

**MORMON
EXPERIENCE
SCHOLARSHIP
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SUNSTONE

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THE CHRISTIAN
CLASSICS: THE
BOOK OF JONAH**

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**LOVING THE
QUESTIONS**

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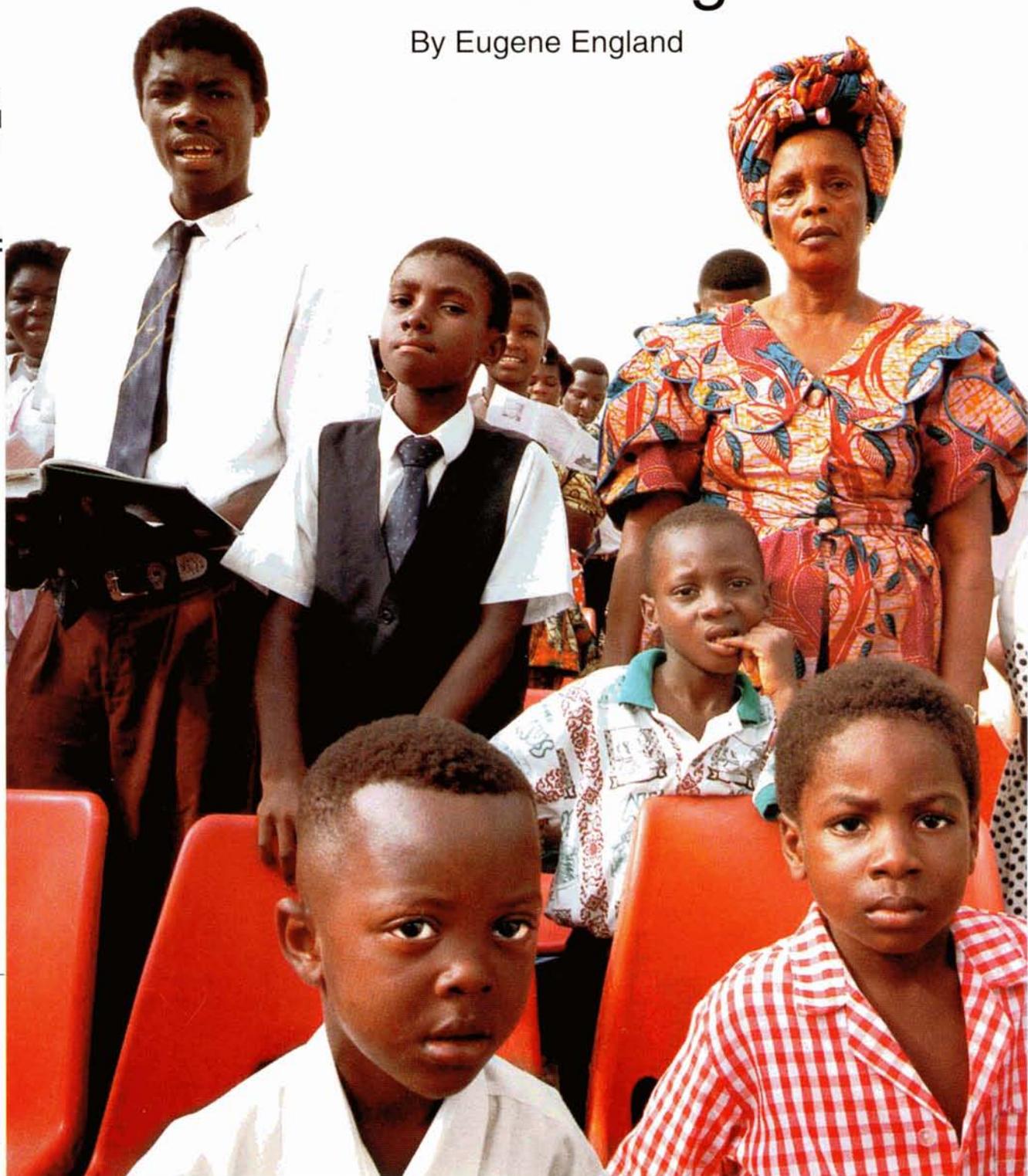
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June-July 1998 — \$5.95



Becoming A World Religion

By Eugene England



AWARDS

THE ASSOCIATION FOR MORMON LETTERS

Excerpts from the 1997 awards, given at the annual
AML meeting, 28 February 1998.

An Award in the Short Story

BRADY UDALL

"Beautiful Places"

in *Letting Loose the Hounds*, New York: W. W.
Norton & Company, 1997

"Beautiful Places" and "all of the stories in [*Letting Loose the Hounds*] . . . betray the funny, lovable dignity of a young man who looks through very Mormon eyes at the dark wild landscape of the new American West."



An Award in the Essay

HOLLY WELKER

"What You Walk Away From"

in *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 30:1, (spring 1997)

". . . Combines scripture, story, allusion, symbol and metaphor to reveal the anguish and . . . joy associated with . . . separation from the Mormon Heartland."

An Award in Poetry

SUSAN ELIZABETH HOWE

Stone Spirits

Provo: Redd Center Publications, 1997

"The lives she explores are not confined to the one she lives. Her poetry is wonderfully personal without being confessional."



An Award in Devotional Literature

CHIEKO OKAZAKI

Sanctuary

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1997

Okazaki's "great strength . . . is her down-to-earth straightforwardness, a breath of fresh air among more conventional pulpit voices."



An Award in Drama

ERIC SAMUELSEN

Gadianton

produced at Brigham Young University, 1997

Gadianton traces "simple lives in complex times where moral simplifications are no help. Judgment alternates with compassion, humor with terror."

An Award in Criticism

RICHARD DILWORTH RUST

*Feasting on the Word: The Literary Testimony
of the Book of Mormon*

Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Company, 1997

"A strong example of how faithful scholarship will continue to support 'the keystone of our religion' and testify of the truthfulness of the prophetic mission of Joseph Smith in the latter days."



WORD BAZAAR

MORMON ORGANIZATIONS

MORMON ALLIANCE

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To report cases, write to the Mormon Alliance (6337 Highland Drive, Box 215, Salt Lake City, UT 84121) or telephone Lavina Fielding Anderson (801/467-1617). Subscriptions are \$30 per calendar year and include four newsletters and the annual volume of case reports. 111

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SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, & ART

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YEA, YEA  NAY, NAY

SYMPOSIUM DATES

WHY IS this year's symposium in July (July 29-August 1)? I thought it was always opposite BYU Education Week.

MUSS AND RUSS FOX
Washington, D.C.

Editor's response:

The symposiums are indeed moving up the calendar, and next year's, which celebrates the Sunstone Foundation's twenty-fifth anniversary, is yet earlier: July 14-17 at the Salt Palace. But never was one of the twenty Salt Lake Sunstone symposiums intentionally put opposite BYU Education Week.

Here is the symposium scheduling history. The founders put the first symposium in the summer of 1979 because they didn't have funds to fly out speakers and summer is when many pilgrimage to Utah. That precedent set the season, and people have planned vacations around symposiums ever since.

In those early years, the symposium was regularly scheduled (with exceptions for hotel availability) for the last August weekend before Labor Day weekend in hopes that thoughtful BYU students would return early to Utah for it. Fat chance. But the late summer date did mean that vacationing BYU professors would be back in town and available.

More recently, symposiums have been scheduled for mid-August and then early August because some academic calendars began starting in late and mid-August.

So, now, expect the symposium to be held from mid-July to early August.

RETURNS REQUESTED

EDITOR Elbert Peck's request for letters to authors goes both ways ("Brassful Thinking," SUNSTONE Mar. 1998). I sent a letter to one Sunstone author over a year ago and asked for a response. If authors are not overwhelmed with feedback, as Peck suggests, I am curious why I heard nothing. That experience would discourage most people from continuing to write. Do authors want to write for the masses, receive feedback from individuals, and then feel that it is not important to respond? By contrast, my wife sent two letters to Apostle Neal A. Maxwell with questions about his books. Both received a warm and personal response.

As much as SUNSTONE adds to the Mormon experience, there is room for growth.

LARRY WATTS
Orange County, Calif.

GRASSROOTS HOLIDAY

ELBERT PECK is right that we need to make Pioneer Day a worldwide Mormon holiday/service project. Members shouldn't wait for headquarters to send a letter making it happen; then, it's just another program. It'd be better if it comes from the grassroots, if local wards and stakes just start doing it. If the idea catches on, then, eventually, someday, Salt Lake simply will canonize what is already a fact. Just as with Primary, MIA, Sunday School, Church welfare, and most good, pragmatic Mormon endeavors.

ERIC STONE
Toluca Lake, Calif.

SUNSTONE TAP DANCE

I AM converted to what SUNSTONE does. I have been searching for a place where I can be what I am without limitations from the traditional mediums of thought and worship. Don't get me wrong: I'm not dealing with sexual identity confusion or apostasy. I'm simply an open-minded, humanistic Mormon who at times feels as if he is alone.

I, too, was deeply influenced by Bishop Stan Roberts, and I appreciate Karen Southwick's "Single in San Francisco" (SUNSTONE, Mar. 1998). In 1985, I called Bishop Roberts: "My name is Scott. I have just gotten out of the Army and am working on Alcatraz Island as a park ranger. I am not religious or active, but I need a place to stay." He said, "Call me back in an hour." I did, and he had a place for me—a true shepherd. The singles' ward made me to want to become a true believer.

Then I went to BYU, got married forever in the temple. It lasted one-and-a-half years. I went from being a married man to being divorced. In Utah, this was like saying you are an ex-con, especially since I was not a returned missionary and was left-of-center politically. I moved back to California.

Now, eight years later, I tap dance from activity to inactivity. In SUNSTONE, I feel I have found a place where a person like me can be embraced and be spiritual.

SCOTT A. WEAKLEY
Los Angeles

THE GOOD WARD

KAREN SOUTHWICK describes a singles' ward that is a vibrant community, not a graduate MIA (as Dallin Oaks once said BYU isn't) providing spouse-finding activities.

That is undoubtedly a by-product, but for singles' wards to be effective, their core needs to be Christians gathering together to carry the cross—to bear each others' burdens, to rejoice and weep together, to forgive and be forgiven, to love and serve and to be loved and be served. When that is the purpose, then silly things like sexual identity and age limits (from the fear that old men [35+] will prey on young women) take second place, and then the ward will have the spiritual vitality Southwick describes. Otherwise, we've just made the Church into a social club, and we've told singles their life has no real meaning unless they're married.

JAKE ANDREWS
La Jolla, Calif

"ANY SICK AMONG YOU?"

THE PRACTICE of anointing and blessing with consecrated oil is one of the most comforting doctrines in Christianity in general and in the Restoration in particular. Since 1944, I have participated in many ad-

ministrations in the military, on my mission, and in several countries. The experience was always rewarding, almost always beneficial, leaving me with comfort and peace. Recently, I have participated in two unusual, perhaps unique, administration experiences.

THE FIRST BLESSING: Two years ago Violet, my wife, suffered from a traumatic sinus infection that seemed to compound other medical problems and create new ones. It plagued her for months. She couldn't sleep, watch TV, read, do much housework, or spend much time at the computer. She asked for an administration from me and our home teacher and received comfort. After two months, however, she called an RLDS friend, Judy Lloyd, and requested a blessing from her. Judy was the presiding elder for the local RLDS congregation. I was delighted by Violet's request. An appointment was made, and Violet asked me if I would participate; I said, "Of course. I would be honored."

Violet requested I anoint and Judy seal. I felt the joint administration entirely in order, and we enjoyed unusual spiritual harmony.

During the blessing, I was moved by the words that Judy said and felt them appropriate and fitting. We were, after all, spiritual and religious cousins united in faith in the power of administrations and the priesthood. I sensed the power of this combined event, but I think Judy and Violet captured it better in their journals. From Judy's journal:

This was a first for me. I was intrigued to participate as Restorationists in an ordinance established when we were one, and which would bring us together again in concern for Violet. The spirit was rich and affirming. I prayed in recognition that as a daughter, Violet had come in faith and obedience to holy priesthood, asking a special blessing. . . . In the peace of those moments, with the lake beside us, and the earth's beauty visible on all sides of the enclosed sun porch, Stan and I laid our hands on her head. Elder Stan anointed and Elder Judy confirmed the anointing. In my blessing I acknowledged Violet's strong



"I move the curse of Cain to the little trash can and that's that."



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emergence into full awareness of her talents and abilities. Health problems have impaired her usual intense use of historical interests for the good of others. It is clearly not in the Lord's plan that Violet's voice in this important work be silenced. May the illness be rebuked—that which limits her and her companion as they work towards their goals. . . . I feel strongly Violet's gifts are for a purpose. She has brought such strength to me in the past two years. I feel the leadings of the Spirit in her life and I am pleased she entrusted me with her concerns.

From Violet's journal:

Judy has a deep testimony of Christ and her right to give blessings. She is spiritual, assured, and I love her dearly. The blessing was intensely intimate and fitting. I wish I had made a recording and taken a photograph of the historic event. It was so beautiful. Stan and I heard words and phrases we had never heard before in such circumstances. She brought her own consecrated oil and invoked the Holy Spirit by the authority of her priesthood. She was not concerned with choosing particular or "correct" words or some formula, but of conveying a healing presence for me. . . . Her hands were trembling on my head and we all felt a deep presence of the spirit. It was heart to heart blessing of woman to woman. It was so comforting, I was crying long before she had finished. Now I know for myself what the early sisters felt when they "blessed and were blessed." I think the Lord sent Judy to me. He knew my heart and my needs. I thank Him. I also felt a special connection to my Mother in Heaven during the prayer because Judy began with "Heavenly Parents, Thy daughter has asked for a blessing."

This blessing gave Violet the courage to undergo long-neglected surgery for a severe, congenital, deviated septum. Within a few weeks, she was fine and has had little trouble with sinus problems since then.

THE SECOND BLESSING: Our oldest granddaughter suffers from ADDS (Attention Deficit Disorder Syndrome) and hyperactivity, which has been treated for twelve years with medications. Recently, she made a heroic effort to get off all medicine. During a visit to us, she worked on an ambitious video for an English class. She seemed restless and had trouble concentrating, but she was adamant about not taking her medication. Violet sensed we

should give her a blessing to help her cope with life in general and specifically life without medication. Violet said: "I think she needs a grandmother's blessing. I would like you to join me." I willingly agreed.

Violet gave our granddaughter a beautiful blessing, and I sealed it. Once again, we all enjoyed a particular beautiful, spiritual, event. In the early Church, sisters such as Vilate Kimball, Patty Sessions, Louisa Barnes Pratt, Eliza R. Snow, Presendia Huntington Kimball, Zina Jacobs Young performed blessings and enjoyed occasions of profound spiritual feasts when "the love of God flowed." What could be more appropriate than grandparents' jointly blessing a granddaughter? In Violet's journal, she recorded the following:

I told our granddaughter I wanted to give her a grandmother's blessing. I remembered Patty, Eliza, Louisa and Vilate blessing children and women at Nauvoo and Winter Quarters. I wanted to bond with them and find the right words and correct spirit to perform an ordinance which they did often and probably took for granted. I felt sure the Lord heard, accepted, and would help a young woman as she struggles with this major challenge in her turbulent teenage years. I poured

out upon her head all the words that a grandmother usually employs to express concern, love, hope, feelings, and aspirations for blood of her blood.

It has been several weeks now since the blessing and she is still able at present to leave her prescriptions on the sink. I recently called and asked her how her video presentation went. "I got an A, Grandma! It was the only one I got this semester." The road ahead for her will be difficult. I have seen in the past how disruptive she can be without her medication, but this time she seems mature enough to handle it better. Her parents have noticed it also. She now has a weekend job and is being recognized for her hard work ethic. Perhaps the blessing did not produce all of those changes in her life since then, but I know for a fact that it helped.

My participation in these two administrations has enlightened and given me a new understanding of spiritual matters, and I rejoice that under President Gordon B. Hinckley we as a people are becoming increasingly ecumenical.

STANLEY B. KIMBALL
Edwardsville, Illinois



"Is everything all right Elder Waterman?
You never call me 'dude' anymore."

HETEROSEXIST BIASES

IN HIS critique of Michael Quinn's *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power*, Armand Mauss agrees that the same-sex marriage issue is the next "crusade" of the LDS hierarchy, but he dislikes Quinn's terms "homophobic" and "anti-gay" to characterize their motives. Mauss identifies such language with the "gay rights lobby, whose agenda does not necessarily reflect the views of all homosexual persons or exhaust the range of civilized and humane ways of addressing the homosexual condition" ("Many Are Called, But Few Are Chosen," SUNSTONE, Nov. 1997).

Here's a better label for the attitude of the hierarchy: "heterosexist." Homophobia denotes an irrational fear or loathing of homosexuality and intrudes into psychology. But some may be rational, fearless, and fully self-aware in efforts to deprive homosexuals of privileges heterosexuals enjoy. Heterosexism is the belief that straight people must always come first socially, politically, and theologically. Whatever "civilized and humane" ways a heterosexist institution may use to "address the homosexual condition," it will do so from a position of presumed superiority.

Most straight Mormons I know are compassionate people who believe the restored gospel does not allow their leaders to be more "generous" toward homosexuality. Most

gay Saints I know—and being an "out" gay Mormon, I know many—are reluctant to believe that general authorities are motivated by fear or hatred, but I have never met one who does not feel that the Brethren's attitude toward homosexuality is tainted by prejudice arising from their being heterosexual.

That prejudice is, at its most benign, a natural, self-loving, and *unexamined* enthusiasm for the gift of sexuality the majority of shares. When heterosexuals say their sexuality is a beautiful and sacred gift, I believe them, even if they do not believe me when I claim the same. But given our theology of continuous revelation where no question can be said to be absolutely settled (we assert that Jesus did not mean it when he said there is no marriage, straight or gay, in the afterlife), I cannot accept that God has nothing more to say about homosexuality that would make a difference. That is heterosexist thinking.

DAVID CALLAHAN
Los Angeles, Calif

ABERRANT BEHAVIORS

GARY WATTS reports being "mugged" by his son's homosexuality ("Mugged By Reality," SUNSTONE, Dec. 1997). In an effort to understand his son's condition, Watts and his wife come to believe that their son's homosexuality is just a variation of "normal."

However, their efforts to legitimize their son's aberrant lifestyle are not in his best long-term interest. It is one thing to show compassion for those who have not learned to control surging appetites, including overeating, alcohol and drug abuse, and aberrant sexual behavior (adultery, homosexuality, bestiality, pedophilia, nymphomania, polygamy, etc.), but it is a different matter, and an error, to advocate that society accept aberrant behaviors.

The "body is a temple" metaphor is apt. Whatever our bodily weaknesses (notwithstanding the varying genetic proclivities we all live with), we should feel impelled to overcome them—to strive toward being better physically. The Word of Wisdom urges us to balance our diet and to avoid harmful substances. That the optimal expression of sexuality is within a heterosexual, family-forming relationship is rarely disputed today. Striving to achieve the optimal state of being requires self-control, discipline, and sacrifice. For some, that effort may be harder than for others, but we all have some cross to bear. Overcoming temptations to indulge our appetites differentiates us from other animals.

Watts seems to think that homosexuality is binary. That is, one is or is not born with the condition. While many allow that genetic proclivities influence human behavior—and not just sexuality—the claim that one's sexual orientation is genetically predetermined,

is far from scientifically proven. If homosexuality is not wholly based in a genetic luck of the draw, then its societal legitimization as an acceptable, alternate life style is potentially destructive to family formation and is a threat to cultural cohesion. Given such circumstances, society—indeed, the Church—has an interest to insure that impressionable youngsters are protected from a proselyting homosexual culture. Unless and until it is proven with scientific consensus that homosexuality is genetically based, its practice must be considered aberrant.

Obviously, contempt for shameful acts should be offset by outpouring of compassion, love, and acceptance—"he that is without sin . . . first cast a stone" (John 8:7).

STEPHEN D. TAYLOR
Coral Gables, Flor.

OVERHEARD AT CHURCH

"I really like it each time 'jeopardy' has a Mormon question on it."

"The only purpose of the spirit of the law is to confirm the letter of the law."



Coral Gables, Flor.

HOUSTON, WE HAVE A PROBLEM

BYU'S RESPONSE to the report of the American Association of University Professors, which criticized BYU for academic freedom violations in the firing of English professor Gail Houston, states that Houston was fired for advocating praying to the Mother in Heaven. BYU administrators claim that in doing so she contradicted a fundamental doctrine of the LDS church. Have BYU administrators forgotten Eliza R. Snow's well-known Mormon hymn, "O My Father"? This hymn is actually a prayer to the Father and Mother in Heaven:

Father, Mother, may I meet you
In your royal courts on high?

It also contains the lines:

In the heavens are parents single?
No; the thought makes reason stare!
Truth is reason; truth eternal
Tells me I've a Mother there.

Something is odd about a church that encourages its members to think of God as their literal, anthropomorphic father and to regard their relationship to him as a father-child relationship, yet discourages them from thinking and talking about a literal mother in heaven and punishes those who publicly do, even though it acknowledges her existence.

BYU's response cites two public statements by Houston as "endorsements" of praying to Mother in Heaven. But Houston did not advocate praying to Mother in Heaven. In the first, a *Student Review* article, she never mentions Mother in Heaven or advises anyone to pray to her. She talks about "communication with my heavenly parents." Her point is not to advocate a particular kind of prayer but to share her own experience of finding that her heavenly parents accept her with all her doubts and problems. The second, a 1994 Sunstone Symposium speech, describes her practice of meditation and tells how she visualizes Heavenly Father and Heavenly Mother. She uses "meditation" and "visualize" to describe her experiences. Although she does say in one place that this meditation is prayer for her, it is clearly not prayer as the Church defines it, and she never suggests that others adopt her practice. Her concept of Mother in Heaven in this speech reflects the orthodox Mormon understanding. She sees Heavenly Father and Mother together and herself as their child being embraced by them and encouraged to become like them.

Clearly, it is not Houston's concept of

Mother in Heaven that offends BYU and the Brethren. They had to fabricate the charge that she advocated praying to the Mother in Heaven in order to present some kind of argument that she had contradicted "fundamental Church doctrine," which contradiction BYU's Academic Freedom Statement does not allow. Calling the prohibition against praying to Mother in Heaven a fundamental Church doctrine shows an appalling lack of knowledge of the gospel and the scriptures and reveals the political motivation behind Houston's firing. A fundamental Church doctrine not given until 1991 by First Counselor Gordon B. Hinckley? A fundamental Church doctrine that has only one reference? A fundamental Church doctrine given without revelation and as a personal opinion, as President Hinckley stated. A fundamental Church doctrine that members have had no opportunity to accept or reject? Clearly, something is going on here besides a serious attempt to understand and protect fundamental Church doctrine. Houston's offense was not contradicting fundamental Church doctrine but failing to give unconditional loyalty to the institutional Church.

Christ states clearly in the Book of Mormon (3 Ne. 11) and the Doctrine and Covenants (section 10) the doctrine of his church: faith in Jesus Christ, repentance, baptism, and the gift of the Holy Spirit, and he declares that anyone who adds to or takes away from this doctrine is not of him.

BYU's response says that Mother in Heaven is "a God other than the God to whom we are commanded to pray." This is equivalent to saying that she is not God or she is a false God. To recognize an entity as God is the most fundamental form of worship and prayer. The Church's "Proclamation on the Family" says we worship God because he is our Father, but it does not even mention Mother in Heaven explicitly. This same document and other Church rhetoric assure us that men and women are *equal* partners, but apparently somewhere along the path to godhood, Father in Heaven became superior to Mother in Heaven. He is God (a being we worship and pray to), but she is not.

JANICE ALLRED
Provo, Utah

HERE AND NOW

WHEN, IN READING the issue of March-April 1998 of *SUNSTONE*, I reflect on the profound understanding of the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament that animated Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, I find puzzling the neglect of the

Bible in contemporary Mormon writing, at least as sampled by Sunstone. As a student of religion I look in vain, among the religious reflections published in these columns, for distinctively Mormon responses to the common heritage of Scripture shared by Judaism and Christianity: where does Job figure, for instance, in that issue's published reflections on suffering? or Leviticus in the issue's discussions of purity and sexuality? or (to take a Christian instance) Revelation in writing on the meaning of the age? Instead, writing focuses upon the experience of the acutely present tense, the revelation of the hour rather than of the ages. So LDS writing in *SUNSTONE* is so zealously contemporary in its character, so centered on the individual and private experience in its interest, that you deprive your faith of its foundations in history and Scripture.

The critics of LDS faith reject its claim to recover lost Scripture and portray it as an invention of the nineteenth century. The generality of LDS writing in Sunstone goes one better: pretending that everything gets going this very morning—whenever that may be. Personal inspiration, private response to prayer—these responses to God in the here and now ought not to exclude what Judaism and Christianity hold to be God's historical revelation that, the LDS faith seems to me to want to say, Mormon religion recovers and renews.

JACOB NEUSNER
Tampa, Fla.

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FROM THE EDITOR

YAGOTTAWANNA!

By Elbert Eugene Peck

ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. *1998 Sunstone Symposium*. The preliminary program for this year's Salt Lake symposium, from July 29 through August 1, is available. It includes a cassette order form. If you didn't get a program, want an extra to share, or want one mailed to a friend, contact us by mail, e-mail, or telephone.

2. *Three kinds of kindly, in-kind summer donations*. First, on Saturday, August 1, we'll host our annual art auction, featuring the finest Mormon artists. If you know of people who would (a) contribute art or (b) purchase art, ranging from a Grondahl cartoon to a fine oil painting, invite or contact us, and we'll invite them.

Second, last summer I pared my religious, non-Mormon library by donating the books to Sunstone. They were then sold, at discount, at the symposium. Everyone benefitted: I took a deduction for their used, retail value, symposium attendees got great books at used, wholesale prices, and Sunstone made several thousand dollars. We're making the used, religious book table an annual symposium feature. Donations are needed; drop them off at the office (any time during the year) or bring them to the conference.

Third, the old Sunstone car, an in-kind donation, finally died. We'd like another one. A company car is not a necessity, but it allows staff to walk or bike to work and have a car for Sunstone errands.

YAGOTTAWANNA!

RONALD M. PATTERSON died last month. He had been my mission president and one of the half-dozen local Church leaders whose nurturing leadership changed my life. He was earthy, kind, lovable, wanting the best for everyone, more interested in people than programs—much like Colonel Potter on TV's M.A.S.H.

Halfway into my mission, rearranged boundaries landed me in the new Nevada Las Vegas Mission. Till then, my mission had been an incongruous combination of (a) a bountiful, spiritual, mellow grace and a deep

sense of God's accepting love, (b) a nagging guilt about a terrible, unconfessed, yet abandoned, sin, (c) a deep love for Saints and gentiles, and (d) an estrangement from letter-of-the-law mission leaders, including an authoritarian president, whose response to my inquiry about the difference between mission rules and God's scriptural commandments ("There is no difference.") prompted the writing of my first religious essay.

But as each elder exited his interview with our new president, he basically reported, "Boy, is President Patterson spiritual. He knew my particular sin!" And my horror at his knowing mine increased. When my turn came, Patterson asked, "Elder Peck, have you totally overcome the sin of masturbation?" He indeed did know my sin! But his gentle question was designed to easily allow me to confess and have the joy of forgiveness. Looking back, I realize that he asked us all the same question, and each of us thought he knew our unique temptation. We each also felt his and God's love. Even those who were still struggling with the "sin."

That's a complicated episode for me to make sense of. I don't now believe that masturbation is a sin. But in that social construction, I did; yet I still feel that the spiritual growth from confronting that contrived guilt was genuine. That's a metaphor for much of life and one's religious journey—authentic spirituality occurs in a relative, inescapably arbitrary context; the working through is important, not what we work through. Nevertheless, shining through my murky story of unnecessary guilt/confession/forgiveness/insight is Ronald M. Patterson, working to help me and everyone else feel individual worth and growth, as he understood it.

Later, he called me to be a district leader. I told him, no, I didn't want to play the leadership game, which seemed to bring out the worst in my friends. A half hour later, he called back and said God wanted me to be DL; then he quoted from 1 Samuel 17:7, "God looketh upon the heart," and told me God saw my good heart. I reluctantly told God, yes, I'd be DL. Patterson was always telling us we were worthy, good people.

Yet he knew our human sides. Reflecting in his office, he'd say, with a laugh, "I know everyone's not doing what they should." Pointing to an elder's picture, he'd say, "Elder X is probably riding horses right now. Elder Y is developing film. And Sister Z is baking a cake for Elder Q. But, dagnabit, they're good people, doing the best they can." Patterson also reproved betimes with brimstone. When I ponder the fiery but loving Brigham Young, I reference Ronald Patterson.

Once, at a farewell for an elder, the laziest, most corrupt guy ever to serve in Vegas, Patterson said in front of thirty missionaries, "Elder F, you have served an acceptable and worthy mission. God is pleased with you." We rolled our eyes. Later, Patterson said, "I meant it. If you knew his life before he came, you'd know that no missionary made more progress." With that attitude—of helping us to feel joy in our service and growth, to feel the spirit's acceptance of who we inherently were—he helped the spirit engender in me a deep love for all the missionaries, regardless of their performance. Later, that approach allowed me to feel that same forgiving/accepting love for myself, and it helped pull me out of a deep depression. It's a love, as I learned at a recent reunion, still vibrant and felt by most for each other, no matter how diverse our journeys or how long the years.

Twice, I listened while he took a call from a general authority who chastised him for low baptisms. But he never passed that numbers-oriented approach down to us, never shared comparative companionship statistics. Instead, he preached, and had us preach, gospel-themed sermons because he wanted to prepare us for church service.

He had his faults, and he liked very corny sayings poems and phrases. "Yagottawanna" was an irksome favorite, as in "Yagottawanna get out of bed on time." An Arizona conservative, he sent me home three months before the election of Jimmy Carter, one of the most Christian men ever to be President, believing we were about to elect the devil's assistant. I worked through that misperception, too. My life has been a lived conversation with his impact, a beneficial one. Even though I now disagree with much of what Patterson accepted and taught, I love him dearly.

Mormonism helped Ronald Patterson blossom by asking him to nurture others. Church callings amplify good traits in people, who then testify that the Church is "true" because of the growth and love and connectedness and, yes, greatness it affords them. That's the Church's genius and the best thing about it. Yagottawanna love an organization that is such a force for good. ☐

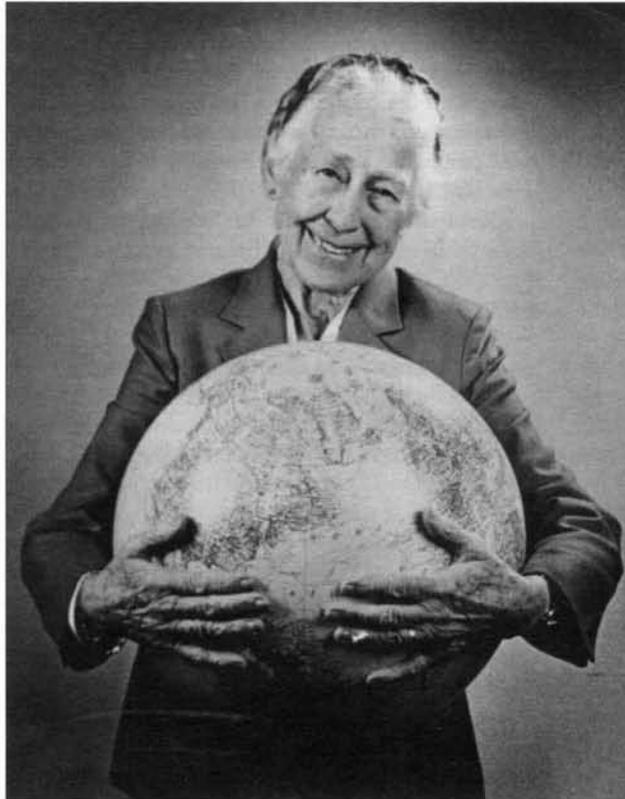
IN MEMORIAM

ESTHER EGGERTSEN PETERSON

By Mary Lythgoe Bradford

SOME DAY, students of our pioneer heritage will be required to memorize the towering achievements of Esther Eggertsen Peterson, who was born in Utah 9 December 1906, left Utah in 1930 as a physical education teacher, and died 20 December 1997 as an unexcelled public service pioneer. She was the first Mormon to receive the Medal of Freedom, the nation's highest civilian honor. Presented to her by President Jimmy Carter in 1981, it carried this dedication: "Once government's highest ranking woman, Esther Peterson still ranks highest among consumer advocates. She has advised presidents and the public and worked for labor and business alike, always keeping the rights of all Americans to know and to be treated fairly as her highest priority. Even her staunchest foes respect her integrity and are warmed by her grace and sincere concern." Ten years later, Esther spoke at a Sunstone symposium, and the editors illustrated her address, "The World Beyond the Valley" (SUNSTONE Nov. 1991), with a photo of her hugging a giant globe. It had been commissioned by consumer advocate Ralph Nader when one of her foes exclaimed, "Esther, you can't be nanny to the whole world!"

In many ways, she was a nanny to me. I was one of the privileged many she welcomed into her private life. We met in the '60s at a meeting attended by our economist husbands, and we soon became better acquainted through her cousin and my thesis subject, Virginia Sorensen. I was so in awe of Esther that, in interviewing her for *Dialogue* in 1980, I trembled at calling her office at the Carter White House. My nervousness dissipated at her beautiful home in an historic section of Washington, where we spent an invigorating two hours with a tape recorder. Afterward, I and other *Dialogue*



staffers attended parties, fund-raisers, programs, and discussions at Esther's home. Sometimes I stayed overnight to arise with her and the sun. Always I left feeling bigger and brighter.

Once Esther said to me, "I just love to feel the continuity of things. I've been through a lot of phases, and I've been very fortunate." Instead of taking to the rocking chair, she kept agitating for reform, sometimes from her bed, and she was too busy to quit. One day, when she caught herself wandering a bit in her speech, she said, "Oh, this makes me mad! My mind is breaking into pieces!"

"I'll take a piece of your mind any day!" I exclaimed. "Other minds can't compete!"

We can benefit from studying the mind of this valiant soul who faced the diminishment

of her powers with the same feisty awareness that she applied to the knottiest social problems of our age.

THE Iron Rod and the Liahona were perfectly meshed in Esther's character—the Iron Rod, her Mormon value system, with its work ethic and strong social conscience; the Liahona, her adventurous desire to take wing, to reach out and serve. She often spoke of the necessity to water her roots and exercise her wings. Although Esther was not always active in the LDS church, she actively magnified values gained from her Mormon/Utah background.

As fifth of the six children of Lars Eggertsen and Anagrethe Nielsen, Esther was tutored by older brother Luther and sister Algie, all having strong political leanings even as children. Freewheeling discussions with them and siblings Thelma, Anna Marie, and Mark were encouraged by their parents. In their Provo, Utah, home, "living clean

was the code . . . and our weeks were filled with Church on Sunday and meetings nearly every day of the week." Years later, she often illustrated her life story with the hymns she sang in those meetings: "Do What is Right," "Let Us Oft Speak Kind Words," "Have I Done Any Good?"

