not, poking gentle and not-so-gentle fun at Mormon ways.
reception complete with an Elvis impersonator on the cultural hall stage. I applaud Deseret Book for recognizing that many Mormons can laugh at themselves.

When people finally got around to Mormon writers who have written funny, they mentioned names we’re all familiar with: Sam Taylor, the granddaddy humorist of them all, Rodello Hunter, Ardith Kanely, Elouise Bell, Jerry Johnston, Clifton Jolley, Carol Lynn Pearson, Levi Peterson, James Arrington, Neal Chandler, Don Marshall, Edward Geary, Paul Toscano (although one person did say that funny is not a word she usually thinks of in relation to Paul Toscano), Orson Scott Card, Joni Hilton, Katherine Kidd, and, finally, my own favorite, Louise Plummer.

In her collection of mostly humorous essays, Thoughts of a Grasshopper (Deseret Book), Plummer displays a nice range of comic talent. Some of the pieces are gently funny in the tradition of Ed Geary’s Good-bye to Poplar Haven (University of Utah Press). Others, such as her written audition for a stake-sponsored rendition of The Book of Mormon Oratorio, are simply hysterical. And others still have that quality I personally find most interesting in comedy—edge.

Humor also informs her award-winning novels for young adult readers, The Romantic Obsessions and Humiliations of Annie Sehlmeier and My Name is Susan Smith, the 5 is Silent (Delacorte Press), which brings another fine Mormon writer to mind I haven’t mentioned, Dean Hughes.

Hughes writes books for children and is fond of saying, like Rodney Dangerfield, that he gets no respect because of it. My response to Dean is that plenty of readers from young people to teachers and librarians all over the country admire his work for many reasons, not the least of which is often very funny.

Now, the good news is that this list from Taylor to Plummer and Hughes includes talented individuals who have made a genuine contribution to the body of Mormon letters. The bad news is that except for the addition of a few more names, it’s practically identical to the list of people mentioned by Bert Wilson and Richard Cracroft in their articles on Mormon humor published by SUNSTONE clear back in 1985—1985 for mercy’s sake! That’s eight years ago!

WHY MORMONS DON’T WRITE HUMOR
They crave respectability and credibility

THERE has been some—although probably not very much—speculation as to why Mormons don’t do more written humor. Much of it has to do with the inherent seriousness of the Mormon agenda, which, among other things, includes that minor matter of building God’s kingdom here on earth. Verbal humor is safer in this kind of a mission-charged setting: folks laugh, tension evaporates, everybody goes on their way. Once spoken, words turn into so much wind. Recorded, however, words endure. Recorded on stone, they can even become commandments.

I think, however, there is another factor that is at least partially responsible for the short list of Mormon humorists. I’m reminded of the year my husband, Ken, and I lived in Finland. A question often put to me by the people we met was “What do Americans think of us Finns?” I couldn’t bring myself to speak the naked truth which, of course, is that we don’t think of Finns at all. So instead I told them that whenever the subject of Finns comes up in our conversations back home, we always, always say they are the toughest folks God ever made. This answer managed to please a lot of people because inner fortitude, or sisu as they call it, rates a solid ten on the Finnish Scale of Desirable Personality Traits.

After several encounters of this sort with eager and earnest
Finns, I remarked to my husband that I had never met a people who were so concerned with how others perceive them—except, of course, the Mormons.

What Mormons crave, it seems to me, is respectability and credibility with those outside the faith. And who can blame them? Standing there in that isolated gift shop in Maine, I had the merest taste of what must have been a steady diet for my pioneer great-grandparents. In their fascinating book *The Mormon Graphic Image, 1834–1914: Cartoons, Caricatures, and Illustrations*, Gary L. Bunker and Davis Bitton vividly demonstrate the derision with which Mormons were viewed during the previous century. A representative cartoon, entitled “The Elders’ Happy Home,” for example, shows a large bed in which the (a) old and ugly wives are beating up on the (b) young and pretty wives. And, of course, who can forget Mark Twain’s pithy observation that after seeing for himself the extremely homely sisters of Zion, he considered any man who would marry more than one of them a true saint.

Sometimes I feel that the major thrust of the twentieth-century Church has been to distance itself as far as possible from its truly radical roots in order to make itself fit for the polite society that condemned it one hundred years ago.

In short, Mormons wish to be taken seriously.

Plenty of Mormon writers, whether they’re the kind that write for the faithful or the kind that don’t, write the same thing. Of course, they may want to be taken seriously by different groups—some, perhaps, may wish to be taken seriously by the general authorities. Others may wish to be taken seriously by the mainstream membership of the Church. Others may crave the approval of the Sunstone set, while still others may wish to be acknowledged by the literary establishment outside the Church. And the best way to be taken seriously is—you guessed it—to write seriously.

In his essay entitled “Some Remarks on Humor,” E. B. White has this to say:

The world likes humor, but it treats it patronizingly. It decorates its serious artists with laurel, and its wags with Brussels sprouts. It feels that if a thing is funny it can be presumed to be something less than great, because if it were truly great it would be wholly serious. Writers know this, and those who take their literary selves with great seriousness are at considerable pains never to associate their name with anything funny or flippant or nonsensical or “light.” They suspect it would hurt their reputation, and they are right.

Now I realize that this address sounds suspiciously like a call to action, a battle cry for Mormon writers to write funny. And on a purely selfish level, I would like to see that happen. I can’t begin to describe the enormous pleasure I have taken over the years in our writers who possess a light touch. And yet, as American humorist Frank Colby warned,

The only really fatal thing is the shamming of humor when you have it not. There are people whom nature meant to be solemn from their cradle to their grave.

They are under bonds to remain so. In so far as they are true to themselves they are safe company for any one; but outside their proper field they are terrible. Solemnity is relatively a blessing, and the man who was born with it should never be encouraged to wrench himself away.

So perhaps I will conclude this way: writers do come with their own set of fairy gifts, and they should be allowed to do with them what comes naturally. In short, they should be encouraged to fulfill the measure of their own creation. In the final analysis, this is what I believe absolutely. Like Shakespeare said, “At Christmas I no more desire a rose / Than wish a snow in May’s new-fangled mirth,” I no more desire that a Judith Freeman write like a Sam Taylor or that a Terry Tempest Williams write like an Elouise Bell.

I’m just glad we have them all.

NOTES

7. Frank Colby, quoted in E. B. White, 246.

REPOSE

Contemplation is the praxis of loss:

I sit, balancing my head of marble,
smile as the neck stiffens,
jugulars coagulate into golden cords,
arms paling in their gesture of supplication:
I bend the elbow forward,
ever so slightly
until the fingers freeze,
pointing at no one,
and the stone cells descend
hardening vitals, trunk and toes:

One century, a lovely century,
I absorb wind and rain until
what I was—man—
calculates into the solid, fluted,
figure I am proud of:
I am so still
I no longer frighten birds.

—SEAN BRENDAH BROWN
The Church currently fosters a climate of fear and intolerance toward certain groups that legitimizes personal bigotry and threatens to poison public life.

SCAPEGOATS AND SCARECROWS IN OUR TOWN: WHEN THE INTERESTS OF CHURCH AND COMMUNITY COLLIDE

By L. Jackson Newell

SCAPEGOATS AND SCARECROWS HAVE BEEN APPEARING on the Mormon landscape—and in the Utah community—with increasing frequency. They are scary all right, not just to those real people who are posted as such for public viewing, but for all of us. Who are these scapegoats and scarecrows, why are they posted, and what do their cases portend?

It is an unusual thing to respond to a speech that wasn't intended for you and wasn't, in fact, intended for public consumption at all. But Apostle Boyd K. Packer's 18 May 1993 address to the All-Church Coordinating Council has been summarized and quoted in the press, and full copies are circulating widely among both LDS and non-LDS people. I respond to it because I believe its content has implications for public life, as well as Church affairs, and it signifies a larger pattern of singling out and ostracizing Mormons who don't flow quietly in the prescribed mainstream. I write here as much as a concerned citizen as I do as a Latter-day Saint.

THE PROBLEM IN CONTEXT
Stimulating group cohesion and obedience by magnifying threats

I have found that it helps to get away and gain perspective on our community and its problems. In connection with my research and writing, I have had two such opportunities over the last six months. I spent ten days in Hungary and Belgium in April as part of an international task force that is helping Eastern European nations get back on their feet after more than a half-century of subservience to Nazi and Soviet regimes. I worked with a group which was given responsibility to help Hungarian leaders and Hungarian professors reestablish academic freedom, in both scholarship and teaching, in universities where these ideals had been discouraged and blatantly suppressed for two or three generations.

Being Latter-day Saints, my University of Utah colleague on this venture, Tony Morgan, and I were kiddingly accused by other members of our task force of having an unfair advantage in understanding the problems of Hungarian universities. BYU's reputation is global, you see, and it isn't for football.

More recently, I returned with my wife, Linda, from a summer teaching and research assignment at the University of Auckland, New Zealand. Here we saw more of the Church, of course, and we heard more concerns. Peter Stenhouse, our Auckland landlord and an architect of humane instincts, remarked: "Most New Zealanders consider the typical Mormon's acceptance of church authority very unsettling. There are many Latter-day Saints here, you know." We heard similar comments from other new friends "down under" when they asked us (knowing we are from Utah) if we were LDS. The resulting conversations made it clear that these were not idle remarks, but expressions of genuine concern about the underside of the LDS church's affects on the quality of civic life in New Zealand. The same friends, incidentally, usually acknowledged the positive side of the Church's influence as well.

We returned just in time to open the Salt Lake Tribune to the headline of Vern Anderson's article, "Apostle Packer Says 'So-Called' Scholars, Gays, Feminists Are Leading LDS Astray." Subsequent reading of the full text of Elder Packer's address to the Church's management echelon made it clear that the head-
line was accurate. The timing could not have been more jarring for me, juxtaposed against my recent Hungarian and New Zealand experiences.

Elder Packer’s address was about obedience and the need for all Latter-day Saints to “face the same way,” with their backs to the light and their eyes on the Brethren. He illustrates this point from his own experience when, as the new coordinator of seminaries and institutes thirty-eight years ago, he took advice from Harold B. Lee and made a personal commitment to face the apostles always—and not listen to the teachers and students in the Church’s educational system—because “some of [his] predecessors faced the wrong way.” (Lowell Bennion’s firing as director of the LDS Institute of Religion at the University of Utah was an early and bitter fruit of this policy.)

Having established the primacy of obedience to the Brethren, the address describes scholars, working mothers, feminists, and homosexuals as the major threats to the Church today. Though their causes may seem just, and their pain may be real and intense, individuals who fall within any of these groups pose a danger to the Church because the Brethren might be tempted to sympathize with them. Thus, LDS leaders must simply teach scholars and human-rights advocates the truth and admonish them to accept priesthood authority.

For the offense of not bowing sufficiently to authority, members identified with each of these four groups are singled out, painted with a broad brush, and tagged with derisive or uncomplimentary phrases. Intellectuals become “so-called scholars,” homosexuals become “gender disoriented” persons, and so on. Members of these groups are stripped of the dignity of being authentic human beings. This dehumanization strikes at the heart of what I value about a democratic society, and believe about religion. I’d be a coward if I didn’t raise my voice.

Scapegoats, those upon whom blame is heaped, have been all too common in the twentieth century, from Berlin and Moscow to Beijing and Baghdad. The costs in lives, liberty, and human dignity have been staggering. Leaders’ words, and the mysterious discipline of individuals associated with groups identified as facing the wrong way, can and do shape public attitudes and influence behavior.

Specific scarecrows are now being posted to frighten the Mormon faithful. For example, 1993 Bancroft, MacArthur, and Pulitzer Prize–winning historian Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, a devoted Mormon for a lifetime, was denied an invitation to speak on the BYU campus earlier this year, and she has never been properly acknowledged in Church publications for her truly extraordinary achievements. Elder Packer’s speech makes the reasons clear: the Church will not honor women for high professional achievements because to do so would dishonor women who stay home, and it would give license to some mothers to work when they don’t have to do so. (A happily married mother of adult children like Professor Ulrich, after all, doesn’t have to teach and write books.)

In the aftermath of Ulrich’s rejection as a speaker by BYU administration, Carol Lee Hawkins, the woman who had successfully chaired the BYU Women’s Conference for several years, was suddenly relieved of her duties.

I need not list all the other recent examples of seemingly capricious punishment here, but I will note a few particularly sad cases. Assistant professors David Knowlton (anthropology) and Cecilia Ko- char Farr (English) have been made examples of this year at BYU by being fired. Each of them has been speaking out on religious issues arising directly from their research and teaching—issues that the Brethren would prefer to hide from public view.

Perhaps more significantly, award-winning teacher Martha Sonntag Bradley (history) resigned her assistant professorship in July 1993 rather than submit to the mounting pressures on BYU faculty to be “careful” about what they say and do as professors. A number of other Mormon scholars have recently been placed on notice, even for their membership in the Church, if they continue to speak or write about issues proscribed by the Brethren. It is not surprising, though highly disappointing, that participation by BYU faculty in the 1993 Sunstone Symposium was a quarter of that in previous years. Even perennial speaker Eugene England chose not to participate this year.

My central concern is that the Church currently fosters a climate of fear and intolerance toward certain groups that legitimizes personal bigotry and threatens to poison public life. An “us versus them” mentality (the “us” being only the few sanctified persons of certified purity) fosters a grim institutional attitude of persecution from without and dangers from
within. Like a perpetual-motion machine, criticism from either source is seen as further evidence of the righteousness of the leaders and their cause. The faithful are assured that Satan fights hardest when truth is spoken. Reason cannot penetrate this circular argument; nor can free institutions survive in such an environment.

Conjuring up or magnifying threats posed by easily identified internal groups is a sorry, old recipe for stimulating group cohesion and obedience to leaders. Unfortunately, it also reaps a harvest of intolerance and hate. Chosen peoples, and their penchant for creating scapegoats, cripple democratic societies.

CONFLICTING ASSUMPTIONS
If revealed knowledge overpowers its delicate balance with rational exploration then the foundations of democracy are undermined

The passion with which Church leaders react to divergent views and those who express them (such as scholars and human-rights advocates), and the passion with which these individuals respond, is deeply rooted in conflicting, though potentially complimentary, assumptions about truth and how we know it. Bringing these contrasting sets of assumptions into focus may advance us toward a common ground for understanding one another.

At the outside edges there are two possibilities. From one perspective, knowledge is “received” from a higher source whole and pure. From the other, knowledge is “discovered” bit-by-bit through observation, experience, and reason. Partisans of these two views squander little affection on each other.

Why? Because if you anchor your world-view on a revealed source of truth, you accord limitless respect to those you accept as the conveyors of knowledge from God, and believe that obedience to them and to their system of authority is necessary, good, and uncomplicated with perils. I’m talking about infallibility here, whether or not this term is used by those who accept this view of the world.

On the other hand, if you believe that knowledge accumulates gradually through the exercise of the human mind, and by constant refinement through observation and reason, then you welcome human curiosity, hallowed intellectual freedom, and embrace those who speak their views responsibly (whatever they may be) as means for advancing knowledge, truth, and justice. The two systems of thought, in their purest forms, celebrate strikingly different perspectives—and often deny each other’s foundations.

What about the vast number of people who believe knowledge arises through some combination of, or interaction between, these seemingly opposite processes? From their perspective, reason may enable us to understand what God has created, or to discover what might later be revealed more fully. Here, of course, is where it gets complicated because this middle ground is broad. It ranges, on the one hand, from a position in which human reason exists only as a tool to confirm or explain to others what “we” already know is true, to a perspective that accepts a 3:00 A.M. insight that produces the solution to a personal dilemma, or revolutionizes the scientific world with E=MC\(^2\), as divine inspiration.

To the former, freedom of inquiry exists as a potential asset to those who might use it to discover what has already been revealed to the chosen. But this same freedom is regarded as perilous for anyone who has already encountered the truth and now stands only to lose it by continuing to ask questions.

To the single-minded believer in received knowledge, any deviation from authority poses a threat—so the middle ground is a dangerous place and those who reside there are dangerous people. For this reason, fanatics on the theological right are seldom singled out by LDS authorities with the same scorn reserved for liberals. Those on the right have their basic assumptions straight, according to the Church, but they have their authorities mixed up. Those on the left, by contrast, don’t even have their assumptions right, and they challenge the whole notion of blind acceptance of authority.

Scapegoats and scarecrows, then, are being made of those who differ fundamentally with the assumptions and implications of relying completely on those who claim to provide received knowledge. Scholars and human-rights proponents are always natural targets of authoritarians, because they think differently. Listen for a moment to these voices:

Thomas Jefferson: “For here we are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error, so long as reason is left free to combat it.”

Thomas Babington Macaulay: “We are never so likely to settle a question rightly, as when we discuss it freely.”

Cardinal John Henry Newman: He dreamed of “a place where the intellect may safely range and speculate, sure to find its equal in some antagonist activity and its judge in the tribunal of truth. It is a place where inquiry is pushed forward and discoveries are verified and perfected, rashness rendered innocuous and error exposed, by the collision of mind with mind and knowledge with knowledge.”

What drove these three visionaries? What were they all three talking about? Universities. Jefferson was describing his ideals for the University of Virginia (the founding of which he regarded as a contribution equal in importance to his drafting the Declaration of Independence); British statesman and historian Macaulay was defending the University of London against its critics in the Anglican Church; and Cardinal Newman was urging the creation of a Catholic university in Dublin, Ireland.

If the church is the House of Faith, then the university is the House of Reason. Both traditions and institutions trace their roots back many centuries. Each champions a priceless treasure in human experience. Faith and reason are often at odds, and each poses a danger to a healthy society without the other.

If we have faith without reason, we place ourselves in the hands of others and distrust our own seeing and thinking. If we have reason without faith, we may so trust our own evidence and reasoning that we close our minds to other views and our lives to spiritual possibilities. When these two elements in human experience cease to moderate one another, then faith and reason, church and university, maybe even Elder Packer and I, are all the poorer for the armistice.
The implications of this natural and enduring epistemological competition radiate widely when we consider the relationship between great universities and democratic societies—which rarely exist without each other. The free exchange of ideas within university walls depends on a respect for human rights in the society that supports the university. Without this respect, universities can be little more than struggling, subversive enclaves or technique and technology factories churning out whatever the prevailing regime orders.

By the same token, democratic societies are always served well by the diversity of thought fostered by healthy universities. Respect for human rights, sturdy democratic institutions, and universities worthy of the name—these three elements have come to exist as an interdependent ecological community. This community respects individuals and welcomes the clash of their ideas.

PARADOXES IN LDS PRACTICE
Utahns as a whole pay a heavy price for the Church's insistence on unity and authority.

Moving to the heart of my argument, the irony in the orthodox LDS position today is that the Church came to exist, and continues to grow and thrive around the world, precisely because of the Bill of Rights that Thomas Jefferson immediately prevailed upon his contemporaries to add to the United States Constitution—and which has served as a model for the defense of human rights and religious liberty throughout the world. These principles underpin our political system and our long-standing commitments to freedom of religion, freedom of assembly, and freedom of the press.

Without growing respect for these human rights around the world, the LDS church could be little more than a subversive element today; its vitality and global missionary program would be stunted. Ironically, the right to preach and practice a particular authoritarian religion like Mormonism depends on the vitality of a larger political and social system that embraces an entirely different set of assumptions about truth and how we come to know it. Authoritarian systems never make room for, nor easily tolerate, their critics. But democratic institutions and universities depend upon the expression of divergent views, including the voices of partisans of authoritarian thought. When universities fail to provide a forum for divergent views, as they sometimes do, they are unfaithful to their own principles.

We must ask, therefore, if there is a point at which the LDS church becomes so dominant in Utah (and potentially in the U.S. and elsewhere), in the sense of converting and controlling its vast and growing numbers, that it threatens the vitality of the larger democratic environments on which it depends? Does urging everyone to face the same way, and succeeding with large numbers of Church members, sap the vigor from cultural, academic, and political institutions essential to a good and free society?

I submit that Utahns as a whole—Mormons and non-Mormons alike—pay a heavy price for the Church's insistence upon unity and authority. Why do I think this is the case, and what might be done to ameliorate the problem?

First, the premium placed on respecting authority and being obedient to leaders has increased noticeably in the last two decades partly because our numbers are multiplying so rapidly; eight million today, ten by the year 2000. To maintain their centralized control, LDS leaders feel compelled to emphasize orthodoxy and obedience at every juncture.

Jesus taught that love of God and love of others are the first and great commandments, but many Church leaders now preach that the first law of the Church is obedience to authority. I have always been a strong proponent of obedience, incidentally, but to me obedience must be to conscience and to principles. It is loyalty that we owe to family, friends, institutions, and leaders. Loyalty is a very different thing. It doesn't demand agreement and has nothing to do with obedience. It is freely given, and it springs from commitment, courage, patience, and love.

So long as obedience to religious authorities does not infringe upon the civil rights of others, it remains chiefly a personal and institutional matter. But when church discipline or religious teachings spill over and affect public life, they become matters of public concern and legitimate debate.

In Utah, religious, economic, and social circles often overlap—as witnessed by our well-known regional gullibility for business deals. If a "scammer" is (or poses as) a loyal LDS member, bishop, or stake president to an LDS "scammer," then the latter often takes the bait and begs for more. A reasonable but humane skepticism would serve members well, even in dealing with one another. That attitude, however, is being beaten and bred right out of the faithful. From pyramids to stock frauds, these habits cost Mormons plenty, and embarrass Utah repeatedly. While the costs are high, however, the damage is slight to the fabric of society itself.
In the political arena the perils are more fundamental. Here the Mormon cultural penchant for following leaders, and for being absolutely convinced one's views are right (no pun intended), is reinforced by the overwhelming Republican majority (but not unanimity) among general authorities, which is demonstrably played out in the political behavior of ordinary members.

One-party systems notoriously quash public debate, not necessarily by blatantly suppressing alternative voices, but because such voices are so faint or so easily ignored by an overly confident majority. With the Mormon majority lined up overwhelmingly on the Republican side in Utah, it is not surprising that we are the most Republican of the fifty states at almost every national election. It is, simultaneously, a tribute to Utah peoples that the traditional corruptions associated with long-term, one-party dominance occur as infrequently as they do here.

The prevalence of military metaphors and analogies in Church language evidences a boundary creep between church and civic life. We hear in Elder Packer's speech alone jolting uses to such terms as "enemy," "rank and file," "leaving a segment of the line unprotected," and multiple references to "invasions" into the membership of the Church by scholars and human-rights advocates. This is not language that inspires love of others or respect for democratic ideals.

If we become accustomed to thinking of people who disagree with us as enemies, then necessary political debate becomes difficult. In the give-and-take of civic life, and I would even say religious life, it is neither wise nor helpful for any of us to be too sure that we are right. (Remember the statements of LDS leaders in the 1950s who said that African Americans would never hold the priesthood in this life?) In a democratic society, if not in a church, none of us gets things just as we wish; good will and willingness to compromise are essential to the processes of public policy-making and governance. When the dominant church in a community uses language to categorize, dehumanize, and sideline individuals as well as whole groups of citizens, it places itself in the arena of public debate.

While the term is so common to LDS culture that it usually goes unexamined, the notion of a "general authority" bespeaks a division of responsibility between those charged with the duty to look out for the welfare of the whole institution and those whose realm of concern is restricted to a limited part of it. The United States Attorney General and Surgeon General, for example, speak respectively for public justice or public health as a whole, and so it is with a general of the Army (five star). The LDS term "general authority" corresponds with these public uses, but the extent to which leaders expect or urge members to "leave the thinking to us" is increasingly extreme.

"Nobody need think about the whole but us" was a doctrine used for many decades by Marxist leaders throughout Hungary and the former Soviet bloc as a way to assure dependence on the Communist Party, and subservience from the people. Russians, Hungarians, and other Eastern European peoples struggle against this mentality today, realizing that when every-

one's sense of duty ends at the edge of his or her little niche, nations suffer and the common good is ignored. They know; they lived this theory and gleaned its gruesome return of social, economic, and environmental destruction.

In his address, Elder Packer emphasized that every Church official, except the apostles and members of the Correlation Committee, is a specialist with a specific assignment in some corner of the Church. I don't quarrel with any leader's sense of duty to think as a trustee of his or her entire organization, and to speak for it, but in any healthy organization—be it a company, church, or nation—every individual should also be encouraged to feel and accept responsibility for the good of the whole.

Responsible criticism, constructive criticism, is and should be regarded as a high expression of loyalty and commitment to the common good. Those who don't care, after all, just walk away. In some authoritarian organizations, including the LDS church, almost all criticism is considered disloyalty because it is lumped in one heap and misread as simple, ungrateful rebelliousness.

Finally, with regard to the LDS church's present hostile attitude toward scholars and human-rights advocates, there is the matter of orthodoxy enforced by "friendly advice": If you care about your future at BYU (or as a Church employee), don't show up at the Sunstone symposium, and certainly don't give a paper! The abomination of secret personnel files that are built by Church functionaries and kept beyond an individual member's own access or review, provide substance for the ever-present specter of capricious punishment. These are the sources of fear that enable scapegoats and scarecrows to serve their intended purposes.

"They kill the chicken to scare the monkey," the Chinese said during the Cultural Revolution. When fear is used as a motive to cause people to face the same way as their leaders, passive resistance, grudging compliance, and alienation too often lurk just below the surface. With a sense of urgency rooted in this problem, I turn to a few simple but constructive suggestions.

SOME SUGGESTIONS

It is essential to the vitality of the LDS and larger community that all scholars be free, principled, and brave.

Consider former University of California President Clark Kerr on the relationship between leading societies and great and free universities: "Each nation, as it has become influential, has tended to develop the leading intellectual institutions of its world—Greece, the Italian cities, France, Spain, England, Germany, and now the United States. It takes a sturdy society to support and put up with a great university, but such centers of learning are inextricably connected with the flowering of a nation or people. If freedom of thought is not honored within a university, it will surely suffer elsewhere. This is why I have devoted so much attention to the idea of a university, and the reason I attach such importance to the scapegoats and scarecrows associated with BYU in the present
have been taken out from under control of the church hierarchy and entrusted to a lay board made up of prominent citizens and alumni, most but not all of whom are affiliated with the sponsoring church. Surely the Brethren have their hands full leading a global religion without also serving as trustees of a large university. The buffer provided by a lay board would defuse many of the present tensions with intellectuals by separating the parties who hold such divergent views on issues like leader infallibility and the sources for knowledge and truth.

3. Whatever else it does, the Church should stop demanding orthodoxy and obedience from its members. These are not worthy expectations of a loyal, free, and confident people. (And preaching obedience unceasingly makes leaders who do so appear self-promoting and self-serving.) It is God we worship, Jesus’ teachings we seek to understand, and human suffering we strive to stop.

If there is contention within a religion, as we must acknowledge there is within the LDS church at this time, then it would seem that Jesus’ ministry should provide principles to moderate and perhaps resolve the conflict. In writing this paper I have reflected repeatedly on Matthew 5: 43–47, which reads in part: “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. . . . [If] ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans the same?” Both Elder Packer and the people he singles out as enemies have reason to feel less than loved.

If T. S. Eliot was right that “To know is to understand, and to understand is to love,” then we must all learn to understand more fully and respect one another’s perspectives on the present impasse. Thomas Jefferson and Joseph Smith, we might say, were prophets of two different ways of looking at the world. Yet the interplay between the ways of knowing that each represented has been important to the development of both religion and democracy in America.

Jefferson and Smith both respected the other’s epistemology far better than most of us do today. LDS doctrine and LDS leaders have, over the years, balanced these ideals rather well. It was this larger perspective that originally attracted many of us who now raise our voices with concern to the LDS church, in the era of David O. McKay’s presidency.

For all parties to the present controversy, preachers of
obedience and defenders of freedom, it seems increasingly important that we distinguish better between means and ends. When any of us becomes absolutely convinced of the rightness of our position or cause, it becomes easy to rationalize the sacrifice of small truths, or even the expulsion of people who hold antagonistic views, in the interests of what we regard as larger truths or more worthy people.

Every authoritarian system suffers and bows to these temptations, often with tragic results. Who can forget Lord Acton's simple axiom: "Power corrupts; absolute power corrupts absolutely." Scholars, democratic leaders, and defenders of human rights also fail at times to use means as noble as their ends. The more and the beam—we must all demand the highest standards of ourselves, while expecting the same of others.

A CALL TO HUMILITY
We need people who are inspired by kindly feeling.

UPON receiving the Nobel Peace Prize in 1950, English philosopher and mathematician Bertrand Russell offered the traditional acceptance address in Stockholm. Seventy-eight years of age at the time, and one of the twentieth century's supreme rationalists, he spoke with simple and penetrating elegance: "One of the troubles of the world has been the habit of dogmatically believing something or other; the rational person will not be too sure that he [or she] is right. We ought all to entertain our opinions with some measure of doubt. What we do need is people who are inspired by kindly feeling."

A finer expression of the Christian ideals of personal humility and love of others would be hard to find anywhere. And yet these words emanated from the scholarly side of the great divide that often separates reason from faith.

If it wouldn't embarrass the memory of the revered philosopher too much, I would like to say, "Amen."

NOTES


2. Among his many and diverse contributions, Cardinal Newman was the author of the text of the well-known hymn "Lead, Kindly Light." He converted to Catholicism from the Church of England as a young man.

3. When Utah Representative Bill Orton explained his opposition to President Clinton's Budget Bill in terms of lofty principles last summer, a reporter interrupted the monologue and asked him how mail and phone calls from his district stacked up on the budget issue. His reply: "Oh, about 6 or 7 to 1, against." It isn't easy to raise up a statesman or stateswoman in a political arena where the electorate is so lopsided. We might expect a public official to take a chance with a 60-40 split among her constituents, as was the case in Utah Representative Karen Shepherd's Second Congressional District, but 85-15 odds are enough to make almost any politician wilt.

4. The reality and secrecy of these files is a matter of personal knowledge. Immediately after the Strengthening Church Members Committee was acknowledged publicly in August 1992, I wrote Elder Russell M. Nelson to request permission to review our own files for accuracy and balance. We were first told via a phone call from a local church officer that we were perfectly welcome to see our files, but that we must make our request "through regular priesthood channels." When we did this, however, we eventually received a letter from Elder Nelson informing us that, although our files are not secret, we cannot be granted permission to see them. When I asked why the initial positive response was reversed, I was told that a local official "wanted so badly to help me that he somewhat misinterpreted his instructions from higher up." Local officials always take the rap.


PARACHUTE

No one hears the tone of the mind sinking further and further out of key, the way a mouth goes soft and blows crooked over a flute until you can't be gentle to your own face and have this urge just to jump off something, just to jump.

In Chinese, jumping is almost dancing. You draw the word and see how elegantly feet cross and weave like a diagram of cracks made by heat in a tortoise shell, the delicate way the future lays itself out in lines.

How long does it take to see someone in terms of his or her own strangeness? You learn too late what Chinese tells you: that birth plus breath, energy, soul, means to be angry.

Some things you follow down gently, like stairs leading from a mound of earth, like grass tracing its roots to water.

Light glints sharply through each tiny tear in a parachute and two bits of light make a star.

—HOLLY WELKER

Saints & Scientists

By Richard Wootton, former B.Y.U.-Hawaii President and Arizona State University Social Science Professor.

"Topics are so wisely, well and forthrightly treated." Marion D. Hanks, Seventy's President, Emeritus.

"An enormous contribution to L.D.S. intellectual history." Armand Mauss, Professor of Sociology and Religious Studies, Washington State University.

"A most important contribution that should be of interest to all members. Results are amazing and highly significant." Wm. Lee Stokes, Emeritus Geology Chair, U. of U., in a letter to the First Presidency.


Buy at LDS bookstores. Or order, pay on approval, from EduTech Inc., 3066 So. Mollera St., Mesa, AZ, 85210, 602-831-1632. $13.95. plus $1.50 shipping.
MISSION RULES

By Penny Allen

The first mission rule in that area of South America was, “Do not catch any girl who faints.” It had come about because a certain young lady had caught (and gotten excommunicated) a missionary by fainting. From then on, the tactic was employed frequently until the rule was invoked. Then perhaps half a dozen listless bodies hit the uncompromising concrete of the branch meeting place before the message got through to everyone.

“But what if she falls on the floor?” a greenie always asked.

“Let her fall,” was the stern answer.

The rule remained number one through several changes of mission presidents although no one could remember anyone’s fainting for years. Still, rules have a life of their own, and Elder Snow got it as strongly as every other elder in the area.

It was a day so hot and humid that five minutes after putting on a clean white shirt it was saturated with sweat. People swam, shiny-skinned, through the pool of atmosphere. Maybe bubbled would be the term because it would seem as if a human soup were being cooked by nature.

So when the flawless olive skin faded to a sickly white and the huge dark eyes turned upward, it was not difficult to believe that the girl was truly fainting in the heat. Elder Snow stepped forward instinctively before jerking back and watching the knees buckle and the body sink. The sound of head striking wood boomed sharply.

Immediately she was surrounded by aid, and he saw her carried out with a bloody handkerchief being pressed to her head.

He and his companion were asked to administer a blessing to her. She was conscious, bandaged, and propped upon a brightly striped bed covering. Although his hands touched only her head, he felt electricity surge through him from the glossy black locks.

After the accident, the mission rule should probably have been changed to “Catch any girl who faints,” but it was not. The mothers agreed, however, that it had all happened for the best, because after Elder Snow’s mission was honorably concluded, he came back for the girl and took her to Utah to marry her. After this, a good many girls had inexplicable accidents that required blessings, and no one could impose a rule that said, “Do not administer to any girl who is wounded.”

PENNY ALLEN is a writer and a teacher of writing living in Bountiful, Utah.
The story of confusing ends and means in the missionary program three decades ago has lessons for the growth of today's Church.

I-THOU vs. I-IT CONVERSIONS: THE MORMON “BASEBALL BAPTISM” ERA

By D. Michael Quinn

lonely may seek the instant friendships that seem to be the reward for conversion. Dysfunctional or shattered families may seek transformation into the happy marriages they see at invitational Family Home Evenings or in "Home Front" television commercials. The hungry and ill may desperately want the food and health care that are available to "the worthy poor" of the new church. The impoverished may hope to achieve financial opportunities through association with comparatively wealthy missionaries and members of the new church. Social outcasts may crave what they perceive as the respectability surrounding members of the new church, especially if they know converts who have experienced upward social mobility.

In I-It conversions, the uprooted and dislocated may also need the stability and cohesiveness of the new church's social network. Those who envy or identify with the United States may seek vicarious Americanization through association with U.S. missionaries and their Americanized converts. Students in specific countries may seek the tuition-free education available to them from the Church's large university that is trying to build bridges across which future missionaries can march into previously forbidden cities. Illegal immigrants may accept baptism from a missionary who promises not to report them to government officials and who offers to transport them to destinations far from the border. And—in the main subject of this essay—Church leaders may put such intense pressures of reward or disfavor on a missionary's baptismal numbers that young missionaries will do anything—anything—to satisfy those demands.

In all of the above examples of I-It missionary work, potential converts and actual converts are only objects to fulfill the various goals of a missionary. That is true whether a missionary's I-It emphasis results in a single baptism or in thousands.

Because the chasm between I-Thou and I-It lies within a person's internal motivation, external actions might not identify which relationship governs. In the case of proselytizing, a person may "convert" for I-It motivations, while the missionary teaches and baptizes the same convert for I-Thou reasons. And vice versa. However, external actions sometimes are so exploitative as to remove all doubt that I-It relationships are occurring.

THE DEMANDS OF GROWTH
The link between chapel construction, baptism, and Church finances

This essay tells the story of a specific period in the modern history of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. It began as a program to encourage I-Thou conversions to Mormonism, but rapidly degenerated into an I-It race for baptism numbers. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, many LDS leaders promoted this as a "New Era" of missionary work and referred to it as the "Youth Baptism Program." In the 1970s, LDS church president Spencer W. Kimball derided it as "the kiddie baptism program." In 1973 I gave a detailed summary of this history as part of a thirty-five page interview with the historical department of the LDS church. I put it under a twenty-year restriction, which has now passed.

In many missions, this accelerated-baptism program was known by whatever activity the missionaries employed to attract adolescent boys. Young males were the specific target because this "New Era" missionary program sought to change the previous over-representation of females in conversions and active membership and the consequent marriage of many of those active young women to non-Mormon males. In some missions its nickname was "Basketball Program." In others, it was the "Beach Party Program." In Great Britain and continental Europe, it was popularly known as the "Baseball Baptism Program."
months later, assumed direction of Church finances, with President David McKay issued its last public statement of expenditures at the April 1959 conference. Moyle, appointed second counselor two months later, assumed direction of Church finances, with President David O. McKay's optimistic encouragement. President Moyle immediately set aside the current budget and launched a massive increase of expenditures, especially in the construction of new buildings. Six months later the LDS church had spent $8 million more than it had received in 1959. This was extraordinary when compared to the Church's surplus income of $7 million after 1958's expenditures. Because the last published report of expenditures included the building program, Elder Moyle persuaded President McKay not to publish even an abbreviated accounting of Church spending. There has been no itemized financial report of LDS expenditures from 1960 onward. President Moyle's financial program for the LDS church was fundamentally linked with his missionary program. First, he expected a major increase of tithing revenues from a significant rise in convert baptisms. Second, he was convinced that massive increases in Church membership meant there soon would be a thousand Mormons in towns and cities where now there were only a few dozen. Therefore, Counselor Moyle ordered the LDS church building program to construct meetinghouses for that projected growth rather than for the current needs of thousands of small branches.

This massive building program plunged the LDS church into huge spending deficits. At the time, Apostle Harold B. Lee waged a losing battle in what he called "my stubborn resistance to the principle of 'deficit spending,'" supposedly justified in the hope of increasing the tithing of the Church to cover the deficit. Such an increase in the building program required a virtual explosion in the number of tithe-payers to avoid bankrupting the Church. In effect, this left the Church's financial survival directly in hands of youthful full-time missionaries.

The nickname of "New Era" for this missionary program was linked to Church finances, to David O. McKay, and to Great Britain. The First Presidency's financial secretary had proclaimed in the mid-1950s that projected increases of tithing revenues constituted "a new era in the financial history of the Church." At the dedication of the London Temple in September 1958, President McKay used the phrase "New Era," and the British Mission president rephrased his words as: "This is a New Era in the British Mission."

Part of that "New Era" was a new approach to teaching prospective converts. Since 1948, many missions had systematic (but unmemorized) presentations that "incorporated well-known salesmanship techniques." Fourteen or fifteen "lessons" were required before a prospective convert was allowed to be baptized. In February-March 1959, the British Mission adopted a six-"discussion" plan which missionaries were required to memorize and repeat verbatim to potential converts. After visiting the British Mission five months later, Apostle Marion G. Romney gave copies of its plan to European mission presidents and instructed them to translate the plan verbatim into their various languages. However, Elder Romney opposed high-pressure proselytizing and warned missionary leaders against being "slave-drivers."

With President Moyle's encouragement, the six memorized proselytizing lessons became the Church-wide program in 1961. This "New Era" plan of memorized dialogue had the following "challenge" midway through the first discussion: "Now, the beautiful thing that we're going to tell you about today is that the Lord has restored His true Church and the priesthood back to the earth again. WHEN YOU COME TO KNOW IN YOUR OWN HEART THAT THIS IS TRUE, WILL YOU BE BAPTIZED BY SOMEONE WHO HAS THE PRIESTHOOD?" No matter what the person's answer, the missionary was to respond: "We hold baptismal services every week in the church. We'll be having a baptism on the (date). We want you to keep that date in mind as you continue to learn about the Church." At the end of this first meeting, the dialogue gave a reminder of the upcoming baptismal service. If the person didn't accept immediate baptism, the lesson plan's third and fourth discussions contained even more emphatic baptismal challenges.

Mormon proselytizing became goal-driven and pressurized upon the Church-wide adoption of this teaching method in 1961. Subtle and not-so-subtle pressures on the "investigators" to accept LDS baptism were in the dialogue's very structure. Missionaries were required to memorize and deliver these six lessons of dialogue word-for-word, and were also instructed how to "coach" the non-Mormon listeners to give the "right" answers. The lesson plan reminded missionaries that "conversion comes only through the Holy Ghost." However, the structure of the "Uniform System" reduced LDS proselytizing to an extended sales pitch and investigators into potential numbers for demonstrating the success of missionaries as gospel salespeople.

Goals, quotas, comparative charts, incentives, material rewards, and deadlines were among the "well-known salesmanship techniques" that Henry D. Moyle made part of the LDS church's world-wide missionary work. Equally important was Moyle's emphasis on baptizing young males whom he expected to become tithe-paying breadwinners and heads of LDS families.

In tandem with the New Era of missionary work, Moyle's protégé Wendell Mendenhall was chair of the LDS Church
Building Committee, and Mendenhall accelerated church construction world-wide from 1959 onward. For example, in 1960 the two men addressed a meeting of mission presidents, missionaries, and local leaders in England. They praised the missionaries for using baseball instruction to baptize young boys and for accepting goals to double the current year's number of baptisms. They also explained that this rate of growth required the LDS church to complete a new meeting-house every day in Great Britain alone.16

To assist this accelerated building effort in 1960, the Church began having young men serve two-year building missions in Britain and continental Europe.11 This had double benefits in providing cheap labor for constructing chapels and in keeping the teenage boys active in the Church. Nearly all of them converted without their parents.12

Nevertheless, even with voluntary labor, the construction of new meeting-houses almost single-handedly pushed the LDS church to a $32 million deficit for 1962. Moyle's building program assumed long-term population growth of extraordinary proportions, yet paying for it required immediate tithing increases. "I wonder where all the money will come from," the Twelve's president wrote.13 There was already a shortfall of $5 million for the first two months of 1963, and the year's outlay threatened to equal or exceed the Church's $32 million deficit of 1962.14 Mormonism was teetering on the edge of a financial crisis.

Long before then, the building program alone had made it imperative to baptize large numbers of adolescent boys to become building missionaries and tithe-payers. Moyle told British missionaries: "We need these young men. How are we going to get this [labor] missionary building program carried out without them? The answer is, we could not." Moyle published that in the LDS Church News.15

TEENAGE BAPTISMS
Top-level resistance to the program

Shortly after the baseball baptisms began, however, some missionaries in Britain wrote letters to the Church president complaining that the program was exploiting British youth. First Presidency secretaries routed these letters to the counselor in charge of missionary work, Henry D. Moyle. A man of strong will and quick temper, Counselor Moyle lashed out at these letters in his talk to all British missionaries in November 1960:

You elders need have no concern, no matter from what source the criticism comes, as to whether your baptisms are too fast. . . . If you think that President McKay does not know what is going on and that Brother Moyle and Brother Woodbury, and Brother Brockbank are "pulling a fast one," so to speak, why you are mistaken about that. . . . I have noted a little apologetic tone in some of your voices about baptizing too many young people. Well don't put on the brakes.

Those remarks also appeared in the LDS Church News.16 Moyle's counsel that missionaries should ignore criticism "no matter from what source" referred to the apostles who were already criticizing the Baseball Baptism Program and its world-wide spin-offs. For example, in March 1960, Apostle Harold B. Lee had warned the missionaries in France that "conversions are not merely the result of a system, not merely the result of a machine operation. . . . We are not concerned primarily with how many baptisms you get."17 In September, Moyle confided that Apostles Joseph Fielding Smith and Harold B. Lee were in "real opposition" to his "accelerated missionary program."18

The European mission president, Alvin R. Dyer, also told the missionaries in France about criticism of the accelerated baptisms he heard when he was at October 1960 general conference.19

On 15 December 1960, Counselor Moyle formally announced to the apostles that baseball was now a missionary tool to baptize teenage boys. Because the British Mission had traditionally been the most prestigious mission, Moyle emphasized the success of the baseball program there. He reported to the Quorum of Twelve that this was happening "not only in England but all over the Continent."20 Convert numbers soared. General authority Derek A. Cuthbert wrote: "Instead of baptising ones and twos, almost overnight from mid-1960, the missionaries were bringing in tens and hundreds." He became an English general authority who continued to defend the Baseball Baptism Program decades after it was discontinued.21 In 1959, Great Britain and continental Europe baptized a total of 9 percent of all baptisms in the LDS church. A year later, Britain and Europe accounted for 36 percent of the entire Church's baptisms.22

Soon missionaries were competing with each other to achieve baptism "goals," and each mission president throughout the world was competing to have the highest numbers of baptisms. However, many general authorities had misgivings, especially about Britain, where several apostles had served missions. By May 1961, "nearly all" of the apostles were "gravely concerned about the pressures being put on mission-
aries to baptize to fill a quota of baptisms.” BYU president Ernest L. Wilkinson added, “This of course was a criticism of President Moyle and many of the mission presidents working under his direction.”

Rather than consider the merits of such criticism from the Quorum of Twelve, Moyle publicly counter-attacked. In August 1961, he had the LDS Church News publish the full text of his defense of the “New Era” missionary program. He lashed out against persons who “undertake to sow doubt or uncertainty about any phase of missionary work,” which equaled “criticism of our Head, Jesus Christ, the son of God.” He denied that missionaries were overworked. He even instructed parents and church leaders to ignore letters from youthful missionaries who complained about any aspect of the new proselytizing program.

So that no one would misunderstand, Counselor Moyle referred to “these teen-age baptisms, about which there seems to have been so much talk.” He said it was no one’s business to complain if a boy chose to be baptized the “first day or the first week or the first month or the first year of contact with him concerning the Church.” A few months later, his annual report of missionary baptisms had the same tone of defensive defiance: “President Henry D. Moyle of the First Presidency, who, under the assignment of President David O. McKay, directs the great world-wide missionary effort of the Church, feels 1962 will record another 100 percent increase as did 1961.”

Counselor Moyle also encouraged mission presidents and missionaries to regard convert baptisms like scores in athletic competition. As an example of this officially sponsored competitiveness, the LDS Church News reported in September 1961 that so far in the year, “the Northwestern States Mission leads the missions...Samoa missionaries were in second place...California Mission reported 2,138 converts to clinch third place.”

Reading like the sports page, the LDS Church News reported in December that the Scottish-Irish Mission’s “baptisms could well exceed 5,100 for the year—the highest of any mission. The Northwestern States with 4,003 baptisms by the end of October will run the Scottish-Irish a close second with an estimated 4,900 to 5,000 for the year.” The LDS Church News concluded that “Contending for the third spot will be the Samoan Mission...”

With little or no gospel instruction, pre-adolescent and teenage boys were joining the LDS Church by tens of thousands annually throughout the world. As a seventeen-year-old, I listened to the homecoming address in my Southern California ward of a missionary who said he had baptized more than two hundred teenage boys in the Pacific Northwest. I regarded that as faith-promoting until a few years later, when I listened to the complaints of a bishop from the Portland area.

His ward clerk was swamped with membership certificates for dozens of boys that no one in the ward had met. After the bishop began locating them, he heard an identical story. A pair of LDS missionaries had played basketball with the boys who were usually underprivileged or from single-parent homes. The elders told them of free trips throughout the Northwest to compete against LDS ward teams, and of the all-Church tournament in Salt Lake City for the best basketball teams. The only catch was that missionaries told the boys they had to be baptized into the LDS Church in order to play on its “athletic teams.” After the baptism ceremony (usually on the first day of contact), the missionaries gave the boys the time and place of local LDS meetings. These Portland area boys never saw those elders again.

A Mississippi convert described a variation on this approach in the Gulf States Mission in the early 1960s. Missionary sisters and elders combed up-country towns and hamlets for boys who had never seen the Gulf of Mexico. During the several-hour bus or car ride to the beach, the missionaries taught the boys all six discussions at once. When they reached the sugar-white sands of the Gulf, the first order of business was multiple-baptism ceremonies in the gently lapping surf. If the boys did not comply, the vehicle would turn immediately around and take the boys back home. After hours of fun in the sun, the newly baptized learned that the missionaries would be glad to bring them back to the beach again—if each boy brought along at least one unbaptized friend. “I was one of those White Trash kids,” this Southern boy drawled. “Now I’m one of the Beach Party Baptism success stories.” He was a full-time missionary when he told me his experience.

A speaker at a Brigham Young University “devotional” in the 1962–63 school year startled the audience by criticizing another example of the “New Era” missionary work. A pair of elders visited a playground in the eastern states and offered an ice cream soda to every boy over the age of eight who would accept baptism that afternoon. I listened to this as a freshman student and prospective missionary and wondered how it was possible for missionaries to do that. By fall of 1963, I was in England and began to learn what had happened in the British missions during the previous five years.

Almost two years earlier, in January 1962, Seventy’s president Marion D. Hanks had begun to preside over mission headquarters in London. He had personal instructions from President McKay: “I have heard disturbing rumors about what
is going on in the British Mission,” the Church president said. “If there are excesses, I want you to correct them.” Hanks immediately ended baptism quotas and stopped the baseball program, which cut baptisms dramatically in his mission. This resulted in Hanks being criticized by Moyle at Church headquarters, by presidents of the other missions which now existed in Britain, and by missionaries and local English leaders within the British Mission.29

Elder Cuthbert was the British Mission’s Aaronic priesthood leader in charge of trying to fellowship these thousands of English boys into the LDS church. As a general authority, he recently wrote to defend the Baseball Baptism Program that “has become a derogatory term among many people.” His only comment about the termination of baseball baptisms was to say that newly arrived President Hanks “gave us some breathing space before moving forward again.”31 Ironically, it was a non-Mormon historian (also English) who noted that Hanks “responded [to the baseball baptisms of youths] by placing the real emphasis not on baptism as such as a goal, but on that conversion of life which is a longer term process.”32

In January 1963, Apostle Mark E. Petersen arrived to preside over the missions throughout Britain, Ireland, and the French-East Mission. Henry D. Moyle Jr. had presided over the French East since 1961, and his first missionary bulletin outlined the program for “baseball americain.”33 Elder Petersen complained that “baseball baptisms” were being made whereby youngsters were baptized into the Church without any instruction and sometimes without the knowledge or consent of their parents.” He added: “Under President McKay’s instructions, we were to discontinue such things and bring the missions back to a normal proselyting program.”34

In contrast to Elder Petersen’s report, Cuthbert’s official history of the British missions said that the conduct of the baseball program required that “parents must agree in writing to the baptizing of their children.”35 Cuthbert’s claim was based on the official requirement for the LDS baptism of minors; Petersen’s statement referred to what had happened in reality.