Esther claimed Danish descent from "a long line of malcontents" from whom she inherited a "restlessness and a willingness to rock the boat a bit when the need arises" (*Restless*, iii). Her parents were both educators—he superintendent of Provo schools and she a teacher. During her father's last illness, Esther substituted for him, graduating from BYU the year of his death and accepting a position as physical education instructor at Branch Agricultural College in Cedar City, Utah. Algie's daughter Grethe Petersen de-

scribed the sisters with their mother as a "formidable matriarchy," but these free-spirited women were nonetheless expected to help with both outside and inside chores. Student boarders joined in lively political and religious discussions at the dinner table, and after dinner, the family read aloud from great classical literature. (One of their boarders was Ernest L. Wilkinson.) When her mother became "matron of the poorhouse" during her father's illness, Esther and her brother worked alongside: "We placed the legs of the beds in cans full of kerosene to kill bedbugs, and we scrubbed bathrooms. It did not occur to us that we should be paid for this—we were simply fulfilling part of our obligation to people less fortunate than we were" (first annual Alice Louise Reynolds Lecture, 22 Sept. 1988, 19, pub. Friends of the BYU Library).

Home and college training blended with certain watershed experiences to create a lifelong penchant for difficult questions. While still in her teens, she accompanied one of the family's boarders on a strike-breaking trip to Salt Lake City. "I still remember being escorted through the picket line by police on horseback. . . . A thin woman with two small children caught my eye. 'Why are you doing this to us?' she asked." (*Restless*, 2.) Esther listened when brother Luther described, from his mission field in England, the dehumanizing conditions in British factories. "Why am I comfortable while others are hungry?" she asked herself.

She left Cedar City and headed East to Columbia University, where she met Oliver Peterson, from South Dakota. Almost immediately, she "knew [she] loved him, but he was a socialist who drank coffee and smoked a pipe, and I was a conservative Mormon Republican from Utah." She followed her heart and from then on credited "My Oliver" with "the strength to work for change and to disturb the peace at times" (Reynolds lecture, 22, iv). His Norwegian background and his becoming a "solid Roosevelt Democrat" made him acceptable to her family, so much so that Oliver and Esther took her mother with them on their delayed honeymoon to Denmark and Norway. The young couple moved to Boston; he studied at Harvard, and she taught at Winsor School for Girls. Additionally, Esther volunteered at the YWCA, where she picketed with her students at the famous "Heartbreaker Strike." Bryn Mawr President Hilda Smith signed Esther as recreation director at the newly formed Summer School for Women Workers, where Esther served from 1932 to 1937.

Volunteer work with the International

Garment Workers, the Textile Workers Union, and the American Federation of Teachers established Esther as a labor professional. In 1939, when Oliver took employment in New York with the Office of Price Administration, she joined the education division of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers (CIO). Then, in the summer of 1941, Esther organized textile workers in Utah, where she lobbied the Mode O'Day Company and convinced them to sign a contract with the Garment Workers Union. Once when Esther was trying to buy time at KSL, a friend of her brother was shocked to see her. Esther, "What are you doing here—disturbing the peace?" Thus began her career of disturbing the peace, with her foes echoing the Advertising Federation of America, which called her "the most pernicious threat to advertising today" (*New York Times*, 4 Nov. 1969).

Oliver was transferred to Washington, D.C., in 1944, and Esther became assistant director of the Amalgamated Clothing Workers of America and a legislative lobbyist working to pass a minimum wage increase. She was sent back to Utah to help re-elect Senator Elbert D. Thomas. While there, she also campaigned to register women voters. This and other experiences, including the birth of her fourth child, turned her attention to the plight of working women. When her children were small, she ceased to hold nine-to-five jobs. "I have been fortunate because I have had a supportive husband and help at home." She vowed that "if my kids need me, they need me—that's all there is to it." (Interview with Scott Bruns, 10 Aug. 1976.)

During the '50s, Esther lived in Sweden and Belgium while Oliver served as foreign service labor attache. She kept up her union work, serving as delegate to the first International Conference of Free Trade Unions. Always active, she wrote an anti-Communism pamphlet, "Women, It's Your Fight, Too," and helped organize the first International School for Working Women in Paris.

When the young family returned to the U.S., Esther ran into Jack Kennedy, with whom she had lobbied. He recruited her to join his presidential campaign in Utah. After he won, he offered her a U.N. appointment, but she refused so she could remain close to home. Instead, she served as Kennedy's director of the Women's Bureau, which led to her appointment as Assistant Secretary of Labor. From this came the President's Commission on the Status of Women, which Esther asked Eleanor Roosevelt to chair, and she herself vice-chaired. It was Eleanor's last public service, and both women were proud of their role in the passage of the Equal Pay Act.

Later, Esther served as special assistant for consumer affairs under President Lyndon Johnson. Once, LBJ phoned her: "Come over here, quick!" She rushed to the White House to find the President having lunch with David O. McKay. The LDS church president greeted her warmly and recalled that four-year-old Esther had broken her arm in his Ogden yard when Esther's family lived next door. "I had a lovely time in the White House with him . . . and as we walked out, he put his arm around me." (Bruns interview.)

When Republicans took office, in 1968, Esther became consumer advocate for Giant Foods, where she pioneered truth in packaging, lending, and advertising. She also became a TV and radio personality, educating the public on nutritional best buys. When Democrats returned to the White House, Esther attained cabinet status under President Carter, again as special assistant for consumer affairs. She has been credited with one hundred pieces of consumer legislation in the '60s and '70s (*Salt Lake Tribune*, 12 Mar. 1995).

In her late eighties, Esther was appointed by President Clinton to the United Nations as senior delegate, thereby recognizing her long service to that body. Her goal had always been to inform the neediest people of their consumer rights. Information, she believed, led to empowerment. Esther was awarded numerous honorary degrees, including one from the University of Utah and Utah State University, but not from her alma mater. In her later years, Esther often expressed her deep connection with Mormonism and her gratitude for her Mormon work ethic.

In 1995, Esther dictated her memoirs, *Restless: The Memoirs of Labor and Consumer Activist Esther Peterson*. Here, she speaks in her own voice, and it is priceless. (Available from SUNSTONE or from Caring Publishing, 519 C St. NE, Washington, D.C., 20003.)

In her last years, she helped found United Seniors Cooperative. The last speech I heard her give was at a United Seniors banquet, where she presented a service award to Rosalyn Carter. At Esther's ninetieth birthday party, she greeted with equal warmth her Utah friends and famous politicians like Ted Kennedy, Elizabeth Dole, and Chuck and Linda Robb.

A few days before she died, I visited Esther at her son Lars's home in Washington. As she greeted me with a kiss, I realized it was our last meeting. I tried to convey my gratitude for her friendship.

Thank you, Esther, for mirroring the self I hope to become. ☺

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO...

Courtney Campbell

PROPHECY AND CITIZENRY:
THE CASE OF HUMAN CLONING

In 1997, researchers successfully cloned mammals and made human cloning a real possibility. What are the religious implications? How should Mormons respond?

THE YEAR IS 2007. MORE THAN FIVE years of research on human embryos that have not been transferred to a womb (research preceded by several years of successful implantation in primates) have indicated that nuclear transfer cloning technology in humans is scientifically possible. Researchers believe it very likely to produce children at not greater risk of physiological abnormality than those produced by other technologically assisted methods of reproduction.

The Genetics and Reproductive Medicine

COURTNEY CAMPBELL is an associate professor of philosophy at Oregon State University. He may be contacted by e-mail at ccampbell@orst.edu.

Institute in Ourtown, Virginia, has been at the center of this research. To date, no cloned embryos have been transferred to a womb to establish a pregnancy.

June and Jerry Smith (ages thirty-three and thirty-one respectively) visit the Institute seeking help. Some years previously, Jerry had experienced a cancer that, coupled with subsequent chemotherapy, has rendered him sterile. Because of the sudden onset of the condition and the medical treatments, the couple were unable to have any of Jerry's sperm retrieved for purposes of artificial insemination.

The couple want an expression of their loving relationship. June, who has never been pregnant, wishes to bear a child herself, but they have both concluded that neither one would be comfortable

with a child resulting from anonymous sperm donation.

Learning of the Institute's research, they request the research team to utilize June's eggs and a somatic cell from Jerry to produce a child for them. No laws are in place barring private facilities like the Institute from performing such a procedure.¹

THE preceding scenario seems the stuff of science fiction, or at least the cover page of the *National Enquirer*. Nonetheless, announcements by researchers in February and March 1997 indicate that what is science fiction may soon become scientific reality and eventually clinically available. A team of Scottish researchers reported in late February 1997 that they had successfully cloned a sheep, whom they named "Dolly" after Dolly Parton, from a somatic (or body) cell of another sheep. A week later, researchers in Oregon reported the successful embryo cloning of rhesus monkeys, "Neti" and "Ditto."

These reports raised the prospect that human cloning was no longer technically beyond the realm of scientific possibility. Indeed, the head of both research teams indicated to the media that their procedures could be used to clone humans, although each expressed that it would be "offensive" or "repugnant" to do so.

Still, science doesn't always follow the dictates of ethics, and the prospect of human cloning caught the attention of President Bill Clinton, who indicated that such research raised serious matters of morality and spirituality. The President (1) imposed a temporary moratorium on federal sponsorship of research to produce a human clone; (2) asked for voluntary compliance from the private sector; and, (3) requested that the National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC) prepare recommendations by early June on the shape of U.S. public policy on human cloning research.

NBAC initiated a public hearings process in early March 1997 and also requested scholarly papers on the science, theology, ethics, and laws regarding human cloning. I was invited to prepare the study on religious perspectives. The following week, a member of the LDS church's Public Affairs Office called to ask if I would be interested in providing my thoughts on whether the Church should make a public statement on the controversy, and on the content of such a statement. Church President Gordon B. Hinckley had already encountered media questions on the subject.²

Here is the story of my role in these re-

lated endeavors—the Federal commission and the Church's position. This episode raises questions about how we as a religious people are to be involved in influencing the public discussion of ethical issues. Just how should we be light, salt, and leaven to, on, and in the world? This is an issue we haven't yet really addressed in our history, and now, with our increased prominence, it is a question we need to confront. Consider my experience.

POLICY AND ECCLESIASTICAL RATIONALES

Questions of genetic testing and engineering haven't been voiced by LDS scholars. But as human genome research continues, such questions will inevitably appear in LDS literature.

SHORTLY after the research announcements on cloning, and the enormous media attention these studies received, some major religious denominations, such as the Southern Baptist Convention, the Orthodox Church in America, and the Roman Catholic Church rushed forward with statements of condemnation, some

more and some less thoughtfully articulated. The media helped to stimulate public imagination by portraying the cloning controversy as a conflict between religion and science. This is a major oversimplification, but it at least opened public forums to religious concerns. The NBAC, charged with making policy recommendations for a public comprising in part citizens who are also religious believers, was obliged to acknowledge these religious sentiments and issues. Besides President Clinton's concerns about the spiritual challenges of cloning and public discussion about whether scientific research on human cloning involved "playing God," there was a philosophical rationale for the Federal commission to request a study of religious issues implicit in human cloning.

In the 1960s, a fairly vigorous debate had occurred in theological bioethics about the prospects of human cloning. Instigated by the writings of Nobel Laureate Joshua Lederberg, this debate concerned a scientific rationale for pursuing human cloning in order to save an endangered species, namely, the human race. Lederberg and other scientists had become concerned about "genetic overload"; that is, because of an excessive

number of deleterious genes carried in the human gene pool, the species was at risk of dying out at some future time. Human reproduction with babies carrying preferred genes, rather than those conferred by the lottery of life, was viewed as a means to avoid species extinction.

This proposal was greeted with both alarm and celebration among members of the theological community. One prominent Episcopalian ethicist, Joseph Fletcher, argued that cloning should be the preferred mode of reproduction because it reflected distinctive human features, including rational control, deliberation, and choice. Others were equally critical; Methodist theologian Paul Ramsey argued that however scientifically appealing, human cloning would be dehumanizing, because it assaulted the meaning of parenthood, transformed "procreation" into "reproduction," involved non-therapeutic research on the unborn, and reflected sinful human aspirations to become a creator God.

My point here is that religious thought on cloning already had some initial credibility and legitimacy for NBAC; indeed, in some sense, the cloning announcements did not necessarily mean ethics racing to keep up with science, as is often the case, but science catching up with theological imagination. In contrast, there is no similar historical discussion of cloning, or even genetic technologies for that matter, within the LDS community. Ecclesiastical leaders have refrained from giving direct counsel on issues of genetic screening, testing, or engineering, and (with some notable exceptions³) such questions have not seemed to command the attention of LDS scholars. Such issues are of course raised for members who may confront them when a fetus is diagnosed with a genetic abnormality or when a family history of, for example, breast cancer leads a physician to recommend a genetic test to determine predispositions to a late-onset disease. I suspect, however, that as research on the human genome continues, as more markers for disease are identified, questions of human genetics will inevitably find their way into LDS literature, both ecclesiastical and scholarly.

RELIGION AND RESPONSIBLE CITIZENSHIP

What values do we want the United States to uphold—morally, economically, spiritually?

THIS lack of an LDS voice was somewhat unfortunate, because unlike previous Federal commissions in medical ethics which have been rather dismissive of religious voices, NBAC seemed



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“Human cloning raises questions about Latter-day Saints influencing public discussion of ethical issues. What can we do to be salt and leaven to the world?”

genuinely committed to an inclusive dialogue with religious traditions. An Islamic scholar testified before the commission, a policy first. And the commission had requested me to study and summarize the views of various religious communities besides Jewish and Christian denominations, including African American, American Indian, Hindu, and Buddhist. Each of these communities has a distinctive religious context within which to situate human cloning and a distinctive religious voice by which to articulate concerns and positions.

Let me briefly recapitulate some of the claims that arise from these religious traditions.

First, a moral issue—even something apparently as breathtakingly new as mammalian cloning—will be set within a social context and history. It is very difficult, for example, to appreciate the distrust and moral suspicion with which cloning and many genetic interventions are viewed within the African-American community without situating these attitudes within an historical legacy of abuse, exploitation, and violation of African Americans by medical research.

Second, moral issues may be constructively approached through analogy, story, and narrative. Some American Indians and Hindu scholars, for example, thought it rather presumptuous that “Dolly” was heralded as a new creation. Many of the foundational creation narratives for American Indians and in the Hindu tradition portray the creation of humanity from divine beings in a manner that looks very close to a cloning process. In this respect, theological narratives might anticipate scientific developments rather than being viewed as reactive and anachronistic.

Third, promoting forms of scientific inquiry such as cloning, either for opening lines of promising medical research or for lining the pockets of biotechnological firms, may nonetheless represent a radical distortion of societal priorities. Funding and research

allocated to cloning can mean diminished attention to chronic diseases that afflict members of the African American community, for example. It may also reflect, as Hindu and Buddhist scholars contend, a misguided attempt to resolve metaphysical issues (about the purpose of parenting or the origins of the soul, etc.) through medical means.

PROPHECY AND CITIZENRY

The LDS church grapples with its response to human cloning.

MIGHT the LDS tradition also have some prophetic words to offer to policy formulation on cloning? Certainly, LDS thought offers some distinctive theological claims about the religious issues NBAC addressed in its deliberations, including the nature of family, procreation, and parenting; the meaning of the biblical concept of the “image of God”; the purpose of human life; or the vocation of scientific inquiry. It is, of course, most common for these issues to be presented in personalized proselyting, but I don’t think the traditional format precludes a different religious witness to the state. Moreover, when the state has invited such a witness as part of an attempt to reflect societal diversity in a democratic society, it can be argued that part of what is entailed by responsible citizenship is to participate in the public forum.

I would like to think that something like this might have been in the minds of those in the Church Public Affairs in early March 1997, but I suspect theological bewilderment might better characterize the situation. Public Affairs was contemplating issuing a

statement on behalf of the general authorities, and considering (1) whether to issue such a statement and (2) what the statement should contain.

Should the Church issue some kind of position statement? When Public Affairs contacted me, they were at pains to remind me that the Brethren typically do not take public stands on policy questions, unless they are directly connected to the tripartite mission of the Church (preaching the gospel, redeeming the dead, perfecting the Saints) or otherwise implicated a deep-rooted moral issue. Moreover, such statements were typically very brief and, following the pattern on display in the *General Handbook of Instructions*, offered conclusions for practical decisions without any supporting theological argument or rationale. So, they made clear to me that what was not going to happen was an official statement along the lines of a papal encyclical. Indeed, if any statement were offered, it was hoped a couple of sentences would suffice.

I argued that there were solid reasons for issuing a statement, and a more substantive statement than was being contemplated. On theological grounds, I suggested, there were some values of profound importance to the Church that were implicated in the cloning discussion. For example, the “Proclamation on the Family” affirms convictions about the family, about human sexuality, and about parenting that do not sit comfortably with human cloning.

I also proposed pragmatic reasons for issuing a statement. I would soon be calling the Church, as I was with virtually every other U.S. denomination, as part of my ap-

Pontius' Puddle



pointed work on behalf of NBAC. A lack of a statement would not necessarily mean the Church was an aberration; as it turned out, ecclesiastical silence was the rule rather than the exception among U.S. religious denominations. Still, it can be important to be viewed as proactive rather than reactive. Particularly when in the midst of a controversial public issue, it is difficult to control the interpretation of silence. Silence can be interpreted as indifference or as tacit consent or endorsement of the research. Finally, I also invoked a political argument, that the Church had an opportunity to exemplify its teachings about responsible citizenship by contributing to the public forum and discussion.

Those arguments, I thought, had some success in trying to address the question of whether a statement should be issued. My church interlocutor also invited me to outline the items such a statement should address. These elements included:

- The ecclesiastical rationale for the statement;
- An endorsement of the legitimacy of scientific inquiry in general;
- Theological issues raised by the prospect of human cloning, rooted biblically in the concept of the "image of God" and ecclesiastically in the "Proclamation on the Family";
- An evaluation of human cloning based on these theological values;

- Ecclesiastical recommendations to the Federal commission.

Not two sentences perhaps, but the five elements could reflect the theological complexity of the issue in a brief statement while avoiding the kind of blanket and reactionary condemnations of science that had been issued by other denominations.

I do not know what became of this exchange of ideas and faxes. After an initial five-day flurry in early March, I was not contacted again. However, as the deadline for my report to the Federal commission grew near, and I had not received any statement from the Church on cloning, I made the dutiful phone call to Salt Lake, and a statement was faxed. It read: "The First Presidency and Quorum of the Twelve Apostles of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have declared that: God has commanded that the sacred powers of procreation are to be employed only between man and woman, lawfully wedded as husband and wife. We declare the means by which mortal life is created to be divinely appointed." "4 This statement, of course, comes directly from the "Proclamation on the Family," and its most notable aspect is that it meets the two-sentence quota perfectly. As a statement aimed at addressing the issues confronted by the Federal commission, however, it was a failure. Whether it was an ecclesiastical failure, I will discuss later.

FAITHFULNESS TO GOD, FAILING WITH CAESAR?

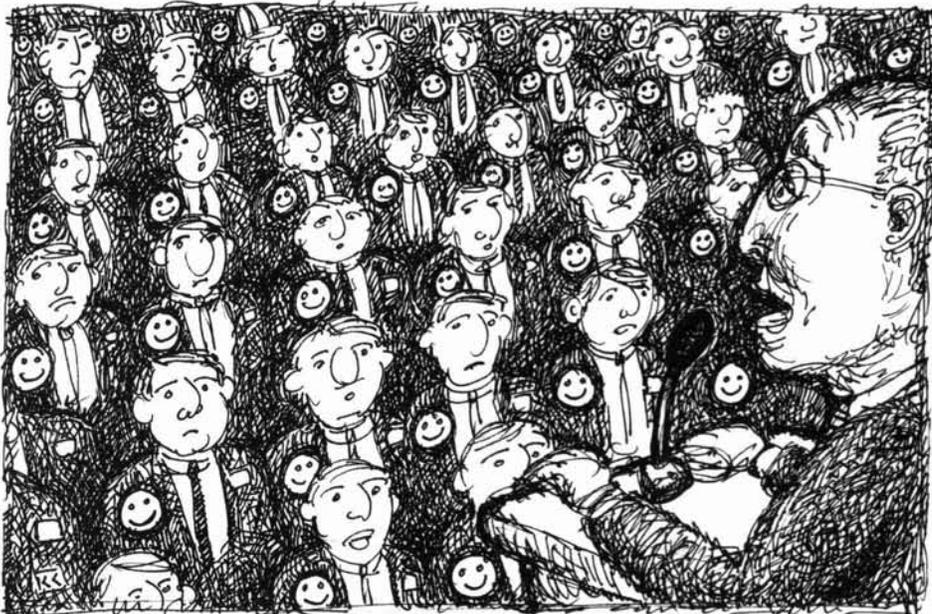
If we Mormons want a voice in the public discourse, how can we effectively and uniquely participate?

IN my report to NBAC, I had tried to bring some organization to diverse religious perspectives by using the metaphor of a traffic semaphore. A "green light" tradition indicated proceed with the research so long as it is safe; an "amber" tradition (where I tended to situate Jewish, Buddhist, and mainline Protestantism) represented proceed with much more caution; a "flashing red" (Hindu, Indian, and Islamic thought) tradition meant a stop or pause, i.e., a moratorium to assess the situation; and a "red light" tradition (African American, Orthodox, Roman Catholic) meant a full stop to research and a prohibition. Where within this schema might one situate the LDS tradition? It's really unclear the traffic semaphore applies at all because it presumes a complex system of rules and procedures to regulate vehicular traffic, while, to mix metaphors, LDS ethics is still in the stage of pulling hand-carts. There are both advantages and disadvantages to this stage.

One advantage is that the religious tradition does not find itself prematurely committed to a particular position that has insufficient scientific support. Simply by invoking the misleading slogan of "playing God" to criticize proposed scientific developments right at the outset, some traditions risk becoming caricatures of "religious reactionaries" to anything "new" in the fields of science or medicine. This is a good method for losing credibility within both the scientific community and among policy makers. In contrast, waiting for the scientific, ethical, and policy discussion to fully play itself out is a course of pragmatism and ecclesiastical prudence.

As Lester Bush has described, this kind of pattern has, more often than not, been followed by LDS leaders in encountering new scientific and medical advances. "Formal [LDS] public statements on medical-ethical issues generally do not appear until relatively late in the discussion," with subsequent guidance evolving in general conformity to medical and societal consensus.⁵ This approach also gives greater latitude to the expression of personal agency, and indeed, on most issues of medical ethics (abortion being the most prominent exception), even formal statements in the *General Handbook of Instructions* defer to personal decisions.

The significant disadvantage to "sitting on the sidelines" during a scientific, ethical, and



KENT CHRISTENSEN

"Now, elders and sisters, when I said 'wear a smile when you are tracting,' I didn't mean it so literally."

policy debate is that LDS ethics can then only be reactive and responsive to a scientific *fait accompli*. In short, it seems to make theological convictions dependent on the progress of science and medical technology, rather than having theological convictions derive from independent theological principles or develop in dialogue along with scientific progress. The result: scientific and technological imperatives—"if it can be done, it should be done"—take primacy over ethical and theological imperatives.

Moreover, as noted before, if theological voices do not emerge until after the major scientific, moral, and policy questions have been settled, it becomes very hard to control the interpretation of ecclesiastical silence during the interim period when the Church is on the sidelines. One prominent example is displayed in a very compelling book, *Spare Parts*, by the sociologists Renee Fox and Judith Swazey, part of which is devoted to a study of the first artificial heart experiment at the University of Utah in 1982.⁶ Among other things, a reader of Fox and Swazey's account would come away understanding the LDS church as a community that believes as much in science as it does in God. Its doctrines indiscriminately celebrate technological achievements as revelations of the will of God, with

little concern about the implications of the science for broader social and ethical questions.

Obviously, there is an intermediate position between hasty and knee-jerk theological reactionarism and ecclesiastical sideline-sitting—one where the tradition is actively involved in the public discussion. My report to NBAC argued that, ideally, religious faiths are "communities of moral discourse"; that is, they provide valuable forums for continuing civic education for citizens, whether religious believers or not. Given the absence of general science literacy among the public, let alone comprehension of cloning, and the reticence of professional scientists to communicate their findings to the public, religious communities could initiate community discussion forums to begin this necessary dialogue. Two of the five recommendations the Federal commission made to President Clinton dealt with measures to provide a more informed citizenry with respect to the scientific, ethical, and cultural questions.⁷ Churches are a good place for that to happen. Could LDS wards become communities of moral discourse, or even simply be locations that host moral discussions on public issues? Places that provide scientific and ethical education on pressing issues, that offer occasions for members to become more the-

ologically informed? Cloning is only one of many difficult ethical issues America will confront in the coming decades, and I believe Mormonism can be a constructive voice in the national discussion. But, at present, on most issues we are a silent observer. Our entering the public discourse on ethical issues would reflect a serious undertaking of good citizenship in a democratic society. But I do not have much optimism for this occurring within our LDS faith community as currently constituted. Do we even want to have a voice in the public discussion? Can prophecy be compatible with citizenry? ☐

NOTES

1. Case originally prepared by Ronald Green, Dartmouth University. Used with permission.
2. "Leader of Mormon Church Looks to Future," *SUNSTONE* 20:2 (July 1997), 72.
3. Lester E. Bush Jr., *Health and Medicine among the Latter-day Saints* (New York: Crossroad, 1993), esp. ch. 6.
4. Communication with Don Lefevre, 21 Mar. 1997.
5. Bush, 202.
6. Renee C. Fox, Judith P. Swazey, *Spare Parts: Organ Replacement in American Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1992), esp. ch. 6.
7. National Bioethics Advisory Commission, *Cloning Human Beings* (Rockville, MD: June 1997, iv-v), 110.



LANGUAGE OF LIGHT

- I. Above the bed
in my darkened room
car lights travel around the walls
like lighthouse beacons.
I lie silent, a child
counting under my breath
the small lighted ships
northing into the valley,
returning home.
- II. In the same room
when I pull the string,
the bulb disappears in the dark;
from the floor's far corner
the ventilator sends up
elongated shafts,
my parents' voices, grids of experience,
review the day,
light coming from below.

- III. In darkness of early morning
I wait,
knock on the bathroom door
for an opening,
knowing my daughter is radiant,
standing mirrored at the sink
on her wedding day—
the light shining under the door
a glyph of meaning.
- IV. My daughter and her child
squint at the camera lens,
their smiles surrendering
to sunlight.
Through a tiny aperture, the testament:
In my daughter's eyes,
the eyes of my grandchild,
light,
telling.

—ANITA TANNER



CORNUCOPIA

Critical Matters

MORMON PAGEANTS

I WOULD PROBABLY BE THE LAST ONE TO SUGGEST that Orson Scott Card is Mormonism's literary Messiah. I have read most of his novels, liked about half of them, and (like most good Mormon liberals) fumed until I was red in the face over his *SUNSTONE* columns about homosexuals, Salman Rushdie, and Mormon art ("The Hypocrites of Homosexuality," Feb. 1990; "Walking the Tightrope," Apr. 1989; and "Prophets and Assimilationists," Feb. 1989). Despite this somewhat mixed review of his overall oeuvre, however, I will always be willing to credit Card with having written my favorite piece of Mormon literature of all time: the short story "Pageant Wagon" in the collection, *The Folk of the Fringe* (Phantasia Press, 1989).

My reasons for liking this story so much have little to do

with its technical merits. I read it so long ago, and at such a young age, that I can't even remember whether or not it has any technical merits. But this story is a crucial part of the first serious evaluation of Mormonism and literature that I ever undertook.

First, some background. I grew up in a rural Oklahoma town, far away from anything that resembled Mormon culture. I saw my first and only Mormon pageant—the Manti Miracle Pageant—about a year after I returned from my mission. At the time, I was a sophomore English major at BYU and was starting to form a rather high opinion of my intellectual prowess. I was also starting to get caught up in the idea that "Literature" (capital L) had value in direct proportion to how hard it was to understand. I had just read my first Faulkner novel (I think it was *Intruder in the Dust*), and I was sure that nothing any more comprehensible than that could possibly have literary merit.

As one might imagine, the Manti Pageant was, for me at that

time, just one more excuse to feel superior. All the way home, I kept telling the people in my ward how utterly devoid of literary merit the pageant is, how Mormons should be ashamed of themselves for producing such facile art, and how dangerous it is for us to settle for cheap sentimentality. I had it all figured out.

About six months later, somebody lent me a copy of *The Folk of the Fringe*. I read the first three stories without much interest. But, when I got to "Pageant Wagon," something happened. The setting for the story is a post-apocalyptic world where Mormons have begun to gather back to Utah. There is nothing like television or radio, so the people rely on "pageant wagons" for their entertainment. The pageant wagon at the center of the story is just an old, beat-up cart maintained by a single family—a father, a mother, a few kids (I forget how many).



MARK SUNSTONE
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The family goes around and puts on the old Mormon pageants, with each person playing multiple roles. An outsider (non-Mormon) begins to travel with the family, and throughout the course of the story, he comes to understand—as do the readers—that these simplistic dramas have a profoundly uplifting effect on the community. They show the people their heritage and give them a link to their religion, their country, and the world that they have lost. They provide continuity and, ultimately, identity.

At least, this is what I got out of the story. When I finished "Pageant Wagon," I felt completely disoriented. I immediately began to reconstruct my Manti pageant experience, not one in which I viewed bad art, but one in which I participated—along with thousands of other people of my faith—in a mythic presentation of our shared heritage. I have never been to another Mormon pageant, but I still—through the amazing miracle of selective memory—regard the pageant that I once scoffed at as one of the more profound experiences of my life.

As I think about this experience now, though, I can't help wondering how those of use who are interested in "Mormon Literature" should deal with things like the Manti Pageant, or the Hill Cumorah Pageant, or any of the other pageants of Momondom. From a literary standpoint, it is difficult to explain why they move so many people; but they seem to do so anyway. It is not the great art or powerful acting or brilliant dialogue that seem to move us, but the rhetoric of the spectacle—the experience of being surrounded by so many fellow Saints while watching a dramatization of things that are sacred

to us. The experience is definitely literary, but not in any way that I seem to be able to pin down.

Just what is it that keeps so many people coming back?

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originally appeared on aml-list

The Medium and the Message

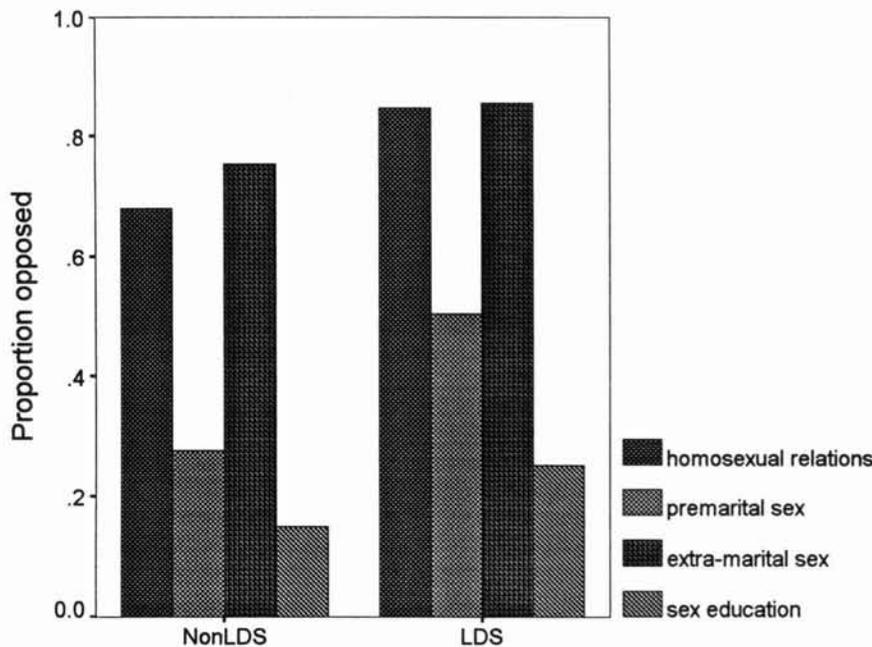
"JUST LIKE HERCULES"

THIS SPRING, MY PARENTS SENT MY DAUGHTERS—Anna and Molly, ages three and one—a video of the Easter story—sort of Hanna Barbera meets the New Testament, with Orson Scott Card writing the sentimental screenplay. It has all the cardboard stereotypes you'd expect: the effeminate Pontius Pilate, the bony, hooked-nosed Sanhedrin members in prayer shawls, clinking bags of filthy lucre. Tree-trunk-necked apostles (though Doubting Thomas is a bit feminized, too, until he sees Jesus; then his voice drops, and his wrists stop going limp). The virtuous women who scold the whining apostles. You know the story.

The opening scene is the crucifixion. Poor Anna, whose previous understanding of Jesus had been limited to the baby in Christmas videos, was terrified. We had to fast forward it, but she was determined, as usual, to make it through "the scary part." We had previously, though not consciously,

Peculiar People

Attitudes toward Sexual Issues



ATTITUDES ABOUT SEXUAL ISSUES

MEMBERS OF THE LDS CHURCH tend to be conservative in their attitudes regarding sexual issues. This finding comes from responses to the General Social Survey conducted by the National Opinion Research Center at the University of Chicago from 1972 to 1996. The cumulative survey includes over 35,000 responses, 452 of which said they are LDS. Respondents to national surveys were asked if they are for or against sex education in the public schools, and if they think sexual relations are wrong if the couple is not married, if they are of the same sex, or if it is with someone other than their spouse. LDS members are more likely than are the national population to say

premarital, homosexual, and extramarital sex are always wrong. They are also more likely to oppose sex education in public schools. The gap between LDS and national attitudes is especially large when it comes to premarital sex.

avoided telling her this story, afraid its associations between violence and God and death and parental love were too complicated for a three-year-old mind. After a few more viewings, though, she had quickly turned it into a “good guys, bad guys” thing, and when the Roman centurions say that “the gods” must have taken Jesus’ body, Anna exclaimed, “The gods took Jesus, just like Hercules.” We were left wondering, of course, whether religion could be any more dangerous than Disney; in her mind, the stories were equally “true.” Since then, she’s watched the movie a dozen times. Once she asked, “Can I watch that movie with that little Jesus guy?”

A few days later, Anna’s nursery school teacher told me that when her class did its Monday morning “What did you do over the weekend” routine, Anna gave them the whole screenplay of the Easter video, from the first Lex de Azevedo song to the final scene, with Jesus “flying up into the sky” at the end. When the teacher asked her who Jesus was, though, Anna’s answer was: “He’s a movie star. When he was a baby, he was in *The Little Drummer Boy* and *The Small One*.”

So, there you have it: Jesus Christ, moviestar.

—BRYAN WATERMAN
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My Creed

THE TIME FOR JOY IS NOW

1. *Joseph Smith and many of our early prophets and leaders were brilliant, innovative individuals. Joseph’s teachings are beautiful and inspired.* The innocence of children, the glory of learning, the importance of progression, recognizing the divine in humans, the propensity to think large and see potential, the strength derived from community, and the blending of the temporal and spiritual all continue to shape and influence my life.

2. *My search for truth and understanding, which matured as I studied the LDS scriptures, has become the most compelling force in my life.* This search influenced my choice of career and my marriage partner. It continues to strongly influence my career and leisure pursuits. I strive to be unafraid of the truth and its consequences. I hope to have the strength to “let the chips fall where they may” when the truth makes me uncomfortable or indicates I need to change my views or behaviors. I try to have tact and judgment when speaking the truth as I see it, but I hope to also have the strength to not avoid truth even when it makes others feel uncomfortable or has negative consequences

for me. I admire people who derive conclusions from facts, but I have less and less patience with people who derive “facts” from their conclusions.

3. *The scriptures contain a lot of truth, but few facts.* Our sacred texts are great for learning to live a fulfilling, happy life, but they are poor for learning about history, physics, geography, or biology.

4. *I cannot separate the spiritual, the emotional, and the physical.* These elements are inescapably intertwined. This conclusion has brought me mental serenity, but it has also made me regret my past attitudes and naiveté.