THE T. BOWRING WOODBURY YEARS

Growth in the British mission

T. Bowring Woodbury

British mission president who enthusiastically promoted the Baseball Baptism Program.

Woodbury had served as Dyer’s counselor in the Central States Mission before Woodbury’s appointment as British Mission president. Cuthbert adds that “President Cullimore [of the Central British Mission] had also been well trained by President Dyer in the Central States Mission.”36

I gained my knowledge of what happened during Britain’s Baseball Baptism Program through interviews with some of President Woodbury’s missionaries, with English bishops and branch presidents, and with mission presidents who served in the post-baseball era.37

As a counter-balance to how Woodbury contributed to the excesses of the Baseball Baptism Program, I must emphasize that all local British leaders I met felt near-adoration for him.38 He was devoted to the youth baptism program. During more than three years over the British Mission, Woodbury took personal responsibility for many teenage boys who were baptized in the baseball program. He spent tens of thousands of dollars of his personal wealth to support dozens of these boys.
as building missionaries in their early teens and as full-time missionaries in their late-teens (Brits could be full-time missionaries at age seventeen). I met one of those young men while he was attending Oxford University. He had been among the "scruffy" Cockney boys that missionaries had recruited as baseball baptisms from the row houses of South London. President Woodbury also used his personal funds to subsidize struggling branches and to implement missionary programs that were beyond the budget of Church funds. Despite such positive contributions, Woodbury also created a world of frenzy and stress for his British missionaries.

Behind Moyle's public denial that missionaries were overworked was their crushing schedule in the British Mission. Woodbury told his missionaries that they needed only five hours of sleep a night. At 7 A.M. they were to be out on the streets looking for people to baptize. They were to schedule their last teaching appointment or baptism ceremony at midnight. Moyle reaffirmed that policy in at least one talk he gave to all the British missionaries at the Hyde Park Chapel.

The New Era, Woodbury's monthly mission publication, emphasized quotas, baptism statistics, and that it was the Spirit, not the missionary's words, which converted. The implication was that the missionary was only an instrument of baptism, not a teacher of the gospel. Missionaries who reached the mission's baptism goals were honored as a "Golden Missionary of the Month." Achieving increased goals merited membership in the "Convert-a-Month Club," the "Four-or-More Club," the "Extra Mile Club," the "Family-a-Month Club," and the "100 Percenter Club."44

In addition, Woodbury took the best baptizers to dinner. For having the highest number of baptisms in a week, he invited two missionaries to have dinner at the mission home where they sat at the head of the table. For consistently exceeding baptism quotas, President Woodbury hosted the top baptizers at the best restaurants in London.

But the baptism quotas kept escalating. In 1958, Woodbury set a goal of 1,250 baptisms in the mission for the next year. In response, his second counselor (a missionary) climbed to the top of a hill in the dead of winter: "He knelt and pleaded with the great God who rules the worlds to bless the British Mission with 1,250 baptisms and more," which the Millennial Star noted was fulfilled as "a miraculous answer to prayer."45

In 1961, Woodbury's New Era set next year's baptism goal at 14,000. To put that increase in perspective, it's necessary to recognize that three other missions had been created out of the original British Mission by that time. Therefore, Woodbury increased baptism goals more than ten times beyond their 1958 level, even though his mission now had only about a fourth of the territory and population it had in 1958 (and fewer missionaries). Without explaining its full significance, Cuthbert wrote this curious observation twenty-five years later: "There never had been and never would be another year like 1962, when over 12,000 people were baptized in Britain."46

In May 1960 the New Era described how all British missionaries received a special badge which they were supposed to wear to weekly missionary meetings, but only if they had baptized one or more persons the previous month. By the personal experience of many of this essay's readers in various parts of the world, that would be a very low goal. Nevertheless, by pre-Woodbury experience in Britain, one baptism per missionary per month was a major achievement.47 However, British missionary meetings now resembled pep rallies or a football coach's browbeating at half-time. All the attention was on those missionaries who did not wear the badges.

In July and August 1960, Brockbank's North British Mission combined with Woodbury's British Mission to reach a combined goal of a thousand convert baptisms in honor of David O. McKay's birthday. Their 1,110 baptisms for those two months were almost equal to the previous year's total.48

In November 1960, Woodbury announced there would be a mission tour to Mormon historic sites in England and then to the London Temple so that missionaries could re-experience the sacred endowment ceremony. The only missionaries who could go on this grand trip were those who baptized four persons during the next month. The British Mission's New Era used slogans to promote this award: "Find your 4 souls on the double, Then let's see the River Ribble. You'll find your 4 and then you'll hasten to the Temple. Baptize 4 and get some thrills by going to the Malvern Hills. First baptize four (this is the rule) and then let's meet in Liverpool," and finally: "Lean on the Lord's arm to take you to Benbow's Farm." Afterwards, the entire issue of the mission magazine featured photographs of the missionaries who went on this excursion and descriptions of what they did.

Elder Alvin R. Dyer officially encouraged mission presidents in the European Mission to use an invitation to the temple as a way to prod missionaries to achieve baptism quotas. In his 1962 The Challenge, published by the Church's Deseret Book Company, Dyer referred to "The mission president [in Frankfurt, Germany, who] had promised that if they got four baptisms in December, they could go to the temple as the guest of the mission president over the Christmas holidays." Dyer then told of two missionaries who had no one to baptize on 22 December, but who "baptized four people in
Woodbury launched another contest for the British Missionaries in 1961. It had two planks. First, to honor your mother, baptize four converts. Second, by so honoring your mother, you will be allowed to attend the dedication of the Hyde Park Chapel in London and be able to see the Church president.

Those who failed to reach that baptism quota didn’t simply lose the opportunity to see the prophet; by implication, these missionaries had also dishonored their mothers. This was the message of the February 1961 edition of the New Era: “To Meet our Dear Prophet will be Quite a Treat. But we must honor Mother before we all meet.” Afterwards Woodbury sent out a list of all the missionaries who had honored their mothers by achieving this goal. One young missionary even wrote his mother a letter of apology for dishonoring her by his failure to baptize enough converts. In addition, Woodbury and the other mission presidents throughout Britain and continental Europe set mass-baptism drives for “Moyle Month” or “McKay Month.”

If missionaries baptized the highest numbers for the week’s or month’s goal, Woodbury called them by their first names when he met or wrote them. That was a clear violation of Church-wide missionary rules. He called missionaries “Elder” or “Sister,” if they baptized only the average for the week or month.

President Woodbury’s baptism quotas also involved punishments. One of Woodbury’s missionaries (who was a teaching assistant with me as an undergraduate in BYU’s religion department) described what happened when a missionary baptized fewer than the average mandated by mission headquarters. With only one baptism instead of the required four, this missionary happened to visit headquarters in London. “Hello, President Woodbury,” he said, as the elder put out his hand. Woodbury ignored the missionary, walked past him, and left the twenty-year-old standing with his hand extended into empty space. Missionaries who baptized fewer than the required goals were treated as faithless, as rebellious, as lazy, or as non-persons by British Mission headquarters.

The Baseball Baptism Program sometimes alienated missionary companions from each other. One “senior” companion in the British Mission refused to participate in baseball baptisms. This caused daily arguments with his “junior” companion who had to share the stigma of failing to reach the British Mission’s baptism goals.

Thousands of miles from their homes, British missionaries faced discrimination, loss of privileges, and even ostracism from the mission president and fellow missionaries—all for not baptizing enough new Mormons. And so came the excesses—the incredible excesses—of the youth baptism program in Britain.

As elsewhere throughout the world, British missionaries used the sports program, but with a difference. Some missionaries told the young Brits that there was a special initiation ceremony for the sports club. Often baptized at the local YMCA, these British boys thought they had simply joined an American baseball club.

“Fronting as a baseball club was not a bizarre innovation of British missionaries, but was an official part of the Baseball Baptism Program throughout Europe. In a conference with missionary leaders from the French Mission, French East Mission, and Dutch Mission in April 1961, Elder Alvin R. Dyer outlined each step of the program he had already implemented in Germany. He explained: “After the [initial baseball] game the young people are called together, preferably at the edge of the playing field, where the missionaries tell them who they are, and ask them to join a Church group or club, and to return the following day bringing their friends with them.” One of the missionaries asked Elder Dyer: “After getting the baseball team baptized do you continue working with that team? Answer: No sir. Your branch must do the integrating.” The ultimate goal of the program was to baptize the entire family of each boy, and at the minimum to have written permission from the parents for his baptism into the LDS church.

However, in the headlong rush to meet baptism quotas, some missionaries decided to avoid opposition by merely asking parents to give permission for the boys to join an American sports club. Others didn’t bother to ask permission.

Missionaries couldn’t always meet their quotas by baptizing those who were eight years of age or older, as required by revelation. Therefore, some elders baptized children who were five, six, or seven years of age, and then falsified their birth dates on the baptismal certificates. If they still hadn’t baptized enough to get mission leaders off their necks, other missionar-
ies baptized one boy several times under assumed names, filling baptismal certificates with plausible information.\textsuperscript{55}

District leaders (DL) were under tremendous pressures to come up with baptism statistics. The DL had to phone in reports of all the baptisms performed by the missionaries in his district. Districts were in competition with one another, and a DL also had his individual quota for baptisms. Some district leaders simply forged baptismal certificates for non-existent people. Mission headquarters, of course, assumed that these people existed, which relieved some of the pressure on district leaders.

The cynicism of falsifying baptism statistics had precedent at British Mission headquarters. The first week of December 1959, Woodbury sent a telegram to every pair of missionaries in Britain to the effect that he was “feeling discouraged over our low number of baptisms for the month of November.”\textsuperscript{56} He challenged them to exercise great faith and increased hours of work in December to make-up the 194 extra baptisms necessary to reach the British Mission’s goal of 1,250 total baptisms for 1959. The next month Woodbury reported that the missionaries reached this annual goal by performing 237 convert baptisms in December 1959, which he described as “the greatest month of the New Era and probably of the last century.”\textsuperscript{57} However, British Mission headquarters had falsified both the report of November’s baptism decrease and the report of December’s increase in baptisms.

“The November 1959 baptism number was intentionally understated to motivate missionaries to be more productive in December,” observes one of Woodbury’s supervising elders. “The convert baptism number for December was grossly over-reported to make missionaries feel they had achieved a great result due to their faith and dedication.” This former missionary quickly adds: “The numbers represented real baptisms, but had been shifted from one month to the next. This achieved the desired effect to create within the missionaries a feeling of disappointment and a corresponding rededication.” As this supervising elder was about to leave for home in January 1960, the “disillusioned” mission secretary told him of Woodbury’s requirement for this statistical manipulation.\textsuperscript{58}

If the mission secretary confided that fact to other missionaries, perhaps the falsification of baptism certificates may have resulted from the “top-down” example of British Mission headquarters. Before recently learning of this incident, I had regarded the falsification of baptism numbers as an aberration of isolated missionaries distant from headquarters.

The president of the British Mission’s young men’s program to European missionaries, President Dyer cautioned: “If we get 1,000 converts [one month] and in the next month only 200 or 300 are active, we have not done a very good job.”\textsuperscript{62} Mormon leaders thought they could impose incredible pressures on young missionaries without something snapping. The leaders were wrong.

All President Moyle and his supporters saw was the massive increase in baptisms and the illusion of spiritual growth. Although their critics within and without the Church pointed to the abuses, a significant group of LDS leaders did not recognize the spiritual decay that lay under the surface. It was a spiritual malaise that the Mormon hierarchy had inadvertently created and was unknowingly perpetuating.

There were so many missionfield excommunications during 1965 that even new baptisms could not compensate numerically.

In the summer of 1963, the Church was in a crisis which resulted in the downfall of Counselor Moyle. As recently as 1957, Zion’s First National Bank alone had $70 million in deposits of the Church’s once-secure reserves. However, by 1963, LDS finances were so strained that Church “financial officers wondered if they would be able to meet the payroll.”\textsuperscript{63} Then the New York Times reported in May 1963 that the Church of Scotland officially condemned the Baseball Baptism...
Program as the LDS church's "most insidious approach."  

This negative publicity may have been the catalyst for a move to strip Moyle of his two major responsibilities ("his portfolio," as one journalist put it).  

By July 1963, Joseph Fielding Smith, president of the Quorum of the Twelve, was now openly criticizing "the spending proclivities of President Moyle, also concerning the unorthodox way with which youngsters had been baptized in the Church..."  

The other counselor, Hugh B. Brown, explained that "this resulted in downgrading of one of the counselors in the First Presidency and he died of a broken heart as a result of it." Relieved of his direction of Church finances and of the missionary program, Henry D. Moyle died of a coronary in September 1963.  

It's certain that many missionaries during this period refused to compromise their ethics in order to meet baptism goals, to achieve awards, or even to avoid ostracism. I felt tremendous admiration as I listened to their experiences. It's also clear that many of those baptized during the "baseball baptism era" were real converts who remained devoted Mormons. I also met many of them.  

However, other missionaries could not resist the unrelenting pressures to become baptizing machines. As a result, thousands of unknowing, underage, untaught, or nonexistent persons ended up on the membership rolls of the LDS church in Great Britain. World-wide, this amounted to tens of thousands of ill-prepared or deceived persons (mainly adolescent boys) who were baptized from 1959 to 1963.  

Some might doubt that these abuses of the Baseball Baptism Program were that common or widespread. Apostle Mark E. Petersen's presidency over all the British Isles is a significant evidence of the extent of the problem. In the spring of 1964, he began a comprehensive program of excommunication throughout the British Isles, based on in-person interviews of every inactive person on the Church's membership records. The first goal was to teach all inactive Church members the proselytizing lessons that many of them had never received. Then Elder Petersen himself provided seven more "fellowshipping lessons" for the full-time missionaries to teach to these inactive Mormons. However, he also instructed missionaries and local leaders to excommunicate everyone who could not be fellowshipped and who did not want to be a member of the Church.  

Like other British missionaries in 1964, I helped conduct that survey in the branch where I served. I spoke with many of the boys who thought they had merely joined a baseball club, or who were actually under eight years old when they were baptized. There were also membership records with nonexistent addresses or with names of people who had never lived at the listed addresses.  

I was assigned to preside over another branch that had eight active Mormons out of a membership roster of 150. In accordance with Elder Petersen's post-baseball program, I began holding Church courts to excommunicate those who didn't want to be Mormon, who had never wanted it. As I spoke with these boys, some were confused, others were bitter, many were indifferent. The most painful reaction to see was their embarrassment when they learned that excommunication was the only way their names could be removed from the records of the Church. The stigma of "excommunication" was the only remedy that Church procedures allowed at the time.  

Three to four years after their baseball baptisms, most of these boys were barely teenagers; some much younger. As I walked away from each of those interviews, I imagined other missionaries like myself looking into the eyes of such sports program "converts" in Ireland, France, or Latin America—where Catholic excommunication is so rare as to make headlines—or in Samoa, where Mormonism is the largest single church.  

I was twenty years old, and I excommunicated three times the number of my convert baptisms. I was in frequent contact with the British Mission presidency during the three or four courts of mass excommunication that I conducted. I followed President Petersen's orders regarding the baseball-baptism boys who had been dunked by other missionaries simply following orders from their file leaders.  

I would have held as many excommunication courts as necessary to do the job: to free those boys from obligations they had never agreed to; to spare them from future inquiries (and implied guilt) about their not attending the Church into which they had been virtually kidnapped. I nearly resigned as a missionary and left the Church myself during those months.  

Spiritual carnage was at both ends of the baseball baptism era. I felt no moral superiority to those other missionaries who had performed the baseball baptisms, and I became an atheist during part of the time I was excommunicating their baseball "converts." Looking back, I think that was an attempt to believe none of it mattered. I was in tears during the last excommunication court I conducted in that branch. I'm sure the mission president reassigned me as a traveling elder just as a face-saving way to release me as branch president. My
atheism lasted only a few weeks, but I remember those months of 1964 as the darkest period of my Church experience. The English bishop of one ward told me he excommunicated 150 baseball-baptism boys in a two-week period, and the end was not yet in sight. Such mass excommunications were happening in every ward and branch throughout the British Isles in the last months of 1964 and throughout 1965.

Elder Cuthbert's history of the British missions makes no reference to such results of the baseball program. However, he acknowledged in BYU Studies that we “failed in our convert retention” from 1960 to 1965, by which time “the pendulum had swung too far,” after which “emphasis was placed on baptizing families rather than youth.” Nevertheless, Cuthbert still insisted that the “years 1960–64 were a golden era” for the British missions.

By the way, under the direction of Elder Petersen, the successors of all the “baseball baptism” mission presidents ended baptismal quotas and pressures. This caused the convert baptisms in Britain to fall “drastically low.” For example, in describing the progress of the French Mission from 1963 to 1964, its mission staff and Elder Petersen himself both took a swipe at the Moyle-Woodbury use of the term “New Era”: “A strong and clear emphasis was placed on convert baptisms. . . . Enthusiasm for what President Mark E. Petersen termed ‘really a New Era’ was mission-wide, and it was mature” (emphasis in original).

At the end of 1965, total membership in the LDS missions world-wide was nearly 15,000 less than at the end of 1964. This was the largest one-year decline in total mission-field membership during previous Mormon history. Less than 5,000 of that loss resulted from the formation of new stakes from missions in 1965. Thus, there were so many mission-field excommunications during 1965 that even new baptisms could not compensate numerically. Since the net loss was 10,000 persons that year, the total mission-field excommunications numbered in the tens of thousands during 1965. The vast majority of these excommunications were undoubtedly baseball-baptism boys.

For several reasons the total excommunications of baseball baptism “converts” may have reached or exceeded 100,000 throughout the entire Church. Mass excommunications began in Britain during 1964, but did not create a net loss of Church-wide mission membership that year. The above estimate of excommunications in 1965 does not include excommunications in stakes during that year. In addition, there were undoubtedly further excommunications of sports program converts in both missions and stakes after 1965. Convert baptisms per year did not recover from the baseball-backlash until 1968.

OUTCOMES

However, there is a larger perspective even for the rapid inactivity and/or mass excommunication of 90 percent (my estimate) of the baseball-baptism boys. Of the British converts who were carefully taught fourteen or fifteen years of baptismal lessons between 1950 and 1956, official Church surveys show that 49 percent had left the Church by 1960. Cuthbert also acknowledges that “convert retention among the adult members was around fifty percent” during the massive growth of the early 1960s. It’s no coincidence that he failed to comment on the retention of youth converts. The attrition rate of baseball baptisms was depressing, but it was less than twice the normative loss for Mormon conversions.

Also, the administrative demolition of Henry D. Moyle did not damage the future Church careers of the two point-men in his building and baptism programs of 1959–63. Wendell Mendenhall later became a regional representative of the Twelve Apostles. T. Bowring Woodbury became a member of the Church Missionary Committee. Woodbury also lived long enough to have the ironic satisfaction of seeing the First Presidency christen the Church’s youth magazine as the New Era in 1970. This was the title of Woodbury’s publication which had promoted baseball baptisms of adolescents in Britain.

It is unrealistic to expect youthful missionaries to completely avoid exploiting potential converts until there is a Church-wide rejection of every explicit or implied use of baptism numbers to evaluate the faith, diligence, success, worth, or future prospects of the missionaries.
participated in baseball baptisms may have been

even eager—but they were nonetheless the real victims of that
era. The persons they took advantage of were objects of an
exploitative I-It relationship for a few hours or less. The
missionaries of the Baseball Baptism Program were exploited
constantly by their mission presidents for two years in a
spiritually corrosive I-It relationship.

The most serious victims were those missionaries who
didn't recognize that they were being spiritually abused. Un-
less they confront emotionally and
spiritually the fact of their being
abused, the abused often become
abusers when they have the power to
do so. This is true of abused Church
members just as it is true of abused
family members. To an abused co-de-
pendent, it seems humble to accept
spiritual abuse from Church leaders
and righteous to inflict spiritual abuse
on Church subordinates. 81

CONCLUSION

Was the baseball baptism era
an unparalleled aberration in Mormon
experience? Not from what a number
of more recent LDS missionaries have
told me. Most of the “well-known
salesmanship techniques” remained in
the missionary lessons and program. 82
In the decades since the 1960s, some
mission presidents in Latin America
have strongly urged missionaries to
baptize people at the end of one
meeting. As a result, many missionaries have
left local Mormons to teach the rest of the gospel to the
first-day converts. 83

Early in 1980, a mission president in Japan used lavish
dinners and other rewards as “incentives” for missionaries to
reach baptism goals. The mission abbreviated the lesson-plan
so that missionaries spent no more than an hour with “inves-
tigators” before baptizing them. This program was “encour-
aged by the general authority who was acting as an area
president without counselors.” Presidency counselor Gordon
B. Hinckley asked missionaries about these developments just
before the dedication of the Tokyo temple that October. He
ended the program by reinstituting the requirement for per-
sons to attend at least one LDS meeting before baptism. 84

As one commentator observes, it is a more serious and
widespread problem when abuses of missionary work occur in
response to pressures and programs imposed by mission lead-
ers. 85 LDS leaders have recoiled from the phrase “baptism
quota” during the thirty years since the baseball baptism era.
However, if a “baptism goal” involves conspicuous rewards for
its achievement (or loss of privileges and status for its non-
achievement), then that “goal” is a quota. In such a missionary
environment, I-It relationships are the norm, not the excep-
tion.

Moreover, even self-imposed “baptism goals” can cause
missionaries to engage in exploitation of potential converts. In
the early 1980s, some San Diego missionaries picked up illegal
aliens as soon as they crossed the fence from Mexico, and took
busloads of them to LDS chapels for a few hours of instruction
and mass-baptism. Mormon missionaries then helped these
“illegals” to evade immigration officers in California. Scouring
California’s agricultural fields and
Mexican border for illegals was a “bot-
tom-up” missionary program. The
mission officially adopted it and soon
became the “top-baptizer” in the LDS
church, even though that had not
been the mission president’s goal. 86

A missionary who returned from the Philippines in 1992 tells of some
1980s “converts” he contacted at the
request of a local LDS leader. One rural
family had accepted baptism after a
missionary promised that the Church
would give them a water buffalo in
exchange for being baptized. They at-
tended LDS services only long enough
to learn that the missionary’s promise
was not in Church records, even
though their “water buffalo baptism”
was. Several Filipino boys in the same
area ended up on the membership
records after playing in the surf with
some missionaries who had taken
them to the beach. Unlike missionar-
ies involved with the “beach party”
baptisms of the Gulf States Mission in
the early 1960s, these 1980s missionaries gave the young
Filipinos no gospel instruction and no hint that a ceremony
occurred when they momentarily held the thrashing boys
under the surf. 87 These two elders did something more serious
than violate the Church-wide missionary rule against swim-
mimg.

Such actions by Mormon missionaries caused First Presi-
dency counselor Gordon B. Hinckley to make a special plea to
newly appointed mission presidents in the 1980s: “With all the
powers of persuasion that I am capable of, I plead with you to
train and motivate your missionaries to the point of view that
it is converts they are out to win, rather than numbers of
baptisms for the sake of a good statistical record.” 88 Those
who would argue that the exploitation of potential converts is
not frequent or widespread among LDS missionaries must
account for the earnest plea of President Hinckley.

This essay’s examples of exploited “converts” occurred in
LDS missions throughout the United States (in the Pacific
northwest, eastern states, Gulf states, southwestern states) and

Mark E. Petersen
An apostle who campaigned for the abandonment of baseball baptisms.
Throughout the world (in Britain, continental Europe, Latin America, Japan, and the Philippines). These missionary abuses have continued to crop up from the “New Era” of 1959–61, through the “Correlation Era” of 1961–73, through the “Lengthen Your Stride Era” of 1973–85, and undoubtedly to the present.89

Parley P. Pratt, Heber C. Kimball, and Wilford Woodruff performed hundreds of baptisms each during their missions in the 1830s, and that has often been used as the inspiration for “accelerated baptisms” since the 1950s. However, there is no evidence that these early Mormon apostles ever set a numerical goal or time period for baptizing anyone, nor “challenged” any missionary to do so.89 “Salesmanship techniques” were not a factor in the massive conversions of the early Mormon missionary experience. In my view, that is why the first century of Mormonism was also virtually free of the kind of all-too-frequent exploitation common to the Mormon missionary experience since the 1950s.

As a historian I’ve traced some of the consequences of that modern change in LDS missionary work, but as a believing Mormon I earnestly hope for a reversal of those trends. Missionary exploitation will be rare only when there is a Church-wide abandonment of baptism goals in any form, abandonment of missionary competition, abandonment of comparative baptism charts. It is unrealistic to expect youthful missionaries to completely avoid exploiting potential converts until there is a Church-wide rejection of every explicit or implied use of baptism numbers to evaluate the faith, diligence, success, worth, or future prospects of the missionaries.