5. *Everyone has a spiritual side.* For some, spirituality bubbles to the surface like an artesian well; for others, it only surfaces after drilling very deeply. This is true among the churchd and the unchurchd, the laity and the authorities, the exalted and the humble.

6. *People pay a price for membership in organizations.* I have devoted a good deal of time to studying and thinking about organizations. By their dividing labor and specialization, facilitating sociality, accumulating and pooling resources, and by their continuity, organizations can be incredibly powerful forces for good. But organizations also exact a price from individuals in terms of lost liberty, con-

Translated Correctly

“SET NO BOUNDS TO YOUR LOVE”

MATTHEW 5:43–48

KING JAMES VERSION

43 ¶ Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy.

44 But I say unto you, 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;

45 That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust.

46 For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same?

47 And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more *than others*? do not even the publicans so?

48 Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect.

THE NEW JERUSALEM BIBLE

Doubleday, 1985

‘You have heard how it was said, *You will love your neighbour* and hate your enemy. But I say this to you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you; so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, for he causes his sun to rise on the bad as well as the good, and sends down rain to fall on the upright and the wicked alike. For if you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Do not even the tax collectors do as much? And if you save your greetings for your brothers, are you doing anything exceptional? Do not even the gentiles do as much? You must therefore set no bounds to your love, just as your heavenly Father sets none to his.’



The spiritual, the emotional, and the physical are inescapably intertwined. This conclusion has brought me serenity, but also regret.

sumed resources, depersonalized interactions, and neglected personal needs. Individuals and organizations alike must constantly ask: "Is the price too high?" If so, organizations need to change or individuals need to leave.

7. *Wealth brings comfort and pleasure, but little else. Power and fame satisfy the ego and stimulate adrenaline and endorphin production, but they bring no lasting satisfaction.* The pursuit of wealth, power, and fame is the greatest source of evil and unhappiness in the world. The temptations Jesus faced in the wilderness are the central challenges faced by every person in every age.

8. *Service brings happiness.* Sensible altruism is the answer to almost all of society's questions. It should be our highest ideal.

9. *Seize the day.* We cannot live life to its fullest when we are looking to the next life, the Millennium, the next year, or the next comet. Our children will never be children again. Our parents and friends will not always be with us. The oppor-

tunity to love or to make a difference or to enjoy an experience may never come again. Sure, we need to plan, to work toward goals, to be sensible, but "men are that they might have joy" (2 Ne. 2:25). The time to be joyous is now.

—JOHN TARJAN
Bakersfield, Calif.

Twenty Years Ago in Sunstone

BEAUTY AND UGLINESS

IN THE JULY/AUGUST 1978 ISSUE OF SUNSTONE, in his "Saints-Eye View" column, Orson Scott Card reflected on John Gardner's then-recent book, *On Moral Fiction*:

"In short, it is the duty of the moral artist to affirm, to build, to construct—but one of his tools, one of his building blocks is ugliness. Beauty and ugliness are not opposites. As [John] Gardner says,

The primary intuition of the poet-priest is one of a particular sort of order, an order which is partly sensual, made up of objects loved or hated, partly transcendent and abstract, a vague but powerful sense of the general classes of things which ought to be loved or hated; in other words, affirmed or blown to bits. What he loves the artist calls beautiful; what he hates he has no word for (not 'ugly,' or 'grotesque,' or 'trivial,' or 'wicked'), he merely wants it out.

"If a work of art depicts evil and shows it to be painful, unrewarding, negative, destructive, bad, then that work of art is exactly as moral as one which shows good to be beautiful, up-

All-Seeing Eye



And what rough beast . . . slouches toward the Los Angeles Temple?

lifting, desirable. Art is not moral, because it never shows ugliness; art is moral because it shows ugliness *honestly*.

"And yet so much of Mormon art shows good to be bad! That is, it often shows goodness to be puerile, or impossible, or—heaven forbid—boring. A gooey G-rated film that reduces goodness to niceness does as much harm as an X-rated film that makes evil seem rewarding, since both will move an audience to shun the good and espouse the evil.

"Yet Mormons have a tremendous potential for creating moral art, as soon as we overcome our preoccupation with morality as a synonym for virtue. We waste too much time attacking pornography when we should be attacking puerility; trying to ban the R-rated film when we should be trying to protect our children from mindlessness and destructive worldviews. Anyone who has seen a predominantly Mormon high school classroom with its appalling lack of respect for the teacher and the subject matter can see that we may be keeping our children from dirt, but we are not providing anything to fill the vacuum."

In the World

EASTER STORY

SPRING CAME TO ESTONIA AND SURPRISED US ON Easter morning with a blizzard the likes of which we have not seen all winter. Not terribly cold, but snowing all day with a northeast wind. I sat home all afternoon with the snow drifting higher against the windows, listening to Easter music on the radio in Estonian, English, Russian, Latin, German. Easter for everybody. By late afternoon, though, I decided to go out. I decided to go for a run. Dress up a bit, with my wind suit on, and it will be fine. Besides, the fresh snow is so lovely.

I set out on my usual route. As I come round the first corner, the bus stop shelter on my street, I see a man lying on the ground. He is holding on to the trash can and moving his legs helplessly. I stop next to him, and look, and see that he doesn't look at all injured. He's an older man, in a thick, brown pile coat and worn-out black shoes. He's wrinkled, but he's big and solid, built like a bear.

I walk over and pick up his hat, which has fallen off in the snow. I try to put it on his head, but it falls off again. So I hand it to him. "Oh, beautiful child," he says to me. His face is round and wrinkled like a pumpkin left in the field all winter.

"I fell down," he says. "And I can't get up."



BLAINE ATWOOD

*"What if he's not drunk, but just old and can't get up?
Horrible to think, Shura, that you left him lying in the snow."*

So I go to take his arm and help him up. I pull, and he doesn't move an inch. His knees are sliding on the snow. So I grab his hand, his fat, wrinkled, sausage fingers, with my right hand, and I grab the trash can with my left hand, and I brace against his feet with my feet, so he won't slide, and I pull as hard as I can. He doesn't move an inch.

"I fell down," he says again. "And I can't get up." And he doesn't seem too worried about it.

I am irritated that my efforts to help are accomplishing nothing. Well, it is just not that slippery, I say to him in my head. And you could get up if you weren't *drunk*. The last word I don't even say in my mind, because it is just too . . . not nice. But I am thinking it all the same.

"Well, if you can't get up," I say to him impatiently, "you'll just have to stay there."

And I go back to my run, because I'm chilled now, having stood still for so long in the wind, and I'm not dressed for standing still. If he's still there when I come by on the way back, I say to myself, then maybe he'll be more interested in making an effort, and maybe then I'll help him.

I run about a mile and a half out, as far as the drive-thru McDonald's sign, and then turn around and start back. It's beautiful, all the new snow, but it's not easy. The footing is tricky, and the wind is gusting and blowing snow in my face. All the way, I talk to myself encouragingly in Russian.

Oh, *Shura, molodets*, I say to myself. *Come on, Shura, just keep going. Oh, you are so molodets.* "Molodets" is an all-purpose Russian word that means good and brave and smart and everything all rolled together. It is what you are if you get the right

answer in class; it is what you are if you score the winning goal in soccer. And it is exactly what you are if you run three miles in the snow and the wind.

First mile: *Oh, Shura, molodets.* Second mile: *Molodets, Shura. Keep your head down, and just keep going.* When I am on the last quarter mile, I can just barely see my corner bus stop ahead in the snow, and I remember the old man on the ground. If he is still there, I think, now I can help him up. Even if he is a bit drunk, he can't stay on the ground in the snow with the wind blowing on him. And what if he's not drunk, but just old and can't get up. Horrible to think, Shura, that you left him there.

I think about how I will help him up, brush him off. Make sure that he gets his old, fur hat firmly on his head, that he gets inside the bus stop shelter out of the wind, until he can get on

the next bus. I even think of a little joke. *Khristos voskres*, I will say to him, the traditional Russian greeting for Easter day. *Christ is risen. And you, too, have risen.*

But as I come up to the bus stop, I see he is gone. I see the bare spot in the snow where he was. But he is not there any more. Somebody else must have helped him up, helped him get on the bus and get home.

I turn the corner to my street, to the last hundred yards to my house, and the wind and the snow come at me full in the face. *Oh, Shura, I think, You are not much molodets. Or if you are, it is only after it is too late.*

—CHERIE WOODWORTH

Estonia

<cwoodwor@eol.ee>



MORMON INDEX

Estimated total number of Mormon pioneers who crossed plains from 1847 to 1869: 60,000

Current number of Saints in the Africa Area: 59,000

Percentage of LDS men vs. LDS women who feel that their marriage relationship is equal for household chores: 6.5 : 6.8

Average number of hours LDS men and women report they spend a week preparing meals: 3.7 : 12.7

washing dishes: 3.6 : 8.8

maintaining auto: 5.2 : 10.8

outdoor tasks: 7.5 : 4.8

Ratio of boxes of Jell-O sold per capita in Utah to the rest of the United States: 4 to 1

Number of Church presidents to visit mainland China before President Hinckley did in 1996: 0

Chances that a person contacted by missionaries out tracting will be converted: 1 in 1,000

Chances of conversion of a person who first meets missionaries in a friend's home: 1 in 2

Number of LDS athletes to win medals at Olympics: 16

Number of Olympics medalists to later convert to Mormonism: 4

Estimated amount of tithes collected by the Church in 1996: \$5.2 billion

Percentage of 1996 Church-received tithes contributed by American Saints: 94

Percentage of LDS who are U.S. citizens: 49

Percentage of Joseph Smith's canonized revelations that explicitly address financial matters: 79

Typical length of time a Church welfare recipient stays on the dole: 11 weeks

Average cash value a Church welfare recipient receives during that time: \$300

Number of attendees at BYU's 1997 Education Week: 30,000

Percentage of Education Week attendees who were women: 60

Number of times a complete General Conference has been canceled: 1

Percentage of Church membership currently living in Utah: 17

Percentage of Church membership living in Utah fifty years ago: 55

Number of years since a new, free-standing building had been built at Ricks College until the recent John Taylor Building: 17

1,2 1997-1998 *Church Almanac* (Deseret News), 176, 178; 3,4 T. Heaton, K. Goodman, T. Holman, "In Search of a Peculiar People: Are Mormon Families Really that Different?" in *Contemporary Mormonism: Social Science Perspectives* (Illinois), 95, 104; 5 *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 Mar. 1997, A1; 6 1997-1998 *Church Almanac* (Deseret News); 7,8 Rodney Stark, *The Rise of Christianity: A Sociologist Reconsiders History* (Princeton), 18, 18; 9,10 D. Michael Quinn, *Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Signature), 813, 813, 159; 11,12,13,14,15,16 *Time*, 4 Aug. 1997, 53, 53, 55, 55, 57, 57; 17,18 *Salt Lake Tribune*, 24 Aug. 1997, C1; 19 *Deseret News*, 4 Oct. 1997, E2; 20,21,22 *LDS Church News*, 20 Sept. 1997, 5, 5, 7.

*Jesus left all of his disciples in all ages to be Jonahs,
whose task it was, and is, to enlarge their ideas of God sufficiently
to guide them as they take up their errand to the Great City.*

IN QUEST OF THE CHRISTIAN CLASSICS: THE BOOK OF JONAH

By Karl C. Sandberg

TOWARD THE END OF THE '60S, A YOUNG WOMAN student in our department confided in me that she had found another student on campus with whom she could pray. I took this passing word as a sign of what I had already concluded from other observations, that this one-time Presbyterian college had turned almost completely secular. Yet in that milieu of great freedom, which was eroding and breaking up established religions, the religious quest started to spring up again of its own roots, and so, two or three years later, I realized that students of a different kind were showing up in my humanities courses. They identified themselves as "Christian" and not as "Presbyterian," "Methodist," or "Catholic." To be a "Christian" was first of all to have had the conversion experience and thus to have had a new beginning centered in the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ.

They were intelligent, buoyant in their faith, and surprised that when they read Dostoevsky, or Pascal, or Camus, they found ideas that led them to see their newly acquired faith in larger and deeper ways. Several of them asked one day if I would give them a tutorial in "reading the Christian classics." I said that I would, if we could simply read the texts together, and then I suggested that we begin with some disparate but rewarding texts from the Old Testament. We would not try to do a course in textual history or development, but rather read the texts as people high and low had read them for hundreds of years, i.e., as stories. We would see what we could make of the text without going outside of the text, trying to see everything that was there and only what was there. We would try to draw meanings out of the texts rather than to read meanings into them from the various interpretive traditions. We would call on works outside the text only when they might be helpful in establishing context and in clarifying ambiguous passages. We would not follow the age-old Christian practice of seeking out prophecies in the Old Testament to prove the divinity of

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Christ. Rather, we would guide our reading of Christian classics according to the following notions.

WHAT IS A CHRISTIAN CLASSIC?

Drawing out what resonates with Jesus' life and death.

THE life of Jesus, especially to those closest to him, was a puzzle. They listened to him teach, and then came to him privately to say they didn't understand . . . would he go over it again? Traveling with him, eating with him, acting out with him the actions that made up his life, they often drew up short and realized they didn't understand what they were doing. They sometimes affirmed—"We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41), or "Thou art the Christ" (Mark 8:29)—they sometimes feared or doubted or worshipped, but always, they wondered. And at the end, they understood less than at the beginning. It was only afterward, at a distance, that the life of Jesus yielded bit by bit for them, like an image from stained-glass bits in a cathedral window, the meaning that its acts had gathered in.

At his life's end, they understood less of his life than at the beginning because they understood nothing of his death. The violence of it was unthinkable. Peter, while they were on the road to Jerusalem, was not even going to let Jesus talk about it. Thomas was willing to die his death with him, but like the others, he was unable to grasp the fact of it. To those closest to him, while they were experiencing the events of his death, his death was simply shattering and senseless.

Only later did his death begin to yield for them the meaning that through his death, Jesus had become both Lord and Christ. And Jesus' death and its mystery worked like a leaven in Saul become Paul—Jesus' life and death encompassed all lives and all deaths, and all of life and all of death. For the writer of Hebrews, "it behooved him to be made like unto his brethren in all things" (Heb. 2:17), and for Paul, he that ascended above all things first descended below all things (Eph. 4:9-10).

Every generation of Christians and seekers comes just as fresh and novice as did the apostles to the puzzle of the life of

Jesus and the mystery of his death. A Christian classic is a work that continues the disciples' task. Whether intentionally or not, it reveals some aspect of the human condition that informs the life and death of Jesus and draws out of us that which will resonate to it.

done with such a man?" David answers and thus convicts himself out of his own mouth: "the man who did this thing deserves to die . . . because he had no pity." Nathan answered, "You are the man." (See 2 Sam. 12:1-8; another example is in Isa. 5:1-7.) This kind of parable is really a dialogue in that the

JONAH

IS A MAN IN CONTRADICTION WITH HIMSELF
AND THEREFORE IN CONTRADICTION WITH GOD.
HE IS A MICROCOSM OF THE HEBREW PEOPLE
DURING AND AFTER THE BABYLONIAN EXILE.

READING JONAH

*It is a five-act play that obliges the listener
to confront its religious questions.*

IS the Book of Jonah such a work?

The first step in reading it, or any other text, is to become ignorant, to put away any idea we have ever had of it, especially if we have a great number of ideas about it. We try to read it with virgin eyes. We look for what we can see: characters, actions, decor. When we have identified the parts, we look for the connections between them; we look for the progressions of the work toward generalized meanings. We then decide what the text is about and what we can say about it on the basis of what we have read. If the text is a rich one, we will continue to get new ideas and better perspectives as we renew the process on future occasions.

If we give the text an overall reading, we notice that the story breaks down into five natural groupings like acts in a play. Each act has its own dramatic statement, but each also builds toward a denouement and an overall effect.

There is a cast of characters (personae who do or experience some action):

The LORD	By Himself
Jonah	Hebrew prophet of the LORD
The pagan sailors	Worshippers of various local gods
The great fish	The Monster of the Deep
The Ninevehites	Ignorantly wicked people, played by the world
The gourd	By appointment
The worm	Likewise

There are also two characters who are invisible but indispensable: the *narrator*, who tells the story, and the *listener* or reader, who reacts to and comments on it. This pattern is a familiar one in the Old Testament. For example, in order to convince David of his sins, Nathan the prophet tells the story of the rich man who had many flocks and herds, yet in order to serve dinner to a visitor, he stole the one ewe lamb belonging to his neighbor. The narrator (Nathan) asks, "What should be

parable is not complete without the response of the listener.

In Act I (Jon. 1:1-3), what would we see if this turned out on film? We would see a man fleeing toward a seaport. God has spoken and called Jonah to service to carry a message to the "great city" of Nineveh, and Jonah the Hebrew, prophet among the Hebrews, tries to flee to where God isn't.

Act II. Jonah pays his fare and goes on board a ship bound for Tarshish, some port at the ends of the earth. Once they are at sea, the LORD appoints a storm so great that it threatens the ship. The pagan mariners row hard against the storm but with no effect. They call upon their gods but with no effect. Meanwhile, at the time of greatest struggle, Jonah is asleep in the hold. The captain awakens him and asks him to pray to his god. By the way, who is his god? Jonah answers with assurance that he is a Hebrew and therefore worships the god that made heaven and earth and everything in them. At this word, the mariners, who worship local gods of a city or a country, are amazed and afraid. Jonah has mentioned to them that he is fleeing from the presence of the LORD. They draw lots to see who is the cause of the storm, and the lot falls on Jonah, who has a moment of self-recognition: "Yes, I am the cause of it," he says, "throw me overboard." The sailors do not want to, but since the storm grows stronger, they accede, and the storm stops. The sailors, pagans all of them, now become worshippers of the LORD. (See Jon. 1:3-17.)

Act III. The LORD appoints a great fish to swallow Jonah, and from the belly of the fish, Jonah cries out. He had intended to go where God wasn't, and now he is afraid that he has. When Jonah cries out in his distress from the portal of Death, God hears his cry and brings him up from the Pit. Deliverance belongs to the LORD. Jonah gives thanks and promises to keep his vows and gratefully sacrifice to the LORD. The fish comes to dry land. Exit Jonah; exit fish. (See Jon. 2.)

Act IV—the LORD, Jonah, the Ninevehites. The LORD again speaks to Jonah. "Go to Nineveh and tell the inhabitants of that great city that in forty days the city will be destroyed." Jonah announces the message, and the people believe him. They seek to turn aside the destruction by fasting and repentance. The LORD sees their repentance and withdraws the

judgment. (See Jon. 3.)

Act V. Jonah has gone from anger to happiness and back to anger. Why? Because God changed His mind about destroying Nineveh. Jonah speaks to the LORD in anger, "Is this not what I said while I was in my own country? This is why I fled to Tarshish at the beginning. For I knew that you are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, abounding in steadfast love, and ready to relent from punishing." (See Jon. 4:2–3.)

The LORD answers with a question, "Do you do well to be angry?" Jonah thinks that maybe the city will be destroyed after all. He sits on the hillside outside of the city to see. The LORD appoints a gourd, perhaps a castor bean plant, which springs up overnight and provides shade for Jonah, who is happy now because the LORD has provided him a shady spot from which to view the destruction of the city. His happiness is dashed the next day when the LORD appoints a worm that gnaws at the plant, causing it to wither and leaving Jonah exposed to the hot, east wind. He becomes so faint that he calls on the LORD to take his life. God answers, "Do you well to be angry about the plant?" Jonah answers, "Yes, angry enough to die." The LORD thus gives a summation, "You are concerned about the plant for which you did not labor and which you did not make grow; it came into being in a night and perished in a night. And should I not be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are 120 thousand persons who do

ings, but we can say it is about an individual type, about a people in a historical milieu, and about the character of God.

First, we see a man, an individual, Jonah the Hebrew. He willingly asserts his belief in the God who made heaven and earth and everything in them. Yet when God calls Jonah to service, the first thing he does is to flee from the presence of the LORD. In the belly of the great fish, Jonah cries out in thanksgiving for the mercies and deliverance of the LORD, and then he becomes angry when the LORD shows these same mercies to the people of Nineveh. Jonah, in short, is the picture of a man in contradiction with himself and therefore in contradiction with God. We can also see here a kind of life in contradiction with itself, the kind of life that hedges itself up within the narrow confines of itself, and if the word of the LORD comes to it in any form, the first reaction is to go where God is not, or at least where He is not so intrusive.

On a larger scale, we see a people in contradiction with themselves—Jonah is in fact a microcosm of the Hebrew people during the Babylonian exile (586–516 B.C.E.).

What, for example, is the great fish, and who had been swallowed by it? Anyone familiar with the prophecies of Jeremiah (who wrote before the Book of Jonah) would see an obvious allusion to what had happened to the Jewish people: "Nabuchadrezzar the king of Babylon hath devoured me, he hath crushed me, he hath made me an empty vessel, he hath

TWO

IDEAS ABOUT GOD CONTEND: JONAH PREFERS A GOD WHO COMES IN JUDGMENT, PROTECTS HIS PEOPLE, AND DESTROYS THE WICKED; HE IS VEXED BY ONE GRACIOUS, SLOW TO ANGER, QUICK TO TURN AWAY PUNISHMENT.

not know their right hand from their left hand, and also much cattle?" (See Jon. 4.)

Here the narrator ends abruptly and waits for the listener (reader) to make a response. What in fact is the book about? What can we draw out of it?

DISCERNING CONTRADICTIONS

The Book of Jonah confronts the differences between two concepts of God in the Old Testament.

WHO is Jonah? Not the prophet mentioned in 2 Kings 14:25 who lived in the eighth century B.C.E., but he is a persona in a parable written during the Second Temple period, i.e., after the return from exile in Babylonia, starting about 538 B.C.E. The Book of Jonah is to the historical Jonah as Shakespeare's Hamlet is to the obscure historical Hamlet.

What is the book about? How much can we say about it or draw from it? We are far from having exhausted all the mean-

swallowed me up like a dragon, he hath filled his belly with my delicacies, he hath cast me out" (Jer. 51:34).

Like Jonah, the Kingdom of Judah had been swallowed up by the monster of the deep. Jerusalem had been left in ruins, and the temple had been destroyed. As Jonah had cried out from the belly of the monster of the deep, those who had been taken into exile had been humbled and had cried out for deliverance and the sight once more of God's temple. (See Baruch 1, 2.) "To the LORD belongs integrity, to us the look of shame" (Baruch 1:15, Jerusalem Bible).

When Ezra the high priest and other exiles under Cyrus the Great had been spat up from the entrails of the great monster of the deep and returned to Jerusalem, they were confronted with baffling questions: How had the debacle come about? God by covenant had supposedly established the Davidic kingdom forever (2 Sam. 7:12). It had lasted four hundred and fifty years, and it was now in shambles. What had gone wrong? What did God want of them now?

In Ezra's mind, the catastrophe had come because they had

not kept the Law strictly enough. In Babylon, some of the Jews had started to assimilate. The Jews were in danger of losing their identity and needed to retrench. Therefore, one of Ezra's first acts upon returning to Jerusalem was to call all of the people together and tell all of those who had taken non-Jewish wives and had children by them to cast them off if they wanted to be numbered among the people of Israel (Ezra 9, 10). Thus, by scrupulous observance of the Law, he launched the people on the road to separateness from all other peoples. This formative period some see as the beginning of what we know as Judaism.

But in the Old Testament, especially in the Prophets, there is another current, the current of universalism. The calling of Israel was to become an ensign to the nations: "I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 9:6). The emphasis is not on withdrawing behind the hedge of the Law and looking inward, but rather on looking outward, trying to comprehend the sovereignty and care of God over all nations.

And so we see two contending ideas about God. Jonah would prefer to think of the LORD as one who comes in judgment, protects his chosen people, and destroys the wicked. Jonah seems, in fact, to need to have someone else down so that he can be up, to have the city destroyed so that he can be vindicated, and he is vexed with the LORD for being gracious, merciful, kind, slow to anger, and quick to turn away punishment. With this description of God's character, with this picture of God, we are very far from the God who commanded Saul to commit genocide on the Amalekites and then rejected Saul as king for having left one Amalekite still living (1 Sam. 15). The God in Jonah looks very much like the Father in Heaven in The Sermon on the Mount.

The Book of Jonah, then, marks a theological crossroads, clearly setting forth the difference between two different kinds of religion. Which road is correct? The Old Testament does not tie things up in a neat bundle. It is full of "unfinished business."

JESUS AND THE "UNFINISHED BUSINESS"

*All disciples are Jonahs on their expansive
errand to the Great City.*

IS the Hebrew story of Jonah a Christian classic? Does it inform Jesus' life?

One of the reasonable assumptions that we can make about Jesus is that he grew up as a Jewish boy, precocious and immersed in the scriptures, since he quoted from them throughout his life and even on the cross. Moreover, the Jewish way of studying scripture was not by way of catechism, memorizing a correct answer, but rather by way of interpretation, working out the best meaning among several possible meanings. It is a process of sifting and thinking about scripture and thereby becoming aware of the tensions in it, and therefore Jesus must have become increasingly aware of the tug-gings this way and that within the Judaism of the time.

As he began his ministry, Jesus was already on the path that led outward. He had broken with the rules that made table fel-

lowship with non-Jews or non-observant Jews impossible. He ate with publicans and other unclean people (Matt. 9:10-11). When the Roman centurion asked him to heal his servant, Jesus was ready and willing to go right into the home of a Roman (Luke 7:2-10). His teachings likewise transcended the narrow hostility between the Jews and the Samaritans. When one worships God in Spirit, one is above the dispute of whether the temple at Jerusalem or the holy mountain of the Samaritans is the right place to worship. (See John 4.)

If Jesus temporarily limited his teaching to the "lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. 15:24), the movement of his life and teachings was outward in increasingly wider circles. He began his life in a small town as part of the artisan or peasant class, and he ended it by saying, "All power has been given me both in Heaven and on earth. Go ye therefore and teach all nations . . ." (Matt. 28:18-19). He thus left all of his disciples in all ages to be Jonahs, whose task it was, and is, to enlarge their ideas of God sufficiently to guide them as they take up their errand to the Great City. 



BARBED WIRE

*after FSA Rehabilitation Clients. Near
Wapato, Yakima Valley, Washington,
1939, by Dorothea Lange*

Famous for being poor,
You stand clutching
A barbed wire fence.
You don't seem to notice
The barbs pressed against hands,
Bodice, crotch through your dress.

Maybe it's the picture
(You're striking a pose);
Maybe it's your mother,
Shading her eyes from a distance
(You want to be by yourself);
Maybe that's what poverty is:
Dirt and barbed wire and grief,
And the two fence strands
Pressed against your dress
Showing what the body
Can take, even now.

—KIM BRIDGFORD

Sermon

If the mystery is Christ in us, then our journey is one of discovery, of learning to love ourselves, to love the questions that show us new sides of ourselves, that lead us into the divine within ourselves and with other people.

LOVING THE QUESTIONS

By Lavina Fielding Anderson

And it came to pass, that after three days they found him in the temple, sitting in the midst of the doctors, both hearing them, and asking them questions. . . .

And his mother said unto him, Son, why hast thou thus dealt with us? Behold, thy father and I have sought thee sorrowing.

And he said unto them, How is it that ye sought me? wist ye not that I must be about my Father's business? (Luke 2:46–49)

IT IS SIGNIFICANT THAT THE FIRST RECORDED action of Jesus in mortality was to ask questions. What were those questions? I wish we knew. Furthermore, the first recorded words addressed to Jesus in mortality were a question—the question of Mary; and the first scriptural words from Jesus in mortality were also a question.

I want to talk about questions. The search for truth is a delicious, deliberate, and sometimes dangerous dance between questions and answers. It is a willingness to entertain questions as though they are “angels unawares,” to journey with the questions, to live with the questions, to love the questions, and sometimes to die with and for and in the questions, only to be reborn in a new question.

Jesus was a question-asker. His questions still ring in our minds and stir our hearts after two thousand years, compelling our attention and challenging our complacency. Think of the

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new avenues of communication and the many voyages of self-discovery triggered by these penetrating questions in conversation with Jesus:

- What manner of [person] ought ye to be? (3 Ne. 27:27)
- What wilt thou that I shall do unto thee? (Luke 18)
- Where is your treasure? (Matt. 6:21)
- Who is my neighbor? (Luke 10:29)
- Could ye not watch with me one hour? (Matt. 26:40)
- Who is the greatest among you? (Matt. 23:11)
- Which of you is without sin? (John 8:7)
- For if ye only love them which love you, what reward have ye? (Luke 6:32)
- How oft shall I forgive my brother or my sister? (Matt. 18:21)
- Whom do ye say that I am? (Matt. 16:15)
- What shall it profit [you] if [you] shall gain the whole world and lose your own soul? (Mark 8:36)

One reason these are such great questions is they have powerful answers, simple answers, clear answers; and yet, they invite—almost compel—us to ask further questions. Take, for instance, that simple, narrative-based question, “Could ye not watch with me one hour?” The answer is obvious: no. The apostles were slumped sideways and snoring. The question is rhetorical. It is a question, on one level, designed to produce guilt and shame because of obvious failure and inadequacy. We have plenty of questions like this already: Why aren't you a better wife? a more faithful home teacher? less slothful in service? Or like this one: So you're right, but everybody else is wrong? And that really terrific question: What's the matter with your testimony?

But Jesus' question leads us into deeper questions: What do we do—what does God himself do—with the fact that our desire to watch will always, in this life, be limited by the flesh and our imagination and the inadequacy of our love? What does it

mean to watch with someone? And, why does someone ministered to and attended by angels still yearn for the touch of a human hand, the look from a human eye, the pity and terror and tenderness of a human heart?

In the spring of 1994, a gathering of women precious to me began its testimony meeting with Janice Allred and Margaret Toscano sitting on the top row of risers and laughing about being on the edge. Janice, in her gentle, quiet voice, asked a question, "If I'm excommunicated this year, will you still love me?" I have walked with this question ever since.

I have not heard Janice ask that question again, but I have been collecting various answers to it. With terrifying frequency, some answers have been: I can't love you unless the Church loves you. And the answer of the Church is: This is a court of love. Of course we love you. In the name of love, we cast you out. This answer should lead us all to deeper questions: How is that possible? What kind of love is this? How can we get the Church to love us? What is love purchased at such a price worth? And how can we continue to love the Church?

Those of us associated with SUNSTONE are about this question: What does it mean to be a Mormon intellectual—to put the fruits of our minds and hands at the service of our faith? But we have other questions: What does God want me to do with my life? What does discipleship mean? How can we be in the world but not of the world? How can we love if we cannot serve, and how can we find ways to serve? What do I do with brothers and sisters who ask different questions or who ask no questions? Does God respect my questions as much as he respects someone else's answers? And there are deeper questions still: What does it mean to be God? Who is he, or she, or they? What makes me feel like their daughter?

Questions are dangerous. Certainly some questions we ask are. Do we *have* to ask questions like this? Do we have to ask questions at all? Isn't it more comfortable to lean on our certainties or on the certitude of others? Hugh Nibley asked, "Are you ashamed of getting the right answer, just because it's the same as everyone else's?"¹ Jesus healed the epileptic son, but he also asked the father, "Do you have faith that I can heal him?" The father answered, "Lord, I believe; help thou mine unbelief" (Mark 9:24). Jesus accepted the father's answer, but what if he really wanted a different answer? John Donne, in his third satire, writes in cautious paradox:

To adore, or scorne an image, or protest
May all be bad; doubt wisely; in strange way
To stand inquiring right, is not to stray;
To sleepe, or runne wrong, is.²

I remember hearing Elouise Bell say, "I don't apologize for my doubts. I'm not particularly proud of them, either." Isn't it just as dangerous to have only questions and no answers as it is to have all the answers and recognize none of the questions?

These aren't questions to supply easy answers to. These are



questions we need to live with, to lie down and rise up with, to take on our journey, sometimes to wrestle with as Jacob wrestled with the angel, and sometimes to dance with.

HARD QUESTIONS, COMFORTING ANSWERS

The courage to question opens new visions of life.

CONSIDER these metaphors for questions: questions can be treasures, the pearl of great price to be carried in the bosom and protected from thieves; or the faint and flickering light from a candle in a windy place that will show us our path one step ahead while we take that step in faith, trusting that if we continue our journey through the weary night, the sun will rise in the morning, drowning the light of our candle in the glorious light of full day.

A question can be a companion on our journey, just as Paul was accompanied on his journey to Damascus by his question, "Who art thou, Lord?" (Acts 9:5). He received an immediate answer and then spent the rest of his life working out what

that answer meant as he shared the glad message with others.

A question can be like a child that we carry within our bodies. We protect it and nurture it as it grows. We have faith that the kicks, swelling, and heartburn will turn into a baby with flawless fingers, toes, and ears. We carry the question in hope, but questions like this make us weary. They give us backaches and headaches. Frequently, they make us sick to our stomachs. And they never stay little and contained. They lead to birth, sometimes rending and tearing as they come forth and take on a life of their own.

Asking questions requires courage. It requires a willingness to open one's self to incertitude, to doubt, to disparagement, and to discouragement. It is to be willing to die to the old self, sometimes to die little deaths daily, in the confidence that change does not mean to lose oneself but to find oneself. Helen Keller said with sublime confidence:

I cannot understand why anyone should fear death. Life here is more cruel than death—life divides and estranges, while death, which at heart is life eternal, reunites and reconciles. I believe that when the eyes within my physical eyes shall open upon the world to come, I shall simply be consciously living in the country of my heart.³

One of the great questions Christianity poses is its paradox that we save our lives only in losing them (Matt. 10:39). We're uncomfortable with this paradox—which is, no doubt, its purpose. We're meant to struggle with Pilate's question, "What is truth?" (John 18:38). Sometimes we may hope that if we never ask ourselves that question, we will never have to ask ourselves the next question, which is: Is this particular concept a piece of the truth? and then the third question: And if it is true, what does it call me to do? How does it call me to live my life?

IS THERE NO OTHER WAY?

*Questioning paths lead from fear toward love,
understanding, and acceptance.*

I think there is no question that Mormonism, which began with the humble question of Joseph Smith in the Sacred Grove, which provides a glamorous, glowing list of new questions, and which provides some of the most soul-wrenching and soul-satisfying answers imaginable in human terms, does not currently welcome many questions. What can be our response? If we can give up those questions, then I think there is no doubt that we will have more comfortable lives. But I think most of us have already passed that point. We have already begun the terrifying and satisfying journey of asking unpopular questions. And I really don't think it's possible to go back. We can't unask questions. We can't unknow what we know. We can't uneat the fruit.

We are launched on Eve's quest for the knowledge of good and evil. We have asked her question, "Is there no other way?" I hope that we will also be able to affirm her answer: "It is better to pass through sorrow, that we may know the good from the evil." Not easier, not safer, not more comfortable—

but better. That means, I think, that we have to acknowledge those questions that fear asks and answer them with courage.

Audre Lorde's poem "We Were Never Meant to Survive" does not minimize the fear but casts it in the most intense and ultimate of terms:

For those of us who were
imprinted with fear like a faint
line in the center of our
foreheads[,] learning to be afraid
with our mother's milk. . . .
And when the sun rises we are afraid
it might not remain.
When the sun sets we are afraid
it might not rise in the morning.
And when we speak we are afraid
our words will not be heard
nor welcomed
But when we are silent
we are still afraid.
So it is better to
speak remembering
We were never
meant to survive.⁴

We need to remember that we have taken upon us the name of a leader whose speaking led him straight to the cross. Caiaphas must have breathed a sigh of relief when he heard the thud of the hammer on the nails, thinking, "Well, that's that. We certainly silenced *him*." But Paul gave us the view from eternity when he reminded us that Christ will "put down all rule and all authority and power" and "put all enemies under his feet," for "the last enemy that shall be destroyed is death" (1 Cor. 15:24–26). Because he knew that end, he could say, by the "rejoicing which I have in Christ Jesus our Lord, [I stand] in jeopardy every hour" and "I die daily" (1 Cor. 15:30–31).

Father Leo Booth, who describes himself as both a recovering alcoholic and a recovering priest, has written about religious addiction in a powerful book called *When God Becomes a Drug*. Right at the top of the symptoms of religious addiction he places the

inability to think, doubt, or question information or authority. This is the primary symptom of any dysfunctional belief system, for if you cannot question or examine what you are taught, if you cannot doubt or challenge authority, you . . . miss the messages and miracles God places in your life because you literally do not know how to recognize them.

In refusing to think or question, you hand over responsibility for your beliefs, finances, relationships, employment, and destiny to a clergyman or other so-called [spiritual] master. You are usually told that not thinking, doubting, or questioning is a sign of faith. . . . Faith is said to mean unquestioning obedience. This is how religious abusers control; it is how

ministers and leaders are able to financially or sexually abuse their followers. . . .

If you are not permitted to think for yourself, to question, you stop your spiritual growth because you do not know how to see the ways God is working with you and through you. When you use your critical faculties to analyze, interpret, explore, and question, you discover new shades of meaning and greater richness in God's truth. Questioning and exploring [are means] of having a dialogue with God. To refuse to doubt, think about, or question what you are told is to miss an opportunity to talk with God.⁵

I never thought that one of the consequences of being excommunicated, would be that I would stop being afraid. More precisely, I never expected that one of the consequences of being excommunicated would be the revelation of how afraid I had been—how much in love I had been with legalisms, rules, and restrictions; how quickly and willingly I had drawn lines to exclude others; how easily I had ranked others by righteousness; how much of my life had been governed by rules: what I ate, drank, and wore, what I could say and how, what I couldn't say. I was a Pharisee supreme, judging others by how they spoke, walked, dressed, spent their money, acted on their political beliefs, prayed, and thought. There is nothing like

being judged to show the dark side of judgment. I tell people that nothing in my personal and family life has changed because of the excommunication—and from one perspective, that's true. We still have family prayer, read scriptures daily, sing hymns together, attend church weekly, spend our time and money in good causes, and find people who need our service. I had wondered if excommunication would mean a greater interest in smoking and drinking, if I would give myself permission to try the marijuana brownies that I had denied myself as a student at Brigham Young University. None of those things happened.

But an immense internal change has occurred. The fear is gone, and with it, the burden of the rules, regulations, and restrictions. It simply slipped off my back like the burden that Christian, in *Pilgrim's Progress*, dropped at the feet of Christ as he passed through the wicket gate of baptism. I no longer feel any need to evaluate my own righteousness or—more important—the righteousness of others according to the rules. I haven't given up judging as an act of will; a merciful hand has lifted it from me. Was I afraid, all those years, that only a rule stood between me and moral chaos? How could I have had so little faith? And how could I have had so little love that the first thing I wanted to know about others was their righteousness checklist instead of their stories and their hearts? There's an



immense freedom in listening for understanding instead of listening to evaluate, judge, prescribe remedies, and fix in various ways. I can't think of the difference without feeling my heart well up with praise and gratitude to God.

THE MYSTERY OF CHRIST

If the gospel is a mystery, then questioning is as essential as knowing.



I believe that an essential and important part of goodness—of being right with God—is asking questions. I think we cannot save ourselves without asking questions. I think we are totally useless at saving others without asking questions. I believe this because, without asking questions, we will never approach the Savior to ask the terrible and tremendous question of faith: “Good master, what must I do to be saved?” The Savior responded first with a question: “What says the law?” But that question was just to clear the ground, so to speak, for the real answer came next, “Come, follow me.” (See Luke 18:18–23.) We cannot get real answers unless we ask real questions. Or as screenwriter Wilson Mizner says, “I respect faith, but doubt is what gets you an education.”⁶

The most intense and urgent invitations to ask questions come from the Savior himself. Paul warns people to shun “fables and endless genealogies, which minister questions” (1 Tim. 1:4), but Jesus urges, begs, commands, promises:

Draw near unto me and I will draw near unto you; seek me diligently and ye shall find me; ask, and ye shall receive; knock, and it shall be opened unto you.

Whatsoever ye ask the Father in my name it shall be given unto you, that is expedient for you. (D&C 88:63–64)

To those who “confessed they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth,” the Savior promised to “reason with you, and . . . speak unto you” (D&C 45:13, 15).

I think of all the anxious warnings that we receive not to delve into the mysteries. What exactly are these mysteries? Alma identified the resurrection of the dead as a mystery (Alma 40:3), and Paul explained to the Corinthians that the change that will come “in the twinkling of an eye” upon the righteous living “at the last trump” is “a mystery” (1 Cor. 15:51–52). In explicating the parable of the sower to his apostles, Jesus explained that the reason he was doing so was because “unto you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God” (Luke 8:18). When Joseph Smith and Sidney Rigdon saw their vision of the three degrees of glory, they described it as

“the mysteries of his kingdom” (D&C 76:114). The Melchizedek priesthood, we are told, “administereth the gospel and holdeth the key of the mysteries of the kingdom, even the key of the knowledge of God” (D&C 84:19).

In what sense are they mysteries? True, we can't make these processes happen from our own knowledge. They are mysteries in that we don't understand how they work. I agree that we have many layers of understanding, but even little children can explain the parable of the sower. Nineteen-year-old missionaries have no trouble making the logic of the three degrees of glory apparent to investigators. The ordinances of baptism and the laying on of hands are the first steps into membership, not the culminating steps of salvation. Even the endowment is urged for the many, not reserved for a privileged fraction.

And, perhaps more important, it is not the scriptures that forbid us to search the mysteries. The scriptures propel and lure and coax us toward mysteries. The Doctrine and Covenants promises, “If thou wilt inquire, thou shalt know mysteries which are great and marvelous; therefore thou shalt exercise thy gift, that thou mayest find out mysteries” (D&C 6:11). The Savior urges:

- Ask that you may know the mysteries of God, . . . according to your faith shall it be done unto you. (D&C 8:11)
- If thou shalt ask, thou shalt receive revelation upon revelation, knowledge upon knowledge, that thou mayest know the mysteries and peaceable things—that which bringeth joy, that which bringeth life eternal. (D&C 42:61)
- Unto [you] that keepeth my commandments I will give the mysteries of my kingdom, and the same shall be in [you] a well of living water, springing up unto everlasting life. (D&C 63:23)

But what exactly are these mysteries? The mysteries may lie not in technical questions of how the resurrection will be performed or who may visit whom in the kingdoms of glory but rather what Paul calls "the mystery of Christ," "the fellowship of the mystery . . . to the intent that . . . the principalities and powers in heavenly places might be known by the church" (Eph. 3:4, 9–10). He refers to the "great mystery" of the union of "Christ and the church" (Eph. 5:32), the "mystery of faith" (1 Tim. 3:9), "the mystery of godliness" (1 Tim. 3:16). In *Doctrine and Covenants*, "the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven" seem to be defined as: "to have the heavens opened unto them . . . and to enjoy the communion and presence of God the Father, and Jesus the mediator of the new covenant" (D&C 107:19). Perhaps the clearest definition of this central mystery is Paul's statement to the Colossians that "the riches of the glory of this mystery . . . is Christ in you" (Col. 1:27). Now *that* is a mystery: within our limited, sinful, ignorant, mortal selves resides the purity, the power, the unfailing love, the immortality, and the glory of Christ himself. Think of the questions *that* mystery contains and engenders!

Brothers and sisters, if the mystery is Christ in us, then our journey is one of discovery, of learning to love ourselves, to love the questions that show us new sides of ourselves, that lead us into the divine within ourselves and with other people. I hope that we will love these questions, live with them, struggle with them, dance with them, rejoice in them, weep over them, stretch ourselves to the cracking point with them, measure ourselves against them, and be filled to the brim with them . . .

that Christ may dwell in [our] hearts by faith; that [we], being rooted and grounded in love, May be able to comprehend with all saints what is the breadth, and length, and depth, and height; And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that [we] might be filled with all the fulness of God. (Eph. 3:17–19)

May we be transformed by both the hunger of Eve in the garden and the clear vision of Anna in the temple who saw the Anointed One in the face of a helpless baby (Luke 2:36). May we ask our questions with faith, and courage, and above all, with that love which is the fullness of God. ☞

NOTES

1. Hugh Nibley, fireside, Brigham Young University, 8 Nov. 1968, notes in my possession.

2. John Donne, "Satire, III," in *Elizabethan and Jacobean Poets: Marlowe to Marvell*, edited by W. H. Auden and Norman Holmes Peterson (1950; New York: Viking Press, 1973), 395.

3. Helen Keller, *My Religion* (1927; New York: Swedenborg Foundation, 1986 printing), 110.

4. Audre Lorde, meditation 587, "We Were Never Meant to Survive," in *Singing the Living Tradition* (Boston: Beacon Press/Unitarian Universalist Association, 1993), n.p.

5. Leo Booth, *When God Becomes a Drug: Breaking the Chains of Religious Addiction and Abuse* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1991), 60–61.

6. W. H. Auden and Louis Kronenberger, *The Viking Book of Aphorisms: A Personal Selection* (New York: Viking Press, 1962), 111.



KING OF WOUNDS

He lived on our place
since before I was born;
more uncle than hired hand.
Pawnee, he changed his name
to King Of Wounds after Korea
part as joke, part serious
because he believed fighting
the Chinese had changed
his vision forever at Chosin:
the vision he had at fourteen
of an owl flying loop-the-loops
in a circle of red moon, talons
clutching a shrieking white
rabbit. His name then had been
Johnny No-Horses but after Korea
he came home with a box of medals,
as scarred as Frankenstein and enough
of a disability pension it didn't matter no
one was hiring Indians.

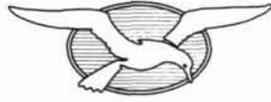
Until my father hired him.

King of Wounds. Odd even among
men reluctant to judge. He rode his
circuit of fence at night because that's
when cattle break out or men in;
he looked upon insomnia as a blessing
because he loved stars and meteor showers.
A beautiful woman once tried to get him
to go to the city—tried everything.
They had a good time and King Of Wounds
wore the pearl button shirts she bought
but at last she went home alone.
When I asked him about it all he said was
*upon those barren islands
they die, blamed and blaming.*

—SEAN BRENDAN-BROWN

LINE UPON LINE

NO TOIL NOR LABOR



chapter 2

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

By Neal Chandler
and Margaret Young

This is the second installment of a short-short story by six authors.

JENEAL SAT OUT ON THE DECK IN THE KENNEDY rocker Larry had bought on credit in 1986, brought up to the summer cabin to stain and to varnish for her birthday, but then forgotten and never looked at again. Now the naked pine was smoke yellow except where it was gummed and charcoal beneath her hands. She liked to sit on the shabby, neglected wood and rock slowly for perspective. Sun was warm through the thin air, the sky clear, the mountain hushed with bird song, but Jeneal was working. That's what she'd told the bishop on the phone. She was conducting an audit, which she hadn't told him exactly, but if he wanted to talk, had time for rumors and for nosing into private business, then he'd have to come up to her office. She sure wasn't going down to his. She wasn't even going to get dressed.

Among other things, things like politics and sexual intercourse and family values, Jeneal was reassessing religion. She kept on rocking and squinted down over the road that climbed up through the canyon. She stroked the deer rifle in her lap and studied things out in her mind. The establishment was coming to have its say. She was calm now. She was looking forward to the conversation.

THE doe she called "Marquita" rustled the scrub oak then peeked through the buds at her. Jeneal nodded, rocking, stroking the rifle. The one time she had caught Marquita nudging her hungry head into the Designated Territory, Jeneal had shot into the air. It was pure poetry, the way a deer could leap for its life.

Marquita was eying her now, like something omniscient. Frankly, these were the visions getting her to reassess. She wasn't wondering if it might all be a lie and a damn waste of time, that establishment-religion she had married into. (God save us, three hours of hard benches and slow songs, and Larry looking like God's personal Fuller Brush Man waiting for some sparkly commission to fall from the sky!) She was wondering if it could actually be true—Heaven and Hell and eter-



"She took off her sweater, wrapped the rifle in it, and then set it under the rocker. The bishop, no doubt, would comment on the weather."

nity and that. If a deer could paw into her secrets that way, eye her that way, then maybe there was a God, and He was using deer eyes.

The bishop's rusted truck rounded the bend. She took off her sweater (Larry's sweater, actually, the grey one his mother gave him one Christmas, two sizes too big). She wrapped the rifle in it, then set it under the rocker. The bishop would, no doubt, comment on the weather, ask her wasn't she chilly without a coat, wasn't she awful lonely away from bright lights and grocery shoppers, and what kind of work was she doing anyhow that couldn't be done in an office building, and wasn't there some marshmallow—Jell-O salad the Relief Society sisters could make her? He'd look briefly toward the peak, and he'd be thinking avalanche, but not saying it. (Spring melt was upon them. Everyone expected once the sun finished its business, Larry's white, white body would come through the icy veil, hands frozen frantic, wide-eyed face, all nicely preserved. But that wouldn't exactly be happening, because that's not exactly where Larry was.)

To be continued . . . Next issue's installment by Linda Sillitoe.

One of the most careful biblical scholars Mormonism has produced takes a microscopic look at the Garden of Eden story and concludes that it is not interested in how death and sexuality came into the world but in how humans came to be distinct from animals and, intellectually, more like the gods.

SEX AND DEATH IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN

By David P. Wright

IT IS A STRIKING FACT THAT, OTHER THAN TELLING the tale in Genesis 2–3, the Hebrew Bible itself does not pay much attention to the Garden of Eden story.¹ Only in later (post-Hebrew-biblical) Jewish and Christian traditions do we find exploration of its meaning.² This interpretive activity includes Mormon scriptural explanations and retellings of the story in the Book of Mormon, the Book of Moses, the Book of Abraham, and the Doctrine and Covenants.³ Despite the variety of directions in which the Jewish, Christian, and Mormon interpretive works go, they all address questions generated by the story found in the Hebrew Bible or its translations.⁴ This is the most original form of the story available. It is therefore necessary to carefully examine it by itself, to see what questions it raises, and to search its context for answers.

One of the questions that arises from the story—and one that readers in the religious traditions mentioned above found important—is whether the man and woman are liable to death and are sexually functional and potentially reproductive in the garden before eating the fruit. The answer to this question is crucial since it bears on the theological essence of the story. For if the man and woman are mortal and are sexually functional or reproductive only after transgression, then eating the fruit marks a descent in the state of the human condition, a “fall” as it has been termed. But if the couple is liable to death and is

sexually functional before eating the fruit, then their physical status does not significantly change—they suffer an “environmental” change by being expelled from the garden and the direct presence of Yahweh, and they now have to deal with thorns and thistles, but the only physical change is the pain of childbirth for the woman. Indeed, the intellectual faculty they acquire—knowledge comparable to that of the gods—mitigates the punishments they receive. In this second case, it may be better to think of the story as one of ascent rather than descent: the humans distinguish themselves from the animal world and draw nigh to godhood.

To be sure, it is not easy to determine from the text whether, before eating the fruit, the couple is sexually capable and active and whether death is possible in the garden. The story gives clues in both directions, and some scholars who have read the story critically have concluded that the pair is not sexually active and that death is avoidable before ingesting the fruit.⁵ After having agreed with this position and having advocated it in public scholarly debate,⁶ I now believe the stronger argument is that the man and woman are sexually active and are susceptible to death before eating of the fruit.⁷ Since the issues of sexuality and death are intertwined with one another, the argument below will move back and forth between them as logic requires.⁸

HUMANS AND ANIMALS

Why didn't animals have to eat of the fruit to be sexually capable?

THE MAIN consideration is the expectation of uniformity between the humans' and animals' situations. There is no reason to believe that the animals are not sexually active and not subject to death from the beginning of their cre-

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ation. Since the man is created from the ground as the animals are, and since the woman derives from him, it is reasonable to suppose that the couple has the same basic physical constitution as do the animals and is therefore sexually active and subject to death. To argue the matter differently, if the fruit is the means whereby human sexuality and mortality begin, one would expect the animals to have to eat of this or some similar fruit. The story, of course, contains no whisper of such a requirement or event.

One might respond that the story's focus is on the humans, not the animals, and consequently that the story does not seek to tell how the animals came to be sexual and liable to death. Yet it is difficult to imagine why this hole was left if a major point of the story is to tell how sexuality and death were introduced into the world. One might alternatively respond that the humans' eating brings about sexuality and susceptibility to death in animals as well as in themselves. But a sympathetic, almost "magical," transference of the consumption's effect goes far beyond the story's burden. In fact, it is actually precluded by the logic of the story: if the animals share in the effects of the consumption, then their intellectual capacities should also be expanded along with those of the humans. Obviously, the story is actually telling of something that uniquely happens to the humans over against the animals.

PAINFUL PREGNANCY AND THE MARRIAGE ETIOLOGY

Indications of sex before the fruit.

A FURTHER indication that the couple is sexually functional before eating the fruit is the punishment of painful pregnancy in Genesis 3:16. The verse implies that less painful pregnancy is possible before the consumption. If eating the fruit inaugurates sexuality, painful pregnancy would be a simple fact of life and not need to be a point of special sanction. The punishment of the male bears out this conclusion. The man is punished in regard to his main productive activity, i.e., agricultural work (Gen. 3:17–19). This work is something in which he is engaged before eating the fruit (Gen. 2:15). The punishment only makes this preexistent labor more difficult. Similarly, the woman is punished in regard to her main productive activity as the story sees it, i.e., childbearing. As in the man's case, the woman's work, or at least the capacity for it, should also precede eating the fruit. Then her punishment parallels the man's precisely: her pre-expulsion labor is now made more difficult.

The rationale in Genesis 2:24, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and mother and cling to his wife so they become one flesh," also attests to the couple's sexual capabilities before eating the fruit. Though it involves the bonding of man and woman in more than just a sexual way, and though it is prospective in speaking about a man leaving his parents (relatives the first man does not have), its placement just after the creation of the woman and its implied inclusion of sexual connection indicates that the pair has sexual capacity as soon as they are brought together.⁹

THE DEATH SENTENCE OF GENESIS 2:17

A punishment not executed.

A PIECE of evidence that could support the idea that sexuality does not begin until the pair eat the fruit is that the woman is named *hawwa* (Eve)—which is intended to mean something like "Life" in the present context as the gloss *em kol-hay* "mother of all that lives" indicates—only at the end of the story (Gen. 3:20) but not at 2:23 where, just after being created, she is called simply *isha* "woman." Why would the name that reflects sexual fecundity be reserved for after the consumption of the fruit if the woman is sexually capable at the beginning of her creation? The solution is found in how the death penalty of 2:17 is played out—or not played out.

As several scholars have noted, the penalty in Genesis 2:17 is formulated in a way so as to suggest that its execution would be swift. This implication is potent enough to make one think that Yahweh decides not to carry out the penalty but simply let the couple die a natural and eventual death.¹⁰ Support for this judgment is found in the lack of any death penalty in the explicit punishments of 3:14–19. The passing reference to returning to the ground in 3:19 hardly qualifies as a statement of punishment.

If Yahweh does not execute the penalty of 2:17, how does the threat function in the context? Is it not then superfluous? No. The story can be understood as displaying a tension between the deity's need to sustain creation and his need to vent his punishing anger. If he were to execute the penalty, creation would effectively come to naught. Humans, the center of the deity's creation, would vanish from the scene. As opposed to the Flood where a favored individual is able to continue the race (Gen. 6:8, 9; 7:1), or rebellions in the wilderness where Moses' posterity might replace the Israelites (Exod. 32:9–10; Num. 14:11–25; Deut. 9:13–14; cf. Ezek. 20:13–17), here at the beginning of creation, there is no one else to carry on the line. Hence, Yahweh relents and institutes alternative punishments (Gen. 3:14–19) that allow humanity to continue.

Naming the woman "Eve the mother of all that lives" late in the story is to be explained in connection with Yahweh's repentance. Despite the fact that punishment has been exacted, the man here celebrates the chance and blessing of continued existence by naming his wife Eve. Hence, it is not that sexual activity begins here; it is rather that the pair's lives have been spared, and they are allowed to raise up posterity. Eve thus becomes "the mother of all that lives."¹¹ This interpretation, by the way, suggests that though the man and woman are sexually capable from the beginning, they have not yet had children, otherwise their children, like those of Noah or Moses, might have continued the human line.

The above explanation shows that the death penalty in Genesis 2:17 cannot be used to argue that the man and woman are immortal or can otherwise avoid death. It might be thought this verse means that the man and woman will live indefinitely until they eat the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge. But the threat of death can be explained otherwise, as just shown. Thus this, the main proof for the pair's immortality, dissolves.

THE EFFECT OF THE TREES
What divine prerogatives are conferred?

THAT the man and woman are sexually able and active from the beginning helps explain more clearly the effect of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It has always been difficult to see how eating the fruit, if it involves sexual activation, can lead to “becoming like the gods” (Gen. 3:5, 22), who are presumably nonsexual or not distinctively

sexual over against animal creation. But if the fruit does not initiate sexual ability and activity, this difficulty does not arise. The man and woman acquire only god-like intelligence, rationality, and discernment (Gen. 3:5, 22).¹²

The challenge to a divine prerogative through eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, when pruned of its sexual connotations, stands in neat parallelism to another arboreal challenge to the divine: eating of the Tree of Life. If the couple eats the fruit of the knowledge tree, they gain divine knowledge; if



GUSTAVE DORÉ

THE FORMATION OF EVE

GENESIS 2

The New Jewish Publication Society (JPS) Translation

2 The heaven and the earth were finished, and all their array. ²On the seventh day God finished the work that He had been doing, and He ceased on the seventh day from all the work that He had done. ³And God blessed the seventh day and declared it holy, because on it God ceased from all the work of creation that He had done. ⁴Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created.

When the LORD God made earth and heaven—⁵when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, ⁶but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth—⁷the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

⁸The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. ⁹And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

¹⁰A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and it then divides and becomes four branches. ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. (¹²The gold of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.) ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon, the one that winds through the whole land of Cush. ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. ¹⁶And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, “Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; ¹⁷but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die.”

¹⁸The LORD God said, “It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him.” ¹⁹And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. ²⁰And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found. ²¹So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. ²²And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. ²³Then the man said,

“This one at last
 Is bone of my bones
 And flesh of my flesh.
 This one shall be called Woman,
 For from man was she taken.”

²⁴Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh.

they eat of the life tree, they gain divine life. As the latter offers only a single capacity, i.e., eternal life, so it makes sense that the former offers only a single capacity, i.e., discernment.

The lack of a prohibition about eating the Tree of Life has been used to argue that the couple can eat of this tree before eating of the Tree of Knowledge in order to stave off death. Thus they are effectively immortal, it is said, until they eat of the explicitly banned fruit. This assumption is questionable. The story reflects Yahweh's jealousy about the unique attributes of divine beings. The people are not to acquire divine knowledge, and when they do, he expressly forbids consuming fruit from the Tree of Life. He does not want people to be like the gods. Yahweh displays a similar spirit in the Tower of Babel tale (Gen. 11:1-9), a story from the same tradition as the garden story. From this evidence, it seems more likely that the couple is expected not to eat of the Tree of Life as well. Perhaps this prohibition is not stated earlier on because the story is an imperfect elaboration of a simpler story that originally had only the Tree of Knowledge in its narrative. Or perhaps the story intends us to understand that the couple does not know the significance of the Tree of Life until they eat of the Tree of Knowledge. Note in Genesis 3:22 how the acquisition of knowledge is made the basis for preventing the couple from eating of the Tree of Life.¹³

In any case, though the story lacks an explicit prohibition about eating from the Tree of Life, the man and woman appear to have avoided it. The wording of Genesis 3:22 (note particularly the adverb *gam*, "also") indicates that by this time, the couple has not eaten of this tree.¹⁴ And there is certainly no requirement that they eat of it. Thus, even if they can eat of this tree, they do not and thus do not have an immortal status in the garden. By all appearances, they can die there naturally.

NAKEDNESS AND SEXUAL METAPHOR

The literalness of eating the fruit.

TWO related bits of data that initially appear to prove that the man and woman are not sexually active in the garden are (1) that immediately after they eat, they recognize their nakedness (Gen. 3:7) and (2) that immediately after the man confesses his nakedness, Yahweh asks if he has eaten of the Tree of Knowledge (Gen. 3:8-11). Eating the fruit seems causally connected with sexual cognition. Why does Yahweh react in this way if the eating has nothing to do with sex? The solution lies in understanding the larger etiological orientation of the story. One of the story's goals is to explain the difference between humans and animals, specifically in regard to humans' superior intelligence.¹⁵ How did humans come to be so notably set apart from the rest of the animals? This happened, as discussed above, by their ingesting food that gave them intellectual abilities akin to those of the gods. Gaining this power of discernment, according to the story, led immediately to the establishment of the *chief visible difference* between humans and animals: clothing. Thus, the focus on nakedness does not reflect a concern about sexuality, but rather why humans, as opposed to animals, wear clothes. Note

that the story mentions making clothes not just once but twice (Gen. 3:7, 21). The statement that before eating the fruit, the man and woman were naked and not embarrassed (2:25) stresses the affinity and proximity of humans to the animals at that point in the story.

Sometimes it is argued that eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is to be understood metaphorically, a structural metaphor, to use Lakoff's and Johnson's terminology, where "Sex is Eating."¹⁶ This metaphor is alive not only in modern poetry and colloquial speech but also in ancient Near Eastern and biblical texts. For example, in Proverbs, an adulteress "eats and wipes off her mouth, and then says, 'I have done nothing wrong'" (Prov. 30:20). More positively in Song of Songs, the woman's "shoots[?]" are a paradise of pomegranates, with choice fruit, and she invites her beloved to "come to his [my?] garden and eat its choice fruit" (Song. 4:13, 16). The woman's "valley" [pudenda] is like a round bowl which does not lack mixed wine" and her "belly is a heap of wheat, surrounded with lilies" (7:2).

Despite the broad attestation of this metaphor, it is doubtful that the fruit eating in our story stands for sexual activity. First, the eating and the fruit in the story are conceived of as real, not simply as metaphors. The tree is planted (Gen. 2:9), and it exists among other trees (2:16-17; 3:1-5). Second, eating is something that the man and certainly the woman do independently of each other (cf. 3:6). Third, eating the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge is not the only instance of fruit eating in the story; the people may eat of all the trees in the garden save one (2:16-17; 3:2-3), and if they only had the chance, they might partake of the



GUSTAVE DORÉ

ADAM AND EVE

GENESIS 3

The New JPS Translation

²⁵The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame. ¹Now the serpent was the shrewdest of all the wild beasts that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, "Did God really say: You shall not eat of any tree of the garden?" ²The woman replied to the serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the other trees of the garden. ³It is only about fruit of the tree in the middle of the garden that God said: 'You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die.'" ⁴And the serpent said to the woman, "You are not going to die, ⁵but God knows that as soon as you eat of it your eyes will be opened and you will be like divine beings who know good and bad." ⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for eating and a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable as a source of wisdom, she took of its fruit and ate. She also gave some to her husband, and he ate. ⁷Then the eyes of both of them were opened and they perceived that they were naked; and they sewed together fig leaves and made themselves loincloths.

⁸They heard the sound of the LORD God moving about in the garden at the breezy time of day; and the man and his wife hid from the LORD God among the trees of the garden. ⁹The LORD God called out to the man and said to him, "Where are you?" ¹⁰He replied, "I heard the sound of You in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid." ¹¹Then He asked, 'Who told you that you were naked? Did you eat of the tree from which I had forbidden you to eat?' ¹²The man said, "The woman You put at my side—she gave me of the tree, and I ate." ¹³And the LORD God said to the woman, "What is this you have done!" The woman replied, "The serpent duped me, and I ate." ¹⁴Then the LORD God said to the serpent,

"Because you did this,
More cursed shall you be
Than all cattle
And all the wild beasts:
On your belly shall you crawl
And dirt shall you eat
All the days of your life.
¹⁵I will put enmity
Between you and the woman,
And between your offspring and hers;
They shall strike at your head,
And you shall strike at their heel."

¹⁶And to the woman He said,
"I will make most severe
Your pangs in childbearing;
In pain shall you bear children.
Yet your urge shall be for your husband,
And he shall rule over you."

¹⁷To Adam He said, "Because you did as your wife said and ate of the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,'

Cursed be the ground because of you;
By toil shall you eat of it
All the days of your life:
¹⁸Thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you.
But your food shall be the grasses of the field;
¹⁹By the sweat of your brow
Shall you get bread to eat,
Until you return to the ground—
For from it you were taken.
For dust you are,
And to dust you shall return."

²⁰The man named his wife Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. ²¹And the LORD God made garments of skins for Adam and his wife, and clothed them.

²²And the LORD God said, "Now that the man has become like one of us, knowing good and bad, what if he should stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever!" ²³So the LORD God banished him from the garden of Eden, to till the soil from which he was taken. ²⁴He drove the man out, and stationed east of the garden of Eden the cherubim and the fiery ever-turning sword, to guard the way to the tree of life.



DRIVEN OUT OF THE GARDEN

Tree of Life. Just as these other cases are not sexual metaphors, so eating from the Tree of Knowledge is not a metaphor.

Against the notion that eating the fruit is a metaphor for sexual intercourse also stands the consideration that if the first instance of sexual intercourse was sinful, then all ensuing instances should be equally sinful. This view, however, cannot be sustained on the broad evidence from the Hebrew Bible.

THE EPIC OF GILGAMESH

Similarities and differences with the Genesis story.

ONE last piece of evidence that might demonstrate that sexual activity begins with eating the fruit is in the Mesopotamian Gilgamesh epic.¹⁷ The possible parallels between this story and the garden story are numerous: Enkidu, the companion of Gilgamesh, is created out of clay by deity (I ii 34); he has association with the animals until a woman (Shamhat, the harlot) appears on the scene (I ii 36-iv 5); she engages him in sex (I iv 6-21; Old Babylonian version II ii 6-8); this sets him apart from the animals (I iv 22-28); as a result of his sexual activity, he becomes "very wise" (I iv 29); he also has "become like a god" (I iv 34; cf. Old Babylonian version II ii 11); Enkidu is clothed (Old Babylonian version II ii 27-28); the woman gives him food to eat (Old Babylonian version II iii 6-16); finally, much of the rest of the Gilgamesh story deals with the question of human immortality and even sees immortality as available to Gilgamesh through ingestion of a certain plant, a chance, however, that is foiled by a snake (XI 287-288).¹⁸ These possible common motifs indicate that the stories are somehow related, and this similarity provides grounds for assuming that sexuality and acquisition of knowledge are connected in Genesis 2-3.¹⁹

While the two stories likely share some common traditional blood (a direct dependence on the Gilgamesh story is unlikely, however), the development of the biblical story is complex as tradition-historical analysis has shown. In Genesis 2-3, multiple traditions have been conflated and creatively revised to yield a rather unique product. It is not impossible that, in the course of this development, sexuality and knowledge, perhaps once causally tied together as in the Gilgamesh story, were disconnected and given different places and functions in the story.²⁰ Enlightenment became associated with eating the fruit of a tree, something not found in the Gilgamesh story.

THE STORY'S THEOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY

Below the gods; above the animals.

ALL the foregoing considerations lead decisively to the conclusion that the man and woman are sexually active in the garden, and that theoretically, they can die there of natural or accidental causes. Thus, the story is not interested in telling how death and sexuality came into the world. These are givens, as they appear to be for the animals. The story's interest rather is to tell how humans came to be distinct from animals and more like the gods in intellect. Something of a hymnic counterpart of this is found in Psalm

8:6-9:

You (God) have made him (i.e., humans) a little less than divine beings ('elohim),

...
you have made him to rule over your creation;
you have placed everything under his feet,
all sheep and cattle,
as well as the wild beasts,
the birds of the sky and fish of the sea,
that cross the paths of the seas.

The difference between this psalm and the Genesis story is that, in the former, God is the one who gives humans their near-divine position. In Genesis 2-3, the humans seize it for themselves. Human initiative, with a little help from a cunning animal²¹—not divine blessing—is responsible for the power of intellectual and moral discrimination. ☐

NOTES

1. Outside of Genesis 2-3, the Hebrew Bible does not make clear, developed reference to the tradition. Job 31:33 has Job rhetorically demonstrating that he had been candid about his failings: "Did I hide my sins like Adam?" But this is not developed. The closest and longest parallel is in Ezekiel 28:11-19, but this is concerned with a single individual, a male, perhaps a royal figure, who is already wise before rebellion, and who lives, along with a cherub (for the reading of v. 14, see W. Zimmerli, *Ezekiel 2, II Teilband* [Neukirchen-Vluyn: Neukirchener Verlag, 1969], 675), in "Eden, the garden of God," alternatively called "the holy mountain of God." After some sin, the man is struck down from the mountain. As can be seen, this tradition is unique and does not necessarily reflect or depend upon the story in Genesis 2-3. It seems to be a parallel story of rebellion against deity, much like the so-called "Lucifer" myth in Isaiah 14:12-20. There are a few passages that mention "God's/Yahweh's garden" or Eden (Gen. 13:10; Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13; 31:8-9, 16, 18; 36:35; Joel 2:3). But these are few and do not refer to a story of transgression as in Genesis 2-3. It is only in later (post-biblical) Jewish and Christian traditions that we find extensive attention given to the Garden of Eden story and the meaning of some of its arcane features explored.

2. E.g., *Apocalypse of Moses* 7-9 (and passim); *Life of Adam and Eve* 1, 32-36 (and passim); *Apocalypse of Adam* 1; *Jubilees* 3; 4 Ezra 3:4-7; 1 Cor. 15:21-22, 45-49; Rom. 5:12-21. To this should be added the many commentaries on the story throughout Jewish and Christian tradition to the present.

3. 2 Ne. 2:17-30; Mosiah 3:11-27; Alma 12:22-23; 42:2-13; Moses 3-4; Abraham 5; D&C 29:34-42; 107:41-56. In my view, these are specifically Joseph Smith's own interpretations of the Garden of Eden story. For reasons for this judgment, cf. my article, "In Plain Terms that We May Understand: Joseph Smith's Transformation of Hebrews in Alma 12-13," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature, 1993), 165-229.

4. Joseph Smith's exegesis, for example, is based on the King James version of the Bible (see note 3).

5. For the view that sex was not practiced or the couple was not sexually mature until or after eating the fruit, see, for example, L. M. Bechtel, "Rethinking the Interpretation of Genesis 2.4b-3.24," *A Feminist Companion to Genesis* (ed. A. Brenner; *Feminist Companion to the Bible* 2 [Sheffield: Sheffield Academic Press, 1993]), 84-86, 88, 116-117; G. W. Buchanan, "The Old Testament Meaning of the Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 75 (1956): 119; R. Gordis, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil in the Old Testament and the Qumran Scrolls," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 76 (1957): 130-138; L. F. Hartman, "Sin in Paradise," *Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 20 (1958): 36; P. Humbert, *Études sur le récit du paradis et de la chute dans la Genèse* (Neuchâtel: Secrétariat de l'Université, 1940), 64-65, 114; S. Niditch, *Chaos to Cosmos: Studies in Biblical Patterns of Creation* (Scholars Press Studies in the Humanities 6; Chico, Cal.: Scholars, 1985), 30-31, 33; J. W. Rosenberg, "The Garden Story Forward and Backward," *Prooftexts* 1 (1981): 17. For the view that death was avoidable in some manner, see: R. J. Clifford, *Creation Accounts in the Ancient Near East and the Bible* (Washington, D.C.: Catholic Biblical Association, 1994), 147-148; G. W. Coats, *Genesis, With an Introduction to Narrative Literature* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 53;

Hartman, "Sin," 35–36; Humbert, *Études*, 116–151; Niditch, *Chaos*, 31. For a more complete list of those with these views, see the article listed in note 8, 313–314, n. 30.