That revitalization of the Spirit in Mormon missionary service will be more effective if it is “top-down” from Church headquarters. However, that transition can also occur from an I-Thou emphasis of individual missionaries, of parents, of a missionary’s friends, of individual bishops and branch presidents, and of individual mission presidents. Exploitation of converts and I-It proselytizing are systemic results of the “salesmanship techniques” in LDS missionary work since the 1950s, but such abuses can become as rare as “going without purse or scrip” now is.

However, a recent news article also shows that deceptive baptisms are not a problem peculiar to Mormonism. A Baptist church in Colorado sponsored a carnival, and then baptized all attending children under the pretense of “water games.”90

Such abuse of religious ordinances will occur whenever leaders or missionaries of any religion regard externals as more important than one’s relationship with God. Church leaders who maintain an I-Thou relationship with God will not require subordinates to have an I-It relationship with their church or its ordinances. All of us can benefit from remembering the example of those Mormon missionaries during the baseball baptism era who quietly maintained the integrity of their relationship with God, despite overwhelming pressures to the contrary. No one who has an I-Thou relationship will act or speak as if the Gospel of Christ were a commodity, or regard converts as trophies.

Nor, for that matter, will such an LDS leader treat Church members as disposable property—to be ignored or discarded when the leader has grown weary of them. Those who have an I-Thou relationship with God recognize that they themselves are no more important to God than the leper, the Down’s syndrome baby, the unconverted, the welfare mother, the thief, the libertine, the excommunicated, the drug addict, the street beggar, the juvenile delinquent, the uneducated, the feminist, the intellectual, the disoriented, or the AIDS patient.

Jesus embraced, ate and drank with, listened to, and comforted those who were hurting, discontented, prodigal, or rejected, while Pharisees claimed that Christ was facing the wrong way. Instead, Jesus turned away from every Pharisee who was an apostle of spiritual decay. God has an I-Thou relationship with all His children, not just those who consider themselves righteous or “His people.” That perception (or lack of it) will determine what kind of missionary experience an individual has, and what kind of Church experience one has.

Marion D. Hanks

British mission president appointed to correct the excesses.

NOTES

1. For a better presentation than I could ever give of the difference between I-Thou and I-It relationships, see Martin Buber’s small paperback I and Thou, trans. Walter Kaufman and S.G. Smith (New York: Scribner, 1978).


3. 4 April 1959 Conference Report, 91–92; Ernest L. Wilkinson diary, 4 December 1959, Western Americana, J. Willard Marriott Library, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah; LDS Church Financial Department’s Condensed Financial Report to the Corporation of the President, 12 April 1961 (for summary from 1950 to 1960), LDS Church Archives, Historical Department, Salt Lake City. Wilkinson’s diary for 4 December 1959 said the Budget Committee announced “the Church last year had spent $8,000,000 in excess of its income,” which leaves the impression that he referred to 1958. However, the Financial Department reports show that deficit was in 1959, which means Wilkinson’s diary reference to “last year” referred to the year which was just ending in December 1959.

4. L. Brent Goates, Harold B. Lee: Prophet and Seer (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 381. This biography scrupulously avoids identifying Henry D. Moyle as the one who promoted all this deficit spending.


7. The phrase "McKay's Pro" is a reference to President McKay's Missionary effort. The context is not clear from the text provided.

8. The reference to the British Missionary Bulletin is correct, but the year is not specified.

9. The reference to "The Story of the Latter-day Saints, 2nd ed." is correct, but the year is not specified.

10. The reference to "The Words of Joseph Smith the Contemporaries of the Prophet Joseph Smith: The Nauvoo Discourses of the Prophet Joseph Smith" is correct, but the page number is not specified.

11. The reference to "The Church in the Twentieth Century" is correct, but the page number is not specified.


13. The reference to "A Surge of Spirit among the Saints and President McKay's Missionary Effort" is correct.

14. The reference to "The Church in the Twentieth Century" is correct, but the page number is not specified.

15. The reference to "The Church in the Twentieth Century" is correct, but the page number is not specified.


27. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.


32. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

33. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

34. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

35. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.


38. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.


40. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

41. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

42. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

43. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

44. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

45. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

46. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

47. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.


49. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

50. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

51. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

52. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.


54. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

55. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

56. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.

57. The reference to "Convert-Baptisms Reach All-time High of 47,912," LDS Church News, 30 Sept. 1961, 3, is correct.
tion of this paper at the Sunstone symposium, 14 August 1993, and reconfirmed in her telephone conversation with me on 17 August 1993. For the British Mission positions of 1961 and William Bates, see "Priest," Millennial Star 121 (March 1959): 100-01.

60. Sherman Fuller, "August [1960]: Youth Programme Catches Fire: Baseball Brings in Youth," Millennial Star 123 (January 1961): 14, described how all the advo-
cates "at the little council estate" either watched or played "our little softball game," while "a big football [soccer] game was on the other side and nobody watching them.

61. My telephone interview on 7 September 1993 with Devery S. Anderson, who served as an LDS missionary in southern England from 1979 to 1981. At the time he had no idea what "baseball baptisms" were.


63. David O. McKay diary, 13 December 1957; Durham, N. Elder Tanner, 208.


68. Barton, Mark E. Petersen, 124, refers to this survey of inactive Mormons, but does not mention that it included an option to recommend excommunication.

69. For example, see: "A Boy, A Baseball, and a Family of Thirteen," Millennial Star 124 (September 1960): 23.

70. Lester Bush Jr., "Eccomunication and Church Courts: A Note from the General Handbook of Instructions," Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought 14 (Summer 1981): 74-89. Only in the past few years have LDS procedures allowed a kind of "no-fault divorce" from the Church by a written request to the Membership Department for removing one's name from its record of members.

71. Derek A. Cuthbert, "Church Growth in the British Isles, 1937-1987," Brigham Young University Studies 27 (Spring 1987): 15, 17, 16. These statements did not appear in his Second Century, which was published the same year.

72. Barton, Mark E. Petersen, 124, also 122-23. Cuthbert, Second Century, 198, presents a chart of convert baptisms that shows this decline in part. By grouping baptisms in five-year intervals instead of yearly, however, Cuthbert's chart minimizes the full extent of the massive decrease in convert baptisms after Marion D. Hanks's abruptly ending the baseball program in January 1962. Nevertheless, his chart still shows that baptisms from 1965 to 1969 were almost 60 percent lower than baptisms from 1960 to 1964. Cowan, The Church in the Twentieth Century, 280, demonstrates that decline statistically in part by showing the number of "Converts Per Missionary" for England in 1961-63 as compared to the next period of his chart, 1976-80. However, unlike Cuthbert, Cowan did not even mention the Baseball Baptism Program in his discussion of "Proselyting Methods" during David O. McKay's presidency (276-83).


77. Cuthbert, Second Century, 92.


82. My observations as a branch president, and the statements to me at the time by British bishops and branch presidents; also statements to me on 14 August 1993 by Lyndon W. Cook, who also interviewed former baseball converts.

83. Erin Silva, statement to me, 14 March 1993, concerning his mission in Latin America in the 1960s; also statements of other returned missionaries who served in South America in the 1970s.

84. Statements of returned missionaries from Japan, during audience remarks after my reading of this paper at Sunstone symposium, 14 August 1993.

85. Daniel Rector emphasized this in his formal response to this paper at the Sunstone symposium, 14 August 1993.

86. Reported in Daniel Rector's remarks, 14 August 1993. Rector personally knew an LDS missionary in San Diego who boasted of being the "coyote" for thousands of what this missionary called "Wetback converts." "Coyote" is the slang term for a person who helps illegal aliens across the Mexican border into the United States, usually for a price.


---

Do you know this picture?

A group of scholars is studying the role this image and others, by the artist Warner Sallman (including Christ at Heart's Door, The Good Shepherd, and Christ in Gethsemane), have played in the lives of Christians. Do Sallman's pictures hang in your home, school, or church? What has the imagery meant for your devotion, worship, prayer, family, or friends? Please send any response to:

David Morgan
Campus Box 55
Valparaiso University
Valparaiso, IN 46383

PAGE 44

DECEMBER 1993
"SO HOW'S TONY DOING?"

I ask but don't want an answer. Gazing out the kitchen window, across the chaparral-frocked canyon and up, up, up at the adobe-colored mini-mansions studding the terraced heights . . . I already know. Living in one of those, building half the others—that's how my favorite cousin Tony's doing.

I take a sip of cranberry juice and, through the curved distortion of the glass, watch the sun hovering above the green hills of La Costa. I'm wondering if my good Aunt Josie hasn't special-ordered it for the occasion, to nonchalantly impress us. Like the Swedish pancakes and fresh strawberries and cream for brunch, and the "light" dinner she's preparing now. Three hours before sundown.

Outside, Spanish chimes are tinkling in the light Pacific breeze. "Oh, he and Terri are doing fine—they're just fine!"

Aunt Josie wipes her hands on the dishtowel. Even cooking she wears a skytone silken dress, long and loose, like a sari. She's looking good. Great. Some skilled surgeon has removed a decade from her face. The network of little wrinkles I recalled under her eyes is barely visible, like a pattern of pencil marks erased. Her figure, too, has been revamped. She's dropped twenty pounds since we last saw her at a Larson family reunion seven years ago.

"They got the new little girl, you knew that . . . ."

Another. That makes two adopted towheads.

Aunt Josie takes a head of cabbage from the refrigerator, a big black space-age vault, and proceeds to slice it up on her built-in cutting board. Tanya and I watch, perched on bar stools.

"Tony's finishing up another home," Aunt Josie says. "It's just up the street."

"Another little quarter-million project?" I smile to show her I'm only joking. Aunt Josie smiles, too, but hers is slow and slightly strained, like invisible strings tugging at the corners of her mouth.

Tanya's giving me the eye. Watch it, she says without saying so.

I'm only kidding. Really.

Just watch it.

Okay. All right. I promise.

Have promised. Myself. I'm determined, for once, to keep my mouth shut. I must not ruin things. We're on vacation. Relax. Enjoy. Unwind.

"Well, this one's closer to a million," Aunt Josie says. She's not boasting. If anything, she looks a little embarrassed. When Tanya asks if we can see the house, Aunt Josie grimaces. The kitchen light has shaped a reddish halo around her coiffure. The threads of gray are also gone. She says she'll call Tony at work and see. "He's so busy right now . . . He'd really like to see you, Stan, but right after work he has to take a group of Scouts on an overnighter."

"Don't worry," I say, smoothing the airspace in front of me. "I understand . . . completely."

I really don't want Tanya to see a million dollar home. After the initial elation, it will depress her for a month. Worse than postpartum blues. I really don't want to see Tony either. I mean, I'd like to see Tony. I'd love to. But not Tony's house or Tony's car or Tony's tennis court.

"So what did they name the baby?" Tanya asks.

"Charlotte," Aunt Josie says.

"Charlotte. That's pretty," Tanya says, but I can tell by her split-second hesitation she's unimpressed. Charlotte. Too Southern maybe. Or arachnid connotations. Tanya's very picky about names. She's picky about a lot of things. She knows what she wants. That's why I married her—one reason anyway. She's got a mind of her own. She's a beauty, too.

Was, she corrects me. She won't let me call her beautiful anymore. Pretty, nice looking, attractive . . . okay. Beautiful? She'll flash her calves and run a quick finger along the crooked blue roadmaps, or grab a hunk of her stomach: "Can you pinch an inch? Or six?" "Motherhood," she says. "You pay your dues." She doesn't say this bitterly, a little tongue-in-cheek if anything, que sera sera; but I catch occasional hints of resentment in her eyes, the way sunlight picks out glitter in broken glass. Well, too bad! Beautiful. Dark brown hair to her hips and almond eyes to match. Fifteen years and she still rings my bell.

Outside I see the fruits of her fleshly sacrifice. Pam and Joy soak in the jacuzzi while little Matt charges around the patio like the Tasmanian devil. A junior whirlwind. I follow the downward slope of the canyon into a blue lagoon where ducks drift about like Chinese characters spelling out a coded mes-

MICHAEL FILLERUP is the bilingual supervisor for the Flagstaff public schools. He lives with his wife, Rebecca, and their four children in Flagstaff, Arizona.
Did you see your dad while you were in L.A.?” Aunt Josie asks. She’s slicing bananas now, into neat little chips.

“Tuesday.”

Tanya gives me the eye again: Don’t lie.

“And how’s he?” Aunt Josie asks. She already knows: another divorce; back on the Special Interests circuit.

“Fine.”

“That’s good,” she says, but the sudden delta of wrinkles at the corners of her eyes betrays her false delight, and her plastic surgeon’s handiwork. She still holds my father personally responsible. The negligent bishop. Get thine own house in order!

Over brunch we ran through the rest of my family: Neil’s in Boston, Anne’s in Provo, Mark’s in San Francisco and loving it, Peter’s in Bakersfield and hating it. Yvonne? “We had lunch with her on Monday. She’s fine.”

And how’s he!” Aunt Josie asks. She already knows: another divorce; back on the Special Interests circuit.

“Fine.”

“That’s good,” I say, “that Tony’s doing so well.”

Tony was my buddy growing up. Two years older, he was one of those blue-eyed blond prodigies who could do anything he put his mind to and tried everything in sight. Skiing, surfing, karate, kayaking, scuba diving . . . things kids like me only dreamed of but . . . what? Some inner restriction we Bodily boys imposed upon ourselves when our father dragged us to the Army Surplus to buy us boots two sizes too big (“You need a little growing room. . . .”) Whatever new fad or craze came along, somehow, no. Not meant for us. Someone else maybe. . . .

It wasn’t all easy for Tony. He spent his teenage years experimenting with drugs and sex and good times. Eventually he went straight, repented, and served a belated mission. He started his own contracting outfit, a la Uncle Eddie, while earning a night school degree. He got dollar-wise, computerized his business, jobbed out all his work, and made a quick fortune. He married a svelte blond divorcée who, for reasons undisclosed, was out of the maternity business.


She’s gazing out the window, dreamy-eyed, a sentimental smile. “Oh, that Matthew! He’s just full of it, isn’t he? Just like a little Kilpatrick!”

Since our arrival this morning she’s been eyeballing my little boy. Why this bothers me I don’t know, but I feel an urge to wrap my arms around him like a possessive kid with a toy: “Mine! Can’t have!”

Aunt Josie stuffs the dough into little tin pans, covers each with a small dish towel, and puts them in the oven. Tanya’s stroking the kitchen counter as if it were alive. “Isn’t tile awfully expensive?” She’s taking mental notes for her dream-house. “Someday when we have enough money to build. . . .” It keeps her going. Hope precedes the miracle.


She removes two fryer chickens from the fridge and peels off the plastic. Stripping the chicken, Aunt Josie grits her teeth: the veins in her hands swell like little blue cords. She tugs until the stubborn skin finally slips over the end of the drumstick. It’s like pulling off a turtleneck sweater.

I’m watching her, thinking, why does she have to dress up like that, just to cook a couple of birds. Who’s she trying to impress?

Then I feel guilty about my feelings. During my vagabond days, whenever I stumbled into L.A., it was Aunt Josie who always took me in. Hair to my shoulders, Levi jacket, bell-bottom jeans, a guitar case in my hand, a knapsack over my shoulder, I’d knock on her window at three A.M. Uncle Eddie would answer first, gruff back then, an early bird working charge, for the ward library. I ought to be ashamed. I ought to rejoice in their good fortune and prosper accordingly.

Then Aunt Josie. “Stan?” A rustling of sheets.

“Who!”

“Who?”

“Stan Bodily!”

“Stan!”

“A rustling of sheets. “I’ll be right there!”

She would bed me in Tony’s old room and feed me a king’s breakfast the next morning, asking about my travels and adventures, never criticizing my tumbleweed existence—encouraging it perhaps? Getting back at my father through me?

Wait. What’s the matter with me? My aunt and uncle are wonderful people. They’ve just returned from L.A. where one week each month they rent an apartment and do temple work. Uncle Eddie has been a bishop, a high councilman, a stake president. Aunt Josie has served as Relief Society president, Young Women’s president, Primary president, at the ward and stake levels. Uncle Eddie spends ten bucks on posterboard for his gospel doctrine class. He builds custom bookshelves, no charge, for the ward library. I ought to be ashamed. I ought to know better. I do know better. I am ashamed. My aunt and uncle have worked hard, from humble saw and hammer beginnings, to achieve their present status. They have lived fruitful lives, and the windows of heaven have been opened accordingly. I should rejoice in their good fortune and prosperity. My cousin Tony’s, too. What’s wrong with me? I don’t want a Mercedes. I don’t need a tennis court. A big home means more housework.

I look up and smile. “Aunt Josie takes such good care of me.
I left home on my own accord. I was going to be the Mormon Bob Dylan, remember?

My favorite Aunt Josie!

Uncle Eddie enters wearing a golf shirt as bright as the sunshine outside. Tall, lean through the hips, broad Kilpatrick shoulders and a gritty, overbiting grin. He leans over and gives Tanya a hug. Her third today. "I can't resist a pretty face," he says. Tanya turns her head and blushes like a little girl. "Oh, Eddie..."

Uncle Eddie wants to show me his new computer. Another one. It spells. Edits. Plays pinochle. Pick any word in the Bible and it'll summon up every scripture with that word. "Oh, like a concordance," I say, downplaying it.

"Yes, but this is much better than a concordance. Come on, I'll show you!"

I follow him into his study. More oak, more polish. Press a button and cupboards open, lights flash, the desktop unrolls. I'm on the Jetsons.

Uncle Eddie inserts a floppy disk. The machine purrs like a sleeping animal. "Now, hear that? It's loading the whole Bible," he flashes his stallion smile and asks me for a word. "I don't know... Adultery." He pecks at the keyboard and the letters A-D-U-L-T-R-Y appear on the screen. When he hits ENTER, the monitor blinks a green alert. His spelling miscue spawns an old memory—or a thought: my father the Harvard graduate squatting down in his three-piece suit to snatch an empty 7-Up bottle from the gutter, back when you could redeem them for a nickel.

I hear my kids in the jacuzzi, laughing and splashing. This is a real treat for them. Back home I find flyers in the burn box. I unwad them: Girls Softball, Gymnastics, Music Camp, Cheerleading Camp. "Pam," I ask, "do you want to join?" She shrugs. "Nah!" "You're sure?" "Un-huh." Off the hook? Or early knowledge? Too early.

Uncle Eddie's still trying to get the correct spelling for adultery. He's a fine scriptorian but a miserable speller. His bulky forehead furrows as he tries odd combinations: ADULTARY, ADULTREY. He asks about my dad, is Bill still teaching?

"I think so. Yes."

Uncle Eddie can't resist a dig. Or else he doesn't know better. "If Bill had worked steady, he'd be retired now, too."

Is there an echo of premonition for me as well? Two years in Mexico City, a year in Guatemala, two years in Alaska. Living like God's lilies of the field, without purse or scrip. Tanya used to nod, yes, yes. But the nesting instinct. Roots.

"The girls are getting older. They need a place to call home..."

Uncle Eddie finally hits the magic key—ADULTERY. The screen spins like a slot machine as a stream of scriptures streaks by. Little letters scurry about like green ants arranging themselves in the manner of a marching band. Uncle Eddie turns to me, beaming with pride. "See? Every scripture in the Bible with the word adultery!"

I'm tempted to tell him my fingers are faster.
I wander through the house, upstairs, wondering if I’ll get lost. Doors, doors, doors, I twist the brass knob on a double set and slip inside. Covered with a thick, satin spread, a king-sized bed sits like an enchanted isle in the middle of a room half the size of my mobile home in Pinetop, Arizona. I look, snoop. The master bathtub is a swimming pool. I could sleep my three kids in the walk-in closet. The champagne-colored carpeting sparkles like the real thing. I feel guilty stepping on it. Any moment a voice from on high will command me to remove the sneakers from my feet.

Creeping over to the bed, I brush off the seat of my Levis and plop down on the edge. Suddenly I feel heat, drained. I fall back flat, arms out, the satin spread billowing up around me. I’m on a cloud, floating. As my eyes close, I notice a triangle of sunlight pointing at the seascape on the wall. I listen to my kids below, slap-happy, splashing. Joy’s pre-teen shriek: “Mathew!” “Heeey!” I hear Aunt Josie calling; “Tony! Stan!” We’re going down the “big slide,” a thirty-foot spiral tube, built by Uncle Eddie. Aunt Josie is bringing us gramma crackers with pink icing. Candy apples, too. Tonight we’re going to the show, an enchanted isle in the middle of a king-sized bed.

I wake up, leaving my imprint on the soft bedspread, a big shallow hole I make no effort to fill.

I wander into the guest room, one of three. One whole wall is covered with framed photographs. There’s a family portrait: Uncle Eddie and Aunt Josie with slender Sara on the left; to the right, Tod the returned missionary, then Tony, blond hair in a pony tail and John Lennon glasses. And next to him, smiling sassily in miniskirt and fishnet stockings, Yvonne, a busty little twenty-year-old my father couldn’t handle post-Mom. I’m long out of the picture, ever since Tony made the quantum leap to high school. He’s into girls, cars, grass. I’m still a junior high honor roll jock with a guitar.

More Tony. The clean-cut missionary, Eddie’s indomitable grim. Night school cap and gown. Tony and Terri in front of the L.A. Temple. Tony and Terri with their first little girl, a miniature Shirley Temple blond enough to be their original. So . . . you can buy kids, too? What next? Ah! Of course. Like a before/after sequence . . . In picture one, Terri looks like a stunk-up Roaring Twenties girl, Charleston slim and flattened, except for oddly ear-shaped hips. In the next frame she’s a Lady Clairiol Cleopatra, still stuck-up, but the battleship hips are gone, transplanted to buxom upper regions, like some great oceanic shift. Re-figured.

“There you are!” It’s Tanya, finding me out. “We’ve been looking for you.”

“We?”

“Me and Aunt Josie.”

Tanya scans the photographs, smiling at soldier Eddie, at Aunt Josie in wedding white (“She was really cute . . .”), at butched and freckled Tod and Tony. Her eyes stop on my eyes. She’s sitting on the sofa, stroking my blond bangs as she reads me a fairy tale out loud. My father’s in the kitchen—a rare cameo—opening the mail. He rips open an envelope with his teeth and slaps the crisp paper on the counter: “Scare!” His tearing grows louder, more vicious. The veins in his mighty arms are writhing like snakes. “Fed Mart!” Slap! “Gelsons!” Slap!

My mother in the florid muumuu marks her place and goes to him. Her voice is soft, a flower. “What is it? What’s wrong?”
breast lift, too? Will our insurance—nope. Not a dime. Look, just forget it. It's petty vanity, that's all. We've got the sewage assessment. Piano lessons. I've got to buy school clothes for the kids. No one looks at my damn legs anyway.

"Let's go," I say, taking her by the arm.

THE sliding glass door opens and in come the kids, dripping. Aunt Josie tells them to stay right there while she fetches some towels. She uses that word, fetch. Arms folded, teeth chattering, wet skin contracted, my half-naked children look like shriveled little refugees. They're not at all. Pam's on the skinny side, but she's also the tallest kid in her eighth grade class. Basketball material if she had the gumption. She's into music. She could be a brain surgeon, but wants to be a cellist. The piano lessons. I've got to buy school clothes for the kids. "What's it going to be, kids?" Pam says. "Basketball material if she had the gumption." She tries reverse psychology: Watch it, or you'll end up a "tennis-type" fruit salad, I note the untanned stripe around her ring finger. Monday at the beach she forgot it was missing from her finger. Easy-going Tanya shrieked and sobbed. It was totally unlike her, carrying on as if this were an "irrelevant" tradition like ring exchanges.

Our Big Stick mentality. We're not wearing the suit and tie of his generation. I, too, am in uniform: tie-dyed tank top and ragged blue jeans. I'm on my high horse.注册 for the draft. No, I will not. Let them put me in jail. I have no right.

Tonight he doesn't give me his standing lecture on the Plan of Salvation, only this caution: Think about what you're doing, Dear. Of course, you're entitled to your personal view. The choice is yours. He's sitting behind the big walnut desk in his study, wearing the smart suit and tie of his generation. I, too, am in uniform: tie-dyed tank top and ragged blue jeans. I'm on my high horse. Vietnam? Whose freedom? We've got to Salt Lake to compete in the Tabernacle? Well, now his boy's doing the same thing. He won the stake and the regional. There's a write up in the Church News.

Tanya's excited for him. "That's great!" She nudges Pam. "See?" Pam shakes the brown bangs from her eyes and mumbles like her father: "No, I'm blind."

She may be blind, but I'm not. I'm staring at the sauced chicken on my plate, which has transformed into a slab of prime rib my father has worked double-overtime to put there... He's doing his executive best to ignore my voluntary abstinence. So are my brothers and sisters. My sandy-haired stepmother rolls her eyes: Good grief! Here we go again!

My father makes a little joke. Something about Stan eating rabbit food. I pick at my mixed veggies, wondering when this meal will finally end so I can grab a yogurt from the fridge and stuff my mouth with sunflower seeds. Although it's fast Sunday and my belly's howling, I'm trying to appear as unaffected as a yogi: Let the sky fall. Let whatever.

All semester my father has been nagging me about college. Get those applications in, so! Tonight I tell him I'm not going. I'm joining the Peace Corps instead. I want to do something for humankind.

Tonight he doesn't give me his standing lecture on the Plan of Salvation, only this caution: Think about what you're doing, Dear. Of course, you're entitled to your personal view. The choice is yours. He's sitting behind the big walnut desk in his study, wearing the smart suit and tie of his generation. I, too, am in uniform: tie-dyed tank top and ragged blue jeans. I'm on my high horse. Vietnam? Whose freedom? We've got to Salt Lake to compete in the Tabernacle? Well, now his boy's doing the same thing. He won the stake and the regional. There's a write up in the Church News.

Tanya's excited for him. "That's great!" She nudges Pam. "See?" Pam shakes the brown bangs from her eyes and mumbles like her father: "No, I'm blind."

She may be blind, but I'm not. I'm staring at the sauced chicken on my plate, which has transformed into a slab of prime rib my father has worked double-overtime to put there... He's doing his executive best to ignore my voluntary abstinence. So are my brothers and sisters. My sandy-haired stepmother rolls her eyes: Good grief! Here we go again!

My father makes a little joke. Something about Stan eating rabbit food. I pick at my mixed veggies, wondering when this meal will finally end so I can grab a yogurt from the fridge and stuff my mouth with sunflower seeds. Although it's fast Sunday and my belly's howling, I'm trying to appear as unaffected as a yogi: Let the sky fall. Let whatever.

All semester my father has been nagging me about college. Get those applications in, so! Tonight I tell him I'm not going. I'm joining the Peace Corps instead. I want to do something for humankind.

He's doing his executive best to ignore my voluntary abstinence. So are my brothers and sisters. My sandy-haired stepmother rolls her eyes: Good grief! Here we go again!

My father makes a little joke. Something about Stan eating rabbit food. I pick at my mixed veggies, wondering when this meal will finally end so I can grab a yogurt from the fridge and stuff my mouth with sunflower seeds. Although it's fast Sunday and my belly's howling, I'm trying to appear as unaffected as a yogi: Let the sky fall. Let whatever.

All semester my father has been nagging me about college. Get those applications in, so! Tonight I tell him I'm not going. I'm joining the Peace Corps instead. I want to do something for humankind.

He's doing his executive best to ignore my voluntary abstinence. So are my brothers and sisters. My sandy-haired stepmother rolls her eyes: Good grief! Here we go again!
teach because you can't do anything else.

Now I've done it. The pink and blue capillaries in his cheeks are swelling, cracking; his face looks like an old fresco about to explode. Don't lecture me on what you don't know anything about! Don't lecture me! I'm your father!

You're nothing!

"Stan? More mashed potatoes?" Uncle Eddie offers me the whole bowl.

"No thanks."

"You haven't touched your chicken," Aunt Josie says.

I cut off a sliver and fork it into my mouth, chewing it like gravel.

"How about some bread?" Aunt Josie reaches for the platter.

"No thanks."

"No bread?" Aunt Josie frowns.

Uncle Eddie's mountainous brow furrows. "It's good bread, Stan."

"Maybe later."

"This is really good," Tanya says, buttering another slice. The kids, cheeks bulging, nod in assent. I gaze outside where the red rim of the sun is being sucked into the Pacific. As the gauzy sky goes through its menstrual changes, a scripture comes to mind: the moon turning to blood. A violent beauty. The ocean tightens and buckles: a hundred thousand flashing swords. The armored ranks of Israel. Or Fort Knox in quiltwork.

Aunt Josie says Tony can't make it, but Tod may stop by later when he gets off work. He's so busy, you know. He's taking the gravel.

Uncle Eddie's mountainous brow furrows. "It's good bread, Stan."

"Maybe later."

"This is really good," Tanya says, buttering another slice. The kids, cheeks bulging, nod in assent. I gaze outside where the red rim of the sun is being sucked into the Pacific. As the gauzy sky goes through its menstrual changes, a scripture comes to mind: the moon turning to blood. A violent beauty. The ocean tightens and buckles: a hundred thousand flashing swords. The armored ranks of Israel. Or Fort Knox in quiltwork.

Aunt Josie says Tony can't make it, but Tod may stop by later when he gets off work. He's so busy, you know. He's taking the gravel.

Uncle Eddie is rising from his padded velour chair. He disappears into his study and returns with a stack of color photographs. "Here, look at these, Stan!" He, Tod, and Tony floating down jungled corridors in pontoon boats. Posing in front of vine-strangled ruins. Surrounded by gaping brown villagers. Tall, fair, broad-shouldered, they look like the Three Nephites bringing light and truth to the New World. Even Uncle Eddie, with gray corkscrews springing from his droopy chest and swim trunks hanging like a saggy diaper, appears godlike among those little brown people.

"When... How...?" Tanya is gawking like the adulating villagers in the photographs.

"It was Tony's idea." Uncle Eddie grins. "He was building a home for a fellow who used to..."

Central America. Why not? Eddie and the boys.

Tanya's snatching glances at me. How long have I been folding and unfolding my paper napkin? It's worn to shreds. What is she thinking, feeling, that compels her to blurt out, "Stan does a lot of hiking!"

Aunt Josie cups her veiny hands and tilts her head. "Hiking... that's nice."

By the time they finish their second helping of pineapple upside-down cake my kids can barely move they're so full. They push their chairs back and totter toward the playroom like over stuffed penguins. Soon I hear the clicking of pool balls and Pam playing a racy boogie-woogie on Aunt Josie's pseudoorgan, the Fun Machine. I do my best to tune out the computerized calliope accompanying her.

As Aunt Josie and Tanya clear the table, the doorbell rings—magic chimes. Aunt Josie's slippered feet swish across the sparkling carpet. I hear a familiar foreignness: Tod and Margie and their little tribe of seven. Instinctively, Tod darts his balding head as he passes through the doorway. He grins, grips my hand. "Hey, long time no see!" He seems truly glad to see me. Margie looks plump in her paisley smock—expecting number eight?—plump and cheerful. She smiles at Tanya: "So you're the one with all the hair! I'm envious!" She turns to me, "And you're the musician!"

"I play a little guitar."

"Stan writes songs," Tanya says.

"Used to."

"Will you play one for us? You sing, too, don't you?"

I politely decline, but score two points for Margie.

The seven kids race by before I can even count them. Aunt Josie introduces us to Sean, a photocopy of his dad: that same Neanderthal brow, one eye slightly askew, watching out for sucker punches.

"So you're the new Demosthenes!" I say, shaking his hand. He crinkles his bun eye. "Who?"

"Good luck with your speech."

He grins, nods, and scampers off. Yep. He's got the Kilpatrick look. Come on, world! Let me at 'em!

The little Kilpatricks know the ropes. Foraging through closets and cupboards, they drag out a mini-trampoline, board games, video paraphernalia. In seconds the house looks like Circus Maximus.

We adults stroll into the living room and occupy the two facing sofas: Tanya and I on one, Uncle Eddie, Aunt Josie, and Margie on the other, and a huge coffee table like a cherrywood continent between us. Tod spreads his work-weary six-six frame across the floor. He's wearing his three-piece pinstripes. Two of his younger boys are taking turns bouncing on the mini-trampoline while, in the playroom, his only daughter pecks out "Give Said the Little Stream" on the Fun Machine. I secretly urge Pam to scoot her aside and dazzle us with a few bars of "Clair de Lune."
The conversation is slow, banal, predictable. Tod’s building a new home in Escondido. Three acres. He’s first counselor in his ward. Margie’s the Young Women’s president. Jenny’s in the school play. The boys are hooked on soccer, Scouts, three-wheeling. Tod’s law practice is thriving.

Aunt Josie updates Tod and Margie. More of the same. Steve’s writing a screenplay. He’s a bishop now. Eddie’s going to help him finish their new house. Steve bought an airplane, did you know that? A little Cessna.

Margie asks about our kids. She’s a big, round, happy woman. Happily freckled.

Tanya does the talking. Pam’s in the gifted class. Joy’s a fourth-grade track star. “Flo-Joy,” they call her. Matthew—well, he starts kindergarten in the fall.

“Why don’t you get a job out here!” Tanya whispers in my ear. Out of the corner of my eye I catch Aunt Josie’s sentimental smile, so sweetly approving, and it rankles me. Am I the evolutionary climax of the meanest sonuvabitch in Southern California? The bad genes cleansed?

“What, Matt? I can’t hear you.”

He whispers louder. He wants one of his little plastic dinosaurs. “Dad,” he pleads, “can’t you get just one?”

I explain that all of his dinosaurs are back in Pinetop, five hundred miles away. That’s ten hours, Matt, going sixty-five.

Time, distance, logic are of no moment to a five-year-old. He won’t quit. “Please, Dad, Pleeeeeze. Just one?”

Why is he being so damn persistent? Kids. It’s just how kids are.

“No, Matt, I can’t.”

“Dad?” He’s in agony.

“No! I said no and I mean no! Now quit bugging me!”

His head drops and he mopes off, his face melting into a basset hound look. Aunt Josie’s face melts, too. “Ohhh...” I look the other way. Tense, hard. As Matt disappears around the corner, I hear Tod’s two youngest boys: “Well? Where is it? Let’s see!” Matt’s voice, an egg cracking: “I don’t have it.” “See! We knew you didn’t!”

I glance at Tod, who appears embarrassed on my behalf. His kids surely have nifty Gobot cars that can grow wings and fly.

I smile and shrug, to put him at ease. Not your fault, Tod. It’s kids, just kids.

“Tyler!” he hollers. “John! Stop that right now!”

Silence, then a tiny voice: “Stop what?”

“You know.”

They stop, but I re-feel a hundred old hurts. Hey, Bodily, when are you getting your Care Package? Hey, Saggy Socks!

Aunt Josie calls to my little boy. “Matthew? Come here, Matthew...” He reappears, small and circumspect. Aunt Josie thrusts out her arms. He takes a cautious step, then makes his break. I’m up, reaching across the coffee table, grabbing his arm and pulling him around, into me. I scoop him up like a bride at the threshold and fall back on the sofa clutching him tightly to my chest as he tries to wrestle free: “Dad! Da-ad!”

Squealing angrily,, fluttering his little legs as I tickle his ribs in apparent play. I hold him closer, tighter, tickling. I don’t look at Aunt Josie until his piercing cries become little belly laughs: “Hey, Dad! Da-a-ad!”

IT’S eleven-thirty when Tanya and I finally put the kids in bed. Usually there’s an elaborate ritual, but tonight they zonk right out. They don’t even ask for a bedtime story or a drink.

Tanya and I go downstairs where Aunt Josie is waiting with tall glasses of cranberry juice. Bowls of tortilla chips and guacamole dip sit on the coffee table. We retake the two facing sofas, Uncle Eddie and Aunt Josie, Tanya and me. We’re no sooner re-settled than Aunt Josie’s up, striding off. “Oh, Eddie, you left the light on in your study again!”
Tanya gasps teasingly. "Eddie, don't you turn your lights off?" Uncle Eddie winks at her.

"No he doesn't!" Aunt Josie says, returning. She slips an arm around Uncle Eddie and gives him a peck on the cheek. "But I love him anyway."

"When I was a kid," Uncle Eddie says, "my mother used to follow me all over the house turning lights off. She had to, of course, to save money. But, oh! I hated it! Just hated it! I told myself—a told her, too, I think—When I grow up, I'm never going to turn off a light in my house!"

"And he doesn't, either!" Aunt Josie says, smiling affectionately. "Sometimes I'll come down in the morning and he'll be asleep in front of the TV with every light in the house on!"

Tanya laughs; I smile.

Maybe it's the late hour, or the cranberry juice (Mormon wine?), or the cumulative residue of the day—or twenty-five years of residue—but somehow our tongues have been loosened. It's nitty gritty time. I can feel it. I caution myself: Stanley, keep thy cool.

"Sometimes I came back!" Aunt Josie says, smiling affectionately. "Sometimes I'll come down in the morning and he'll be asleep in front of the TV with every light in the house on!"

Aunt Josie glances left at Uncle Eddie, then across at me, searching for a euphemism. Her hands move tentatively to her abdomen, then roll up and over in a great pouring forth motion. "I mean, being as well-endowed as she is."

"Yvonne Kilpatrick?" Tanya says.

"Oh, Yvonne Kilpatrick," Tanya says. "That's a good answer. That's not why she changed her name."

Aunt Josie looks thoroughly baffled, as if I've just posed an advanced calculus problem or the notion of a partless, passionless God. "No? Then why do you think...?

"She didn't want to be one of us, a Bodily."

Aunt Josie shakes her head. She's chewing her lower lip. "No, I don't think..."

Uncle Eddie cuts in, a rare defiance. "It was a women's lib thing!"

Now Aunt Josie is shocked—double shocked. She looks persecuted, ganged up on. She turns to Tanya for support, but Tanya's neutral, at least in face. Aunt Josie smooths the front of her dress and gazes off, the pious peacemaker. "Well, I don't agree."

"I want to pursue this. If it was just the name, purely the name, why Kilpatrick? Why not Larson, Mom's maiden name? And why...?"

"Just like you wish Tony had come!"

"Yes... No. I don't know."

Tanya laughs through her washcloth. "That's a good answer."

"The lid's down on the toilet and I'm sitting on it, chin in hands, watching a thread-thin trail of red ants make its way across the carpeted floor. Seeing these almost invisible invaders in the house gives me a malevolent pleasure as they grow larger in my mind and sink their giant jaws into Uncle Eddie's woodwork.

"He didn't throw me out!" My tone is growing louder, harsher. I think I'm almost yelling. Tanya squeezes my thigh. I look at all of them: "Well, he didn't! I left home of my own accord." To Tanya, with self-scrorn: "I was going to be the Mormon Bob Dylan, remember?"

"Why did you leave?" Aunt Josie says, challenging. "Because... I'm stumped. Tanya's shaking her head. She can't believe I'm defending my father. 'I don't know,' I say, 'maybe for the same reason Tony left!'

"Tony came back!" Aunt Josie says. "I came..." But I'm stumped again. I gaze from face to face, stopping at Aunt Josie's. "You think my father killed my mom, don't you?"

Aunt Josie glances sideways down her sleeve, picking a piece of lint there.

"Do you wish Tony had come?"

"Yes... No. I don't know."

"It was a women's lib thing!"

Now it's Uncle Eddie's turn to be shocked. His bulky forehead darn near cracks in half. "Dorothy? She was spoiled rotten!"

"Oh, Eddie! She wasn't either!"

"Josie, you used to yell at her all the time. Oh, she matured, sure—after she got married. She grew up a lot. And after that, I don't think there was very much wrong with her, but back then, when I first met you... I really didn't like her, to be honest. Not at first."

"When I was a kid," Uncle Eddie says, "my mother used to follow me all over the house turning lights off. She had to, of course, to save money. But, oh! I hated it! Just hated it! I told myself—told her, too, I think—When I grow up, I'm never going to turn off a light in my house!"

"And he doesn't, either!" Aunt Josie says, smiling affectionately. "Sometimes I'll come down in the morning and he'll be asleep in front of the TV with every light in the house on!"

"I mean, being as well-endowed as she is."

"Yvonne Kilpatrick?" Tanya says.

"Oh, Yvonne Kilpatrick," Tanya says. "That's a good answer. That's not why she changed her name."

Aunt Josie looks thoroughly baffled, as if I've just posed an advanced calculus problem or the notion of a partless, passionless God. "No? Then why do you think...?

"She didn't want to be one of us, a Bodily."

Aunt Josie shakes her head. She's chewing her lower lip. "No, I don't think..."

Uncle Eddie cuts in, a rare defiance. "It was a women's lib thing!"

Now Aunt Josie is shocked—double shocked. She looks persecuted, ganged up on. She turns to Tanya for support, but Tanya's neutral, at least in face. Aunt Josie smooths the front of her dress and gazes off, the pious peacemaker. "Well, I don't agree."

"I want to pursue this. If it was just the name, purely the name, why Kilpatrick? Why not Larson, Mom's maiden name? And why...?"

"Just like you wish Tony had come!"

"Yes... No. I don't know."

Tanya laughs through her washcloth. "That's a good answer."

"The lid's down on the toilet and I'm sitting on it, chin in hands, watching a thread-thin trail of red ants make its way across the carpeted floor. Seeing these almost invisible invaders in the house gives me a malevolent pleasure as they grow larger in my mind and sink their giant jaws into Uncle Eddie's woodwork.

"He didn't throw me out!" My tone is growing louder, harsher. I think I'm almost yelling. Tanya squeezes my thigh. I look at all of them: "Well, he didn't! I left home of my own accord." To Tanya, with self-scrorn: "I was going to be the Mormon Bob Dylan, remember?"

"Why did you leave?" Aunt Josie says, challenging. "Because... I'm stumped. Tanya's shaking her head. She can't believe I'm defending my father. 'I don't know,' I say, 'maybe for the same reason Tony left!'

"Tony came back!" Aunt Josie says. "I came..." But I'm stumped again. I gaze from face to face, stopping at Aunt Josie's. "You think my father killed my mom, don't you?"

Aunt Josie glances sideways down her sleeve, picking a piece of lint there.

"Do you wish Tony had come?"

"Yes... No. I don't know."

"It was a women's lib thing!"
"No I don't."
I don't know either. I don't know what I'm trying to say. I don't know what I'm feeling, or trying to feel or unfeel. I keep seeing my father, the Ivy League M.B.A., chasing broken rainbows in Century City, finally settling for a quasiprocessor's job at Valley Junior College; sulking in his study, staring at his hands: "Sian, everything I touch turns to shit."

"You know Tod's boy, the silver-tongued orator?"
Tanya, dabbing white cream on her face, smears it all around until she looks like a kabuki dancer. "I think that's neat," she says.

"Sure it's neat! It's wonderful! Commendable! And it was no less so when Tod won the Church-wide thing twenty-five years ago. But let me tell you something about Tod's fabulous award-winning talk. Oh, he wrote it, with some help from Uncle Eddie, I'm sure. But guess who they came to for senior editing? Guess who polished the thing and got rid of all the can't hardly's and up to Utah's? Guess who had to give Tod a crash course in articulation and delivery?"

Tanya wrings out the washcloth, waiting. "So?"

"So! No one seems to remember that!" I'm standing, fists clenched. In the double-mirror I look ridiculously reduced: a little boy's face on an old man's body. When I close my eyes and open them, it flip-flops.

Tanya hitches up her garments. "You've got a real chip on your shoulder."

I hate that word, chip.

I sit back down, staring at the faill of ants which has become a strand of red hair, Aunt Josie's twenty-five years ago. Aunt Josie taking me and Tony to the beach, to the movies, to Buddy's-Bat-Away. All the financially forbidden fruits.

"I could have been a doctor."
Tanya laughs. She can't help it. "You didn't want to be a doctor."

"Well, I didn't want to be a damn ... I didn't want to be what I am."

Then there's silence as Tanya scrubs her face briskly, furiously, as if trying to erase an indelible stain. Now I've done it. I've blown it again. Tanya can put up with just about anything but self-pity. She's going to kick me in the butt and straighten me out. I've got it coming and here it comes!

I hear the water go on, then off. Tanya wrings out the washcloth and slaps it on the sink. She takes a deep breath. Round five. But then she surprises me. She gently pulls my hands from under my chin and slides onto my lap, stroking my hair as my mother used to. Her other hand has settled on my thigh, the pale stripe on her ring finger obscured in shadow.

She leans a little closer and says, very softly, "I have no regrets."

Then I feel like crying. I don't want to. I don't want to ruin things although I already have. I hold it back. I slip my arm around her waist and begin rubbing her belly, gently, up and down. As I feel her animal warmth seeping through the fabric of my jeans, my head falls against her shoulder. "No, I didn't want to be a damn doctor."

—DOUGLAS M. JOLE
I assisted President Benson in compiling the Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson. It was a spiritual feast to sit at the feet of a prophet and hear his comments about important spiritual doctrine and issues that were the culmination of his life.

ONE SUNNY AFTERNOON in 1985 while a graduate student at Brigham Young University, I was walking between the Harold B. Lee Library and the Administration Building. I heard someone running up behind me. I glanced over my shoulder and to my surprise, I saw a short man in a blue suit. He stopped me and said, "Hi, I'm Reed Benson. We've heard good things about your work. I was talking to my good old dad, and he wants you to go to work for us." This was the start of an unusual involvement with the Benson family.

The next week I found myself assisting Reed, a religion instructor at BYU, in the research and writing of his father's biography and teachings book. A few weeks later I answered the telephone in Reed's office. A distant voice said, "Is Reed there?"

1 replied, "No, may I take a message?"

The man responded, "Who are you?"

1 answered, "I'm Frank Bruno."

He questioned, "What do you do?"

1 said, "I'm working on the Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson."

"Who is that?" he asked.

"He is the prophet of God."

He chuckled, "That's me."

I soon discovered that President Benson had a warm and rich sense of humor. He and his son Reed were close, and he would call our office daily, mainly to see how Reed's family was doing. Since Reed was often gone to teach class, I had many conversations with the prophet.

For several years I had listened to Elder Benson speak at general conference. He was a strong and fiery speaker, and I assumed that he must have a similar personality in his private life. I soon discovered, however, that he was a warm and caring man.

One day in October 1985 President Benson invited me to Salt Lake City to his office in the Church Administration Building. He interviewed me for about thirty minutes concerning my religious beliefs. After I told him I was majoring in history, he decided that I was "one of the good historians in the Church." He said that the Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson "should lead men to Christ and establish the importance of the Book of Mormon." If the book did not lead people to Christ, he did not want it to be published.

He was concerned that I would work many hours beyond what I was being paid, and he asked me to "consider my work as a Church service." I assured him that I would be glad to complete the book no matter what sacrifice I had to make. Then as I stood up to leave he said he wanted to give me something special. He presented me with autographed copies of all his personal writings. I was deeply touched by his thoughtful gifts and his genuine concern for me.

President Benson delivered more than 14,000 pages of material in his more than fifty years of service as an apostle and prophet. Reed Benson, Dennis Wardle, and I worked fifty to sixty hours per week for the next two years compiling material that we knew would follow President Benson's mandate to "lead men to Christ." Each day we began work in BYU's Joseph F Smith Building or the Benson Institute library with a prayer to seek the Lord's guidance in extracting the words that would change people's lives as President Benson so wanted. Little by little we whittled it down to about 600 pages of the best representation of his stated mission.

WHILE working one afternoon, I answered the phone and was told by Mark Benson, Reed's brother, that it was critical that I find Reed and give him a message. I went to where Reed was teaching his Book of Mormon class and conveyed the message. Reed invited Dennis and me to accompany 

FRANK ALAN BRUNO is a graduate assistant in the department of educational leadership at Ball State University. He lives in Muncie, Indiana, with Cheryl and their six daughters, who have taught him how to be more sensitive and less sexist in a patriarchal society.
him to an eye clinic in Provo. Since he was slowly going blind, President Benson had met with Harold Oaks, a leading eye surgeon, concerning his cataracts. They both discovered that their schedules only allowed for President Benson to have the surgery done that very day. Dennis and I waited in the outer office with the Church security man. After several minutes Reed came back out and said that he and Mark had been requested to give a blessing to the prophet. Their dad wanted us to join them. All of us, including Oaks, stood in a circle as Mark anointed and Reed pronounced a spiritually moving blessing that President Benson would recover his sight and return to his duties quickly. As I stood and heard Reed’s prayer, I silently pled with the Lord that if he would give the prophet renewed vision, I would gladly sacrifice some of my own. It was a marvelous privilege to be invited as an elder to assist in administering to the Lord’s anointed servant.

In January 1987 President Benson invited Reed, Dennis, and me with our wives to attend the Jordan River Temple with him and Sister Benson. It was an unbelievable privilege to converse with President Benson in the temple. We met him in a private dining room where we had a delicious meal with fresh strawberry pie and cashews, some of his favorites. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”

He told us that he read many magazines and journals and was concerned by the current trends in society. He mentioned that he intended to speak to the mothers in Zion concerning a tendency among some members of placing materialism and selfishness above having more children and that the Saints needed to be different in an age where mothers were leaving the home in epidemic proportion. His mind, contrary to many older persons, was lucid and quick. He brought up the subject of AIDS. He was concerned that members of the Church were being affected by it. He felt it was “a debilitating scourge placed on the earth to chastise those breaking the commandments, and it was a shame that innocent people had to be hurt by it.”
fore the end of the month, they would go
without eating or eat reduced portions rather
than spend more money. Inevitably, President Benson would offer us juice and nuts
which we would munch on, then at lunch
dinner time he would invite us to join
them. We always excused ourselves as having
some errands to run.

The Bensons lived what they
preached. I didn’t think there was a sweeter,
more guileless man than Spencer W. Kimball
until I met Ezra Taft Benson. Both men were
genteel and refined. I came to appreciate that
prophets of God have to be special people
who can live Christ-like lives and be different. Being somewhat contentious, I watched
everything the prophet did or said to try to
see if I could catch him being “human.” I
never once read or heard him say anything
that was critical or uncomplimentary about
any other person. He even had a good op-
portunity when it was decided that one of his
talks should include a disclaimer that the
ideas were his own opinions. If his brethren
decided something was for the good of the
cause, he would support it honestly and
sincerely. After fifteen days I knew without a
doubt Ezra Taft Benson was a prophet of
God.