6. In the article "Unclean and Clean (OT)," *Anchor Bible Dictionary* (6 vols.; ed. D. N. Freedman; New York: Doubleday, 1992) vol. 6, 739a, and in the presentation "Exclusion from the Garden and Sanctuary City" (at the national meeting of the Society of Biblical Literature, Nov. 1993).

7. For arguments along this line, see J. Barr, *The Garden of Eden and the Hope of Immortality* (Minneapolis 1992) 57–73; J. A. Bailey, "Initiation and the Primal Woman in Gilgamesh and Genesis 2–3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 89 (1970): 144–148; O. H. Steck, "Die Paradieserzählung: Eine Auslegung von Genesis 2,4b–3,24," in his *Wahrnehmungen Gottes im Alten Testament* (München: Chr. Kaiser Verlag, 1982), 70–71, 98, 102, 103 n. 272; P. Humbert, "Mythe de création et mythe paradisiaque dans le second chapitre de la Genèse," *Revue d'Histoire et de Philosophie Religieuses* 16 (1936): 451.

8. A version of this argument with fuller references appears in my article "Holiness, Sex, and Death in the Garden of Eden," *Biblica* 77 (1996): 305–329, in a larger argument about the contradiction of the impurities of sex and death in a holy Garden of Eden (cf. the exclusion of impurity from the holy in Lev. 7:19–21; 12:4; 21:1–4, 10–12).

9. The blessing-command to multiply in Gen. 1:28 cannot be used for determining whether the couple is sexually active before eating the fruit since it is part of Gen. 1:1–2:4a which has a different origin and authorship than Gen. 2:4b–3:24.

10. Cf. R. W. L. Moberly, "Did the Serpent Get It Right?" *Journal of Theological Studies* 39 (1988) 1–27.

11. Cf. the similar conclusion in Steck, "Paradieserzählung," 103.

12. The phrase "knowledge of good and evil" does not seem specifically connected with sexual experience or maturation, but rather general knowledge, discernment, and wisdom. Similar phraseology is used of ignorance in young children (Deut. 1:39; Isa. 7:15–16) and possibly senility in an elderly person (2 Sam. 19:35–36). In some cases, similar phraseology is connected with a divine capacity for wisdom and judgment (2 Sam 14:17 [cf. v. 20]; 1 Kgs. 3:9 [cf. v. 28]). On the meaning, see Buchanan, "Meaning," 114–120; W. M. Clark, "A Legal Background to the Yahwist's Use of 'Good and Evil' in Genesis 2–3," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 88 (1969): 266–278; Gordis "Knowledge," 123–138; Humbert, "Mythe," 453–455; *Études*, 82–116; H. S. Stern, "The Knowledge of Good and Evil," *Vetus Testamentum* 8 (1958): 405–418; J. Stoebe, "Gut und Böse in der Jahwistischen Quelle des Pentateuch," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 65 (1953): 188–204.

13. Cf. K. R. Joines, "The Serpent in Gen 3," *Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft* 87 (1975): 7; and similarly, Humbert, "Mythe," 447–448, 453; *Études*, 22–23.

14. W. H. Propp, "Eden Sketches," in *The Hebrew Bible and Its Interpreters* (ed. W. H. Propp, B. Halpern, D. N. Freedman; Winona Lake, Ind.: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 192.

15. A similar disjunction is found in the Gilgamesh story (see note 17, below). After Shamhat seduces and pleasures Enkidu, the animals are alienated from him and he is then brought into civilization (I iv 23–36).

16. See G. Lakoff and M. Johnson, *Metaphors We Live By* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980).

17. For a translation, see Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, The Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others* (Oxford: Oxford University Press), 39–153.

18. One could expand the parallels to include the flood story in Gilgamesh XI and Genesis 6–8 which includes a flood story from the same tradition as Genesis 2:4a–3:24.

19. Another supposed evidence of sexual activity is the term *eden* which means "pleasure," perhaps including the notion of sexual pleasure (cf. *edna* in Gen. 18, 12; see G. Anderson, "Celibacy or Consummation in the Garden? Reflections on Early Jewish and Christian Interpretations of the Garden of Eden," *Harvard Theological Review* 82 [1989]: 137–138 for evidence). This is not decisive since the garden seems to have its designation not from what humans might do there, but from the fertility of the land and the lushness of the plantation (cf. the sense of *eden* in Isa. 51:3; Joel 2,3).

20. Cf. Bailey, "Initiation," 147; on the Bible's rearrangement of motifs, cf. Clifford, *Creation Accounts*, 148–149.

21. The snake in Genesis 3 is just that, a snake, though with legs (and a voice!) before his punishment. In the context, it is neither Satan nor a demon. The notion of Satan as a proper name and as a tempter and rebel against deity is by all appearances a development of late/post-biblical thought. Cf. V. P. Hamilton, "Satan," *Anchor Bible Dictionary*, vol. 5, 985–989.



DAYS UNFOLD

From this toy-sized pond on Plumb Road
a Blue Gill struggles at my feet,
the line spittle-like trails its lip to grass.
I don't pay attention to the familiar flop
and wheeze, instead I watch my neighbor
take his grandchildren for rides
in an old Ford tractor. He circles, does figure eights;
three small heads bob behind him.

I want to wave, maybe stick my thumb out for a ride,
then, in the bump through high grass
and whirl of mosquitoes, ask him
to drive past my driveway and his, past
Grambling, keep going to where we see
only corn-fields and cows
and the slow hills of Ohio.

His wife comes to their porch, waves to them—
the afternoon sun strikes her dress, her smile
of hip, causing me to shudder with a warmth
close to embarrassment. He heads for home.
The Gill already collects the first flies. I study
the random breach of water and air when the fish jump.

After losing at love again, my father
flaked the empty barn with buckshot
where now daylight composes a litany
of shadows on the walls. The barn's skeleton
folds a little more each season, just like the memory
of my father curling into floor dust, the puff of dirt
left in air to refract the sun like fish scales.

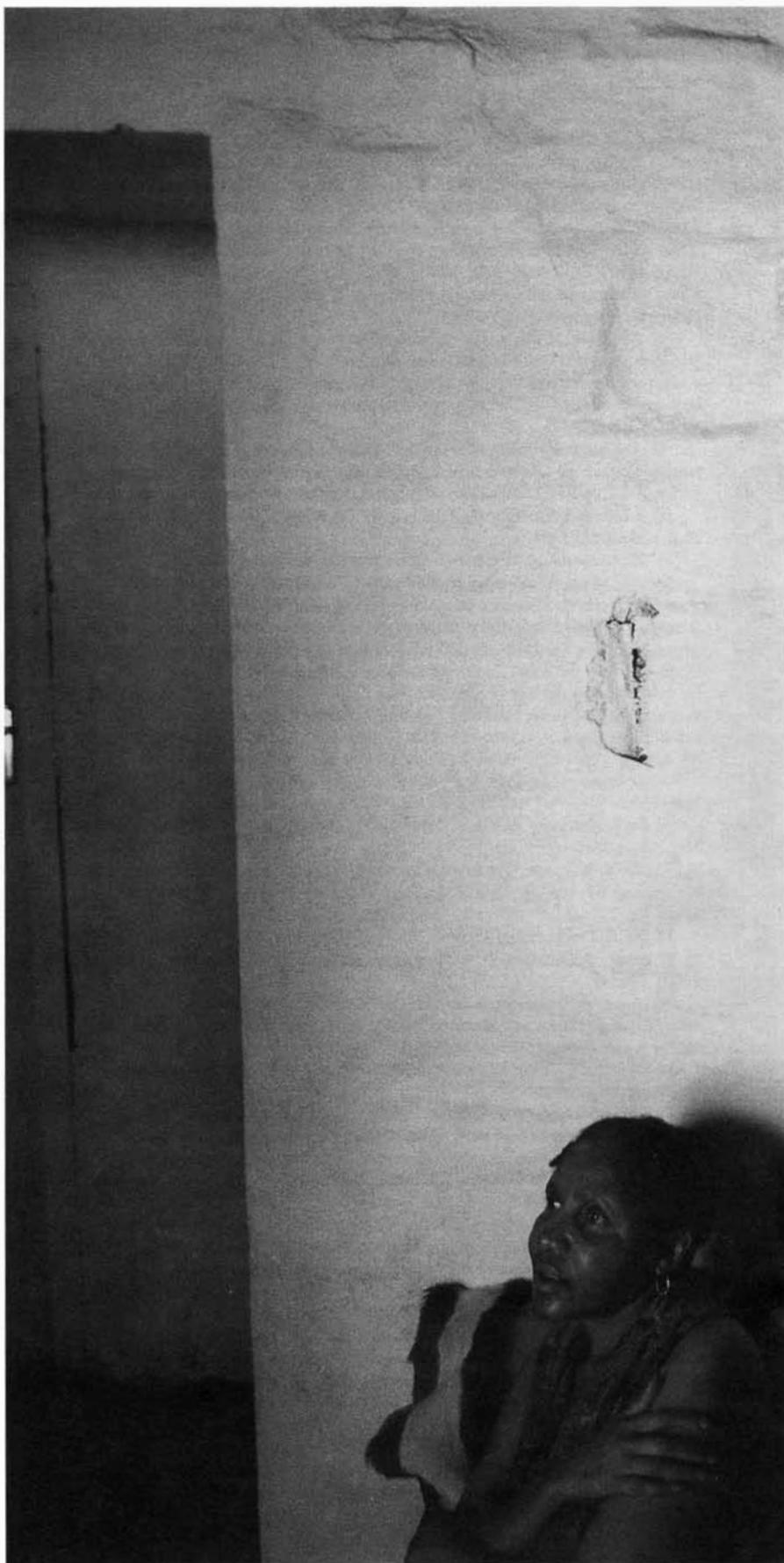
I sidearm a few stones, trying for at least five
good eyes rippling back to me. I'm sure
that in an hour from now the children next door
will get restless. Maybe after a breakfast
of hot cakes and honey they'll run outside
with the old man trailing them,

and I'll go over, ask if they'd like to fish.
Maybe ask for a ride on his tractor in return.
Until then, I'll sit here like every morning and daydream
of a woman not yet mine who stands next to me
in this marshy grass. She'll block the sun with one
hand,
place the other on my sunburned shoulder
and listen with me to the fish brush the surface.

—C. ROHRBACHER

PLATES & ANGLES

WHILE covering LDS church President Gordon B. Hinckley on his historic visit to Africa, Salt Lake Tribune photojournalist Trent Nelson took this picture of a Latter-day Saint woman. Nelson likes to look for scenes that have a touch of irony. The photograph illustrates a point historian Jan Shipps made at the 1997 Sunstone Symposium in her address on religion in Salt Lake City, which is part of her forthcoming book on religion in the U.S. city. Shipps recounted that when she asked President Hinckley what will be the role of Salt Lake in the expanding and decentralizing global Church, he essentially replied, "It will decrease administratively and increase symbolically." Hence, the Salt Lake Temple tacked onto the wall of a Momon home in Africa.





Moonstone Award Winner
1995 Brookie & D. K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest

JIM OF PROVO

By Tim Slover



BRUCE READE

I'm a people person; God isn't. I'd love to take away their plaguing doubts and decisions, but God just hides behind his pious front of free will.

“HAST THOU CONSIDERED MY SERVANT JIM?” It was almost closing time at the gymnasium, almost time for the laborers to discreetly murmur everybody out the doors and start cleaning up, and here God was, bringing up a new subject. Or rather, an old, old subject.

“Hast thou considered my servant Jim in Provo?”

I finished the last rep of lat pulls with a grunt and squinted up at God through the sweat. He had a beatific look. Figured. “Look,” I said, “we’ve gone around and around on this thing.” I got out of the way, and God moved in to do his set. He

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moved the pin to his usual Everest of weight with what might have been a smile of deprecation but just as easily might have been simple pleasantness. Infuriating. I towed off. “I’ve considered lots of your servants. I don’t like them. The ones I like aren’t your servants. I’m not dumb, you know.”

He glanced up at me with one of those somethings in his eye I can’t stand. “My servant Jim in Provo might be one of yours, might be one of mine. I don’t know yet.”

“You don’t know?”

Again the hint of a smile. “I haven’t ascertained.” By this time, you understand, God had already done about as many reps as the sands on the seashore, numberless to me though not to him, but he hardly seemed to notice, of course.

"You mean you haven't decided yet," I said. Couldn't keep the exasperation out of my voice: God's coyness about free will and determinism gets my goat.

God took a deep breath, filling his massive chest, and of course, all the laborers turned around to look. I rolled my eyes. Thoughtfully, he pulled off another six jillion reps, let the weights down with a crack like thunder, and stood up. "My servant Jim is not happy," he said. "I don't seem to be able to change that."

"Aren't *able* or—"

"I just thought you might want to consider him. Maybe you can help him." God picked up his towel. "Let's hit the showers." It was a bad joke, and I'd heard it a million times, but that's what I get for working out with God: there's not much point in a disembodied spirit hitting the showers.

"Don't rub it in," I said.

JIM Towner was sick of school. At least, that's what he thought he was sick of. He was sick of smartass students sucking up to smartass teachers by giving smartass answers to stupid, unimportant questions. It wasn't like he didn't know the answers. Take his English class: the teacher was droning on about some long poem by Eliot which for once he had bothered to read because he somehow liked that line, "Marie, Marie, hold on tight," or something like that.

"Marie, Marie, hold on tight.' What does that *mean*?" this dumb cluck of a teacher had asked on Friday. And all these smartasses gave their answers: death of the soul, old coot remembering his youth, winter grasping after spring in the cruelest month, that kind of thing. Jim had kind of liked that teacher before Friday because he seemed to know what was what, and Jim had expected this guy to laugh out loud when he heard those answers, which is what Jim himself was doing inside. He had expected this teacher to say something like, no, no, you stupid, brown-nosing jerks. It doesn't *mean* anything. It's just Marie, holding on tight. Don't you get it? But this teacher didn't say anything like that. He just grinned and nodded like an idiot and wrote all their answers down on the blackboard like they were geniuses and then gave his dumbass meaning of the line which was even worse than theirs. He wrote his answer on the blackboard, too, above theirs.

"Jim, what do you think?" this teacher asked. Jim's hands went into clammy fists inside the pockets of his jacket. The teacher was grinning at him like a fool. "Anything you want to add?" Yeah, you jerk, you first-class jerk, Jim thought. I want to add what dopes you all are. You're all so busy trying to impress yourselves, you're practically wetting your pants; it makes me sick.

"No," Jim said in a soft and respectful voice. "Everything up there on the board seems pretty right." Jim was fairly certain he heard a faint, just the faintest, chuckle across the room somewhere.

After class, he noticed his right palm was bleeding a little.

I DON'T know why I accepted God's lunch invitation. We don't like the same things: he's a vegetarian; I can't get enough meat. Of course we—the spirits—don't really eat any more than we really lift weights, or do anything else physical. But we've developed pretty good imaginations, and I have the most developed one around. I can get by on the physical plane almost like I'm one of them, imagining I'm touching, smelling, holding on to things, even, everything. It's all a matter of *seeming*.

Anyway, God can always tempt me, and so here I was. I was wary, though, when the laborer brought in my steak. I levitated it while seeming to lift it with my fork, which I was also levitating, of course, while seeming to hold onto it. You get the idea. I sniffed the meat apprehensively. "TVP?"

God smiled. "Is that what you think?"

"Okay," I said, and cut a mouthful. Meanwhile, God toyed with his salad, a gargantuan affair of fruits and vegetables and nuts which frankly gave me the willies.

"It's Jim of Provo," he finally said with a sigh. Affected, I thought. "He's going to kill himself." For a moment, I thought I had him, but he quickly added, "I think." He sighed again, and this time I believed it. Suicides are a real problem for God: I have a legal claim on every one of them. Without realizing it, I guess—I suppose I have a problem with this—I threw back my head and howled with delight to the tune of about five hundred decibels. God glared at me.

"Sorry," I said. I leaned forward; it was my turn to look concerned. "Tell me more about Jim. Poor boy," I said. I noticed tears in God's eyes, which always makes me impatient. The old phony.

He changed the subject. "Why aren't people happy?" he asked.

Was he kidding?

"Are you kidding?" I asked. "War, famine, poverty, disease, old age, loneliness." I was feeling pretty cocky, even managed to look him right in the eye for a moment. "Why should they be happy?" I said. I personally was feeling more buoyed up by the moment. "The way things are isn't conducive to happiness," I said and crammed a huge piece of steak into my mouth. "It's tough down there."

God pushed his salad bowl to one side, and a laborer discreetly whisked it away. Or he would have, if God hadn't caught him at it. "Save it," he said. "Or have it yourself." After the usual foot-kissing, etc., the laborer withdrew with his prize. God leaned forward. "I know it's tough down there," he said. "I've been there." It would have been a real triumph if I could have held his gaze just then, but I suddenly found my napkin very interesting. God leaned back in his chair. He looked done in, actually. "Why don't you see what you can do with Jim?" he said. "I can't seem to do anything."

My jaw dropped.

"I mean it," he said. "Oh, I know, your line is making people miserable, but you always claim if you had it your way, you could make them happy instead. So, why don't you give it a try with my servant Jim?"

"You mean, make him happy?" I asked.

"Yes."

I tried my best not to look sly. "Why should I?" I asked.

God stood up and paced. Each footfall sounded musically through all eternity as usual, but there was something deeply and genuinely tragic in the notes now. "Because maybe you're right. Maybe we should start doing things your way down there. My way doesn't seem to be working out."

Doing things my way. In a momentary flash, the old vision came to me. Came to me? Hardly. It grabbed me by the throat with thorny hands, and I didn't like it because it stirred up old itches I knew I couldn't scratch: Me on top, me on the throne, me telling everyone what to do, and *them doing it*. Not like with God in charge; he tells everyone what to do, and they hardly ever do it. It's that freedom problem he's got, that penchant for letting people work it all out for themselves. Only they don't; they screw it up. And, yes, these days I help them screw it up—sometimes, not as often as they tell you I do—because the whole insane plan just infuriates me. See, I'm a people person; God isn't. People are weak; I understand. They want help to advance themselves; I sympathize. And they don't want to be plagued by doubts and decisions; I take them away. Or at least I would if God allowed me to. But he won't. He hides behind this pious front of free will and choice, which of course he doesn't really give a fig about, just read your Bible, but his real objection to my way is that it puts me in charge. And he can't stand that. That I relate to.

"Let me just get this straight," I said. "You want to start doing things my way down there?" I pushed my plate away, annoyed that no laborer even pretended to be interested in clearing it, the little swine. God raised an eyebrow, and a laborer was there in an instant and gone with my plate just as quickly. Insufferable.

"Maybe," God said. "Why don't you start with Jim?"

"If I make him happy, you'll incorporate my ideas?"

"You're seeming to drool." Just a hint of mirth on the grave, perfect face. Maddening. But I needed to keep my cool; this was a huge moment for me.

"Sorry," I said. "I just want to get this straight. If I help this Jim guy be happy, using my own methods, you'll use them down there? I have to know this because I've never actually made anyone happy. You understand? I'd be breaking a principle."

"Well," God said, "it's up to you, of course."

I wondered. For a fleeting moment, it occurred to me that maybe it wasn't up to me; maybe nothing was really up to me. Worse, maybe none of what anybody did was up to them, and we were all just chemical impulses along the inscrutable paths of God's perfect synapses. Depressing. If that was how it was, I didn't want to know.

"Look," I said, "I know it sounds legalistic and all, but it's the way I work. I like to be careful; it's my nature." I took a deep breath. "Would you mind if we put this in writing?"

"Yes."

"I mean, would you sign a contract stating that if I do my part, you'll allow me to put my methods into operation down there?"

The divine gaze was level and steady as an anvil in a wading pool. "No," God said.

"Will you give me any kind of guarantee that if I succeed with this Jim, you'll play ball with me?"

"No."

"Right," I said, "you've got a deal." I had a hard time hiding my sheer delight as I left the presence. I'd just cut the best deal I'd ever made with God.

JIM plodded down the street from his appointment. Another wasted hour, he thought. And now that the winter sun had set, he was cold, too. He buttoned the top button of his jacket against the January wind, which he hated to do because he knew it made him look like a geek. But then, he thought, why should he care what all these smartasses thought about him? No reason.

He dug his hands deeply into his pockets, walked faster, head down, mad. Maybe if I had some cash, Jim thought, I could afford a real doctor instead of these stupid cut-rate-for-students dopes. Well, that's my last time anyway. Last time I spill my guts for some sappy woman and whoever the hell else was looking in behind the two-way mirror. The thing she didn't know, the one main thing Miss-I'm-all-concerned-about-you-Jim didn't have a clue about was how close she came to death tonight.

I was telling her about being a ghost, Jim remembered, and, if he'd known it, went red in the face as he lurched along remembering. I was telling her about walking on campus between the busiest buildings at the busiest times and being a ghost, how I say "Hi" to twenty people in a row on that x-crossing place and smile, put out my hand for a shake, and not one of those stuck-up bastards pays any attention to me.

I shouldn't have said any of that, I know, Jim thought. What a jerk I am. His hands, in his pockets, pounded his thighs. Jerk, jerk! He was passing the 7-11 now, and the automatic itch came to go in and ask for one of those magazines they keep behind the counter. He'd never done it; didn't they stop selling that stuff a while back?

The therapist had looked right at him and said, "Now, Jim, do you *really* say 'Hi' to anyone on campus?" She had a warm look in her eyes as if she thought she was my mother or something. Jim thought, that was when I almost did it. If she hadn't turned away that instant to pretend to look at some papers, I would have reached over and grabbed her by her chicken neck and smashed her head against the mirror. Give the gawkers behind there something to really look at, bastards.

"Hi, Jim." Jim looked up startled, almost running into the pretty blonde woman standing too close to him. He was too frightened to say a word, even to take his hands out of his pockets.

"You probably wonder how come I know your name. I just do." Jim could hardly breathe, but the smell of perfume was intoxicating. The dazzling woman held his gaze, smiling, sympathetic. "You know, Jim, you don't need magazines if you've got the real thing. Not if you're as cute as you are." She put out her soft, comforting hand to lift a loft of hair from Jim's fore-

pathetic. "You know, Jim, you don't need magazines if you've got the real thing. Not if you're as cute as you are." She put out her soft, comforting hand to lift a lock of hair from Jim's forehead. But he was half a block away and running hard.

GOD always keeps you waiting. His press notices, of course, are all along the lines of his never letting a sparrow fall without his noticing, and so on, and, frankly I can't argue with that: not much goes on God doesn't know about, I'll give him that. But *knowing* about something and *doing* something about it are two entirely different things, believe me. When it comes to action, God likes to say, "My time is your time," by which he really means, "Your time is my time," and he takes his sweet time. Which is why all that drivel about creating everything in six days makes me laugh so hard. *Six days!* Forget it, they don't know who they're dealing with.

At this point, God was keeping *me* waiting in his outer office. Nice place: big, impressive, comfortable couches, what you'd expect, but mine are not heels which enjoy being cooled. Frankly, I was steamed. God had broken the rules as usual. When I appeared to Jim in the likeness of the blonde rock star—who, I did the research to know, was a dark fantasy of his—and gave him his shot at happiness, he wasn't supposed to be able to resist. That was the deal I'd made with God. We'd do things my way, none of this either/or stuff; if I say do it, we do it.

Suddenly God was right beside me. Unnerving.

"I think you have misunderstood," he said. "I can't curtail Jim's basic freedom to resist your temptations."

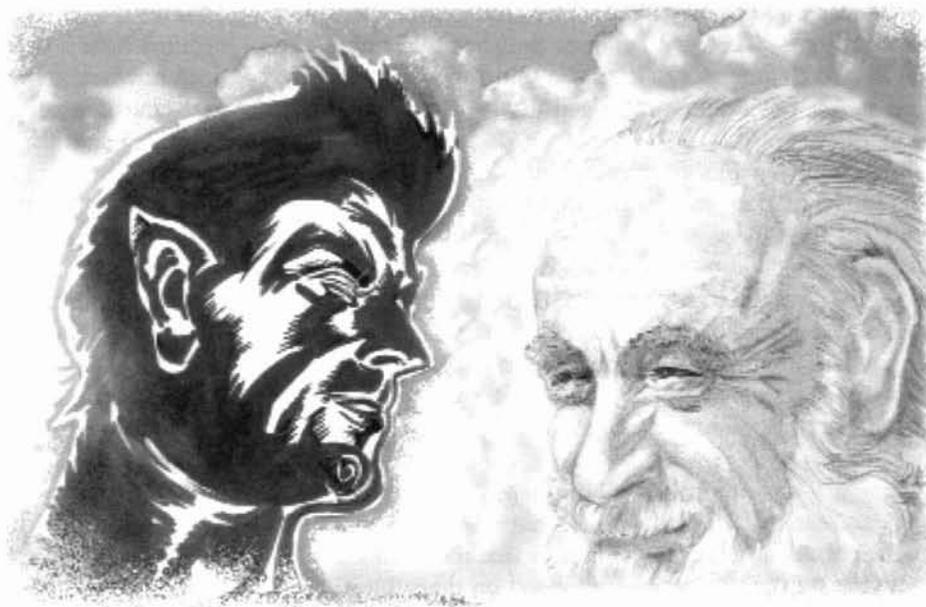
"Can't or won't?" I asked.

"It wouldn't be right," he said, smiling radiantly and sidestepping the issue deftly. His sitting so close to me on the couch made me uncomfortable. You could almost smell the incense. I got up and paced.

"Okay," I said, succeeding in keeping my voice steady. "So I can't take control. I can only tempt, as usual."

"If that's what you want to do."

It's like he *tries* to get me angry. "Of course it's not what I want to do, but it's what I'm stuck with, evidently. You deal the cards; you stack the deck. What choice do I have but to play by your rules? What choice have I ever had? But listen here, if I can somehow make this kid happy—and let me point out that when I offered him a night in paradise he cut and ran, the insufferable little wimp—then you'll agree to end this cruel



BRUCE READE

*"Why aren't people happy?" God asked.
"War, famine, poverty, disease, old age, loneliness," I answered.
By now, I felt cocky enough to look God in the eye.*

game of choice and freedom you've inflicted on everyone down there? You'll let me end it and make the poor miserable creatures happy for once in eternity?"

That's torn it, I thought. Nobody speaks that way to God when he's right in front of them, not even me. It's thunderbolt time; I better leave, but fast.

But God was suddenly right in front of me, and I couldn't leave. Of all his looks, the one he fixed me with now is my second least favorite: stern and inescapable honesty seeking out total honesty in whomever he holds in his limitless gaze. "Brother," he said, "you have never for the millionth part of one second held in your heart the desire to make anyone happy. Is that not so?"

He was staring me right in the eyes, and I couldn't look away. "It is so," I heard myself howl.

"Your hatred for mankind is limitless, and your hunger for its destruction is ravenous and insatiable. Is it not so?" God asked.

This was torture, this seeing oneself as one is. And he's supposed to be a God of compassion! "It is so!" I screamed. I was foaming, grinding my teeth, trying desperately to tear myself into tatters of self-abnegation. Anything to escape that look. But suddenly God was gone.

When I came to myself, I saw that God was sitting a discreet distance away on another couch, looking thoughtfully into space. "And yet," he was saying contemplatively, "if you could make this one man, my servant Jim of Provo, happy for one moment before he kills himself, I tell you, I will give to you dominion over everything and everyone for time and eternity." He turned and looked at me. Again the tears. Disgusting. "But

happy for a second or two, I knew he would deliver. He would have to. You see, God can't lie, or at least he's told himself he won't lie, which amounts to the same thing apparently, and so if he'd said it was dominion I'd get, it was. No matter what. And that's what he'd said.

I picked up on Jim again, lurching along another street. Didn't this kid ever stop stumping around town? What a sorry sight the guy was: head down, hands clenched in his pockets, eyes red-rimmed, lips wet. Pathetic. I looked into his mind, and it was full of scorpions. That and a kind of grim resolve I'd seen plenty of times before: like a lot of suicides, the little jerk had finally got some purpose to his life, even if all it was was turning his own lights out. Well, that was fine with me, as long as I got a crack at giving him a little happiness first.

Actually, I was more than a little happy, myself. God had given me quite a start. He's always been a bully, with all that "you hate humanity" business; but now that the truth was out, and God and I both knew where I stood on the subject, I felt enormously buoyed up. God and I had faced up to our respective natures squarely, and, even though it might not have looked like it, it was God who blinked. The facts were these: God's goal is to make people, even people like this creep, Jim, here—pick up your feet, boy, have some self-respect—happy. And God's a failure. Whereas my goal, now it's out, I might as well admit it, is to make people as sick as they make me. I'm a success. My plan works; his doesn't. Obviously, he now sees that. Survival of the fittest. Time, past time, for me to take over. Where the hell is this kid going?

JIM plodded his slow way up the long, winding hill in the nice Provo residential area. Most of his mind was clenched like a fist around the decision he'd made, the one he knew was finally the right one. But a part of his mind still took in sights, vacantly: house on the right, green shutters, green garage door, looked new. Probably smartass creeps lived there; probably if I walked up to their stupid green door and knocked on it, they wouldn't even answer it, just stare at me like idiots through the glass on the side.

All the houses looked that way to Jim: fortresses of porches and eaves and Monday evening newspapers. In those fortresses lived people so remote from him, so far away in their self-satisfied smugness, he couldn't get into them if he had a bazooka to blast his way in.

He walked along.

What, is this kid crying now? Revolting. Also troubling. How am I going to give him that one stab of joy before he checks out? Why doesn't he stop?

AT the top of the hill, Jim paused to catch his breath. Now his goal was in sight, the spire barely visible above the rooftops off to the left. Yeah, that's the place, Jim thought. They'll hate it there. He picked up his pace now that he was on a straight and level road.

Suddenly off to his right, in a yard that looked, Jim thought

with the unclenched part of his mind, like the guy who owned it didn't have a clue how to take care of it, a cat streaked out from nowhere, ran twice around a Russian olive bush and up to the curb. In hot pursuit was a big German shepherd, its eyes never leaving the cat's neck through all its twisting and turning. The dog's mouth was an open, panting grin. The cat, wild-eyed, wild-furred, bolted out into the street, and right in front of Jim the shepherd caught it, sunk its jaws into the neck, then loosened them slightly for a second to get a better grip, and then clamped down hard and tossed his head upward. The cat's scream ended at the top of the arc. In a moment, its body hung limply from the mouth of the dog, now suddenly docile and hesitant as it lay the cat gingerly, gently down on the asphalt. Jim dropped to his knees in front of the dead cat and the dog, all the strength, all the breath even, gone from his body. An expensive car hurtled by, swerving smoothly to miss the carnage. The dog, puzzled and quiet now that his quarry was still, nosed the cat delicately. Jim gathered his breath into a stormfront and howled until his throat hurt more than the cat's had in its moment of agony. The dog spooked and bolted. Jim sprawled on the gritty January asphalt street, his face buried in the cat's still-warm, sticky fur.

WHAT does this kid want?, I wondered. I thought that would cheer him up! Someone who hates the world as much as he must, I figured, would enjoy—just for a moment, at least—seeing it suffer. I figured wrong, obviously. Look at him, snivelling in the dirt, you'd think the stray was his long lost . . . hey!

It took the kid the better part of ten minutes to come up with a place to stow the cat. I was getting impatient and more sick of this Jim by the second. He finally laid the thing to rest on the frozen ground under a winter-killed lilac bush, and, let me tell you, by that time, what with blood and fur on his cold bare hands and face, the kid was quite a sight. All the time he was poking around, I was trying to see past all the crap inside his mind, trying to gather some data on people who meant something to him. I figured the kid was lonely, right? That had to be his main problem, it almost always turned out to be with people who decided to torch their souls. So I would rummage around in his mind until I found somebody who meant something to him, whip up a manifestation of whoever it was and have it say something gooey and supportive to him. He'd catch on in a minute or two that it couldn't be the real thing, figure it was some kind of hallucination and get on with his act. But in that minute, I could make him feel, I figured, a second or two of happiness. And a second or two was all I needed. Then he'd off himself, I'd get his soul, and he'd wake up to find out what real misery was all about, God'd pay up, and the New Order would begin. I laughed so hard I howled. It was okay; nobody could hear me down here.

JIM didn't wipe his face or his hands, but he did stop crying. His hands, clenched into fists again and almost jammed through the bottoms of his coat pockets, made the insides a mess. He didn't think about that. There was

would begin. I laughed so hard I howled. It was okay; nobody could hear me down here.

JIM didn't wipe his face or his hands, but he did stop crying. His hands, clenched into fists again and almost jammed through the bottoms of his coat pockets, made the insides a mess. He didn't think about that. There was blood smeared on his nose, and the tracks of his tears cut through the red around his mouth, but he didn't notice it. He kept to his slow march, going downhill now and curving around to the left, head down, eyes watching his shoes, not wanting to see the place he was going, just wanting to get there. And to get this whole, whole thing, this whole stupid thing over, he thought.

They say, Jim thought, you don't even feel it if you do it right, and that was fine because, oh brother, this was something he was going to do right. Not like college. Not like high school or school at all. And then what? What would happen to him after? Nothing. Jim almost had a second of happiness right then, savoring the thought of nothing, but any disembodied spirits which might have been in the area weren't paying attention. And if there is something, he thought, it can't be as bad as this. At least it won't be here. At least it won't be smartass land.

Jim let his feet stop and raised his head. He was there. Through the smoggy night air, he peered up at the lit spire of the Provo Temple.

SO this is where he's decided to do it. Not that it makes any difference to me, I'm not superstitious. What I'd picked up in Jim's mind was about as pathetic as I'd figured it would be. A long, dingy string of completely inconsequential events the kid had hypnotized himself into believing were his failures: old chewed ends of resentments, a huge canker sore of self-hatred. Same old petty drivel. I have to admit, though, I was pretty impressed as I came up over the horizon of his soul and hit this Grand Canyon of loneliness. I don't know if I've ever come across anything that vast, that dark, that huge and engulfing before. Where most people have memories of people, this kid had a black, howling wind and a need like bodies have for air. Only it seemed like this kid's soul had never breathed.

So where was I going to dredge up somebody meaningful to Jim? His parents? Wiped clean from his memories. A girlfriend? Laughable. Friends, pals? Only shadowy fantasies in



BRUCE READE

God made me a promise: "If you can make this one man happy for one moment before he kills himself, I will give you dominion over everything and everyone for time and eternity."

Jim's mind. There did seem to be one person, but it didn't make much sense. Still, it was my only shot.

JIM leaned against the fence that ran around the temple. He didn't turn around to look through the grill work and see the words carved into the east wall of the building, Holiness to the Lord, but he knew they were there. Instead he looked up and down the street. Nobody there. Figured. He took out the handgun he'd been carrying around in his coat pocket for eight days, but he found he didn't want to look at it. It hung loosely from his hand at his side.

"Don't do it, Jim."

Jim turned, surprised, to see his English teacher standing next to him. "Now, I'm your friend, and you know that, Jim." He didn't sound very convincing. "Don't you know that, Jim?" he said tentatively. No answer. "And . . . I've always found your . . . papers . . . for the class . . . very interesting."

Jim stared at his teacher. This can't be real, he thought.

"More than interesting, really, more than interesting. Satisfactory. Yes. Perhaps even excellent."

Jim found himself laughing, hard. It hurt his throat. He was laughing a dry, soundless, painful laugh. But not a happy laugh.

ALL right then, you moron, you worthless misery, I thought furiously, kill yourself. Laugh at me, will you? Kill yourself before I crush the life from you myself.