President Benson taught me a great deal
about leadership. He would often ask my
opinion about Church programs such as the
youth program or scouting. Then he would
listen intently and make comments. Even
though I was an elder and held no significant
position in the Church, he would hear me
out. If he didn’t agree, he just didn’t say
anything. I learned that great leaders care
what the general member thinks and have
enough confidence in their position that
they are not threatened to hear more than
one view.

President and Sister Benson had a great
love for children. Each week they would
invite a family into their home to share fam-
ily home evening with them. One day Presi-
dent Benson asked me about my children. I
 took their picture out of my wallet to show
him and Sister Benson. He was so excited to
see them that he took the picture and put it
on his desk so that he could look at them as
he worked. When I visited him he would
always ask how my daughters, Genevieve
and Gianina, were doing, and he would
genuinely express care about them.

In the summer of 1987 I felt that my
contributions to the book were about fin-
ished, so I began looking for a new position.
I was able to find a job as a fifth grade school
teacher in Chattanooga, Tennessee. Presi-
dent and Sister Benson wanted to meet with
me before I started my new job. I drove with
Reed up to their apartment on 4 August
(which was the prophet’s and my own birth-
days). President Benson told me he had
something important to say and I should
write it in my journal. He told me that I
would be a great leader in the Church and
that my students “would also become great
leaders and teachers.” As we left, Reed told
me that his dad felt I would be a bishop,
stake president, and mission president one
day.

In December 1987, the month before
Cheryl was due to have our baby, I learned
that my mother had a mild form of cancer. I
felt impressed that I should move back out
West to be near her. In addition, the Teach-
ings book had been delayed in publication. I
came back to Utah without a job or any-
where to live. Some friends offered to let us
stay with them for a couple of months. Presi-
dent Benson was quite concerned about our
well-being, since Cheryl was only three
weeks away from delivering our third child;
he worried about our little girls eating prop-
erly.

One night the doorbell rang and there
was Reed Benson standing in the snow. He
had about 50 pounds of Idaho #1 prime
spuds. He said that his dad received them as
a gift from a farmer and that he wanted to
share them with us. Those were the best
potatoes we ever ate. During the next few
weeks, he sent several care packages to us,
which included oranges, nuts, and vegeta-
bles.
Finally, in the middle of January 1988 Cheryl went into labor. She had a difficult birth. A team of five people worked frantically on Cheryl and the baby. As we prayed previous to the birth, we felt a strong inclination that under no circumstances should the umbilical cord be cut, even in an emergency. Even gave the head medical person a special blessing. Fortunately the Spirit was guiding us. One person suctioned the baby; another took the little body and butterflied her up and down. A third person assisting had the presence of mind to hand me a bottle of consecrated oil. I quickly anointed the baby. One person suctioned the baby and began to bless her. I commanded her in the name of Jesus Christ "to come into the world and breathe." I lifted my hands after the birth. A team of five people worked frantically on Cheryl and the baby. Five minutes, and a baby girl miraculously entered this life. I was told later by one of the team, who had delivered hundreds of babies, that they had thought our baby wasn't going to make it, but they had felt calm through the whole experience.

We were so relieved that a new baby had arrived safely that I gave little thought to her name. The next day Cheryl wondered what we should name her. I told her that since she had named the last one, it was my turn to name this one. She was very patient with me for several hours. I even found a Brigham Young University student phone directory and began writing down girls' names. I suggested Camilla and Flora and a bunch of other names, but Cheryl didn't respond to any of them.

Soon the phone rang, and Reed asked me to come up the next day and do some revisions on the Teachings book. He said his dad was anxious to complete the manuscript and wanted to add a few talks he had given since August. I asked Cheryl if that would be all right. She agreed, but said that I needed to come up with a name for the baby.

The next day I drove to Salt Lake. As I entered the study, President Benson was in his recliner, and Sister Benson was on the couch wrapped in her afghan. Reed and Dennis went out for a minute. I told the Bensons about the birth of our new baby girl.

President Benson asked, "What are you going to name her?" I answered, "I don't know. My wife is upset with me because I can't figure out a name." He smiled, putting his hands on the top of his head to think, and said with a twinkle in his eyes, "I can help you." I quickly responded, "You can?" He looked at Sister Benson with love in his eyes and pronounced, "Her name is Flora."

I hadn't understood him, so I explained that I had suggested Camilla or Flora, but Cheryl hadn't seemed too thrilled with those names. He looked at Sister Benson and asked, "Flora, what does your name mean?" She thoughtfully responded, "It has a special meaning." He turned to me and prophesied, "If you name her Flora, she will one day have special power and will be highly favored and do great things."

When I got home, I told Cheryl, "President Benson said the baby's name is Flora." She responded, "If the prophet says her name is Flora, then her name is Flora." I blessed Flora Aimee shortly after that, and she has been a great joy in our home. Her loving nature reminds me often of Sister Benson. I have no doubt that Flora Aimee will turn out just like Flora Benson. If she is only a little bit like her namesake, she will indeed be highly favored of God and human-kind.

The experiences that my wife, my family, and I had with President Benson and his family contain important evidence that modern-day prophets have characteristics similar to former prophets. Prophets of God are concerned with every member of the Church, and they see people from a spiritual perspective. Cheryl and I are both converts to the Church. Her father is a Protestant minister, and my father is a shift boss in a gambling casino in Las Vegas. We have no family members prominent in the Church, yet the Prophet and his wife treated us as spiritual equals with whom they could discuss matters of eternal consequence.

The Prophet's concern for us was manifested through his actions of setting a good example, encouraging me to follow the Savior, discussing spiritual matters, sending us food, prophesying to me, and naming our daughter. Prophets of God demonstrate through their actions that they are true servants of the Master. To our family, Ezra Taft Benson and Flora Amussen Benson will always be known as true disciples of the Savior and role models that we will always remember and try to emulate. Is Ezra Taft Benson a prophet of God? Yes.

YOUR TASK NOW

If you cut yourself from the gallows, know now that the fall will be steep and you won't end up in a cabaret, pouring claret from a crystal decanter; you'll be a renegade cymbal player biting your nails in the candlelight, sleepy and lonely and quiveringly ecstatic that you even get to live.

Later, you'll think of sweet peas, their scent strong even after their petals fall limp, the way the pain of love is strong after the pleasure limps away. Remember that blood is easier to draw than a perfect circle and that love ultimately always requires a violent act. There is a gallery of blank pallid faces whose random desires you bend to, offer them a coin and request a messenger from the fertile mystery adjacent to the barren reality you breathe in every day:

your task now is to extract yourself from the static madness that wants to spin you downward like a madwoman untangling her hair.

—HOLLY WELKER
LIGHTER MINDS

FLANNEL BOARDS AND FLIP CHARTS

By Peter Sorensen

Rolled up, flannel boards look like iron rods; when opened they are two-dimensional—a perfect metaphor for Mormon Conservatives.

As August Rolls inevitably around, it brings scorching heat and, unfortunately, the equally inevitable Bloodstone Symposium. You may have heard a report of mine a few years back on the traditional bloodletting at Bloodstone, but I now have ample time to catch you up on recent Bloodstone developments, for I am recovering from a complicated surgery in which an elders quorum presidency removed an entire blue plate special consisting of barbecued beef, corn on the cob and cole slaw, and replaced it with backbone and intestinal fortitude.

The current Bloodstone debate centers on choosing new metaphors for liberals and conservatives in the Church. As you will recall, in the sixties, the groups were called, respectively, "liahonas" and "iron rodders." These terms are now passé, so the Conference Subcommittee on Committees for the Subcommittee’s Committee on Subcommittees concluded in secret ballot (which is still being located) to rename conservative Mormons "flannel boards" and liberals "flip charts."

You who were missionaries, or just pretended to be, will recognize the symbolic tools of the craft. Collapsible flannel boards, no longer used to teach investigators, were popular with green missionaries who had difficulty moving their hands in a foreign language. Most exciting was the impressive apostles and prophets foundation with the hidden flannel tongue that, when the cornerstone was taken off the board, forced a scraper of elders and priests to call on the unsuspecting investigator's carpet. Flannel boards, when rolled up, look for all the world like an iron rod, which makes them ideal conservative symbols. Unfortunately, rolled up flannel boards also look like three-pound blood sausages, and one missionary was poisoned twenty-two years ago when he was accidentally served a plate of flannel board *au gratin*. The flannel board also is not unlike an overripe zucchini, and has recently been chosen as the official metaphor for the FFA. Be that as it may, the flannel board is an entirely appropriate metaphor for Mormon conservatives. When opened, a flannel board is two-dimensional, reflecting the depth of most conservatives, I am sure you will agree, and serving as an aperitif tray when laid horizontally. Since flannel boards are no longer used, conservative Mormons and their ideas are depicted frozen in an unchanging past, making them a fit subject for such painters as Harry Anderson, if he likes alfalfa sprouts, or Arnold Friberg, if he is built like Mr. Universe. (Which brings up another issue. Why is Arnold Friberg's Abinadi built better than Rambo? I bet I'm half Abinadi's age, and I have maybe one quarter his physique!)

Similarly, the metaphor for liberals, the contemporary missionary flip chart, is equally appropriate: the flip chart is slick and bendable, two qualities every liberal Mormon needs if he's going to make it through a bishop's interview. Then, of course, the chart flips either backwards or forwards, which nicely reflects the post-structuralist lack of closure that is the hallmark of liberal thought. (For instance, a liberal was recently arrested outside a restroom at general conference for lack of closure. He was cited for indecent exposure, which was merely a conservative ploy, since the man's only real crime was failing to put a paper bag over his exceptionally ugly head.) Last of all, if you flip enough pages on the chart, you end up where you started; this corresponds to the fact that enough circular progressive and enlightened thought will eventually leave us with all the constancy and determination of a plate of creamed herring.

Despite the subcommittee's choices, however, the general assembly of the Bloodstone Symposium reacted unfavorably to the new proposals. One participant had the nerve to suggest one could be conservative about some things and liberal about others—you know, be devout and still hold an advanced degree from a school in California. That touched off some serious fireworks.

Professor Demure, holder of the Wimp Chair at the University of Washington, was outraged: "Choose you this day which party you will serve, whether it be the Neoprotestants or the Charismatics; be ye politically..."
correct, even as my father, who was college dean, was politically correct!"

Professor Fraustydgle, representing the feminist critics, concurred: "The only pluralism we will endorse is monism! And that's final."

"Nothing is final," declared DeMan Tanner, a rabid deconstructionist from Piltdown U.

Professor Backlash, a religion professor who singlehandedly altered the credentials of the entire physical sciences faculty at Utah State said, "Here we have the quintessential flip-chart Mormons—always unwilling to coexist with us flannel boards. Boy, somebody oughta have your temple recommend for this!"

Shot back Professor Demure, "Look, you glorified seminary teacher with an Ed.D., I got my Ph.D. from Harvard, and my publications vita is as long as your arm."

"I'll bet it's not as long as your rap sheet!" shouted Backlash.

"I'll rap you!" said Demure, knocking Backlash over with his flip chart. Before he fell, however, the cagey religion teacher jammed a fast flannel board to Demure's solar plexus.

Rather than chronicle the free-for-all that ensued (as it does every season) where blood flowed like cheap sack as flannel boards were used as broad swords and flip charts as bucklers, I will provide a casualty list for those whom the hospitals and morgues failed to notify. (Remains will be forwarded to families, but strictly COD; the Bloodstone Foundation has a tight budget, after all.)

An entire contingent of visiting Yale deconstructionists were caught in a protest rally, and got buried in the "difference" between signified and signifier; DeMan Tanner bled to death because he would not allow paramedics to achieve closure on one of his arteries.

A group of Revisionist historians from the West Coast performed a strong misreading of the symposium program, and they all fell headlong into each other in the foyer when all the sessions of the three-day event suddenly converged. Orwell Marx, chair of the Church history session and a descendant of the great Marx himself (Gummo), was lanced by a Mormon satirist's rapier wit.

A small coterie of transcendentalist charismatics died of stigmata.

A group of Libertarians were crushed leaning too far to one side. Last of all a large group of traditionalist conservatives were demolished for failing to yield.

LOOKING TOWARD NEXT YEAR: We would like to fill the void—created by the death of all these intellectuals—with a large group of Mormon lawyers, who seem to have achieved the greatest ability of any educated Mormons to cash in on their ability to manipulate the English language, with the possible exception of certain cosmetics salespeople and steel magnates. Submit all symposium proposals to Sneed Hearn, c/o Bloodstone Symposium. You may be assured your proposals will be given prompt attention by Mr. Hearn, who has only recently returned from the dead.

I'm sure we're all looking to the day when missionaries use color monitors and video laser discs to teach the gospel. What will that represent?

OF SACRIFICE A SHRINE

1877

When word came that there was to be a temple nearby, at Manti, Great-grandfather left, for a time, his meager harvest, to quarry stone. Then each massive square was shaped with care, for each must be perfect—or as near perfect as the human hand could make it. Walls must be strong that bind eternity in—and the world out.

And Great-grandmother stole precious hours from making cheese and dying wool and keeping ten perpetually hungry children full to gather rags soon loomed into carpets for the hallowed halls. She wove them tenderly, with care, for each piece must be perfect—or as near perfect as the human hand could make it. For on these hand-loomed threads might tread the Living God or our loved dead or our own children on the day that they would wed.

1977

Word came that there would be a temple near me, too, in Bellevue, and I longed to get my hands into the warp and weft of it. But well I knew that stones for these walls would not be hewn in a nearby quarry, but would come, pre-fabricated, from a far-off factory. Oh, they would be beautiful and shine, and the workmanship thereof would be exceeding fine, and they would be perfect—or as near perfect as machines can make them. Walls must still be strong that bind eternity in—and the world out.

No rags are needed here for these carpets will be made by Lees and come in thirteen colors. Yes, they will be perfect—or as near perfect as machines can make them. For on this inch-thick plush might tread the Living God or our loved dead or our own children on the day that they will wed.

—INGRID FUHRIMAN
INTERVIEW

A NEWSLETTER OF OUR OWN

A Conversation with Hartmut Weissmann

HARTMUT WEISSMANN is publisher and editor of Betrachtungen (Reflections), a new Mormon newsletter for European Saints. This interview was conducted by Elbert Peck.

WHAT HAS BEEN THE RESPONSE TO BETRACHTUNGEN?

We have published three issues and have about fifty subscribers.

The first issue asked people to respond to my open letter about the idea of a European newsletter. It also featured an interesting essay by an East German brother on free speech and open, independent dialogue within the Church.

We had a review and discussion of Carol Lynn Pearson's book, Good-bye, I Love You. We chose Pearson's book because it had been translated into German. At the end of the review we noted two other LDS-related books on the same topic: Chris Oyler's, Go toward the Light, a personal story of a woman whose son was infected with AIDS at the age of seven; and Signature Books' Peculiar People, which deals with homosexuality and Mormonism.

We reprinted a German translation of a piece by Hugh B. Brown on orthodox thought that originally appeared in Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought.

The second issue presented a discussion about if there had been priesthood for women in former times.


We also had reactions to the first issue. Presently the Ensign does not actually reflect its readers' responses. I really want the readers to reflect how they feel about the newsletter, and express their points of view. This will encourage dialogue.

A piece by the East German continued the independent dialogue topic, by using the Apostle Paul, that we can to come to a unity of faith, not by pronouncing the same points of view, but by being part of the body of Christ where everyone can participate freely.

A man from Berlin wrote a letter stating that when he was a teenager, more youth helped plan activities with the adults, whereas today, the adults plan the activities for the youth. He believes this has caused a lack of motivation and a certain frustration.

A French journalist wrote an article that basically deals with the subject of free dialogue. This has been a main topic for us.

When I proposed the idea of having free dialogue within the newsletter, the opinions were quite widespread. We have people who think the only free dialogue should be that offered by the official Church. There are people who think that this dialogue is extremely necessary to provide balance with the official Church and our own private lives.

In the third issue we had quite a few negative responses from people concerned about what we are doing. We have both sides: one reader who likes the second issue better than the first, so he is a subscriber; other readers basically think we're drifting apart from the truthfulness of the gospel, that we're expressing our own thoughts, and that we will lead people away from the Church.

IS YOUR NEWSLETTER THE FIRST INDEPENDENT EUROPEAN MORMON PUBLICATION?

No. About fifteen years ago, Horizon was published in Belgium. The publisher told me that he had wanted to run this project for about two years to help improve the Ensign. Basically, it reprinted translations of American articles and books, such as Charlie's Monument, by Blain Yorgason. He would reprint the news that appeared in the Church News, and he would also share information about activities in Belgium and Holland.

Overall, the Church was not pleased with what he did. He was asked several times not to publish it. He quit the publication, but believes that Horizon caused the addition of a local section in the Ensign.

About five years ago the HLT Forum was published in Germany. It provided readers with short Dialogue-style, five- to ten-page articles translated into German, like excerpts from The Diaries of Wilford Woodruff. HLT Forum was less to the perspective of European or German readers than our newsletter is. It basically concentrated on translations of American writings. Due to insufficient funds, insufficient reader support, and insufficient donors and translators, the publication was discontinued in the late eighties. It's difficult enough to find readers for independent publications, but to find subscribers who will also write articles is almost impossible. This is why our issues so far feature only a few one- to two-page articles.

As far as I know, no other independent publication currently exists in Europe.

SO YOUR PUBLICATION MAINLY ADDRESSES EUROPEAN ISSUES?

Yes. We are not that close on a day-to-day basis with the general authorities. And so a whole issue of SUNSTONE on Paul H. Dunn was just too much for us. I understand it was of concern to you, but this illustrates the need for a European magazine. We'll have short news spots on American stories, but there are other concerns that are more interesting to European Saints.

Modeling the SUNSTONE and Dialogue American experience, we need to build up something similar for our own country.

Our objective is to have a three-language publication: German, French, and English, but our major concern is about German and French; English Saints always can benefit from overseas U.S. publications.

The third issue, for example, has an article from a young French brother, a man of color, who was baptized this year. He describes how he learned from a student colleague about polygamy. This was a very hard issue for this new member. When he learned of the 1978 revelation of giving the priesthood to all worthy male members, that almost drove him away from the Church. He became reconciled after many hours of talking to long-time members. He became more comfortable with the Church, and basically he says, "Today I can support the Brethren of the Church, understanding that they are as human as I am, and not as perfect as I believed them to be." Although in places he is quite critical, I think it's a faith-promoting story; many readers think the same as he thinks.

HOW HAVE YOUR LEADERS REACTED?

I had an interview with my stake president and expected him to be unfavorable. However, he was neutral and in a way positive. He said, "You should make it Church-affirming, not against the Church. But, I can't tell you to stop because I don't know how it will develop."
A CALL FOR MORA"L TRADITION
HEALTH AND MEDICINE AMONG THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS:
SCIENCE, SENSE, AND SCRIPTURE
by Lester E. Bush Jr.
Crossroad Publishing, 1993
xv + 234 pages, $19.95

Reviewed by Courtney S. Campbell, Ph.D.

Lester Bush has written a splendid contribution to the highly acclaimed “Health and Medicine in Faith Traditions Series” of the Park Ridge Center (see Religious Studies Review 19:2, April 1993, 103-09) that will be informative for Mormons and non-Mormons alike on the nature of health and medical practices within Mormonism. The series as a whole uniquely conveys both the breadth and depth of how fourteen different religious communities enact their faith through health behaviors and ethical medicine. The series also facilitates comparative study of the faith communities since each author organizes his material through ten common themes: well-being, sexuality, passages, morality, dignity, madness, healing, caring, suffering, and death.

The distinctive “peculiarism” of the LDS approach to such themes is conveyed in the title of Bush’s volume. Bush focuses on health and medicine “among” the Latter-day Saints, and is the only author to do so; the other authors interpret these themes in the Lutheran, Roman Catholic, Jewish, Islamic, Hindu, etc., “traditions.” At least two implications follow from this titular change. The first is that Bush’s concern is with health practices as they are embodied in the lives of people, and it is these practices that precede and give shape to the enunciation of theological principle. Bush’s interpretation of the origins and development of the Word of Wisdom, which I shall comment on below, is a case in point. The second implication is a rather damning indictment that the Latter-day Saints have not developed any tradition of theologically informed reflection on these themes. I have frustratingly found confirmation of this in the rare occasions that I have been invited to speak on ethics, health, and medicine before an LDS audience. When confronted with a difficult ethical choice, the first answer of my audiences is inevitably “prayer.” More tragic to me are the stories of persons who wished to conceive children through reproductive technology, but did not because they were (wrongly) informed that the LDS church was opposed to artificial insemination or in vitro fertilization; or were invited to participate in organ donation, but refused because they had been (wrongly) informed of ecclesiastical opposition to organ transplantation. Bush quite correctly implies there is no meaningful religious and moral tradition of discourse within Latter-day Saint communities on the relevant health and medicine themes of the series.

Bush’s substantive narrative begins at the ending, that is, with a descriptive account of LDS attitudes about death and dying. His narrative method relies on fascinating historical material, and serves well to illuminate his central thesis that Latter-day Saints have dealt with the “problem of death” through ritual. Proxy baptisms, endowments, sealings, etc., all serve to bring the community a measure of control over the silence that is death. This confrontation with death also is constituted by what the Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard referred to as death’s “retroactive power” over life. The full life requires an awareness of the fragility of mortality, and LDS practices and rituals surrounding death heighten the intensity of this awareness.

Still, the reader can sympathize with series editor Martin Marty’s prefatory comment that “from page one” Bush’s account sets up a “distance” between Mormon and non-Mormon. Bush has chosen to emphasize distinctive LDS practices and beliefs, and so informs the reader very early on that the Mormon setting for death and dying consists in convictions embodied in rituals about the plurality of gods, sacred temple ordinances, the eternal nature of family, and the kingdoms of glory in the afterlife. Marty, and other readers, I am sure, want this world of Mormonism to be understandable and accessible, but it is not clear that Bush has offered initially any bridges between these worlds.

It is possible, however, to focus on distinctive theological claims without imposing the insider/outsider distance to which Marty alludes. Mormonism proposes a paradigm-shattering understanding of God as an embodied being, and this somatic theology cannot but help inform the community’s response to matters of health and medicine. Given this integrity of bodily and spiritual unity, the LDS plan of salvation, as exemplified in Bush’s account of the endowment, might then be portrayed as an example of a universal feature of religiosity, namely, as one grand, eternal rite of passage—marked by themes of separation, transition, and reincorporation or new life. What identifies these various phases are precisely transformations in the nature of our embodied existence—unembodied spirit, embodied moral, disembodied spirit, resurrected being, etc. Thus, a focus on embodiment as a different but distinctive theological claim would have allowed Bush to also incorporate concepts and language more inclusive and accessible rather than distancing.

The section on death and dying concludes with an unduly brief attention to provocative issues in medical ethics, such as suicide and euthanasia. To suggest one example that I have found to be of increasing concern for LDS families, Bush observes that current ecclesiastical teaching holds there is no obligation to use “unreasonable” means to prolong life when death seems inevitable. End of discussion. But, what does “unreasonable” mean? Permission to refuse or withdraw ventilators, feeding tubes, antibiotics, etc.? To put a point on this, were the antibiotics used to treat President Benson’s pneumonia...
in 1992 an example of using "unreasonable means" to prolong life? On such matters, I don't think it's good enough for family members and others to just muddle through on faith, hope, and love; some tradition of ethical reflection is a necessary balance to ad hoc ("inspiration") practices.

The fusion of physical and spiritual in Mormonism opens Bush's discussion of the themes of "being well and suffering." This has implications for one of Bush's subthemes—science—that unfortunately are left unexploited. It is much harder to affirm an interconnection of soma (body) and pneuma (spirit) once the materialistic reductionism embedded in modern science and medicine is embraced as the dominant explanatory paradigm for health and disease. We need not accept a simplistic causal account of righteousness and health, or sin and disease, to still observe that our very concepts of "wellness" and "illness," "health" and "disease" are laden with cultural and religious values. Masturbation continues to be a source of religious stigmatization in LDS culture, unlike some other faith communities, but during the last century, it was listed as a cause of death on many death certificates in the southern United States. We need, in short, to look more carefully and critically at our foundational concepts in health and medicine (and within the faith as a whole).

Bush's treatment of the Word of Wisdom, to which he devotes an extensive doctrinal genealogy, insightfully exemplifies this larger point. Bush contends that the historical context for the Word of Wisdom was consistent with the "conventional wisdom" then prevalent in medical culture about risky stimulants. Yet, this suggests the primary reason for compliance ("living the Word of Wisdom"), past or present, is self-interested (and discretionary) prudence. Having suggested this, however, it would then seem important to use the Word of Wisdom to explore the implications of Mormonism's somatic theology: We want to know why, if this is merely conventional wisdom, it should over time become a culturally distinguishing characteristic of the Latter-day Saints. What other values are embedded in LDS teaching that require the current ecclesiastical emphasis on the Word of Wisdom that Bush acknowledges (57)? The Mormon concept of "being well" simply cannot be wholly explained by a reductionistic model of modern organic science.

Bush's extraordinarily rich historical treatments of the themes of "healing" and "sexuality" also offer insight into the transformation of the Mormon faith as a whole. How is it, a reader should ask, that a nineteenth-century religious community with a scriptural mandate to use faith healing and herbalism in response to health crises can accommodate a supportive context for late twentieth-century experimental technology such as the artificial heart without compromise of its identity and integrity? The medicalization of Mormonism from natural to technological responses to illness parallels its homogenization into American cultural beliefs and patterns of living. More striking and disturbing, the historical evolution of

---

**The Word Bazaar**

**BOOKS**

**B.H. ROBERTS**

**A SCRAP BOOK I & II**

These two volumes are limited to 500 copies each and there are only 25 sets left, 528 pages respectively, with all materials previously uncollected. Only $100 per set plus $5 for shipping. Send your order today to: LYNN PULSIPHER, P.O. BOX 1607, PROVO, UT 84603-1607. AREA CONFERENCE REPORTS and select out-of-print books also available. Send your want list. Phone: 801/377-3046. Please leave a message. 097

Adam-God by Craig L. Tholson. Most complete treatment of the Adam-God doctrine to be published in this dispensation. Hardbound. Order from Publishment, P.O. Box 440507, Aurora, CO 80044-0507. $30, includes shipping. 098

The Coming of the Holy One of Israel, new from Craig Tholson. This shocking new revelation will rock the world of Mormonism and its traditional belief about the second coming of Jesus Christ. Never-before-published information. A MUST READ for all Latter-day Saints. Hardbound. Order from Publishment, P.O. Box 440507, Aurora, CO 80044-0507. $30, includes shipping. 099

**EASY-TO-READ BOOK OF MORMON**

Lynn Matthews Anderson's work can be purchased at Seagull Book & Tape or Benchmark Books. The Sunstone Foundation sells it for $10 at the office or $12.00 mail order. 099

**WOMEN'S PUBLICATIONS**

**EXPONENT II**

Exponent II, a volunteer organization, publishes a quarterly newspaper addressing women's issues in an LDS context. For 20 years, this personal essay format has provided a forum for women to exchange life experiences in an atmosphere of trust and acceptance. Past issues have discussed drug abuse, authority, the socialization of young women, and the Mormon male. Regular columns by Judy Dushku, Emma Lou Thayne, and Laurel Ulrich. Edited by Sue Paxman. For a subscription, please send a check for $15.00 ($4.00 per issue) to: Exponent II, P.O. Box 128, Arlington, MA 02178. 099

**NEWSPAPERS & MAGAZINES**

**THE BEEHIVE**

The Beehive newspaper has hundreds of LDS singles ads from singles in the Western United States. Pick up your FREE copy of the Beehive today, or call 800/200-4LDS. 094

The Beehive newspaper, the largest FREE LDS newspaper, is now available at over 300 locations in Utah. The Beehive is always looking for qualified salespeople and writers. (800/200-4LDS) 095

**STUDENT REVIEW**

BYU's unofficial student magazine is now in its eighth year! Examine the life and issues at BYU through essays written by students and faculty. Humorously, sometimes critically, but always sensitively. One-year subscriptions, $15. Student Review, P.O. Box 7082, Provo, UT 84602.

**JOURNAL OF MORMON HISTORY**

Keep up with the best, ground-breaking articles on Mormon history by getting the semi-annual Journal of Mormon History with your membership in the Mormon History Association. You'll also receive the association's quarterly newsletter. One-year memberships: regular, $15, student, $10. Mormon History Association, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602. 099

**OUT-OF-PRINT & RARE EDITIONS**

LDS BOOKS BOUGHT & SOLD

We pay top dollar for out-of-print, used, and rare LDS books. Thousands of LDS books (new & used) for sale. Out-of-print book search available. Call, write, or visit our shop. Open Mon.-Fri., 10-8, Sat., 10-4. BENCHMARK BOOKS, 331 RIO GRANDE, SUITE 300, P.O. BOX 9027, SALT LAKE CITY, UT 84109-0027, 801/352-3100 100

THE WORD BAZAAR AD RATES

$3.00 per line, minimum of 4 lines at $12.00. Headline type counts as two lines. Lines counted at seven words per line. Other heading titles are negotiable, such as magazine subscriptions, printing services, autographed letters, books wanted. Payment must accompany the ad—we do not bill. For more information call 801/355-5926.
healing within LDS culture displays what the German sociologist Max Weber referred to as the routinization of charisma. The charismatic gift of healing as a mark of the Restoration is gradually formalized in pattern and institutionalized through priesthood organization. This routinization results in a loss of function for such practices as healing baptisms, or consecration of any afflicted body part with oil (or consumption of consecrated oil), as well as the ecclesiastical displacement of the healing gifts of women. What guides the religion in its century-long transformation of healing, Bush seems to suggest, is a scientifically informed common sense pragmatism, itself the quintessential American philosophical ethos. Yet, pragmatism also implies there is little principled identity and integrity to permit a cohesive and pro-active, rather than re-active, transformation. And if the faith community is always and only positioned for re-action to science and new medical technology, then it will have lost the capability for prophetic critique. That critique should have been present, in my view, in the context of the artificial heart experiment of the 1980s, and an occasion for its expression looms in the 1990s as we enter into an era of invasive genetic manipulations.

The medicalization of Mormonism has been so encompassing, according to Bush, that “all . . . medical issues of concern to the church, save one, have been resolved” (106). That exception concerns sexual and reproductive medicine, which is “without parallel in the window it offers on the evolution of authoritative guidance within the LDS Church” (139). Thus, in this area, the focus moves away from “among” the Latter-day Saints and more toward ecclesiastical authority.

There is at best an ambivalent attitude about sexuality in LDS culture. On one hand, Bush observes, an open and affirming philosophy of sex is embedded in doctrines of a (non-sexual) Fall and reproductive sexuality through the eternities, as well as practices of plural marriage. At the same time, ecclesiastical stress on the sin of sex outside marital boundaries could not be more pronounced, nor, more importantly, enforced through excommunication or disfellowshipping sanctions. Moreover, it is difficult to separate sex from procreation within LDS culture in the absence of an articulated theological purposiveness to sex. Given these tensions, there are few things more futile than to speak to the “hot button” issues of contemporary medical ethics—abortion, contraception, genetics, reproductive technology. Bush’s probing analysis reveals how the convictions and practices of a religious community undergo adjustment and adaptation in the face of scientific knowledge and medical innovation. The challenge for the faith community is whether this adjustment can be carried off without compromising or abandoning fundamental values. The missing piece of Bush’s otherwise compelling analysis is that it does not enumerate what these fundamental values might be. The abortion question is a case in point, where scriptural evidence might be cited to support either a conservative or liberal position, and the point then at issue is what additional values are involved in the conservative position the ecclesiastical leadership has promulgated. It is one thing to identify the ecclesiastical stance of the LDS church, past and present, on abortion and another to determine and evaluate the normative values that support this position. I would identify four central values embedded in LDS medical ethics relating to the beginnings of mortal life: a procreative imperative; the sacrality of family; the necessity of embodiment; and the principle of moral (free) agency. Those values, it seems to me, ground neither an ethic of life’s absolute value nor an ethic of unrestricted choice, but rather a strong presumption in favor of birth as a soteriological rite of passage.

Bush is quite correct to observe in conclu-
sion that individual Latter-day Saints have not contributed an "influential body of reflective medical-ethical literature" (201). This simply confirms my initial claim that a meaningful "tradition" of ethical discourse on medicine is not present in the LDS faith community. There may be some understandable reasons for this, such as reliance on personal free agency and inspiration or conformity to the enunciations of ecclesiastical leaders. It may also be attributable to intellectual laziness. The eminent Yale professor of Christian history Jaroslav Pelikan was once asked to write a short book for his own community, entitled What Lutherans Are Thinking, to which he replied that a more appropriate title would be "What? Lutherans Are Thinking?!" The problem similarly for Latter-day Saints is not that we have the answers—Bush's narrative witnesses to the contrary—but that we may have stopped asking the questions. We have not taken seriously the eloquent words of Holocaust survivor and Nobel Peace laureate Elie Weisel that "true dialogue" occurs when "man questions God and God answers" and that our prayer should be to ask God to give us "the strength to ask Him the right questions" (Night, 2–3). We have instead become comfortable with a model of ecclesiastical direction that says, in effect, "Here's your answer; now what's the question?"

In calling for the creation of moral tradition within the LDS church, I do not mean vain repetition of the wisdom of the past, a practice that Jesus condemned. Rather, I have in mind a sense of tradition (see Alasdair Maclntyre, After Virtue, 206–07) as an ongoing argument about the goods and values constitutive of the identity and integrity of the faith community. That argument need not reflect the American tradition of adversarial challenge, but instead embody Mahatma Gandhi's idea of an argument as a collaborative quest for truth.

Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints has in fact made an immense and unprecedented contribution to that quest. The two-fold challenge with which Bush confronts Latter-day Saints is the identification of the normative ethical values embedded in LDS teaching and practice and the development of a rabbinic-like casuistry that tests and refines these values in concrete situations. The call for a moral tradition is a hope that the evangelical dynamism experienced by the contemporary LDS church will be mirrored by an intellectual dynamism and vitality that enables our personal and collective quests for truth.

**ANTI-MORMONISM FOR VOYEURS**

**SECRET CEREMONIES:**
**A MORMON WOMAN'S INTIMATE DIARY OF MARRIAGE AND BEYOND**

by Deborah Laake

William Morrow & Co., 1993

240 pages, $20.00

Reviewed by Massimo Introvigne

Deborah Laake has produced a best-selling book about her experiences in Mormonism, psychiatric disturbances, broken marriages, and miscellaneous sex affairs. All of the ingredients for a successful book are present. Apparently, the reading public is still eager to learn about "secret ceremonies" in the Mormon temples, the peculiarities of Mormon women's sex lives, and the psychiatric disturbances suffered by young Mormon women, all of which have been popularized in fiction and documentary format.

Laake's book covers her life as a BYU student who fell in love with her handsome Sunday School teacher, but is eventually rejected because of her lack of spirituality (an understatement, in view of subsequent developments). At BYU she searched desperately for a husband and found one diminutive and uninspiring Mormon called Monty, whom she did not love, but became convinced that God wanted her to marry him anyway. Laake claims that BYU assumed that Mormon girls are completely unfamiliar with sexuality and offered basic information through rather ridiculous courses and seminars held by bishops and local psychiatrists which included slides depicting male private parts. When she finally married Monty, Laake was "horrified" that he was "nothing like those slides" (97, emphasis in original). In the meantime, Laake was married and "endowed" in a Mormon temple through the endowment and temple wedding ceremonies, which she describes in some detail, including temple garments. She was disturbed but altogether unexcited about the ritual. She also mentions theories about Masonic borrowings in the endowment ceremony. Laake claims that she had some difficulty—after so many years—in reconstructing the temple ritual and had to request the help of some friends, and seems very proud to offer—for the first time, she implies—astonishing revelations. She apparently ignores that the endowment and wedding ceremonies have been the subject of countless exposes and that the full ceremony is still available from anti-Mormon ministries.

After the wedding, matrimonial life with Monty was a disaster, and Laake only found relief in masturbation, graphically described and theologically discussed (a bishop advised her that it was an excommunicable felony, while Laake's father—quoted by her as an authority in matters of Mormon doctrine—guaranteed her that it was not really serious). She even claims that masturbation was first suggested to her by a Mormon psychologist she regarded as a "man of God" (120). Finally, tired of mere masturbation, Laake left Monty, obtained a quick divorce, and retired to Florida where she had grown up and where she claims she had problems with her bishop who regarded her as a fallen woman because of her divorce. In Florida she
worked at a health spa, but felt uncomfortable because of her temple garments (an obsession for Laake throughout the whole book) and finally lost her job. Thereafter, she attended college again and married a Phoenix gentile. Always obsessed with what she describes as her Mormon education—impossible search for the perfect husband—she was not true to her new husband and started seeing an old Mormon boyfriend.

RECENTLY RELEASED

This section will include new titles from Mormon publishers; descriptions are usually taken from promotional materials. Submissions are welcome for future listings.

FICTION


A novel "which explores a lively and unlikely relationship and engages the hearts by what it says about special needs kids [and] their place in the Church."

Volume 4 picks up the story of the fictional Steed family in the summer of 1838, as the family reunites in Far West.

Simon's Touch. By Brenton Yorgason & Richard Myers, Bookcraft, $12.95.

A novel which mixes adventure and romance with conjecture about the second coming.

Patriarchs of Kingdom Come. By Lynn R. Eirionson, University Editions, $9.00.

A contemporary international novel which follows its main character, Mikhail Blazhenstvo, from his family to his "Son, University Editions, $9.00.

a contemporary international novel which follows its main character, Mikhail Blazhenstvo, from his family to his "Son, University Editions, $9.00.

CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Where Have All the Nephites Gone? By Pat Bagley, Deseret Book, $12.95.

A children's activity book and decoder, illustrating various aspects of Mormon life and culture.

CHRISTIAN LIVING


The story of "how one woman is ultimately able to escape the torment of an abusive stepfather, heal from its effects, and forgive her abuser."


"Nearly one hundred examples and stories that illustrate how to involve the Lord in raising up a family to him."

Peculiar People (paperback). Ed. by Ron Schow, Wayne Schow and Marybeth Raynes, Signature Books, $18.95.

Explores the issue of same-sex orientation, including personal essays by gay and lesbian Mormons, their families and friends, theological and scientific developments, and national survey information. Disaster strikes again, and she ends up both in a psychiatric clinic and in an unpleasant confrontation with her local Mormon authorities. The unavoidable result was another divorce, a lapse from the faith, and a move to Salt Lake City where she lived for a short time with a liberal Mormon architect she calls Adam in the book and worked for "a small city magazine known for its willingness to treat Utah's sacred cows, including the church, with near objectivity" (190) (which one easily recognizes as the now defunct Utah Holiday). In Utah, she entered the world of the Mormon liberals, Jack Mormons, and lapsed Mormons, but crisis strikes again when she asks Adam "to marry her."

"My God, my God, I'm just not sure," Adam replied (206), and Laake—a new attempt at college at Northwestern University—landed again, this time for real, in a private psychiatric hospital, where she realized that her situation may be more serious than she had thought. When she finally left the hospital, she tried marriage once again and tied the knot with a "charming lawyer" (227) in her first really "secular" marriage, which is not about Mormonism or anti-Mormonism. Notwithstanding its secularity, their marriage also failed, and Laake decided never to marry again. She settled down in Phoenix writing for a Phoenix weekly, New Times, where she still works today. Religiously she is not only anti-Mormon, but has been "trained to detect the hollow moan of dogma wherever it arises, which is nearly everywhere. When I'm up against a wall and someone or something is telling me there's only one solution, I know the message is wrong... I can feel the lie" (240).

If the book has a theme (other than confession), it is the impossible expectation that the Mormon doctrine of marriage creates in young girls, dooming them to failure because no perfect husband can match the heavenly one. She seems to fall victim to anti-cult stereotypes when she calls Mormonism a "metaphysical sect" (13), emphasizing the most bizarre elements and ignoring the core points of Mormon doctrine and everyday life. Her emphasis on the world of spirits in Mormonism seems peculiar to Laake and would not be recognized as an acceptable reconstruction of Mormon spirituality by serious Mormons. Laake insists that an "extraordinary number of [Joseph] Smith's revelations concern spiritualism. When he died... he left behind the doctrine that every member of his church was surrounded by fabulous ghosts—the glorious dead, the wistful unborn, the searching and the monstrous—as well as an understanding that every man and woman was entitled to hear from ghosts, and
from God, as routinely as in later years modern Mormons would pick up the phone. . .

Since babyhood, when my parents had first begun passing Smith's wisdom on to me, I'd been instructed in how to discern difference between a messenger from God and one from the devil, whenever spirits appeared to me." (34). Although stories of spirits are certainly common in Mormon folklore, few present-day Mormons would recognize daily appearances of spirits and the feeling of being surrounded by "fabulous ghosts" as the core of their religious experience. Laake is not proficient in Mormon history, either. She places the first vision in 1823, confuses it with the visitation of Moroni, and (as usual) assumes God always appears surrounded by a "cavalcade of spirits" (33). She could perhaps be forgiven, since she admits she spent most of her time in Sunday School fantasizing about romantic relations with her teachers.

Although Laake could have written an interesting book about the female condition in present-day Mormonism—a topic emphasized in recent feminist Mormon literature—she chose instead to underline the most sensational aspects of her story and produced what can only be termed an anti-Mormon book. In fact, students of the anti-Mormon literature easily recognize all the ingredients of a garden variety expose. Although psychiatry replaces polygamy, the "secret ceremonies" and sexually graphic descriptions of Mormon life have been the common ingredients of anti-Mormon literature since the nineteenth century. Craig Foster has recently noted that a mild pornographic element was often included in this type of literature. The comments on the relationship between temple garments and lovemaking—couched in pop Freudian terms—are also not entirely new, having already appeared in Peter Bart's anti-Mormon novel Thy Kingdom Come (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981). Some passages about how young girls at BYU were taught about sexuality are admittedly humorous, but it is a cheap shot to single out Mormonism for this kind of morality since many Christian churches were advancing similar conservative mores in the United States and elsewhere in the 1960s and early 1970s. Laake seems prone to fall victim to a common Mormon mistake that Mormonism is unique also in details—such as strict sexual morality—which are in fact common among the majority of mainline churches, except the very liberal ones.

Summing up, the book, as it is, will not significantly advance an understanding of Mormonism by non-Mormon readers and could even distort their perception. This apparently happened to one Bob Shacochis, quoted as a famous author in the dust jacket (although I admit that I have never heard his name before), who assures the reader that "Ultimately, Secret Ceremonies will be read as a fascinating metaphor for the cultural divide in America, and Deborah Laake will be hailed as a clear-eyed survivor from the wildest, God-craziest, most far right side of the tracks." Of course, read this way, Secret Ceremonies will just serve the typical function of anti-Mormon books. This is why I would not recommend this book to serious students of Mormonism or even to lay readers with an interest in what Mormon life is really about. Readers who like to read about sexual lives of psychotic women and female masturbation would probably prefer stronger literature. Even those interested in books connecting secret ceremonies, magic, spirits, and sex will find more satisfaction in books on sex magic like those of Aleister Crowley, which are still in print and readily available at any occult bookstore. Crowley surely knew how to mix sex and "secret ceremonies" better than Laake. He was also, without doubt, a more reliable expert on "metaphysical sex." 

NOTE
NEWS

DISCIPLINARY ACTIONS GENERATE MORE HEAT

THE RESPONSE to the publicity about the disciplining of six Mormon authors last September ("Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," SUNSTONE 16:6) slowed down during late October and November, but two of the events prompted by the communications may herald a new Mormon tradition.

On 2 November, the First Presidency sent to all Church leaders a letter reproducing the "Statement Regarding Disciplinary Councils" that was issued by the joint Council of the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles (see previous SUNSTONE for entire text). Among other things, the statement defended the responsibility of general and local leaders to preserve the Church's doctrinal purity. Interestingly, the letter was signed only by the two counselors, Presidents Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson, and not by Church President Ezra Taft Benson.

Speaking about the statement, Paul Toscano, who was excommunicated for apostasy in September, told the Associated Press, "It is essentially disinformation . . . to put out a statement to say 'we have a policy,' when in fact the policy of spoken rules is undermined by a whole cluster of unspoken rules . . . . Once a [member] is targeted as a dissenter or critic and leaders are fed up with the criticism, the rule is 'do whatever you have to do to silence the person.' . . . Any stated policies are just subterfuge."

Two public meetings were organized in response to September's events. Inspired by the deeply moving and spiritual prayer meeting on the eve of Lavina Fielding Anderson's excommunication, and feeling that it needed to be reproduced on a regular basis, Louise Degn rented the reconstructed Social Hall at Pioneer Trail State Park for a noon "Sunday Gathering" that was attended by around 200 people. The event featured vigorous singing of Mormon hymns led by Ardean Watts, sharing of spiritual journeys by Kent Frogley and Marybeth Raynes, a time of open sharing similar to Mormon testimony meetings, and a closing blessing by Martha Bradley.

Degn told the gathering that the event was not "against" anything, including the Church; it was a time to celebrate the common spiritual heritage of Mormons. She welcomed those who feel uncomfortable at regular LDS meetings, but have the spiritual need to worship with other like-minded Saints. At present, Degn plans to hold the Sunday Gathering quarterly; the next one is scheduled for 13 February 1994.

The second meeting was sponsored by the Olive Branch, an ad hoc group organized by J. D. Williams that solicited donors and signers for a statement that ran in the Salt Lake Tribune on Sunday, 13 November, calling for reconciliation and announcing a one-time meeting the following Sunday night, 5 December (see ad at right).

That meeting also featured vigorous singing led by Ardean Watts. Each of four speakers gave powerful sermons on one aspect of 2 Timothy 1:7: "For God hath not given us the Spirit of fear, but of power and love, and of a sound mind." Fred Voros preached on fear, Martha Pierce on power, Vicky Stewart on the concept of a sound mind, and Paul Toscano on love.

Williams told the group of 250 gathered at the University of Utah Fine Arts Auditorium that the idea for the Olive Branch came to him when he ran across a 1979 full-page newspaper ad apparently intended for Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, who had also been excommunicated for apostasy in September, was received by a baby sitter at the Bountiful home of Michael D. Quinn, who is not related to the historian. A man told her to give Quinn this message: "I'm tired of hearing him criticize the Church. He'd better start keeping things to himself. If he doesn't, I have his phone number and I know where he lives. I'll come get him. He stinks." Then he hung up.

The non-historian Quinn changed his telephone number and went public with the threat to let the caller know that he had
the wrong Michael Quinn.

Commenting on the episode, Quinn, the historian, told the Tribune, "Threatening phone calls are a new low in the current atmosphere of repression in the LDS church. I hold Apostle [Dallin H.] Oaks personally responsible for inciting such sick-minded Mormons. Apostle Oaks publicly stated that feminists and scholars excommunicated in September were actually wolves. Utah sheepherders kill wolves rather than allow them to wander around and kill sheep. Elder Oaks has increased the paranoia of Mormons toward differences of opinion and dissent. I refuse to remain quiet while ... Oaks and [Apostle] Boyd K. Packer demonize anyone they don't agree with. It would have been more Christian of Apostle Oaks to describe excommunicated persons as 'lost sheep.' That might have avoided giving encouragement to the self-appointed vigilantes in the Mormon community."

In SUNSTONE's news section, both Arizona Republic cartoonist Steve Benson's statements were reported about a conversation he had had with Elder Oaks on Oaks' initial reply. One such statement was Elder Oaks speaking about Elder Packer, "You can't stage manage a grizzly bear," adding that "it was a mistake for Packer to meet with Heinz and a mistake for Heinz to ask for the meeting."

In the same news section, some readers have interpreted imprecise passages in the SUNSTONE report to indicate that SUNSTONE believes Benson is a promise-breaker. SUNSTONE makes no such determination and apologizes for causing anyone to erroneously arrive at that conclusion.

In a highly unusual decision to publicly debate issues, Elder Oaks replied yet again to Benson in an op-ed piece in the Salt Lake Tribune. Benson then responded again to Elder Oaks. The texts of the two responses follow. Benson's is slightly expanded from his newspaper version.

OAKS: 'I'VE BEEN VICTIM OF DOUBLE-DECKER DECEIT'

Dallin H. Oaks
FOR THE SALT LAKE TRIBUNE

ON OCTOBER 12, 16, and 17. The Salt Lake Tribune gave prominent and extensive coverage to wire-service stories on cartoonist Steve Benson's charges that I "lied" to an Arizona Republic reporter in an interview on current controversies over church discipline. I have no desire to prolong this controversy, but feel it necessary to set the record straight on some important matters omitted or obscured in this attack upon my integrity.

My dictionary defines lying as being "deliberately untruthful" and a "lie" as a "false statement made with deliberate intent to deceive." I did not "lie" to the reporter and, contrary to the wire-service story printed in the October 16 Tribune, I did not "admit" to "falsely telling" the reporter something that was untrue.

I withdrew one sentence I had spoken in a long interview, and I did so three days before the article was published because I realized, when I saw the written transcript, that this single sentence was not "truthful" (meaning "accurate" or "correct"). When a newspaper publishes something that it later realizes to be incorrect, does it apologize to its readers for "lying" or does it just print a correction? My statement to the reporter was corrected before it was published.

The sequence and timing of various events is important.

On Sept. 9, Elder Neal A. Maxwell and I met with Steve and Mary Ann Benson for about two and one-half hours to discuss their questions. Because he was a newspaperman, we sought and he gave solemn assurances that our discussions would be confidential. We continue to honor that confidence.

On Sept. 10, Steve Benson wrote us a letter expressing gratitude for "being able to talk freely in an atmosphere of trust," reaffirming his commitment to "honor completely the confidentiality of our conversation, in not speaking, or even alluding to, for the record anything said by either of you," and asking for another meeting to deal with "some follow-up questions."

On Sept. 24, we met again with Steven Benson for about an hour and a half.

On Oct. 1, a reporter for the Arizona Republic interviewed me for about an hour on a wide variety of subjects pertaining to current controversies over church discipline. Though Steve Benson works for this paper, he did not arrange this interview and was not included in it.