All right, I've lost, and I suppose God knew I would all along. Nobody could have made this Jim, this walking, shuf-

In the end, Jim's hand with the gun in it jerked up to his temple almost involuntarily, like it was on a string. He squeezed the trigger before he even had time to get scared. But there was time between the instant when the bullet, bursting through the skin and splintering the side of Jim's skull, destroyed the masterpiece that was his brain and the next instant when his spirit found itself outside, alone and helpless and confronting the utter savagery of the howling demon about to spring on it, for Jim to have two thoughts. The first was, "The smartasses are wrong; this hurts like hell." The second, Jim's last as a mortal, was "poor cat."

"**Y**OUR set," God said, his voice kindness itself.

I was lost in thought and now tried to snap out of it. "All right," I said and lay down on the bench to do my presses. Still not all there, I forgot to move the pin. Of course, I couldn't budge the bar. Sniggers from the laborers. Humiliating.

"Here, let me," God said with, I swear it, an edge of condescension in his mellifluous voice. Discreetly he adjusted the pin, and I grunted my way through my set.

I wasn't speaking to God. I'm still not, and let me tell you, this time it could last a while. He breaks all the rules, and I'm sick of it. Either he breaks the rules, or he makes the rules just to accommodate whatever he happens to want to do, which amounts to the same thing. Either way, like I said, I'm sick of it. You should be too, but you aren't because you don't even care about justice, let alone order. If you did, you'd agree with me on this Jim of Provo affair.

There he was in front of the Temple, discharged gun to his head, bullet in his brain. His hand hadn't even dropped, his body hadn't even begun to slump, the bits of bone and brain hadn't even sprayed the winter night when Jim's spirit found itself naked and alone in front of me. I caught his first spirit-thoughts: like all these suicides, when he saw what his true predicament was, he wanted back into his body, but fast. That part usually tickles my funnybone, but this time I was furious. This jerk's unrelievable misery had cost me the best chance I'd ever hoped to get for taking the reins. I was going to swallow this kid in one bite and spend a few thousand years digesting him. But when I jumped him, which I remind you is my *legal right* since he was a suicide—God knows it, everybody knows it—when I was on top of him and could actually feel his terror, he suddenly wasn't there.

And when I finally managed to make an appointment to see God and lodge my legitimate complaint about possession of damned souls, and when he finally buzzed me in to see him—there he was, with God, in his office. Jim of Provo!

I came unglued. "This one is mine!" I yelled.

"No," God said, putting his arm around Jim. The little jerk looked radiantly happy. And God gave him that look, my least favorite one of all: complete acceptance, serene understanding, healing love. Unbearable. "This one is my friend," God said.

"But," I spluttered, "it isn't fair, it's a cheat! He killed himself. He took a life. Murderers come to me."

God turned in my direction. "Thank you for bringing my friend, Jim, to me."

This was too much. I could feel the foam spilling out of my mouth and dripping onto the crystal floor of God's office, but I didn't care. I was more livid than I had ever been. I started to curse in righteous indignation, but God cut me off.

"You played your part admirably. I asked you to tempt him, and you did. He resisted your temptations to the very last." He looked back at Jim, whose untroubled, joyful eyes had all this time never left God's face. God smiled at him. "That is all I ask of my friends."

I thought about ranting and raving some more about my rights and God's apparent misapprehension that I had been doing all this for *his* benefit, but my heart had gone out of it. God had me, and I knew it. He worked all the angles, even mine. Neither God nor Jim paid the least attention when I left the office and quietly shut the door.

In the gym, God cleared his throat gently to bring me back from these unpleasant thoughts.

He raised his eyebrows questioningly. "Shall we," he said, "hit the showers?" Was there mockery in his voice? Insufferable. 



TARGET PRACTICE

Let them have it, Jessica.

Empty the chamber again.

We know the chill of
the wood kitchen floor.

Even though the shards
from the mirror left no scars,

I know, Jessica.

I saw it all.

We still dream in thick abrasions,
like where the river twisted tight
around my neck. We still dream
of footsteps on the attic stairs.

I think I see you sometimes,
bent over by the rain at the side of the street,
like those hunched and old storm-worn oaks,
their roots kicking up the sidewalk,
their leaves screaming to be dropped.

—JOHN D. HAMILTON

*Now that we number over ten million, doubling every fifteen years,
it is time to take stock of where we are and where we are going.*

*It is vital that we not only grow in size but also in truly
becoming the people of God, for our challenges of racism
and classism cripple our claim that "all are alike unto God."*

BECOMING A WORLD RELIGION: BLACKS, THE POOR—ALL OF US ..

By Eugene England

FROM THE VERY EARLIEST DAYS, IN THE 1830s, of what they called "the Restoration," the leaders of a tiny American sect known as Mormonism, though reviled and persecuted and driven, have constantly repeated the astounding claim that their church would not only succeed but would grow into a world religion—in fact, *the* world religion. In 1831, the Lord announced through Joseph Smith that "the keys of the kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone that is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth" (D&C 65:2). Since then, we Latter-day Saints have thought ourselves to be the chosen ones to fulfill that prophecy made first in Daniel's interpretation of the dream of Nebuchadnezzar. He saw, you remember, a great composite figure representing the kingdoms of the world, from the head of gold to feet and toes of clay, that was smitten by a stone which then "became a great mountain, and filled the whole earth" (Dan. 2:35). We have seen ourselves as that stone growing into a mountain, and we have believed ourselves to be the true inheritors of Christ's final commission to his disciples, before his ascension, "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and

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of the Holy Ghost" (Matt. 28:19).

We have succeeded remarkably. Even through times of the most bitter persecution and suppression—including all-out attacks, both judicial and military, from the U.S. government—the Church has grown steadily and, in the past forty-five years especially, has prospered in numbers and power and increasing recognition. We are now over ten million, doubling about every fifteen years, with easily one of the fastest growth rates for any Church larger than one million, with even non-Mormon sociologists predicting we will pass the two hundred million mark sometime in the middle of the next century. And we are, since the 1990 breakup of the Soviet empire, rapidly fulfilling our commission to reach all nations. In fact, if you count our "non-proselyting" and "humanitarian service" missionaries in places like Vietnam and China and our huge and expanding television and radio resources, we are quite close to fulfilling that goal we have long dreamed about as a condition for Christ's return to the earth—to preach the gospel to every nation, tongue, and people.

I remember praying in the 1950s—and 1960s and 1970s and 1980s, as our Church leaders regularly exhorted us to—that God would touch the hearts of the leaders of nations to open their doors to the preaching of the gospel. I confess that, concerning Russia and China, I prayed without much faith, mainly in hope for something I thought would only occur far in the future. But God *did* touch hearts and open nations, and there are now branches in Prague and Krakow and Kiev and Novosibirsk and pioneering missionaries gradually venturing out to the east across that huge country of Russia and landing in places like Ulan Bator, Mongolia.

Seventeen years ago, when I helped send food and medi-

cine to suffering people under martial law in Poland, which was then threatened by a Soviet invasion, or even thirteen years ago, when I visited Poland and what was then Leningrad, U.S.S.R., I did not dream that a time would soon come when, as I did last spring, I would be able to speak to a Polish Club here at BYU, which contained many young Polish LDS converts who had already been on missions to Poland and elsewhere. I did not dream that by now I would have welcomed back to campus my dear friends and BYU colleagues, Gary Browning and Thomas Rogers, returning from service as mission presidents in Russia, full of stories of faith and reports of thousands of converts, including expanding branches in the former Leningrad, now again called St. Petersburg. In the Cold War tensions as late as the mid-1980s (remember the Soviets shooting down a Korean airliner and Ronald Reagan's "evil empire"?), I could not have imagined that in 1991 a young pair of Mormon elders would be companions preaching the gospel of peace together in northern England, one the first missionaries called from Russia, a former soldier who had served in Afghanistan, the other a former U.S. cadet at West Point, where he had been trained to fight the Soviets.

In the midst of this growing success, this fulfillment of what may once have seemed like outrageous prophecies, it is time, I believe, to take stock of where we are and where we are going as the stone cut out of the mountain that will fill the earth. It is vital that we not only grow in size but that we also grow in truly becoming the people of God. I will focus on two major challenges we still face and two central theological ideas that have profound implications in our present situation. The challenges are racism and classism, which are continuing and potentially crippling violations of our claim that "all are alike unto God." The theological ideas are, first, the universal fatherhood of God and his unconditional love for all his children, manifested in his grace extended throughout time to all of them, and, second, the related concept of universal salvation, the equal opportunity for *all* God's children, through his grace, especially of course through the universal and infinite atonement of Christ, to gain immortality and eternal life with God. I will address the theological ideas first and then the related social challenges.

THE UNIVERSAL FATHERHOOD OF GOD
God has already revealed himself to all nations and cultures.

THE central idea and contribution of Judaism, contained in what for Jews is still their most sacred expression, was the revelation to the prophets that "The Lord our God is One God" over all the earth (Deut. 6:4), with the same concern and expectations for all people. Christ expanded that idea in his claim to be the literal son of God, sent to earth to reveal to us all what God is like and to live and teach and suffer and die in order to bring salvation to all people. He also, in the Christian religion he founded, expanded the Jewish notion of faith *inherited* literally by physical descent from Abraham to faith that must be *chosen* and demonstrated by individual repentance and baptism, and he called his disciples to take that faith to all nations.

That charge from the Savior of the world contains an implicit theological problem for which, I believe, the restored gospel provides the best answer. The charge to take the call to repent and be baptized as the necessary way to salvation into all the world makes us wonder about the millions of God's children who had not heard that message before Christ came and the billions of those who, despite the best efforts of his disciples, would live and die in the future without hearing it. What are we to make of an all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-loving God, who by nature is concerned equally about all his children, but whose absolutely crucial message of salvation he can only communicate to a very small fraction of those children? Certainly less than 10 percent of the estimated seventy billion people who have lived on the earth have even *heard* the Christian gospel, perhaps 2 or 3 percent have accepted it, and something like one hundredth of 1 percent have been Latter-day Saints. Even with our rapid growth, the percentages will always be small, when you consider all the billions of lives that have already been lived without any knowledge of the atonement of Jesus Christ or the restoration of the fullness of the gospel through Joseph Smith.

To point out that all those others can have their temple work done for them and hear the gospel in the next life is hardly an adequate response when we continue to put huge and anxious effort into missionary work and imply that it is critical for people to hear and accept the gospel in this life. And that response also fails to address the question of God's apparent inefficiency: what has a loving God been doing *previously* in people's lives, if those lives can only be made meaningful through conversion to Christianity? In addition, we must face the fact that Christ's charge to take his gospel to the world has inspired in some Christians a missionary zeal that has been destructive to the cultures and even lives of non-Christian peoples. The recent, widespread, and thorough discussion during the 1992 "quincentenary" of the nature and consequences of Columbus's "discovery" of America raised im-

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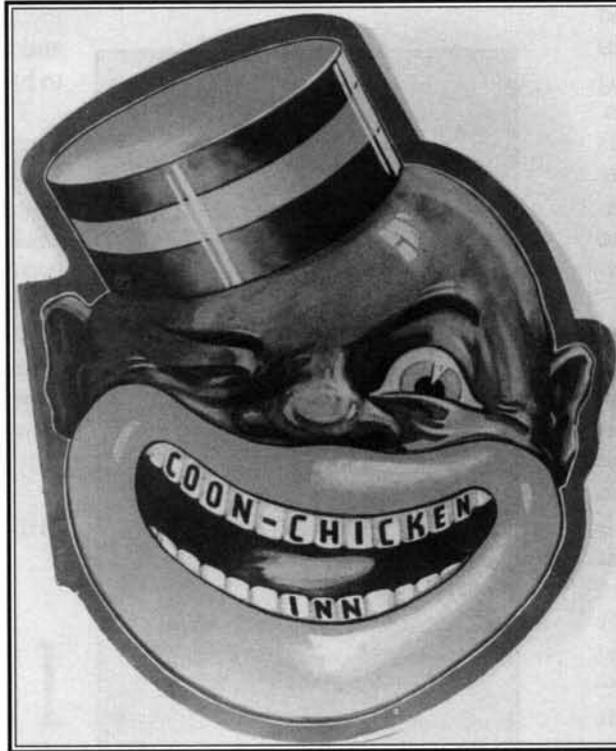
NATIONS"

portant questions that we Mormons must face as we now confront throughout the world similar challenges to those that the voyage of Columbus brought to the Catholic Church: What is the spiritual status of people, especially of other races, who have long “dwelt in darkness”? And what is our responsibility to them and ourselves as we intrude upon them with the version of the gospel of Christ developed in our own Western, American culture?

The Catholic answer was, of course, mixed and in many ways a failure. But Catholic thinkers like Karl Rahner have tried to describe the increase in understanding for all of us—the new paradigms made possible—from the mistakes made and new perspectives gained from the crucial history of Christian proselyting cultures colliding with very different cultures. For instance, Rahner has articulated a way of understanding, given God’s universal love and power, how Christ’s grace must have been operating in non-Christian peoples all along: Christianity cannot “simply confront the member of an extra-Christian religion as a mere *non-Christian* but as someone who can and must already be regarded in this or that respect as an *anonymous Christian*. It would be wrong to regard the pagan as someone who has not yet been touched in any way by God’s grace and truth.”¹ Rahner also asks us to consider what did and what should happen to Christianity itself as it enters into genuinely loving encounter with others in another culture. He points out that Catholicism was always a world church “in potency,” but in the encounter with the New World brought on by Columbus, it came for the first time to act, on a huge scale, like a capitalistic export firm: it exported an essentially “European religion as a commodity it did not really want to change but sent throughout the world together with the rest of the culture and civilization it considered superior.”² As a result, it has had to face the mistakes and evil consequences that resulted and try to admit that, in a genuine world church, such cultural imperialism must give way to peaceful interaction and reciprocal influences—at least in all the non-essentials.

The restored gospel has given us a crucial additional concept to help us improve on the Catholic experience, as we face our own transition into a world church. We have been clearly taught that God did not first reveal Christ’s identity and saving gospel at the meridian of time but has done so again and again from the beginning, in dispensation after dispensation and in all parts of the world. Indeed, the Book of Mormon preface declares that “Jesus is the Christ, the Eternal God, *manifesting Himself unto all nations.*” And early in the book we learn at least one of the ways Christ so manifests himself. The Lord asks

Nephi, “Know ye not that there are more nations than one? Know ye not that I, the Lord your God, have created all men, and that I remember those who are upon the isles of the sea; and that I rule in the heavens above and in the earth beneath; and I bring forth my word unto the children of men, yea, even upon all the nations of the earth? . . . I shall speak unto the Jews and they shall write it . . . and the Nephites and they shall



GROWING
UP IN THE
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AND '50S
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SOCIETY.

UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

write it; and I shall also speak unto the other tribes of the house of Israel . . . and they shall write it; and I shall also speak unto all nations of the earth and they shall write it.” (2 Ne. 29:7, 12; emphasis added.)

I can only understand those passages as giving even more concrete meaning to Karl Rahner’s claim that Christ’s grace has *already come to all peoples* on the earth. It seems to say that *every nation* has been given, directly, in their own tongues, some manifestation of Christ through the word of God. It then goes on to promise that “the Jews shall have the words of the Nephites, and the Nephites shall have the words of the Jews” (2 Ne. 29:13) and both will have the words of the lost tribes and vice versa—which seems to mean that God’s intent is that all his children will be able, if we try, to share the words given by God to all other peoples. This means to me that we are to look in *every nation* for those scriptures: In India is it the Hindu Baghavad Gita, in China the Tao Te Ching, among the Ogalalla Sioux *Black Elk Speaks*? In Russia is it Tolstoy and Dostoevsky, in England Shakespeare and Milton? And what about Samoa and Switzerland? I don’t know, but I feel called by that revelation to Nephi to search with an open mind and heart.

Part of our mission, it seems to me, is to identify and then

learn from the scriptures that God says have been given "unto all nations." We are called to learn how to delight in the diversity of revelations and other manifestations of his grace that God has given his children everywhere and to honor and learn from those people he has inspired to minister to and teach those children. On 15 February 1978, the First Presidency under Spencer W. Kimball officially declared:

The great religious leaders of the world such as Mohammed, Confucius, and the Reformers, as well as philosophers including Socrates, Plato, and others, received a portion of God's light. Moral truths were given them by God to enlighten whole nations and to bring a higher level of understanding to individuals.

The Hebrew prophets prepared the way for the coming of Jesus Christ, the promised Messiah, who should provide salvation for all mankind who believed in the gospel. Consistent with these truths, we believe that God has given and will give to all peoples sufficient knowledge to help them on their way to eternal salvation, either in this life or in the life to come.³

I delight in that call to appreciate God's respect for diversity—even while I struggle with its challenges and often fail. I confess I experience the greatest challenge to my faith when I consider the enormous variety of races and cultures and people and, being caught up in the popular Mormon notion that only those who have known Christ through our particular Western Christian and now our American Mormon tradition have been "saved" or even experienced life properly, I realize how few have heard the restored gospel. Then I must consider, bleakly, that God is terribly inefficient and powerless, wasteful of those billions of suffering lives—and that we must expend more concentrated, even desperate, effort to save a few more before Armageddon.

In saner moments, I remember God's universal love, and I open my imagination to the billions of diverse lives who have learned about and experienced that love in many diverse ways. I realize that the mortal experience of those billions is not wasted because they don't have the version of the gospel that I

have. They are learning and experiencing vital things, things I will have to learn and experience in the next life. They are engaged in important spiritual growth, even as they are being prepared—just as I am—to eventually hear the fullness of the gospel in this or the next life. I continue to enjoy being part of a missionary effort that will share what God has given us with other nations. I also seek to find and understand what God has already given those in other nations, with the genuine and

joyful anticipation that we can *all* be changed and healed by each other and be brought back to him, partly in this life and partly in the next.

The challenge to be open to "anonymous Christians"—whatever they call themselves, whether Buddhists, Muslims, or atheists—in all other cultures is made particularly pointed, I believe, by that statement about Christ "manifesting himself unto all nations" (see 1 Ne. 13:41). This seems to be a direct witness that Karl Rahner is right in his suggestion that a loving God has *already*, in a great variety of ways, revealed himself through Christ *to all nations and cultures*. How he has done this we can only begin to imagine, but imagine it we must.

THE CONCEPT OF UNIVERSAL SALVATION

The grace and opportunity from God to be saved is never withdrawn.

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I was on my mission to a very different culture than my own that I first felt the full impact of a *second*, related, theological idea, crucial to our being a world church—the idea that not only does God love all his children equally and send his revelations, both scriptures and manifestations of Jesus Christ, to all of them impartially, but he acts with constant, unending grace and power to *save* all of them, in this life and forever. Just before Christmas, in 1955, my wife, Charlotte, and I were living in Mapusaga, a small village in American Samoa. We had been married two years and had been missionaries to the Polynesians for a year and a half. Charlotte was six months pregnant. We were teaching a woman named Taligu E'e, who had Mormon relatives and who had agreed to meet us each Wednesday afternoon. We would walk to her fale—her circular, open, thatch-roofed home—

and teach her in broken Samoan one of the lessons from the systematic missionary teaching guide. She would listen politely and impassively, her eyes looking down at the mats we sat on, and after we finished she would serve us the meal she had prepared.

One Wednesday, we taught her the plan of salvation. We told her how we had all chosen to come to earth, with Christ who had offered himself as our Savior, and how important it

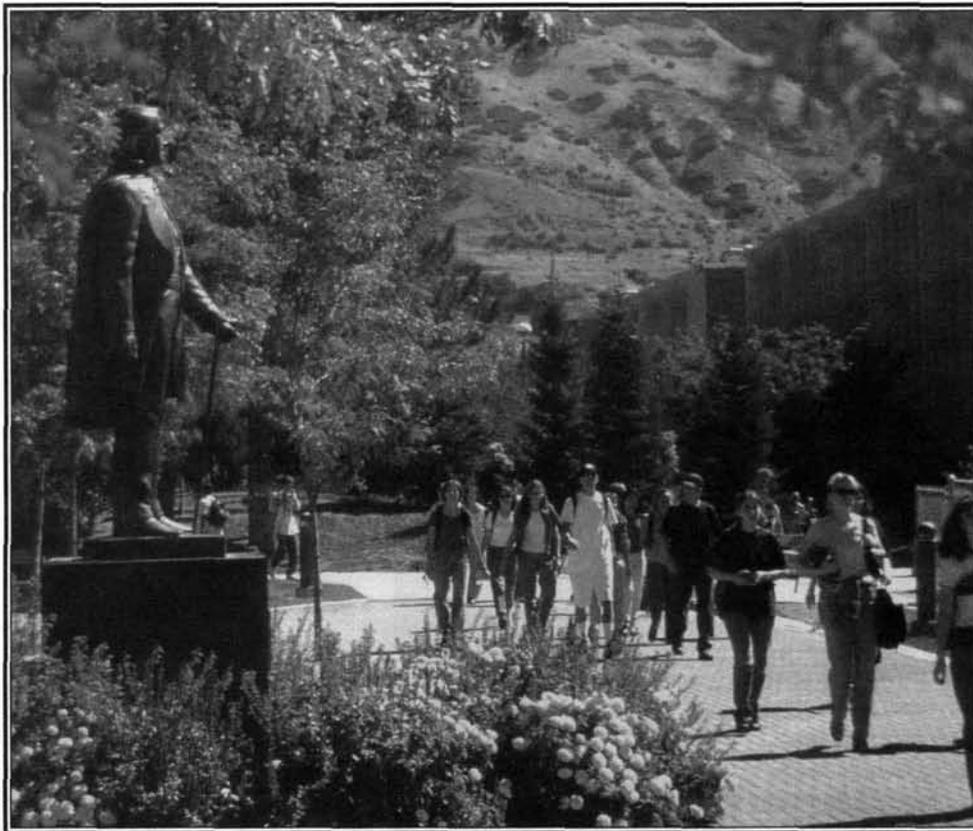
was to follow him if we knew him. Then we told her how, by doing temple work, we could help those who had died without knowing Christ, but who were being taught about him in the spirit world. Her head came up as I told this story. Timidly she asked about her own ancestors who lived before Christian missionaries came to Samoa. She had been taught by her Christian pastor that those ancestors must be damned because they had not known Christ and were not baptized.

I repeated what I realized right then was indeed the *gospel*, the “Good News.” I assured her that God loves everyone equally who comes to earth and had provided a way for all, including her ancestors, to come to him. She kept her eyes on my face, and they slowly filled with tears. I sensed that a deep sorrow, a long-standing wound, was being healed in her, and I kept repeating, “O le Atua, alofa tele ‘ia ‘i latou uma,” which I hoped conveyed to her, “God really loves them all.” Taligu was baptized the day after we left Samoa, but we have heard that

he brought to class once), and Jacques Maritain (with whom he had served as an observer at Vatican II). Later, when he accepted me as a teaching assistant in his theology and literature class, I learned of his warmth and humor, but sitting in that first class I thought he existed in a realm of pure, emotionless Protestant thought that both impressed and repelled my Mormon sensibility.

So it was a great surprise when one day, while he was talking about God’s infinite, unconditional love as a basis for all human ethics, he paused, and sitting on the first row, I could see that there were tears in his eyes. After a few moments, he said, “I’m considered a heretic in my own church because I can’t accept its teaching that, when we die, we are judged and go to heaven or hell. That’s completely inconsistent with the God of perfect love I know. He would *never* stop loving us and trying to save us.”

My heart yearned for him, and at that moment a joyful con-



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TWENTY YEARS
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BYU STUDENTS
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she became the matriarch of a great Church family in Samoa, and we are confident that she did the saving work for her ancestors in the New Zealand Temple, built just a few years after her baptism.

Ten years after teaching Taligu, in the winter of 1965, while I was a graduate student at Stanford, I audited a course in Christian ethics from Robert McAfee Brown, the great Presbyterian theologian. I was in awe of him—his meticulous scholarly writing and precise lecturing, his ecumenical friendships with the likes of Paul Tillich, Abraham Heschel (whom

viction renewed itself in me that God did indeed love us infinitely, and he would indeed never stop loving us and helping us repent—and he would accept our repentance and welcome us into his presence and eternal life *whenever* we chose to turn to him, even after any imagined “final” judgment. That conviction, born of the spirit, has never wavered.

Mormonism is not the same as “universalism”; it does not claim that an all-powerful God can and will save all his children. Rather the restored gospel provides both the incentive and power of God’s infinite love and the knowledge that we

THE CHALLENGE OF RACISM

The Church's progress in overcoming racism is primarily due to Blacks inside and outside the Church.

must and can choose to use that power to do and be better, all according to eternal laws. It teaches clearly the active grace of God that extends into the post-mortal life and eventually provides all who come to earth with sufficient knowledge and power to be saved, if not in this life, in the next. And, with Robert McAfee Brown, I believe that the grace and opportunity from God to be saved is never withdrawn by him—though we can eventually, through our own constant refusal, destroy our own ability to accept it.

As a missionary I often rejoiced in being able to teach people that God does not separate us, according to our great range of sinfulness and righteousness, at death and then stand at the border between heaven and hell, stomping on the fingers of those reaching up who don't quite qualify. I somewhat smugly taught that there are actually three kingdoms of glory—and of course the sons of perdition. But surely the restored gospel does not merely substitute four divisions of judgment for two, with God standing at each border stomping on fingers. The Book of Mormon makes clear that the judgment will be simply our complete self-knowledge and our consequent acceptance of the best opportunities and environment for further progress that we are able and willing to accept from a perfectly loving God. It will be as unlimited as our individual potential and as diverse and individually tailored as God's infinite creation—"for as one star differs from another star in glory, even so differs one [person] from another in glory" (D&C 76:98). Yes, I know that section 76 seems to describe a condition of three separate glories, with no possible advancement of certain kinds of sinners "worlds without end" (v. 112), but if we remember that this is a vision of one specific time (like a snapshot), it simply means that while those people remain sinners they can't advance to the presence of God. Repentance, which is always acceptable to a perfectly merciful God, would change the picture—just as is allowed by the official Church position on advancement between kingdoms (which is, "We don't know").⁴

I feel in the universe a constant and permanent message, expressed by Joseph Smith in the King Follett Discourse, that "all the minds and spirits God ever sent into the world are susceptible of enlargement and improvement."⁵ Some (such as sons of perdition) may eventually stop progressing, limited permanently by what they have chosen to become, that is, beings no longer willing to progress, but neither we nor God knows who they are—and so we must, as God does, always treat everyone, including ourselves, as potential gods.

So I rejoice in God's overflowing grace and permanently offered forgiveness. I rejoice in a universe of plenitude, full of his glory and love. As the earth turns, the dawn comes up constantly for new people, and bright sunsets revolve before us—God's never-ending show of his grace. The clouds turn with the earth, and rainbows grow up through the rain—God's never-ending promise of forgiveness. God's everlasting, unceasing work and glory is to bring to pass our immortality and eternal life.

NOW, with these two glorious principles firmly in mind, let's turn back to the challenges that still face us and see how those principles can help us. We are approaching the twentieth anniversary of the remarkable revelation ending the priesthood denial to black men, which was announced by President Spencer W. Kimball on 8 June 1978, and which most of the Saints received with such jubilation that they can remember exactly what they were doing when they got the joyful news. This is a good time to remind ourselves that most Mormons are still in denial about that ban, unwilling to talk in Church settings about it, and that some Mormons still believe that Blacks were cursed by descent from Cain

through Ham. Even more believe that Blacks, as well as other non-white people, come color-coded into the world, their lineage and even their class a direct indication of failures in a previous life.

The Book of Mormon, published in 1830 when the Church was organized, announced unequivocally that "black and white . . . all are alike unto God" (2 Ne. 26:33) and that "every man that is cursed bring[s] upon himself his own condemnation" (Alma 3:19; emphasis added). At that time, very few American whites, if any, believed those claims, but Joseph Smith spoke and acted consistently with them until his assassination in 1844. Evidence indicates that he ordained Blacks to the priesthood, that he clearly anticipated sending missionaries to Africa and welcoming Blacks into the Kirtland and Nauvoo temples, that he took a strong stand against slavery from early 1842, especially in his 1844 campaign

for the U.S. Presidency (where he proposed compensating all slave-owners over a period of six years), and that he consistently advocated "equal rights" for all Americans, specifically what he called "national equalization" for freed slaves.

However, Mormon publications equivocated and became racist when the Church came under threat of violence for being "abolitionist" in Missouri in the early 1830s. Many Mormon converts from the South kept their slaves and indeed took them West with them (where Utah became the only western territory that allowed slavery). At least by 1852,

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Blacks were specifically denied the priesthood and temple blessings. The slaveholders' theology that claimed Blacks were descended from Cain through Ham and were subject to "natural servitude" was expressed by Mormon leaders, even the liberal B. H. Roberts, and official publications, and indeed from then on Mormons were generally in line with predominant American attitudes and practices concerning race.

In the twentieth century, speculation by Mormons that Blacks were being punished for some sin committed before they came to earth gradually gained in popularity and was extended to other races. When I was growing up in the 1940s and '50s in Utah, I was a racist in a thoroughly racist society. The predominantly Mormon Utah legislature passed anti-miscegenation laws and consistently killed fair housing laws. Blacks were neither allowed in the Church-owned Hotel Utah nor on Salt Lake's east bench, where even Japanese-American Chieko Okazaki encountered prejudice and efforts to keep her out and where a good sister in our ward came to our home with a petition to exclude a Jewish family. Hard as it is to even say it now, down into the 1950s you could go to a restaurant named the Coon Chicken Inn and enter through a doorway that was the mouth of a huge, grinning Black man's head. In the 1960s, as the Civil Rights and Black Power movements gained in strength, there was criticism, both from without and within the Church, of the priesthood ban and racist Mormon teachings, criticism that produced its own apologetic theological response by white Mormon writers. In 1960, John J. Stewart published *Mormonism and the Negro*, and in 1967, John Lewis Lund published *The Church and the Negro*. Both books approvingly reviewed the Cain and Ham theology. They also asserted unequivocally that "the Priesthood . . . is denied to the Negroes because of their behavior in the pre-mortal existence"⁶ and not only that, but *all* races and conditions of birth are determined by "conduct in a life before this"⁷—using an analogy with our being "punished" in the life after this according to our conduct now. These books were so popular as to be reprinted, especially Stewart's, which was reissued in 1964 and 1967 and even published again (by Horizon Publishers) in 1978, *after* the priesthood ban was lifted. Thus, in a tragic case of the tail wagging the dog, a Church *practice* was made the basis of a racist popular *theology*—even though many thought the practice to be historical and sociological in origin and therefore temporary, as it in fact proved ultimately to be: President Kimball told the press after the 1978 revelation that the revelation came at this time because conditions and people have changed. "It's a different world than it was 20 or 25 years ago. The world is ready for it."⁸

However, as is too often the case, we Mormons didn't all follow the prophet; some continued to believe the racist theology, even though the practice that gave rise to it had ended—and even though it contradicted central Mormon

doctrinal principles. For instance, the scriptures and common sense suggest clearly that each of us is punished solely for our own sins, not through lineage, that no one is punished for a sin

he or she does not know about and have opportunity to repent of, and that the analogy of being judged as we come into this life just as we will into the next is false because, in fact, as we move from here into the next life we are *not* punished or rewarded by God but simply continue to *be* what we *are* (celestial, teletial, or whatever) and can act and associate accordingly unless and until we change. (In other words, the best way to judge what any person was like in a previous life is, to paraphrase Martin Luther King, by the content of their character, not the color of their skin or the kind of mansion they live in.) However, that false, race-based theology became a basis for perverting more important principles like free agency, even for imagining *God* as a racist—partial, a respecter of persons, punishing his children for lagging in a "lap" of the eternal race with extra handicaps of skin color and poverty in the next.

Of course, there was opposition to that influential popular theology that denied agency and made *God* into a racist—a sort of Mormon theology of liberation if you will. In 1970, Stephen Taggart published *Mormonism's Negro Policy: Social and Historical Origins*, which thoroughly discredited the Cain-Ham theology and attempted to show

that "God did not place a curse on the negro— . . . his children did."⁹ In 1973, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* published Lester E. Bush's more thorough and reliable study, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," with responses by Hugh Nibley and me.¹⁰ Nibley recommended much more detailed study and discussion of the issues as a "prelude" to revelation, and I argued, using the evidence Bush had uncovered, that the ban was indeed a "practice" with no scriptural or doctrinal support (that is, no basis for believing in some kind of ontological difference between races). I suggested that the practice was "inspired" or at least "allowed" by God, but not because *he* was a racist—rather because *we* are, especially in America and as an inheritance of slavery, and in such a situation, with most whites simply unwilling to accept Blacks in full fellowship, especially in positions of authority, the priesthood would be tragically divisive, *not* a blessing. We

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EXPANSION.**

were, I concluded, like the children of Israel in the desert, living, by God's sufferance but to his sorrow, a lower law. I pointed out that the policy did not apply to Asian and Pacific Island blacks, that it was already changing as we became less racist (with light-skinned Blacks of unproven ancestry in Africa and Brazil receiving the priesthood), and I predicted that it would be ended when we were ready to *accept* God's will in a way that would bless all his children, including us whites, whom I saw as being terribly harmed *ourselves*, both morally and spiritually, by the priesthood denial.

The most comprehensive effort in such a Mormon theology of liberation so far is *Neither White nor Black: Mormon Scholars Confront the Race Issue in a Universal Church*,¹¹ edited by Armand Mauss and Lester Bush, a fine collection of historical data and analysis concerning the experience of black Mormons. And there have been other resources: Black Mormon voices have themselves been speaking to us. The first were Alan Gerald Cherry's *It's You and Me Lord: My Experience as a Black Mormon*¹² and Mary Frances Sturlaugson's *A Soul So Rebellious*.¹³ Both were converts before the priesthood revelation and talk frankly about their resistance to joining what they saw as a white racist Church and the problems they encountered in the Church, but they also express the mature, even heroic, ability of Black Mormons from that period to separate the truth of the gospel they were convinced of by the Holy Spirit from the deficiencies in a racist Mormon culture. In 1988, I collected many Mormon narratives, including some by Blacks, for my book *Converted to Christ through the Book of Mormon*. These showed that, in addition to the explosive growth in black converts in Africa, similar to that in early Mormonism, these converts were having spiritual experiences and visions similar in power and in content to those of early Mormons. In the early 1990s, Dale LeBaron collected more of such narratives, all from Africa, in *All Are Alike Unto God*¹⁴ and Jessie Embry reported on the extensive LDS Afro-American Oral History Project in *Black Saints in a White Church*.¹⁵ There, through interviews and analysis, she explored in more complexity and range the Black American Mormon experience, including those who joined before the revelation and were embittered by persecution, those who stayed faithful through spiritual conviction, and those who joined after, have stayed faithful, but feel that, because of prejudice, they are not being used in Church leadership.

The same year that Embry's book appeared, Elder Helvecio Martins, of the Seventy, published his *Autobiography*,¹⁶ giving us in moving detail the life of the Black Brazilian who joined the Church in 1972, became a prominent Church leader

without priesthood and a friend of President Kimball and eventually a general authority—and is perhaps the one human being most directly responsible for the yearning prayers of President Kimball that led to the priesthood revelation.

Fictional literature about the Black Mormon experience has so far been disappointing in quantity but not in quality. (Outstanding examples are Virginia Sorensen's story "The Ghost"; Karl Keller's essay, "Every Soul Has Its South"; Orson Scott Card's novel, *Prentice Alvin*; and Margaret Blair Young's story, "Outsiders.")¹⁷ In 1995, Scott Livingston's play, *Free at Last!*, which deals very honestly with the experience of a Black coming into the Church and meeting racist Mormons just before the priesthood revelation, was performed at BYU. The largely Black cast decided to have open discussions with the audience after each performance, and those turned into a remarkable form of guerrilla theater, where Mormons talked openly about racism, racist theology, and Black experience in the Church. The white audiences, I believe, craved a cathartic discussion that would liberate us from the suppression we practiced and the guilt we still feel.