At about 4:30 p.m. on Oct. 6, I received a "personal and confidential" letter from Steve Benson. Relying on his personal notes of our confidential conversations, he charged that I had "lied in public" in my interview with the reporter and stated that unless I "publicly set the record straight" by calling the reporter within 24 hours, he would do so himself.

I immediately studied the lengthy transcript of the Oct. 1 interview (16 pages single-spaced), received the previous day. I was distressed to find one statement to the reporter I could see was not accurate ("I have no knowledge of whether he did"). I am sure I did not speak that sentence with the intent to deceive, but whether it was an inadvertence or a result of forgetfulness in the context of a long and far-reaching interview, I cannot be sure. But the important thing was that I could recognize that this sentence was not correct. (Three other statements challenged by Steve Benson required no correction.)

That same evening (Oct. 1) I reached the reporter, advised him of the circumstances, and asked to withdraw the single sentence. He agreed.

On Oct. 7, I received another "personal and confidential" letter from Steve Benson thanking me for calling the reporter to clarify my earlier statements. His letter did not even hint that he thought further clarifications were necessary.

The Arizona Republic article appeared on Oct. 10. It made no mention of the sentence I had withdrawn. There was also a separate story about Steven Benson and his wife seeking to have their names removed from the records of the Church.

On Oct. 11, Steven Benson sent a copy of his "personal and confidential" letters of Oct. 6 and 7 to the Associated Press in Salt
Lake City. He also gave TV and radio interviews on this subject. In summary, when I found that I could not defend the correctness of one brief sentence in a long interview, I immediately contacted the reporter and withdrew that sentence, doing so more than three days before the story was scheduled for publication. When the publication honored that correction and made no comment on it, Steve Benson accused me of lying in public and participating in a cover-up, and the wire-service coverage of this episode has inaccurately portrayed me as deliberately making false statements to the public.

My perception of this matter is simple. I have been the victim of double-decker deceit: 1, betrayal of promises of confidentiality, and 2, false accusations of lying.

My heart goes out to all who have suffered from this painful sequence of events.

OAKS DISEMBLED PACKER'S ROLE IN TOSCANO EXCOMMUNICATION

Steve Benson

MORMONS ARE admonished to be honest. Unfortunately, Apostle Dallin H. Oaks has been less than candid concerning Elder Boyd K. Packer's involvement in the excommunication of Paul Toscano.

On 9 September, Mary Ann and I met with Elder Oaks and Elder Neal A. Maxwell. In a 10 September letter, I promised that I would not speak on-the-record about our conversation. Contrary to Elder Oaks's instigation, I have kept that pledge.

On 24 September, I met with Elders Oaks and Maxwell, and confidentially discussed the Toscano excommunication. Confidentiality agreements are valid only when the parties involved remain truthful, both publicly and privately. Elder Oaks broke that ground rule when he publicly dissembled Elder Packer's role in the Toscano affair, thereby releasing me from any obligation of silence in the cover-up. (All else discussed on that date has remained off-the-record, as promised.)

On 1 October, Elder Oaks gave a carefully worded, tape-recorded interview to the Arizona Republic, where he was asked if Elder Packer was "involved in any way" in the disciplining of Paul Toscano.

Elder Oaks now admits one of his answers to the reporter was untrue and indefensible, but blaming it on "inadvertence" or "forgetfulness." He insists that other questionable statements he made "required no correction."

Elder Oaks's position is simply not persuasive. Several of his on-the-record answers are quoted below and, when paired with contrary facts he offered in our 24 September meeting (during which I took notes), they point to a deliberate pattern of deception.

Elder Oaks: "... if Elder Packer is having any conversation with Kerry Heinz [Toscano's stake president], it is outside the normal channel."

By framing the Packer-Heinz conversation hypothetically, Elder Oaks falsely implied personal ignorance of whether the two had met. He furthered the deception by leaving it on the record. In truth, Elder Oaks told me they had met, saying President Heinz "called and asked for a meeting with Elder Packer. Elder Oaks: "I have no knowledge of whether he [Elder Packer] did [talk with President Heinz]."

To the contrary, Elder Oaks knew the discussion took place. When, and only when, he was warned on 6 October that this falsehood would be exposed if he did not correct the record, did he call the reporter and retract it. (Elder Oaks may want to explain the contradiction between his private claim of being surprised by the Packer-Heinz meeting and Elder Packer's public claim that the Twelve gave prior approval for that meeting.)

Elder Oaks also told me he later spoke with Elder Packer, advising him that his meeting with President Heinz violated disciplinary procedure and that Elder Packer had no authority or responsibility in this area. He said he strongly urged Elder Packer to avoid such contact in the future and admitted he expected Toscano "to sue the Church." (This also contradicts Elder Packer's claim of prior approval.)

Summarizing, Elder Oaks told the reporter, "So, that's all I know about that at this point."

As one can see, he knew more, but denied it on-the-record.

Upon hearing the Oaks interview, I was dismayed by his deceptions and the fact that he had not come forward on his own to correct them. I faxed him a letter on 6 October, detailing what he told me on 24 September compared against what he told the reporter on 1 October.

I was pleased when, on the evening of 6 October, the reporter told me Elder Oaks had called to retract. At the same time, however, I was disappointed to hear that Elder Oaks had accused me of exorting information from him and suspected me of using our private meeting as a ruse to gather material for a newspaper story. (Several days later I learned that he had also improperly divulged to the reporter, for-the-record on 6 October, the nature of the private conversations between Elders Oaks, Maxwell, and myself, making this another breach of confidentiality on his part.)

On 7 October, I faxed Elder Oaks a second letter, primarily to remind him that if I had had ulterior motives, he would not have been afforded an opportunity to clarify the discrepancies between his private and public statements. I thanked him for availing himself of that opportunity. That "thank you" proved premature, however, because at the time I wrote it I had not been fully informed that Elder Oaks had chosen to leave his other false statements on the record.

Elder Oaks's decision to deceive became clear a few days later. On 10 October, an article appeared in the Arizona Republic containing some of his other falsehoods, specifically his claim that "if Elder Packer is having any conversation with President Heinz, it is contrary to what I know about Elder Packer and how he operates."

By this point, it had become readily apparent to me that Elder Oaks would not fully set the record straight, even when given ample opportunity to do so. On 11 October, I went public because I could not allow Elder Oaks's deceptions to go unchallenged or the abuse of ecclesiastical power by him and Elder Packer to go unchecked.

On 15 October, I faxed Elder Oaks another letter explaining why I felt his failure to publicly speak the truth necessitated that I openly address the Packer-Heinz-Toscano affair; otherwise, I told him, my silence "would have served only to perpetuate falsehood and false faith."

While Elder Oaks portrays himself as an innocent victim in this regrettable affair, he has (1) admitted privately the facts concerning the Packer-Heinz-Toscano case, (2) falsified publicly about those facts, (3) retracted one of his untrue statements under threat of exposure, and (4) refused to disclaim other statements of his that are demonstrably untrue.

This dispute has been an unnecessarily painful one. It could have been avoided if Elder Oaks had originally offered a "no comment" when asked what he knew or, better yet, told the truth. Instead, his disposition seemed, with regard to Elder Packer, to want to "cover our sins, or to gratify our pride, our vain ambition, or to exercise control or dominion or compulsion upon the souls of the children of men" (Doctrine & Covenants 121:37).

One would hope that, in the spirit of love and reconciliation, Church leaders will reach out to those who have been harmed by this inappropriate exercise of priesthood power.
MISSIONARIES EXPECTED TO MEET HIGHER CRITERIA

MOST ACTIVE LDS boys expect and are expected to be called on missions; it's something they have heard, sung, and talked about since they entered Primary. Though young women serve missions, they do so in much smaller numbers, and the pressures on them to serve have never been as great as have those on young men. It has been almost automatic that if a young man expressed any interest in serving a mission, he would be called. This may no longer be the case, however. In March 1993, a policy statement was sent to priesthood leaders codifying strict behavioral standards for missionary candidates. The new standards disqualify any young person who has had a child out of wedlock, has been divorced, or has encouraged, paid for, or had an abortion. Candidates must "be free of transgression for sufficient time" to show true repentance. For heterosexuals, the wait could be as long as three years "for multiple serious transgressions, and not less than a year for the most recent transgression."

The statement discusses several distinctions regarding homosexual acts. A person who experimented or was victimized as a child and has "no current indication of homosexual tendencies" may be considered. However, if the candidate participated in homosexual acts from age seventeen, there must be "strong evidence of complete repentance and reformation, with at least one year free of transgression." Those who test positive for HIV are also barred. The document stresses that candidates who have had "significant emotional challenges" must be stable and "not totally dependent on medication." Any exceptions to these guidelines must be submitted to the First Presidency for approval. Many mission presidents applaud the clarification these guidelines offer, saying too much of their time goes to problem missionaries. Salt Lake bishop Ray Haeckel says unpunished, unprepared missionaries are "detrimental to the work, [and] they hold other missionaries back."

ALTERNATE VOICES ADD VARIETY

SEVERAL PUBLICATIONS have been created to fill the needs of a fast-growing and increasingly diverse church. Mormon Review, based in Sherman Oaks, California, with Gideon Burton as general editor, is dedicated to "fostering[ing] better Mormon productions and better appreciation of LDS and non-LDS arts and entertainment generally." The Beehive Newspaper, in production since 1975, "is now the largest FREE LDS publication in print." Recently entering the Utah market, the Beehive provides local LDS news and features, family events, activities, and events calendars. For subscriptions ($9 a year, $16 for two years), write to the Beehive Press, 1916 S. Maryland Parkway, Las Vegas, NV 89104-3106. In Japan, Mormon Forum is an 82-page bi-annual magazine in Japanese that editor Jiro Numano, a Tokuyama University professor, says is patterned after SUNSTONE and Dialogue. Comprised of letters to the editor, poetry, interviews, book reviews, and news articles, Mormon Forum is produced entirely by Japanese scholars and enjoys a good relationship with Church leaders in Japan. Two-year subscriptions are $25 through 1441-4 Kamitokimune, Kudamatsu Shi, Yamaguchi Ken 744, Japan. A European magazine, Betrachtungen (Reflections), was organized in January by a group of German Mormons to "deal with the culture and intellectual world of Mormonism and the Latter-day Saints in Europe." To subscribe ($15 a year) or receive a free trial issue, write to Hartmut Weissmann, 64 rue Albert Joly, 78000 Versailles, France.

The Latter-day Digest, which usually carries fiction, articles, poetry, and art, is the first publishing project of the Latter-day Foundation for the Arts and was created to fill a "hole in the marketplace for any kind of short subjects." The Foundation also publishes Cameo, a companion magazine, "as a voice for mainstream LDS women." Those interested in Cameo or the Latter-day Digest should call or fax 801/221-0893, or write to P.O. Box 1510, Orem, UT 84059.

GEORGE P. LEE INDICTED

FORMER FIRST QUORUM of the Seventy member George P. Lee was charged in early August with the 1989 sexual abuse of a twelve-year-old girl. The official charge filed against Lee, the first Native American appointed to be a general authority, was first-degree felony child sex abuse. Lee surrendered to authorities in Salt Lake City and was released, but ordered to have no contact with anyone under eighteen. He appeared in 3rd Circuit Court on 7 September, where he asked for more time before a preliminary hearing. Court documents allege that Lee fondled the girl's breasts, buttocks, and genitals after "talking about polygamy" to her in his West Jordan home, and that other abuses occurred during out-of-state trips for LDS meetings, where Lee's daughter was accompanied by the twelve-year-old (now sixteen) who made the allegations. Lee claimed to be "innocent before God," according to a Salt Lake Tribune story, and said that "... those who are doing this to me and my Indian people... will be punished by God." Friends of Lee contend the allegations are part of an LDS church plot to discredit Lee, who, in 1989, became the first general authority excommunicated since 1943. A Church spokesman says the current charges against Lee were not known at the time of his excommunication. Lee accused Church leaders of forsaking their callings for material gain. "Navajo Mormons do not trust the Church any more, especially when they were told that the day of the Lamanite is past... and they are labeled as a poor investment by the Church's leadership," he said in the Navajo Times.

The day after charges were filed in Salt Lake City, Lee was dismissed from his position as a high school principal by the Tuba City Unified School District for "cause." After Lee's attorney, David Sanders, informed district officials that a criminal allegation cannot be used for such a dismissal, officials brought up two minor instances of insubordination. Lee claimed, at the time of his excommunication, that Church officials had accused him of "immorality" and polygamy, and that when neither charge stuck they leveled the charge of apostasy. A trial date will be set 3 January in 3rd District Court. If convicted, Lee may be sentenced to life in prison because he "occupied a position of special trust to the victim" as a church leader.

MACHINE SIGNED CORPORATION OF THE PRESIDENT TO COUNSELORS IN 1989

ACCORDING TO a 15 August article in the Salt Lake Tribune, documents filed with the state of Utah in 1989 show that control of the Corporation of the President of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints was signed over to counselors Gordon B. Hinckley and Thomas S. Monson in May of 1989, six months prior to President Ezra Taft Benson's last general conference address. This action marks the first time anyone but the Church president has held complete authority over the Church's assets since Heber J. Grant created the corporation in 1923. While other members of the first presidency have, in the past, held limited delegations of authority
from the president, the 1989 documents give Hinckley and Monson full decision-making authority for the Church. "This is a wise practice which provides contingency coverage when the president is traveling or when advanced age or failing health make it impossible for the president to carry out" his duties, said Church spokesman Don LeFevre.

Church leaders also released a statement asserting that the use of a signature machine is routine and is done with President Benson's approval. LeFevre said the same type of machine is used to affix Benson's signature to missionary calls. Cartoonist Steve Benson, grandson of the Church president, who has stated publicly that President Benson's mental and physical capabilities do not allow him to function as Church leader, said that the signature machine is also used on family correspondence. "Evidently," Steve said, "the signature machine had not been programmed to sign, 'Grandpa.'"

U.S. OPINIONS OF LDS UNFAVORABLE

A RECENT POLL taken for the American Muslim Council shortly after the bombing of New York's World Trade Center showed that Americans rated Mormons just slightly higher than Muslims, according to the Salt Lake Tribune. Muslims were ranked at the bottom of eight faiths, with only 23 percent reporting a favorable impression, 36 percent unfavorable; Hindus received 23 percent favorable, 31 percent unfavorable. Thirty-five percent of the respondents had a favorable impression of Mormons with 33 percent unfavorable, ranking below Fundamentalist Christians with 39 percent favorable. Respondents showed Roman Catholics drew the most favorable response (67 percent), followed by Presbyterians (65 percent), Lutherans (60 percent), and Jews (52 percent). Don LeFevre, LDS spokesperson, said that the Church has found similar results in polls it has done in the past. "Where we're better known, we've had a more favorable impression," he said. Also, responses were better when the Church's formal name was used.

KNOWLTON AND FARR TO LEAVE BYU; STUDENTS RALLY IN PROTEST

CECILIA KONCHAR FARR and David Knowlton will leave Brigham Young University when their contracts expire in August 1994. While Farr decided to drop her appeal in favor of a settlement with the university (neither Farr nor BYU would say if the settlement included financial compensation), the decision to terminate Knowlton's contract was upheld. In June 1993 BYU's faculty council on rank and status recommended the denial of "continuing status" to Knowlton, Farr, and three other faculty members (see SUNSTONE16:5). Both Farr and Knowlton appealed to the Academic Vice President's Council, which upheld the faculty council's decisions. On 30 November, BYU released a statement explaining that president Rex Lee and provost Bruce Hafen had upheld the decision of the AVPC in Knowlton's case. "I've been seriously wronged," said Knowlton in an interview with BYU's Daily Universe. "BYU's own procedure... and my academic freedom [have] been violated." Knowlton will pursue not only legal action, but sanctions against the university by national professional academic associations. Some 250 BYU students met on 1 December to protest the decisions. Cecilia Konchar Farr spoke at the rally, happy to finally break her vow of silence. "All of us must be free to question, to grow, to establish and to exercise our moral integrity..." she said. "Otherwise we are not Mormons." When some questioned the integrity of her settlement with BYU, she responded: "Right now it has become too difficult for a Mormon to be a feminist at BYU. I have spent all my time trying to convince people that I actually have a temple recommend, that I actually believe in God... I can't spend my time doing that and actually accomplish other goals." BYU spokesperson Margaret Smoot told the Daily Universe that "feminism is not the whole reason why Cecilia now finds herself where she is." After negotiations with Farr and her attorney, BYU backed away from its contention that her teaching and scholarship did not meet university requirements. Farr and the university released a joint statement explaining the nature of their agreement. It concludes, "Professor Farr and BYU agree amicably but irreconcilably over what constitutes the citizenship requirement of a BYU faculty member." Farr told the Salt Lake Tribune that to BYU, citizenship means "they don't like feminist scholars." BYU president Rex Lee crossed paths with the hymn-singing demonstrators as they moved across the campus, and when asked for a comment replied, "Academic freedom is alive and well at BYU and always has been." He also said that there was an expectation that people will not use the resources provided by the Church to harm the Church." Lee's decision, according to spokesperson Margaret Smoot, was his alone, and was not, as some contested, dictated by the Board of Trustees. The 30 November press statement concluded: "The appeals have been complex, intensive and challenging... [The Academic Vice President's Council] has reflected the university's belief in the principle of faculty governance."

A 1991 SURVEY of approximately 1,400 randomly selected women living along Utah's Wasatch Front indicates that LDS women report levels of satisfaction similar to non-LDS women in several areas of their life. LDS women were more likely to express satisfaction with the city where they live than with any other area considered, and they are much more satisfied with place of residence than are non-LDS women. The LDS women are a little more likely than other women to express satisfaction with work, but are a little less satisfied with finances. "Finances" elicited the greatest number of dissatisfied responses.
THE BOMB OF GILEAD?

THE FOLLOWING appeared in Inside Radio, Thursday, 15 July 1993:

WABC, New York- After all, if your station carried both Rush Limbaugh and Bob Grant, wouldn’t you be worried about loonies sending heaven-knows-what through the mail? New York’s finest summoned to the mailroom Tuesday morning. Somebody heard a beeping or ticking noise coming from a pouch. Played it safe and called the cops. Actual contents of the package: the latest PSA package from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (the Mormons). Seems the press kit contained a chip designed to emit an attention-getting signal. It worked. A little early.

The upshot: Word is WABC is planning to air the PSAs.

FIRST NAME BASIS

THE FOLLOWING appeared in the Rolly & Wells column in the Salt Lake Tribune, Friday, August 13:

President Clinton seems sensitive about political correctness. But maybe his staff should take a crash course in Utah etiquette.

After Clinton was elected, the First Presidency of the LDS church sent him a congratulatory letter.

He sent a return note of appreciation. It began, “Dear Ezra, Gordon and Tom…”

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS will hold its 1994 Symposium on 22 January 1994, at Westminster College, Salt Lake City. Contact: AML, 1346 South 1800 East, Salt Lake City, UT 84108, or call Linda Brummitt (801/378-6001).

THE MORMON HISTORY ASSOCIATION will hold its annual meeting 19–22 May 1994, at the Olympia Hotel in Park City, UT. Contact: MHA, P.O. Box 7010, University Station, Provo, UT 84602.

THE WILLIAM G. AND WINIFRED E. REESE MEMORIAL AWARD of $500 will be given to the person completing or publishing the best doctoral dissertation or master’s thesis in the field of Mormon history. Send manuscripts by 1 February 1994, to the Joseph Fielding Smith Institute for Church History, 127 KMB, Brigham Young University, Provo, UT, 84602. The award will be presented at the May 1994 meeting of the Mormon History Association in Park City, UT.

SUNSTONE CONFERENCES

SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM WEST will be held 11–12 March 1994 at the Burbank Airport Hilton.

WASHINGTON, D.C., SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held 18–19 March 1994, at the American University Campus. Send proposals for papers or panels to Kathy Okerlund, 1832 Biltmore St. N.W. #2, Washington, D.C. 20009 (202/797-9113).

1994 SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM will be held 17–20 August 1994, at the Salt Lake Hilton Hotel.

OXYMORMONS

THERE’S EVIDENCE GOD DOESN’T APPROVE OF THE CHURCH’S HANDLING OF ITS DISSIDENTS

BUNK!

I DON’T KNOW—IT’S PRETTY CONVINCING... IT WAS JUST HERE A SECOND AGO...

POPPY-COCK

WHY HAST THOU FORSAKEN US?

SUNSTONE NEEDS VOLUNTEERS TO:

STUFF AND STAMP, CHECK ZIP CODES UPDATE ADDRESSES, TYPE AND FILE DURING BUSINESS HOURS FREE SYMPOSIUM TAPE/BACK ISSUE PER DONATED HOUR

CONTACT CAROL—801/355-5926
1993 CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

AUDIO CASSETTE ORDER FORM

$8.50 each, includes tax & shipping

01 Panel: Intellectual Freedom in Academics
Miles Kimball (chair). Discusses how academic freedom is in danger at Church institutions, how events at these institutions impact intellectual freedom in the Church.

02 Understanding Battles of Mormonism
by Marie Cornwall, Ph.D. Social, scientific, and feminist viewpoints explaining current problems within Mormonism.

03 Mormonism & Feminism
by Martha Bradley, Ph.D.

04 Building a Shared Vision of Zion
by Bruce Rognan, MBA. A conceptual model in organizational design theory is used to identify steps necessary to lead Zion to a Christ-based model.

05 Beyond the Only True Church
by Keith Norman, Ph.D. Suggests opening a perspective beyond the dogma of the Only True Church, losing self-absorbed testimonies in favor of a universal soul.

06 Beyond Terrorism
by Lee Flosi, J.D. Discusses terrorist and organized crime activities & provides insight into the unifying of international organized crime rings and terrorist organizations.

07 Panel: RLDS Women & Priesthood
William Russell, J.D. (chair). Panelists include, two female ordained priesthood bearers of the RLDS church & a feminist theologian.

08 Learn to Cope: Intellectuals in Mormonism
by Karl Sandberg, Ph.D. The role of the intellect, within Mormonism, has had significance in the Mormon experience, and recent events show the need to rethink the role of thinkers and seekers in relationship to the Church.

09 Mercy Seat in LDS Theology & Practice?
by Stanley Kimball, Ph.D. Looks at how Mormonism treats sorrow, and if the wounded-heart member can seek the Mercy Seat for comfort without judgement.

Mormons & the Overland Contemporaries
by Violet Kimball. Reveals how Mormons were seen by “westerizing” Americans, and suggests four reasons why Gentiles learned Mormons.

10 Apostasy: Who Are Bad Guys, Really?
by Allen Roberts. Compares present day “apostates” to former known apostates, such as Jesus, Luther, and William, and discusses similarities in apostasy.

11 Panel: What Do LDS Women Really Want?
Becky Linford, Ph.D. candidate (chair). Discussion on Mormon Feminism, its definition, and women's status in the Church.

12 Readings from "Revelations"
by Neal Chandler

13 Change, Change, & More Change
by Jan Shipps, Ph.D. Explores changes in past Mormonism, as a religious & ethnic identity, to a present-conservative Christian community.

14 Sex and the Single (Latter-day) Saint
by Fulk Gibson, Ph.D. Addresses these issues: purpose of sexuality, misconceptions from the biologically defined model, masturbation, and managing one's sexuality.

15 Book of Mormon/Feminist Resource: Part I
by Lynn Anderson. Discusses the negative and exclusionary treatment of women in the Book of Mormon and proposes the need for modern revelation of women's role in the present LDS church.

16 Sutured Families: An Open Discussion
by Rebecca Chandler, M.Ed. Examines how the contemporary family’s experience differs from traditional LDS families.

17 A Mormon Theology of Diversity
by Eugene England, Ph.D. Examines the “all are alike unto him” concept, as it relates to the world and within Mormonism, and if Mormons can find resolution in an age where the world is seeking an end to discriminations.

18 Priesthood Ordination of LDS Women
by M. Scott Fisher, Ed.D. Suggests the time is here for LDS women to receive priesthood ordination and notes the benefits of such a reality.

19 Interested Marxist in Mormonism
by Bill Martin, Ph.D. Discusses qualities of Mormonism that Marx & Engels missed out on: creation of comprehensive culture and creation of state power.

20 Pillars of My Faith
by Charlotte Johnston, M.A., and Catherine Stokes, B.S.N.

21 To Purge or Not to Purge? A Mormon Question
by Allen Roberts. Includes a chronology of recent events from Salt Lake City (disciplinary actions, members resigning, & background activities leading to these actions).

1993 CHICAGO SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

TAPE ORDER CARD

(Send form or photocopied form to address below. Allow four weeks for delivery. Phone or fax order with number below. Allow 7-10 days.)

Please send me a tape for each number circled below:

01 02 03 04 05 06 07 08 09 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26

Name ____________________________

Address ____________________________

City __________________ State ______ Zip _________

Phone (_______)

_____ Total # tapes x $8.50 (includes tax & shipping) =

Check (payable to Anvid Recording Company)

VISA ☐ MasterCard ☐ AmEx ☐ Discover

(for orders over $10.00)

Card # ___________ Expiration Date ___________

Signature ____________________________

Mail to: Anvid Recording Company
P.O. Box 8130
Bartlett, IL 60103
(708) 837-9840; fax (708) 859-7576