It is clear in scripture that a central quality of God is that he is impartial—"no respecter of persons"—and that a chief evidence that one has truly come to Christ (even a *requirement* for fully experiencing the Atonement and being saved, as I will discuss more fully later) is that all economic, class, and racial distinctions are done away. In other words, oppression, including racism, is a major sin, from which we must be saved.

The majority of Mormons were clearly still racists in the 1960s. One of the most humorous if not heart-breaking indications of this was the wide-spread elation felt by Mormon intellectuals when Mormon scholar Armand Mauss, in 1966, published, in the *Pacific Sociological Review*, a fine comparative study of attitudes toward race in a variety of Mormon and other Christian congregations.¹⁸ He showed that, despite all the publicity alleging Mormons were more racist because of the priesthood ban, they were in fact actually no more racist than other American Christians! Mauss himself took no comfort in such findings. He had shown that the Church's enemies were wrong in asserting that its policy on the priesthood was causing Mormons to be racists in areas outside the Church, but in a follow-up article in *Dialogue*, he took the lead in demolishing the false theology

used to justify the priesthood ban and in encouraging his fellow Mormons to give up their racist folklore.¹⁹

In the thirty years since then, much progress has been made and some reconciliation has been achieved, in good part because of what Blacks—Mormon and non-Mormon—have done for the Church. We Mormons owe an enormous and as yet unexpressed debt of gratitude to Black people for helping liberate us from false and destructive ideas about race, for helping to save our souls from the sins of racism and oppres-

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ELDER PACKER**

sion, and for making possible the world-wide expansion and growth of the Church that we prize so much. To begin with, the work of Martin Luther King and Malcolm X, though they seemed so different, achieved a unified effect in the Civil Rights and Black Power movements that changed the world

Los Angeles and Chicago ghettos to the slums of Sao Paulo and Calcutta. If scholars' predictions are fulfilled that the Church will reach two hundred million of such mainly colored, mainly oppressed, third-world peoples by the middle of the next century,²⁰ and if the Church is not just big but the true



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and provided impetus and vision for continual future change. Those movements, I believe, saved America from a violent revolution, gave political and cultural direction to African Americans, and permanently aroused the conscience of many Americans, including Mormons.

THE PERSISTENCE OF MORMON RACISM

"We can't move there with the baggage we are carrying here."

THAT social and cultural change in Mormons' views on race made possible the revelation of 1978, and that in turn made possible the explosive growth of Mormonism since, especially in nations of color. It made possible, just last March, the first visit of a Mormon prophet to Black people in Africa and the announcement of a temple to be built in Accra, Ghana. Mormonism recently passed the point where over half its members live outside the United States. In not many years, if present trends continue, over half the Church will be non-white and then, in a few more years, over half will be from oppressed classes throughout the world, from

Zion community Joseph Smith envisioned, it will lead people not only to better private morality (freed from drugs and abuse and sexual sin) but also to greater social morality (freed from racism and sexism and economic oppression). If that happens, it will have been made possible in good part by Martin and Malcolm, as well as by Black Mormon heroes like Alan and Mary and Helvecio—and by the thousands of humble souls who were converted by the Spirit and remained true to that testimony despite being denied the priesthood and temple blessings, being told their skin was a sign of spiritual failure and a divine curse, and being treated accordingly.

However, work still needs to be done—perhaps in a "Mormon theology of liberation"—because, although our racist behavior has changed dramatically, the false ideas that were invented to rationalize our earlier racist practices are still with us. In his book, *Tolerance*, published fifteen years after the priesthood revelation, Seventy John K. Carmack still felt it necessary to say, "We do not believe that any nation, race, or culture is a lesser breed or inferior in God's eyes. Those who believe or teach such doctrine have no authority from either the

Lord or his authorized servants."²¹ No wonder Apostle Boyd K. Packer, speaking in 1987 concerning the Church's entry into third-world nations, exclaimed, "We can't move *there* with all the baggage we produce and carry *here*! We can't move with a 1947 Utah Church!"²²

Sadly, some of that baggage is still with us. I check occasionally in classes at BYU and find that still, twenty years after the revelation, a majority of bright, well-educated Mormon students say they believe that Blacks are descendants of Cain and Ham and thereby cursed and that skin color is an indication of righteousness in the pre-mortal life. They tell me these ideas came from their parents or Seminary and Sunday School teachers, and they have never questioned them. They seem largely untroubled by the implicit contradiction to basic gospel teachings—and seem to have never thought through such obvious rebuttals as these: Then-Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith pointed out, in an interview in 1962, that if Blacks were being denied the priesthood because of the pre-mortal life, a just God would not suddenly start giving it to some. God *has* started giving priesthood to Blacks, so (as I believe President Smith's great integrity and clear thinking would have led him to recognize) the reason had *not* been the pre-mortal life. As for the idea that black skin comes through a cursed lineage from Ham, besides recognizing how that notion violates all our teachings about moral agency and individual responsibility, we need only remember that Asenath, the wife of Joseph who bore the sons Ephraim and Manasseh (Gen. 50:34), was an Egyptian and that, according to Abraham 1:21–22, Ham married Egyptus and "from this descent sprang *all* the Egyptians." Thus Joseph Smith (JST, Gen. 50:30) and in fact *all of us* who claim literal descent from Ephraim are *also* descendants of Ham. (I've checked this genealogy with Hugh Nibley, and he says there's no question about it.)

For my gospel doctrine class, when I taught the great story of Joseph last March, I found a painting in the ward library that shows Joseph greeting his aged father, Jacob, as he comes down with his family to live in Egypt. Joseph is in full Egyptian regalia as Pharaoh's appointed ruler, and behind him are his family and retainers in their Egyptian dress, while behind Jacob, in simple shepherds' clothing, are his family, the first

Children of Israel. Here we have two great nations—two separate races—coming together, to be literally joined in the children of Joseph down to us in the present in a great manifestation that God has indeed made "of one blood all nations . . . for to dwell on all the face of the earth" (Acts 17: 26) and that "all are alike" unto him, whether descended from Ham as blacks or as whites.

THE CHALLENGE OF CLASSISM

Any discrimination or failure to aid and free the oppressed interferes directly with the salvation of souls.

BESIDES racism, another kind of baggage we must drop is classism and its associated cultural icon, our strange, especially Utah, Mormon drive for wealth and social status as if they were *religious* virtues—what Hugh Nibley calls "successism." Recently a doctoral student at BYU, John Rector, completed a study of "Wealth, Poverty, and Religiously-Based Attributions" among Utah County Mormons—extensively interviewing Mormons to see if we "believe that material prosperity is a reward for righteousness, and that poverty is due to wickedness." You guessed it! We do—at least in Utah county. Rector says that one of his motives for conducting such a study is to form a basis for evaluating the psychological and spiritual effects on those who believe such things and on those about whom such things are believed, especially because there is good evidence that people who connect wealth to righteousness "tend to be less sympathetic to the plight of the poor, and [to] be less likely to support social programs aimed to assist the poor."²³

Recent studies show that the United States, over the past twenty years, whether led by Democrats or Republicans, has been returning to the huge gap that existed between rich and poor of one hundred years ago. The middle class is decreasing and the very rich and very poor are increasing in percentage. And we Mormons are right there at the national averages, with our billionaires and millionaires and struggling two-job families and desperate single mothers and neglected elderly.

With these timely facts in mind as Mormonism aspires to be a genuine world religion, let's look at the evidence in our scriptures that Christ came chiefly to liberate the oppressed. Whether we are oppressed or oppressors, we need to focus our religious life on that message. A Mormon "theology of liberation" must begin with Christ's very first announcement, in Nazareth, of his mission: "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he hath anointed me to preach the gospel to the poor; . . . to preach deliverance to the captives, to set at liberty them that are bruised" (Luke 4:18). Mormon scriptures record that whenever a new dispensation of Christ's gospel opens, the response is a desire by the people who have faith to do away with economic, racial, and class distinctions. In the New Testament, the newly converted faithful "sold their possessions and goods, and parted them to all men, as every man had

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need" (Acts 2:45) and learned that after genuine conversion, "there is neither Jew nor Greek . . . bond nor free . . . male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). Modern scripture tells us that the ancient city of Enoch became righteous enough to be taken up into heaven "because they were of one heart and one mind . . . and there was no poor among them" (Moses 7:18). And when Jesus Christ appeared in America after his crucifixion and taught his gospel, the newly converted "had all things common among them; therefore there were not rich and poor, bond and free, but they were all made free" (4 Ne. 1:3).

Exactly the same impulse for liberation and equality moved the new converts to what Joseph Smith called restored Christianity in the 1830s. They learned right away that "black and white, bond and free, male and female . . . all are alike unto God" (2 Ne. 26:33) and that "it is not given that one man should possess that which is above another, wherefore the world lieth in sin" (D&C 49:20). The newly converted faithful yearned and tried mightily to live these ideals in the midst of a violently racist and exploitively capitalistic American society. They practiced the Law of Consecration in Missouri, holding all things in common. They covenanted to share all they had with the poor so they could make the trek West with them, and established fully communitarian United Orders throughout Utah territory. In response to such ideals, the U.S. government nearly destroyed the Church and forced it to submit to Federal power and, beginning in 1890, accommodate to American political and economic practices.

But that Zion ideal remains strong, not only ready to be put into literal large-scale practice in a *Church-directed economy* of equality when the Lord so directs, but constantly reaffirmed as a temple covenant to be practiced *individually* right now. I've known Mormons at all levels of income who have lived modestly, with consciously restrained consumption, and, as their temple covenant of consecration requires, used all the resulting surplus to help others. They understand the clear (and never rescinded) command of the Lord, "In your temporal things you shall be equal, and this not grudgingly, otherwise the abundance of the manifestations of the Spirit shall be withheld" (D&C 70:14; see 78:6). They believe the assurance of the Lord that "the earth is full, and there is enough and to spare," that *force* by him or earthly governments will not bring equality because his children are "agents unto themselves" so it must be done "in [his] own way" (D&C 104:16–17). But these Mormons also accept the way the Lord says he has "decreed to provide" for equal distribution and an end to oppression: "the poor shall be exalted, in that the rich are made low. . . . Therefore, if any man shall take of the abundance which I have made, and impart not his portion . . . unto the poor and needy, he shall, with the wicked, lift up his eyes in hell, being in torment." (vv. 16–18.) This revelation has never been repealed, and though the institutional Law of Consecration, adminis-

tered by the Church, is in abeyance, our covenants of consecration, made in the temple, are not—and I suspect that nearly every one of us is in violation to some degree. I am. Often in Church, I hear discussion of this matter, in which the clear, demanding scriptures are read and then someone says, nervously, "But God doesn't care how wealthy we are but how we live," and the discussion quickly ends, often with a palpable sense of relief. That statement about what God cares about is technically true, of course, but it can be and usually is a cop-out. God may not care about how wealthy we are, but he certainly cares how much we consume, how wealthily we *live*, whether we in fact use all our wealth, beyond our basic needs and those of our family, to serve him and build his kingdom of peace on the earth.

Jesus not only *began* his ministry with a focus on "the poor," he *ended* it with the same focus. In his last sermon to his disciples, he said he would come to judge the world, to divide the "sheep from the goats," and he told them clearly what the criterion of judgment would be. Do you remember what it was? *Not* whether we've been to the temple or paid our tithing, not even whether we're Mormons or have confessed Christ is our

Lord. Surprisingly, and an offense and stumblingblock to many of us, he tells his disciples that his *only* criterion, by which he will separate the good from the evil, the saved from the damned, will be whether we have actually done to the "least" of his brethren what we *think* we would do for him: "I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat . . . I was a stranger, and ye took me in, . . . in prison, and ye came unto me" (Matt. 25:35–36).

Joseph Smith builds on this crucial understanding, by teaching the *reasons* that classism and racism—i.e., any discrimination or failure to aid and free the oppressed—are not only sinful denials of Christ's announced mission and damaging to society, but also interfere directly with the salvation of souls, both of the victims and the victimizers. In the third lecture on faith, Joseph Smith teaches that "it is necessary [for

all to see] that God is no respecter of persons, for [otherwise] men could not exercise faith in him: because if he were a respecter of person, they could not tell what their privileges were, nor how far they were authorized to exercise faith in him, or whether they were authorized to do it at all, but all must be confusion."²⁴ This describes exactly how it must feel

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to be an oppressed person in a racist or sexist culture, supposedly being punished or limited in some way because of the bodies we inhabit, for something done by an ancestor or in the pre-mortal life or inherent in our nature, with no way to repent of that "something" and no certainty about its effects on our future. Joseph continues: "But no sooner are the minds of men made acquainted with the truth on this point, that he is no respecter of persons, than they see they have authority by faith to lay hold on eternal life, the richest boon of heaven, because God is no respecter of persons, and every man in every nation has as equal privilege."²⁵ In other words, by persisting in oppressive teachings and practices, we are denying others—and ourselves—full access to Christ and his plan of redemption.

The Book of Mormon explains most fully why judgment and partiality to others rejects the process of salvation from sin through the atonement of Christ and denies ourselves access to it. The Atonement is an expression of unconditional love from God powerful enough to move us, if we accept that love, to repent and be saved. If we are caught up in what the Book of Mormon calls "the demands of justice" (Alma 42:15) in our relations with others—refusing unconditional love for them because they do not deserve it—we will refuse that love for ourselves, whom we know in our hearts are also not deserving. Even if we focus only on "justice" for the oppressed, we will lose sight of the mercy that makes atonement possible—for others and ourselves. The Book of Mormon teaches us that in order to "retain a remission of [our] sins from day to day" we must be focused on mercy and forgiveness—for others and ourselves (Mosiah 4:26). King Benjamin, 150 years earlier than Jesus, was inspired to use the same phrases as Christ for what we must do specifically: we must be constantly engaged in imparting "our substance to the poor . . . such as feeding the hungry, clothing the naked, visiting the sick and administering to their relief, both spiritually and temporally, according to their wants" (Mosiah 4:26). Notice that doesn't say "according to their needs"—even that bit of judgment is denied us. Even if we are thinking about what people need, we may judge them; we must give them what they want. Why? Because though their needs for proper food, clothing, and spiritual relief are important, there is an even more important reason to feed and cloth and visit them. Until we do so, with unconditional, unjudging, even uncalculating love, we cannot invite into our own flawed hearts the unconditional love of Christ—which alone can save us. ☞

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homemade tie,
treasured but never worn,
reclaimed for D.I.

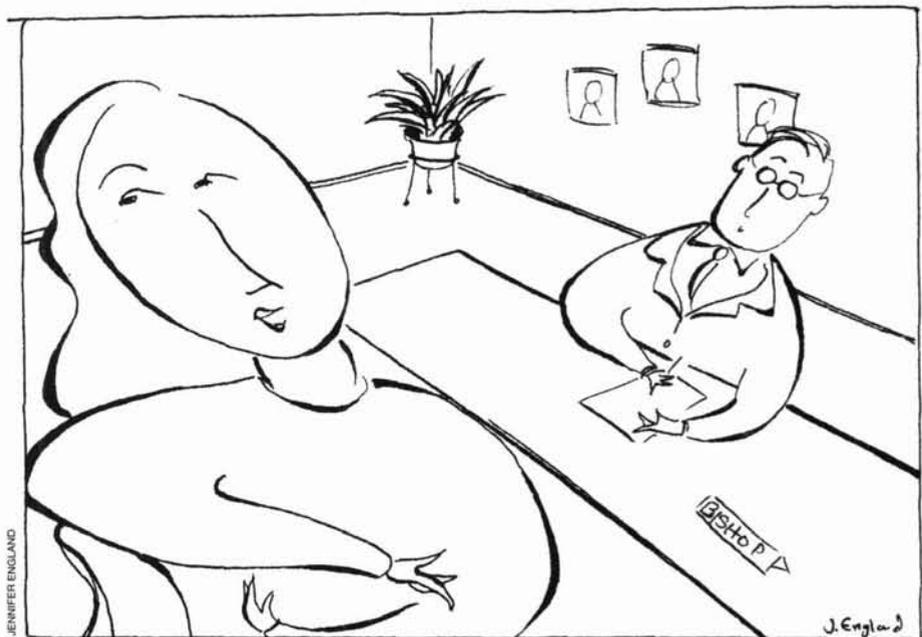
—ADDIE LACOE

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L I G H T E R M I N D S

A MODEST PROPOSAL FOR
REDUCING THE POPULATION OF
SINGLE MEN IN THE CHURCH

By Miriam A. Smith



"Don't get me wrong, Bishop . . . singles dances . . . are a step in the right direction. But based on my experience, it isn't a group dance that's needed, it's group therapy."

I T STARTED OUT as the typical, new-to-the-ward, meet-the-bishop interview. "Smith is a strong Church name," Bishop Price¹ said. "Are you related to Joseph Smith?"

"My forebears were among the pioneers in Nauvoo," I answered, "but, no relation—though I've always thought it would be great to be a descendent of Mary Fielding Smith. She was truly an example," I explained.

Mary Fielding Smith, despite the death of her husband, discouragement, and disparaging remarks from pioneer leaders,

MIRIAM A. SMITH resides in Los Angeles where she practices entertainment law.

packed up her children and crossed the plains. She had strength and courage of heroic proportions.

Bishop Price and I chatted pleasantly for a few minutes. I had been in the stake for several years, so we weren't complete strangers. And then . . .

"Sooo," Bishop Price intoned. His voice carried both hesitation and warning. I knew what was coming. "Why aren't you married?"

Yep, the infamous "rite of passage" question. Hadn't most of my friends who, like me, had "graduated" from a singles ward, been confronted with that question in one form or another?

I think it a fair question. The obvious an-

swer is that most single Mormon women are not married because we outnumber the males of the species. But the possibilities exist that we have chosen to never marry, or that our journey through life has been such that marriage has been, so far, well, let's just say, impractical. Some of the stories and personal insights from my single friends make for interesting conversation.

Anyway, my silence appeared to fluster Bishop Price. "I don't mean to intrude . . ." he stammered. "I . . . I . . . well . . . are you interested in marriage?" Since marriage offers the only sanctioned opportunity for sex, I immediately responded.

"Yes, I would like to marry. I just don't know anyone to marry," I offered, hedging my bets. I actually could name a few men I would marry—if only they were marriageable.

"Well then, Sister Smith, what can I do to help you?" Bishop Price asked. Impressive—a very wise bishop. He obviously knew that one should volunteer assistance but never give advice unless it's requested.

"To be perfectly honest, bishop," I said, "I think the big problem is lack of proper labeling."

Bishop Price looked puzzled. Usually people complain about being "labeled" or decry the harm of labeling others. "What do you mean?" he queried.

"It's very simple. My big problem is that I tend to misread men. I spend far too much time pursuing a man before I realize he just isn't interested. Of course, I usually determine that he isn't interested in marriage in general, but it is unfathomable that he wouldn't be interested in me." The key is to say such things with just enough sarcasm that one thinks you are joking. Of course, deep down, you really aren't joking, but it is far better to be perceived as a comic than as a megalomaniac.

"So the labeling system I propose consists of just four letters," I explained. "Each single Mormon man over the age of thirty would be required to wear the appropriate letter to church and social functions. It would make things so much easier."

Bishop Price had determined I was joking and wanted to see where this "joke" was leading. "And what might those letters be?" he asked.

"G, S, W, and L," I replied. "G for gay—wonderful men but not likely to marry. S for selfish. Bishop, did you know that there are single men out there who actually think they will be able to find a 'no-maintenance' relationship?"

I paused for a reaction. Bishop Price

didn't seem too surprised. He's probably talked to some of the S men. I continued.

"W for the walking wounded. That would include all the commitment and responsibility phobes. It's probably easier to convert a non-member than to heal the sick. And L for late-bloomer. If you know an L, let me know," I said with a hint of hopefulness.

"That's an interesting idea," Bishop Price said. "But what about those men who are divorced or widowed?" he asked. "How would they be labeled?" As I said, he was impressive. Bishop Price had uncovered one of my biases: I'm anti-previously-married men.

"Well, it all depends on the baggage they are carrying," I offered. "Some people learn a lot from a divorce, and some just repeat all the mistakes they made the first time around." Even though Bishop Price nodded, I somehow knew he wasn't committed to implementing my label system, so I moved to phase two.

"There's more," I said. "I have no idea what lessons are in the priesthood manual now, but I think on the first Sunday they should add a few lessons on relationships. I mean lessons like Dating 101, which could explain that dating is somewhat essential to getting married. I have actually met men who wonder why they aren't married even though, to my knowledge, they seldom, if ever, ask anyone out. And one lesson on Beyond Friendship, that physical contact is a good thing, followed by Relationship Maintenance."

Bishop Price seemed to be nodding more intently now. I quickened my pace. Talking fast made it all seem so much more exciting and compelling.

"Some men understand perfectly well that unless you put money into your retirement account you won't be able to get anything out of it. Others are very much in tune with nature and have instinctive knowledge about plants and animals and caring for nature. Why, then, they are so clueless about relationships is a mystery—unless they are missing the relationship gene."

In about ten years, science will demonstrate that everything is genetic. How this will impact our notions of sin and repentance and exaltation, of course, is a matter of fascinating conjecture.

"Bishop, I don't need to tell you that relationships are about being together and that sometimes you do things you are not very interested in just to be together. But someone needs to explain that to some of the single men." I'm serious; Bishop Price was in full agreement. I was ready to pull out a pen and start scheduling these lessons.

"To be perfectly honest, there are days I wonder why I didn't marry that nice Irish Catholic boyfriend I had," I confided. "I guess I just didn't know how unusual it is for a man to call to invite you to do things and to actually want to know how you are feeling. Not only that, John-the-Catholic knew his feelings and could talk about them." Bishop Price looked intrigued. He had no idea of my previous inter-faith romance. Even us meek and mild types can have a past. "I guess that's why in Young Women's we were cautioned against dating non-members." I reflected. "Once you find out how fun and caring those worldly men are . . ." At this point, my self-monitor told me to quit this line of thinking while I was ahead. Besides, my best idea was yet to come.

"I do have one other idea. I think some of these single men would benefit from a 'T-patch,'" I proposed. "Somewhat like a nicotine patch, except that the 'T' stands for testosterone. I understand it can provide that extra push that some men need to take the marital plunge," I earnestly stated. "Studies have made it clear that men benefit the most from marriage. Married men live longer and happier lives and make more money than single men do. But, evidently, research findings just aren't enough to motivate some men to action," I said.

"That leads me to another lesson idea—a lesson debunking the myths about love. Love at first sight is not essential for a happy marriage. I think love at first sight is largely a hormonal response. And without the T-patch, some men might never get that surge at any point in a relationship. But many men need to be told that if you are willing to get to know someone, without that initial flood of emotion, you may fall in love with someone for who she is and who you are when you are with her. Attraction will come. The hormones will start pumping . . ."

Sensing that Bishop Price may be better acquainted with testosterone than I (though I am in my sexual peak years according to the biology books), I decided to let him fill in the gaps.

"You have given me a lot to think about," Bishop Price said. "I can't promise anything, but I have enjoyed our visit. It has been, for lack of a better description, quite singular."

"Thanks for your time," I said arising from my chair. As I turned to go, I provided Bishop Price with one last bit of wisdom.

"Don't get me wrong, Bishop. I do think these singles dances and activities are a step in the right direction. But based on my experience, it isn't a group dance that are needed, it's group therapy."

And then with singleness of heart, and soul and life . . . I went home.² ☞

NOTES

1. Not only have the names been changed to protect the innocent and the not-so-innocent, but this interview never even took place. Everything else in this story, though, is true.

2. If you know any Is, please call. Thank you.



LUNAR ECLIPSE

Not every shadow wears ash on its face; not all our Wednesdays stoop with forehead

blessed. Some labor under orange dust to leap across cloud cover. Nine o'clock. They said the moon

would be a harvest bowl, the citrus fruit piled closely to the brim, and falling farther out; we recognize the

peel, rough, pitted skin exposed to midnight jeer. The sky is thirsty for its juice, the blade of equinox curves smooth

and sharp. We watch, and only watch. The ground rules never change, once kept by Aztec, Mongol, Bedouin

and Jew; this black aroma, their innocence. Nine thirty-five. We taste our awe, hold in our breath—the

moon will swallow whole what we deny; its cold lung, poised, inhales the oxygen under our masks.

—SOFIA M. STARNES

INTERVIEW

SEX & SPIRITUALITY



A Conversation with Marybeth Raynes

MARYBETH RAYNES is a clinical social worker and marriage and family therapist in private practice in Salt Lake City. For many years, she authored an "Issues of Intimacy" column for SUNSTONE. The following is a condensation of a question-and-answer session she participated in at the 1996 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (tape #SL96-335).

Any general observations about the Mormon sexuality?

Sexuality is an aspect of our being, our personality; whereas, sex concerns those behaviors with oneself or another. Most Mormon discussion of sexuality focuses on sexual behavior only, or equates sexuality with sexual behavior.

From this narrower focus on sexual behavior, it is my experience that most discussions about sex—Mormon sex—could not occur without talking about guilt. Generally in therapy, clients' questions focus on particular issues, but their concerns almost always impinge upon shame and guilt, and what action Church authorities might take. For Mormons, it is difficult to separate shame from guilt. Shame concerns an inner quality of being; that is, a lack of your right to be, to feel good about yourself. Guilt is about outer actions and whether they comply with your moral code or with the Church's code. As someone once said, guilt is "I made a mistake" while shame is "I am a mistake." Additionally, sexuality and spirituality are split in Mormonism, as they are in Christianity and in many other religions. Therefore, unless you fit within the religion's acceptable behaviors, it is difficult to find a connection between sexuality and spirituality. So, it is always a struggle for Mormons to harmonize religious ideals and sexual actions and to feel good about *being* when they are not *doing* everything correctly.

By the way, I experience Mormon men as having more awareness of their sexuality than Mormon women do. One of the delightful experiences of being a therapist—

just as it was in being a lady missionary—is the opportunity to have a variety of discussions with men that I would not have otherwise. Men are very aware sexually. Mormon women are often less aware until their middle to late thirties, when huge questions of sexuality arise for them that often arise for men in adolescence.

Sexuality and spirituality are amorphous terms. Where's the dividing line?

Given that religions often communicate a split between the sexual and the spiritual, the answer lies in how something is coded or defined. Nothing says that something sexual isn't also spiritual. It depends on how you interpret your experiences. For many people, the sensations of spiritual and sexual experiences are somewhat similar, although one may be more intense than another. For instance, many people who enjoy both feel that both are ecstasy events. Both are doorways to greater joy and meaning in life.

How you interpret those sensations, however similar, has everything to do with your emotional stage of development. At certain stages, if your religion says that sexuality and spirituality are different, you will indeed experience the two as different, even as polar opposites. You cannot see an underlying congruence between the two. At later stages of development, when you understand paradox or dissonance, when you can integrate thinking skills with your emotional experiences, you can then find similarities between these two facets of being that were previously so different. You can then re-code your experiences.

If women and men "code" sex differently, do they also spirituality?

Yes. It's common for women to want to have a spiritually identified, loving connection before sexual feelings occur. I have heard many women say, "After my husband or my partner really gets turned on and becomes sexual, then his heart opens." This difference is one of many questions I want to ask God, if I ever get an audience—"Why is the sexual and love wiring different between the sexes?" I think it's simply a gender-related preference, even though many men will experience the typical female pattern, and many women the typical male pattern.

Most men I have talked to have had some sexual guilt, and, consequently, they feel "less spiritual." Most men have had sexual impulses since adolescence. An acquaintance of mine, an MTC bishop, said his main function seemed to be dispensing forgiveness. Male missionaries come to him—inevitably half of them in the district—and say, "I couldn't tell this to my bishop because he is my father," or "knows my family." The missionaries then tell him the problem, from masturbation to sexual intercourse. This bishop said, "I saw it as my function to say, 'Brother, it's done, forgive yourself, the Lord forgives you. Clean it out of your mind, and go on your mission, and do a good job.'" I agree with his position.

Many women, particularly those who have grown up recently in our increasingly sexualized world, also have many sexual impulses. But since these impulses are often coupled with or disguised in romantic impulses, they may feel confusion along with feeling guilt. This is almost always true of those women who have endured sexual abuse.

In 1982, a letter instructed bishops to ask couples about inappropriate oral sex. What's the stand now?

Shortly after that letter, the Church reversed its counsel to bishops and stake presidents in another letter from the First Presidency. Essentially, the Church said, "Brethren, do not ask about these issues. They are between a couple in their bedroom, so don't ask." Shortly thereafter, another letter said, "Brethren, we really mean it: Don't ask." Since then, bishops for the most part have been pretty good about a couple's privacy. Some may still take advantage of their position and indulge in a form of institutionalized voyeurism by asking too much. In my clinical experience, gays or lesbians often report being required to give explicit details.

But most bishops don't ask, and if a person is assertive enough to simply say that's private, most bishops don't push the issue. So, it is a question of what's okay between a couple in their own bedroom, what is acceptable to both partners.

I heard a joke the other day about what's acceptable to both partners. A man found himself on a desert island with the requisite brass lamp. Upon rubbing the lamp, the genie emerged. However, this genie was quite tired and said, "You can only have one wish, because I'm really just tapped." The man thought for awhile, reached into his pocket, and pulled out a map of the world he happened to have. He said, "Well, if I could wish for any one thing, it would be for world peace." The genie groaned and said, "I really am tired; that's quite beyond me today. Why don't you pick something else." The man said, "Well, okay, then I wish for something personal. When I get off this island, I wish that my wife will be as interested in oral sex as I am." The genie looked at him and said, "Let's look at your map again."

Do general authorities care if a married person masturbates?

First of all, I'd say they don't talk about married people masturbating. So—as you may have guessed—you have a wider range of sexual practices once you're married.

Before you're married, there are obviously sanctions against sexual intercourse. It's how much guilt you feel (up to the point of sexual intercourse) that decides if you discuss sexual acts with your bishop. Then, it's up to what your bishop feels, which is highly variable. Church talks have certainly identified various behaviors that are not okay, such as excessive fondling, petting, or even french kissing. So we're in this wonderful place of ambiguity—I purposely call it "wonderful"—where you are forced to decide your own thoughts and actions. And that is always good.

Have LDS leaders reversed their position on sex only for procreation?

Informally they have done so, but not officially. A couple of *Ensign* articles over the years have acknowledged the role of pleasure, but very euphemistically. Also, no recent, formal discussions have stated that sex is for procreation only, and the issue of birth control has become less emphasized. In my opinion, and according to Lester Bush in his book on Mormon positions on medical issues, that's how the LDS church changes its position on many doctrinal issues, particularly sexual ones—the process is to de-em-

phasize the issue, to stop talking about it, and then to focus elsewhere.

There are many ways to enhance sexuality in a marriage. I believe that one of the best things you might treat yourself to is a bookstore. Any large bookstore will have at least a few selections on sexuality. Browse through four or five; find which one works best for you. A question I've heard many Mormons ask is, "Will I be learning things that won't comply with Church teachings?" But Mormons are very good at trying to figure out which TV programs or music will work for them. So read what you want, and edit as you go: say no to some parts, say yes to others. Reading things that are explicitly sexual as an adult doesn't generally harm you unless you think it's going to or if you are sexually addicted. If it's violent, or in any way coercive, or uses another person as an object and not as an individual, then that's another matter. However, by being selective when you browse, you can find sexually oriented information that will enhance your sexual relationship and also fit your values, or can be edited to your values.

Couples who talk regularly about sex, who see differences as a matter of preference, who acknowledge gender-related issues, and who collaborate on difficulties are going to be more successful as a couple. They might not have sex as often as one partner would like, and they may have it more than the other would prefer. But they find ways of taking turns or compromising. They create ways of being affectionate in many settings.

Are sexual mores just a control weapon for religions?

I think it is the legitimate domain of religions to control what they theologically believe they should control. That's part of the division between church and state; each has its own aegis. I may agree or disagree with what my religion says, but that's still within the purview of the religion. Ultimately, the question is not, "Is everybody controlled?" but "How controlled do I feel?" As one grows into more mature stages of emotional development, one can even ask, "How do I allow myself to feel controlled? If I decide to comply with my church, am I making an adult decision to do so?" In the end, we have to accept the responsibility for our own decisions of living, or not living, as our religion says. When we choose not to, we also need to responsibly say, as an adult, "I'm not, for various reasons, going to do that."

There is a type of person who makes his or her own decisions and lives with them well. These people make up their own minds

and do not feel controlled, even when they're in a very disciplined structure. Such people often have spiritual lives in which they feel ongoing relationships with God that continue throughout their lives' cycles. I've heard many clients say, "I know what the Church would say about my sexual behavior, but my spiritual life is doing just fine. I'm feeling all kinds of things from God." They experience no split between sexuality and spirituality. On the other hand, I've known many Mormons who when they say they feel frustrated, or stuck, concerning sex also say the same thing about their spiritual life. I'm not sure you can progress far in one area without parallel progress in the other.

Nevertheless, statistically, Mormons who are in non-compliance with Church sexual norms become inactive fairly easily. Then the question arises: "What do I do with my spirituality?" The answer is often in the negative, guilt-ridden form. A typical bind that Mormons get into is perceiving the problem as absolute—if the Church says you can or cannot do something, then you have only one move to the right, one move to the left, with only one millimeter in between. And many of them get stuck, spiritually and sexually. However, as you expand your view of the problem, many courses of belief and action then become available.

My advice is to spend time thinking and talking through sexual issues to understand them from different angles *before* acting; then, you spare yourself later anxiety. However, if you've felt penned up for many years, you may not have the will to do this. The re-thinking or re-believing then comes *after* the acting. To resolve the problem of the contradictions between what you believe spiritually and what you do sexually, you must move to the level of thinking and problem-solving that involves paradox, ambiguity, and cognitive dissonance in your personal life. How to do this? Read, talk to other people, observe how they solve similar paradoxical struggles, find new ways to integrate, rather than polarize, your sexuality and spirituality. ☐



immersion
and spirit marrow transplant—
sin in remission

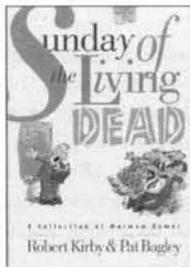
—ADDIE LACOE

originally appeared in Exponent II

REVIEWS

THREE COURSES OF TASTY SATIRE

SUNDAY OF THE LIVING DEAD
 WAKE ME FOR THE RESURRECTION
 PAT & KIRBY GO TO HELL
 by Robert Kirby and Pat Bagley
 Buckaroo Books, 1995, 1996; Slickrock, 1997
 \$8.95, \$9.95, \$9.95



A satirist must imitate his or her victims well enough so they are recognizable and laughable. If the satirist is really good, the portrait will also provide insight. Again and again, Pat and Kirby nail us.

ROBERT KIRBY makes writing satire look a whole lot easier than it actually is. In Kirby's hands, it seems no tougher than falling into a snoring fit during a high councilman's talk. In reality, creating effective satire is more difficult than getting Molly Ivins tenure at Brigham Young University.

The classic recipe for satire (which originally meant "a mixed dish") calls for three ingredients: *imitation*, *attack*, and *humor*. Now, Mormons are highly skilled in *imitation*. Just count the number of Primary girls named

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"Brienne." On the other hand, Mormons seem not to understand that imitation leads naturally and quickly to laughter. One Brienne is charming; eight flower-frocked Briennes in a class of 14 reminds us too much of a fun-house mirror. A couple of men in dark suits and '50s haircuts are no more than mildly amusing, but five hundred begin to look like extras in a Charlie Chaplin farce. The crucial thing to understand is that *sober* imitation (otherwise known as "getting with the program") is not funny to those who do it, whereas *satiric* imitation (otherwise known as "light-mindedness") is intended to provoke laughter, although not necessarily "loud laughter."

Attack, or even its milder cousin, exhorta-

tion, rides comfortably on the hip-holster of most Latter-day Saints. Of course, Saints insist that the bullets always be aimed *outward*, at the worldly sinners who surround the camp and threaten to pollute the well and carry off the unsuspecting youth, or at backsliders skulking around the perimeter of the camp itself, wiping crumbs of embittered evil-speaking from their seedy moustaches. Attack aimed at faults and foibles *within* the camp is termed a call to repentance if deployed from higher echelons upon the lower troops; if fired from lower ranks upon higher, it's branded apostasy.

But *humor* is an endangered species in the Zionite ecosystem, and without it, the delicious dish of satire is so much cold tuna casserole. Some years, there's not enough genuine humor offered to the Saints to keep body and soul together.

Yet Robert Kirby, who goes by Kirby, has whipped up enough tasty satire to serve three courses: *Sunday of the Living Dead*, *Wake Me for the Resurrection*, and *Pat and Kirby Go to Hell*. All were published in conjunction with another skilled satirist, cartoon champ Pat Bagley, who goes by Pat.

The Bagley-Kirby union is surely a match made in heaven (even though both must have hell to pay from time to time for the collusion). Pat's cartoons line up with Kirby's prose not only in subject matter and satiric edge, but in the zany, one-bubble-off-plumb style both have mastered. Pat's caricatured Mormons, like Kirby's, are trying hard to hold it all together, but the buttons are coming undone, the hairdos wilt and come unstuck, and the eyes begin to cross ever so slightly. Be sure not to miss Bagley's gem on the back of *Pat and Kirby Go to Hell*. There sits Satan on his perch above the hellfires, and below, oblivious to the flames, we find our artist and writer, respectively sketching and word-whipping the horned one. Satan, clearly feeling picked on, whines, "I hate this job!" Another Bagley masterpiece ought to be reproduced on a massive mural somewhere, perhaps on the road to Strawberry Reservoir or near Snowbird. It is titled "Increasingly Popular Sunday Activity: Unmirring the Ox." Getting the lone ox (an especially long-suffering creature, as depicted by Bagley) out of the mire apparently requires swimming, boating, water-skiing, four-wheeling, and similar non-wardhouse effort on the part of a whole quorum of Mormons.

A satirist must imitate the victims of his or her barbs well enough so they are at the same time recognizable and laughable. Exaggeration is usually the tool of choice. If the satirist is really good, the portrait will also

provide insight. Kirby's classic piece in this regard is "Five Kinds of Mormons." Kirby corrals us all: Liberal Mormons, "who attend church only when they feel like it . . . And don't believe that every word that falls from the lips of a General Authority represents the actual personal opinion of Jesus Christ"; Genuine Mormons, "unimpressed with themselves and their own opinions . . . affable, easy-going, and keenly interested in the welfare of others. . . there are only eleven GMs on the face of the earth"; Conservative Mormons, who "tend to be overweight and Republican"; Orthodox Mormons, who are "scared of Russians, MTV, and accidentally partaking of the sacrament with their left hands"; and Nazi Mormons, who "claim that Diet Coke is the same thing as heroin, and heaven is a multi-level marketing system of glory." In this five-for-five essay, you can almost hear the darts thunk into the center of the target.

Again and again, Kirby nails us. There we are, pinned and wriggling on the wall, as T. S. Eliot feared, unable to deny the identification.

- "With 50,000 missionaries in the field, Mormons have made the mailing of packages a religious rite."
- "Most Mormons, at least . . . in Utah, fit a particular mold. We're known for

our white shirts, floral dresses, gang voting, Republican hair-dos, and surreptitious use of Diet Coke and Prozac."

- "Biologically speaking, church is about as male-oriented as Tupperware and menopause. Church is women's way of controlling men by convincing them that they're needed in some role or other when we'd really rather be off getting bloody and filthy."

But in this game, getting the object smack in the center of one's sights is not enough to bag a trophy. Anyone can yuck it up about huge Mormon families, boring church speakers, Neanderthal husbands and Stepford wives. What disqualifies most junior high clowns who think they are creating satire when they are merely spouting low-grade sarcasm is the absence of wit. Cyrano de Bergerac taught young Christian a lesson in this respect. Christian tried to gain points with his comrades by insulting Cyrano: "You have a big nose." When nothing more interesting followed, Cyrano then supplied more than a dozen insults about his own nose, putdowns rich in every nuance and tone of wit. Satirists need more than fat targets; they need arrows that whistle and gyrate and zing, that shimmer as they slice and sting. Kirby's humor at its best gleams in the sunlight:

- "Because we're Mormons and believe in eternal marriage, Irene says, 'I hope perfect is Alec Baldwin. What's the point of the resurrection if your spouse is going to look like a beanbag chair?'"
- "A five-minute dose of any church meeting is sedating enough to be regulated by the Food and Drug Administration."
- "My dog isn't prejudiced, she's stupid. . . . This isn't her fault either. I've trained her to bark at anyone carrying a casserole."
- "It's too bad that other 'sins' don't smell as strongly as tobacco. Christians probably wouldn't be so smug if they did. Smoking might even become the relatively minor problem that it is if intolerance and arrogance smelled like a dead cat. . . . Things could get really confusing if being judgmental smelled like spoiled milk."
- "We have a ward rehab program for ex-nursery workers. The average human being can take only so much screeching over vanilla wafers and Fisher-Price toys. When the mind goes, as it inevitably does, they give you a blessing and stick you in the high priests group. Or they make you the ward doorstop."
- "The average Mormon kid separated from its mom makes more noise than a Chihuahua being sucked through a Shop Vac."
- "[When I was a kid] staunch Mormons left the church rather than accept a calling to be my Primary teacher. Picture Peter Pan on crack."

In other words, if you plan to sneak one of Kirby's books into a church meeting to brighten the corner where you are, be warned. You may blow a gasket trying to hold in your laughter.

So Kirby is funny, making readers snort, bark, guffaw, howl, and occasionally break into spasms of coughing. And Kirby is right on target with recognizable, outrageous and often insightful portraits of his victims. I'd give him three and a half stars in both categories. But where he most brilliantly shines and shines again is in his handling of attack.

Reader, permit a footnote. I'll keep it as short as possible. It is in the mishandling of attack that about 90 percent of all satirists get themselves condemned to hell. Satire has been respected from the time of the ancients because of its high motive, which theoretically is to improve society by ridiculing its faults and foibles, or, for the heavy-hitters, its vices and villainies. Satirists through the ages



MARVIN FRIEDMAN

"No, I believe you, Jason, when you say that it took inspiration to write this manuscript. It's just that it'd take a lot more inspiration for us here at Deseret Book to publish it."

have justified their barbs, their stings, the wounds they inflict, by claiming they do so to improve humankind's behavior, to laugh mischief and mendacity out of court. Mockery has forced change when exhortation, editorials, and righteous indignation have failed.

However, an occupational hazard of satirists is that they become mean-spirited and petty. Focusing steadily on the warts of humankind, they can end up convinced that we are a hopelessly ugly race. Moreover, if one is a satirist by trade, the necessity of meeting regular deadlines means that one often takes aim at gnats. (Trust me here.) The satiric edge, originally clean and surgical, can become blunted and contaminated. Jonathan Swift was arguably the greatest satirist in the English language, but I sure wouldn't want the man for my home teacher.

On the other hand, as American editor and writer Edgar Watson Howe points out, "Wit that is kindly is not very witty." In that observation lies the achievement of Robert Kirby's work. He is both funny *and* kind. That makes him danged near unique.

His mellowness begins with his sense of inclusiveness. There is no *them* and *us* with Kirby: there is just *us*. Heck, with Kirby, there isn't even any *Us v. The Neighbors* (as in "What will the—think?"). You don't get to wiggle out of the pack and stand on some Rameumptom when you're in Kirby's company: "It's simply amazing how many of us act like God grades on the curve." You have to sit right there in your pew along with everyone else and ask yourself the tough questions in between chuckles. Brother Kirby surely does. "Forgiving other people is even tougher than asking them to forgive you. A sense of self-righteous anger is the only thing that gets most people out of bed in the morning. If I couldn't hate at least five hundred people a day, I wouldn't know what to do with myself. I better work on it though. God knows what to do with me if I don't. I'll be somewhere keeping your cat company."

Another proof of Kirby's innate good will is his sense of perspective. Instead of petty, he is generous and large-hearted. He doesn't sweat the small stuff; instead, he erases it with a swipe of smiles. His laughter is wholesome and healing, and he gives

God at least as much credit for sanity as he does his best fishing buddies:

- "Regular church attendance invariably gives people a clear idea of the things that make God mad enough to kill them, but absolutely no idea of what makes him laugh."
- "We have this moronic tendency to become dangerously self-important about our beliefs, as if God is on our side rather than it being of necessity the other way around."
- "If laughing about church stuff is a sin, why isn't it a bigger sin to take it too seriously? Sure, laugh too much and you may hurt your ability to be spiritual. Don't laugh enough, however, and you could end up being dangerous to everyone around you."

Above all else, what gives Kirby's satire its rare integrity is its grounding in faith. Now, I don't pretend to know where the man Kirby stands in relation to his religion. But the *writer* Kirby stands smack in the middle of the congregation. He may twit and tweak at human foibles and frailty, but he is never snide, smug, or irreverent. He speaks as a believer to other believers. He does not snipe at doctrine, established policies, or the general authorities. In this respect, he resembles the stalwart LDS essayist Eugene England. Those readers who are offended—and letters from the incensed make for some of the funniest of Kirby's newspaper columns—simply have

not read with understanding.

Yes, Kirby's writing has a few problems, mostly the ones that come from writing on a relentless schedule instead of when outraged or uncontrollably amused. In his third book, the edge of his blade is dulled a bit, and he falls into the habit of ending an essay with rather self-evident platitudes:

- "Today, there's ample evidence that the line between faithful and foolish sometimes gets a little fuzzy. When it comes to following a religious leader, you've got to keep your wits about you. Which, by the way, is rather hard to do if you turn them over to the person you're following."
- "When it's all said and done, I think God cares less about *when* and *how* we die than he does about *why* and *how* we lived. As such, the only explanation necessary for death is how prepared you are to meet it."

One of the ten commandments for humorists says, "Thou shalt *stop* before 'all is said and done.'"

But we must remember that even Homer nods. Even Garrison Keillor nods. After creating dozens of Lake Wobegone tales that rank among the finest humor in our century, Keillor ground out the flat and mean-spirited *Book of Guys* and the disappointing *Lake Wobegon Boy*. But my money is on Keillor, and on Kirby. There's more good stuff to come. Stay tuned. ☐



"On the advice of my lawyer, Bishop Malcolm, I won't answer any questions until we first negotiate an immunity agreement."

BOOK NOTES

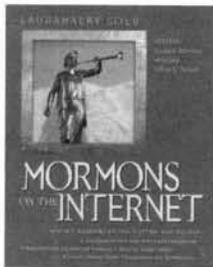
MORMONS ON THE INTERNET

by LauraMaery Gold

Rocklin, Calif.: Prima Publishing, 1997

159 pages, \$12.95

Reviewed by Marc A. Schindler



ISSUING A comprehensive guide on any aspect of the Internet in these days of rapid change takes a lot of chutzpah. And business and computer publication editor LauraMaery Gold has it with *Mormons*

and has used it well. Well-designed and smoothly-written, the guide can serve equally as an introduction for the newly wired CyberSaint or as a reference for old hands—one who's had an Internet account for longer than, say, six months.

Gold makes fascinating reading of the lists of websites, listservers, newsgroups, and all other nooks and crannies of the LDS side of the Internet. These lists, cross-referenced in a usable and intuitive way, include her personal ratings and wry and humorous comments and anecdotes. She also has short interviews with well-known CyberSaints and an interesting interview with Apostle Jeffrey R. Holland. He discusses the Church's attitude toward the Internet. In early 1996, the Church opened a website (<http://www.LDS.org>). It didn't have much on it for a while, but it has been growing recently.

Gold makes no claim for this volume she hasn't more or less fulfilled. My criticisms are more for what the book isn't; I share them as possible challenges for future editions.

The Internet continues its lightning growth, which means that any guide to it is going to be quickly out-of-date. This edition may well be near the upper limit of what a single author can compile in a comprehensive and timely manner. For future editions, author Gold may need to become editor Gold, farming out sections to collaborators. One minor sign of strain is that she doesn't review a Spanish-speaking website because, she admits, she doesn't speak Spanish.

Happily, more and more LDS websites are appearing in languages other than English. Two of my favorites are based in Austria and

Denmark; there's even a Basque language site. Gold has an extensive background outside the U.S., and this experience shows, but even she will need serious help to keep up with future international LDS Internet growth. Possibly, if one's understanding of Mormonism comes exclusively from the Internet, one might never realize the significance of the Wasatch Front. Most well-known CyberSaints seem to be from somewhere other than the Ogden-to-Provo line; certainly, Canadians and Australians seem to be more numerous than their membership proportion.

More work could be done in expanding and categorizing different communities within Mormonism. Although there are some references to non-LDS Restorationist groups, this is an area which could be expanded in future editions, and many do have Internet sites. She does list a few non-LDS Christian sites of interest to LDS, but she could expand them.

Gold's five-star review system is appreciated, idiosyncratic though it's bound to be, but future editions might benefit from more critical descriptions. I recognized the descriptions of some of the listservers (the descendants of computer mailing lists, where people subscribe to a list and can "post" to the list and read other people's posts) such as Zion-L, LDS-Poll, Eyring-L and Mormon-L, as having originated elsewhere, although the author credits her sources. The next edition add more color to the descriptions, that it be less list-like in nature and more of a review. Her short sidebar interview with Colin Robertson, the list administrator of Eyring-L, where discussions of science and Mormonism take place, is a good example. One learns far more about the real flavor of the posts on Eyring-L than from, for example, the rather mystifying reference in the Zion-L entry that criticism of Church leaders is not tolerated there. More helpful would be a discussion of the conservative tone of Zion-L. The Internet reflects the vast diversity of Mormonism; Gold's book could better show that by unambiguous descriptions.

I disagree with Gold's criticism of the *LDS Church News* website (<http://www.ldschurchnews.com>, or <http://www.desnews.com/cn>) for now charging an annual subscription fee for its on-line edition. A true child of the 'Net, she decries this departure from the

spirit of the Internet, and she's not the only one. However, as a professional in the Internet industry, I see things differently.

Incidentally, I can't help but point out that for many LDS having the *Church News* online is a boon for other reasons. Given the lengthy delays in mail of printed materials outside the U.S., it is refreshing for me as an electronic subscriber not to have to wait two weeks for "news." Outside the U.S., it's also less expensive than the print edition.

If the current Internet is to advance to what the industry now calls Internet II (which is linking all high-bandwidth commercial internal intranets to provide higher speed access to the world at large), it will have to be commercially successful for content providers. Right now, the Internet is barely commercially viable for service providers (telephone companies, cable companies, and independent "ISPs") and possibly for those such as bookstores, who are beginning to treat the Internet as just another retail outlet. The *Church News* is in good company, having joined the *Wall Street Journal*, various scientific journals, and other illustrious publications that charge for their on-line editions. Even *Slate*, the quintessential webzine, published by a subsidiary of Microsoft, will start charging sometime in 1998.

This inevitable commercialism, which purists might deride, will also permit a tremendous blossoming of the intellectual LDS community. Already some CyberSaints are practically household names on the Internet—Craig Anderson, Arden Eby, Clarke Goble, Kent Larsen, Dave Crockett, David Kennison, David Bowie, Jeff Lindsay, Nick Literski. They and others too numerous to mention are virtually unknown in the print media. Not all of them would qualify necessarily as "intellectuals." Most are compilers or presenters of data, and the quality of data provided varies tremendously.

Anyone who ventures into the Internet learns that junk and vacuous nonsense are as readily available as authoritative and reliable information. The "Big Three" print media of LDS intelligentsia—*SUNSTONE*, *Dialogue*, and *BYU Studies*—are not yet on the Internet. And very few members of the LDS print community are known yet on the Internet. Some exceptions are Orson Scott Card and F.A.R.M.S., which have excellent and active websites. There is room for quality intellectual and academic work on the Internet, but this won't happen until the next, commercial stage makes it worthwhile for more than just the

Books featured in Sunstone articles may be purchased through the Sunstone Mercantile.

hobbyists, activists, and amateurs (regardless of their quality) who, by and large, populate Cyber-Zion at the moment.

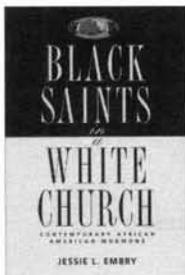
Documenting this explosive bloom will be an interesting challenge for Gold and/or whoever else decides to take it on.

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BLACK SAINTS IN A WHITE CHURCH: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN AMERICAN MORMONS

by Jessie L. Embry
Signature Books, 1994
270 pages, \$18.95

Reviewed by Armando Solórzano
and Shirley Frazier Watkins



JESSIE L. EMBRY embarks on a complex odyssey—understanding how LDS African Americans cope with a church that is predominately white in membership and culture, how they are perceived by white Mormons, and, ultimately, “what they see in a church that previously excluded them from full participation” (xiii).

Embry describes basic demographics of black Mormons: there are more Black women than black males; the majority of LDS African Americans belong to the middle and upper classes; they possess higher levels of education than do their non-LDS counterparts; they are concentrated in the South; and they enter the Church through the proselytizing efforts of LDS missionaries. As Embry puts it, “The profile of LDS African Americans more closely resembled other Mormons than it did black Americans” (88).

Embry describes the historical relations between LDS institutions and African Americans. She asserts that priesthood denial, up to 1978, and the denial of temple worship for black people were not characteristic of the LDS church but a reflection of racism in the larger society; white Latter-day Saints just adapted the beliefs of mainstream America (17). Embry theorizes that the current racial problems of the LDS church, like those of other churches, stem from the fact

that white LDS members have “not been sure how to deal with ethnic groups who are not a part of that middle-class upwardly mobile image” (35). At this point, Embry’s analysis seems to fall apart. She discusses the denial of priesthood to Blacks in theological and doctrinal terms, while in her conclusions she replaces “doctrine” with “policy” and “theology” with issues of “social class.” Are African Americans singled out from the LDS church because of the “official doctrine,” because of their blackness, or because they are poor? It is difficult to understand what Embry is trying to convey.

In the rest of the book, Embry explores the impact of the abolition of priesthood restriction on contemporary LDS Blacks. Her assessment relies on Alan Cherry’s 224 oral interviews and surveys with LDS African Americans in different regions of the United States. In terms of orthodoxy (belief in divinity, eternity, and the authenticity of the Bible), black Mormons surpass members of other black denominations and even white Mormons; the “calling process” is the most effective mechanism to get Blacks involved in the LDS religion and its concomitant social life; the centrality of religion in black culture is transferred to the LDS church when Blacks become Latter-day Saints. Thus, African American Latter-day Saints are more religious than are white members of the Church (118). When looking at cultural interaction, Embry perceives the deep dilemmas embedded in the conversion process. Mormonism is not only a religion, it represents a cultural tradition; to become a Mormon implies the acceptance of “American culture.”

What are the benefits and the disadvantages for African Americans when they become LDS? Among the positive elements, Embry counts the change of lifestyle that Blacks experience after their conversion. LDS Blacks tend to improve their family relations based on the concept of eternal families; black male converts become more affectionate with their wives and children; they are more home-centered, and friendly interactions permeate their families. Black members in the LDS religion advance the concept of a color-blind church and a less color-conscious society. A positive outcome for LDS African Americans is their change of perception about money; paying the 10 percent tithing helps them to be better stewards. More important, Blacks become the primary source for outreach to other Blacks.

When considering the negative elements, Embry concludes that callings put too much pressure on Blacks, but the absence of callings can lead to members’ withdrawal and

inactivity. LDS Blacks also experience the risk of losing their religious identity and forms of worship. For example, gospel music, the “call and response” style of preaching, the content of the hymns, clapping and dancing in the chapel, and the vividness and emotionalism of black religious expression radically contrasts with the quietness of white LDS services. Or, as one of Embry’s respondents asserted, “black is not only a color. It is also a culture” (207). According to Embry, the prejudice that LDS Blacks experience in the Church is not a matter of plain racism but of ignorance from white members. After all, “Mormons have not been hostile as much as ambivalent—and sometimes intimidated—by racial differences” (135).

After closing Embry’s book, we are left with uneasy feelings. The lack of analysis, in contrast to the overwhelming descriptive nature of the book, impedes our understanding of the mechanisms and motivations that bring Blacks to the LDS church. Embry, however, is absolutely right that Mormonism doesn’t have a monopoly on discrimination, exclusion, and segregation, but this fact does not exonerate the LDS institution from its historical responsibility. In spite of being embedded in the American culture, the LDS church has its own identity, and, as such, it has been selective in adopting American traits that conform to its policies and teachings.

Our expectation to know why African Americans become members of the LDS church is never fulfilled. Her conclusion that LDS African Americans have “mixed experiences” within the Church is insufficient, ambivalent, and, ultimately, confusing. The essential value of Embry’s work can be found in the number of questions it raises, not in the number of questions it answers. ☐

ARMANDO SOLÓRZANO is a professor of family and consumer studies and ethnic studies at the University of Utah; SHIRLEY FRAZIER WATKINS is a former graduate student at the University of Utah.



An Elder brand-new to the Quorum
Thought teaching was mostly a forum
For jumbling church hist’ry
With a teaspoon of myst’ry . . .
But at least he contrived not to bore ’em.

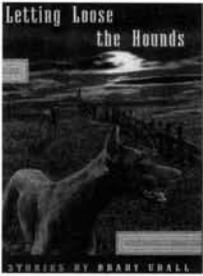
MICHAEL R. COLLINGS

LETTING LOOSE THE HOUNDS

by Brady Udall

New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1997
221 pages, \$22.00

Reviewed by Eric Lynn Jones



BRADY UDALL's collection of stories is an engrossing romp on the wild side of life in small-town Arizona and Utah, stories largely set in old Mormon towns. (Udall spent a good part of his growing-up in

Fredonia, Arizona.) These stories are of characters who not only inhabit small, out-of-the-way towns but of characters who live on the outskirts of those towns—if not geographically, then socially. What ever happened to wandering ranch hands, those loners bouncing along the trails of the West and conjured by Steinbeck? We find them here in fine 1990s form. These characters don't quite fit in the "New West" yet are born both of it and the Old West: rustics trying to settle down, but not quite doing so—no good jobs to be found, dreams busted up by hard-rock reality, loves gone bad just because their worlds are a little too stony and thorny.

Hilarious, bittersweet, gritty like sandstone, soul-wrenching, as genuinely enlivening as a somersault in last autumn's hay: these descriptions all hit the mark on Brady's tall, western tales. Imagine a prickly pear cactus with a blossom so pink and lovely that you can't help putting your nose too close. Again and again I've been pricked by Udall's stories, having read them each three or four times, and I'm not done yet.

You, too, should read Udall. His stories are full of raw humanity that makes us better people for having come across them. Better people? Yes, I really believe so. These rambling mavericks of *Letting Loose the Hounds* are misfits—people inadequate to their circumstances, square pegs in round holes. Misfits who bring to mind the Misfit in Flannery O'Connor's "A Good Man Is Hard to Find," or, closer to home, Levi Peterson's Pickett in "Night Soil" or Frank Windham in *The Backslider*. But Udall's misfits are perhaps more human, less far-fetched than Peterson's (e.g., you won't find many sarcastic dogs that reply in complete English sentences in *Letting Loose the Hounds*.) And Brady's misfits are more like the disturbed family in "A Good Man . . ." than like the Misfit. And, therefore, Udall's characters are easy to relate to, easy to

love, and to forgive for their foul mouths, dirty socks, and beer breaths.

Letting Loose the Hounds people are much like our brother the black-sheep-of-the-family whom we see once or twice a year because Snowflake, Arizona, is just so far away, and darn it, we just don't have that much in common with him, anyway. Or, on second thought, maybe Brady's men (and a few women) are simply more like ourselves than we care to admit, just as is that black sheep brother of ours.

One thread that all of Udall's mavericks seem to share is a brutal, uncompromising, yet matter-of-fact honesty that exposes these outcasts for who they are.

"Though she doesn't like to admit it, the fact I live with three crazy people is the reason Ansie won't stop by the house," begins my favorite story of the bunch, "The Opposite of Loneliness" (which, by the way, would be as apt a title for the book as is *Letting Loose the Hounds*.)

"How can you sleep in the same house with them?" Ansie, the narrator's sometimes-girlfriend, asks. "For all you know one of them could be a murderer or a sex maniac. One morning you could wake up with a fork in your eye or somebody's hands in your shorts" (114).

See what I mean? Udall's characters give us brutal honesty that, because of its unexpected shock, strikes us as deep and sincere and hilarious, all at the same time. True, we soon discover in "Loneliness," the narrator could wake up with the ill-placed forks or hands from any of the certifiable cuckoos he shares a house with. The narrator is like any of us who struggle to be a good person. "I'm not a doctor or a psychiatrist," the narrator tells us when explaining why he took a job looking out for homeless crazies. "I'm just here to help out, keep things under control" (121).

But the narrator of "Loneliness" is a flawed human being whose faults reach beyond him and out to us. His wife of years ago left him because his idea of the good life was kids and a woman content with his meager income while hers was vacations and new clothes. All he wants now is that family of his own that has forever eluded him. In the end, he finds his family, and oddly enough, it's none other than Ansie and the three crazies in his charge. One day, the narrator, Ansie, and their three companions head for the Grand Canyon only to have the car break down. But when he witnesses a bit of camaraderie among his misfit bunch, "it hits [him] that, finally, in some way, I have all the things I ever wanted. . . . I'm speechless. Everyone

looks up at me and I just stand there in a puddle of oil, grinning like an idiot" (134).

Just as it dawns on this fellow that he's found his family and his opposite of loneliness—all the while right beneath his nose—it dawns on us readers, too, that perhaps our own broken lives are a little more together than they ever really seem. And that's nice to know.

ERIC LYNN JONES is managing editor of SUNSTONE.



IN A DARK ROOM

after a photograph by
Alfred Stieglitz

Darkness has floated
To the top of the room,
Dropped to the bottom,
As if clearing a space
For her to write.
On the wall hang pictures
And pressed flowers,
Some in heart shapes
Tied with a ribbon.
To the right a bird flutters
In a cage.

Two photographs
Are exactly the same,
Like studied echoes,
One on the table
Beside the woman
Writing in a hat
And a long dark dress.

But she doesn't look up.
I touch her face,
Like a cameo turned away;
There's just the slightest glance
Of an eyelash, part of her nose,
The half-comma of her lips.

In that parade of shadows,
I lean over my paper,
Feeling the knot
In the back of my neck,
The stares of pictures
From the avenue of wallpaper,
The circle of lace at my
throat—
All for the words.

—KIM BRIDGFORD

NEWS

LDS IN AFRICA: GROWING MEMBERSHIP SEES AMERICAN CHURCH WITH UNIQUE VISION

by Peggy Fletcher Stack
Salt Lake Tribune religion writer

This story originally appeared in the 4 April 1998 Salt Lake Tribune. Reprinted in its entirety by permission.

HARARE, Zimbabwe—Across sub-Saharan Africa, traditional Mormon hymns are sung in clipped British accents. LDS lesson manuals preach Family Home Evening and food storage to people who have no food for tomorrow, let alone a year. In some homes, Mormon inspirational posters and temple photos bedeck the walls.

Such is the power of the LDS church in Africa, where the Mormon ranks have swollen from a handful to more than one hundred thousand in the two decades since black men first were allowed to hold the priesthood in the faith's all-male clergy.

It is a testament that a religion born on United States soil 168 years ago can so transform lives halfway around the world. African Mormons give up their drums for organs, their dashikis for white shirts, beads for CTR (Choose the Right) rings, and their lively religious services for subdued reverence.

"We want to do it just right," said Ben Ntiamoah, a Mormon convert who works in the temporal affairs office of the Church in Accra, capital of the West African nation of Ghana.

Ntiamoah was among the thousands of Africans who in February got their first glimpse of a man they revere as their prophet, when President Gordon B. Hinckley visited Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Zimbabwe, and South Africa.

Hinckley was the first Church president to visit the African con-

tinents since the 1978 visit of the late President Spencer W. Kimball, whose announcement that year of a divine revelation ended the ban on blacks in the priesthood.

For many black African converts, the Mormon story of how LDS church founder Joseph Smith saw God and Jesus Christ in a grove of trees when he was just fourteen years old seems natural, in light of their own visionary experiences.

Emmanuel Kissi of Accra said he was studying medicine in England when two LDS missionaries knocked on his door. His wife, Benedicta Elizabeth, was suffering from severe health problems.

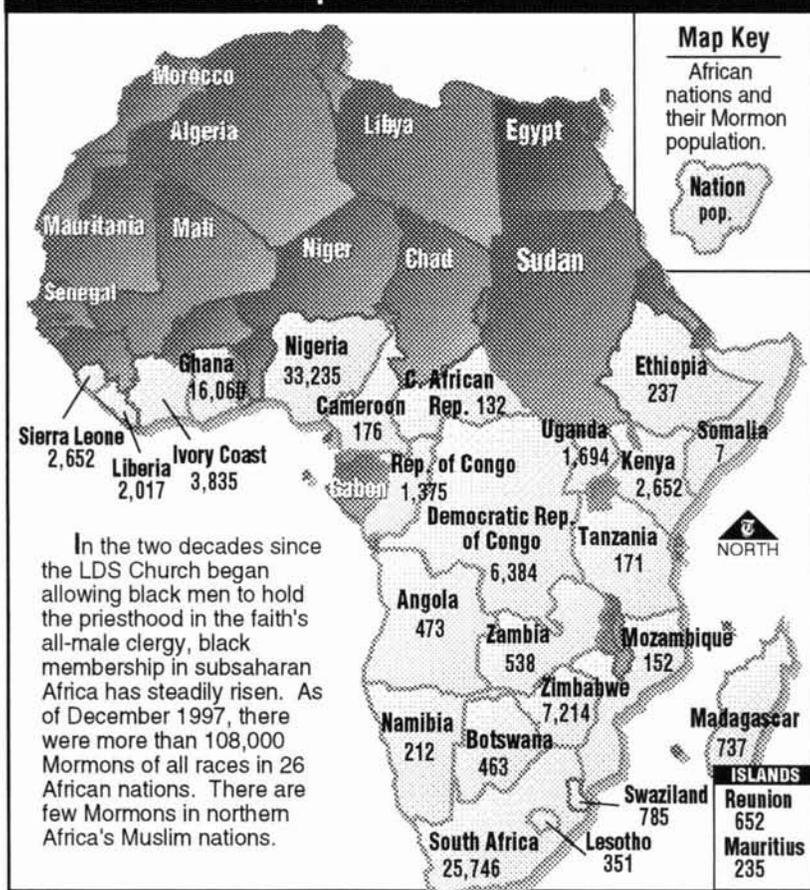
"She invited them in and they offered to give her a blessing," Kissi said. "She was cured instantly."

It took Kissi another year to join the Church, and he has been a staunch member ever since.

Smith's "vision was very good for me," Kissi said. "I put myself in his place and found myself enjoying every bit of his experience."

Africans are "intuitively and somehow inherently spiritual people, given to religion," said Elder Jeffrey R. Holland of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles in a recent interview with *The Salt Lake Tribune*. Holland, who traveled with Hinckley, oversees the LDS church in Africa.

Mormon Membership in Africa



A SYSTEMATIC APPROACH

AFTER 1978, the LDS church sent waves of missionaries into sub-Saharan Africa. Often, when a village chief was converted, the whole village followed his lead. In many cases, missionaries baptized everyone at once.

While conversion rates climbed, Church leaders decided such rapid-fire baptisms were "ultimately counterproductive," Holland said.

"Every individual had to be taught, every individual had to make commitments. That is how we join this Church and how we experience this Church," he said.

So Church leaders moved the missionaries from villages into cities and consolidated operations to foster new congregations. Once such a nucleus is established, missionaries move out in concentric circles in a conscious, methodical approach to Church growth, Holland said.

Part of that nucleus is created by Africans who joined the LDS church while living abroad and then returned to their homes.

Edward Opare is the stake president in Accra. His wife, Monica, joined the Church nineteen years ago while living with a Mormon family as an exchange student in New York state.



African saints at a meeting where President Hinckley spoke.
Church leaders moved missionaries from villages into cities; once a nucleus is established, then missionaries move

When Monica Opare returned to Ghana in 1977, there was no Mormon presence. Then Opare saw a newspaper advertisement for a "Meet the Mormons" evening and told his wife, "There are your people."

Opare joined the church a short time later in a scenario seen often throughout the Mormon missionary effort—women lead the way.

One Mormon group in a village about 350 kilometers outside of Johannesburg has only women members. They receive the sacrament, or communion, just once a month when a male missionary or leader comes to bless the bread and water.

At the same time, the percentage of black African male converts who advance in the priesthood is higher than anywhere else in the world, Holland said. Again, he credits their cul-

tural and religious traditions.

PRE-1978

KIMBALL'S REVELATION, which many hoped would erase the stigma of racism from Mormonism, was heralded by some African whites as a great step forward. But while Holland said he knew of no negative reaction in Africa, members in South Africa and

Zimbabwe report that some Mormons left the Church or moved to whiter neighborhoods or even countries.

Reg Neald, a white Mormon in Zimbabwe since the 1950s, said the pre-1978 prohibition was "hard for us. We had met people who were worthy of the priesthood."

After 1978, Neald became the first president of a black branch, or small congregation, in what

then was called Rhodesia. In 1980, the white government was overturned by black nationals who won independence and changed the nation's name to Zimbabwe.

"We went into the war zone to hold church, but never felt threatened," Neald recalled. But many white members were "scared of the unknown . . . [and] frightened to treat blacks as equals."

The former prohibition also caused trouble for African missionaries seeking converts.

"People thought it was racist," said Peter Chaya, the first black missionary in Zimbabwe. He served from 1981 to 1983. "I got big opposition. But I managed to overcome it with my testimony. They could not take that away from me."

THE NEED TO READ

IF OPPOSITION has diminished, the Church still faces internal challenges, the most difficult of which is literacy.

Though many Africans speak

"colonial" languages—English, French, and Portuguese—others speak primarily tribal languages.

"We did not know that when we first went in," Holland said. "We thought we could do everything in the colonial languages, because that's what the missionaries could handle the best."

What the Church discovered, however, is that the colonial languages worked best for men in the workplace. Women tended to use tribal languages.

That was one reason the Mormon women's organization, Relief Society, took on its worldwide literacy project in 1992. "They have had some wonderful success stories from Africa, particularly among women," Holland said.

In addition, the Church has approved the translation of scriptures into a few of the largest tribal languages, such as Twi in Ghana and Shona in Zimbabwe.

But what of those people who join the LDS church without being able to read any of the faith's scriptures?

"Well, they are responding to

**"Before
my misison,
I could not
compromise."**

MISSIONARIES IN AFRICA GROW AS THEY SEEK NEW CONVERTS

by Peggy Fletcher Stack
Salt Lake Tribune religion writer

This story originally appeared in the 4 April 1998 Salt Lake Tribune. Reprinted in its entirety by permission.

ACCRA, Ghana—There are some things that African Mormon missionaries find difficult to understand—like Utah weather.

“How many of you have had malaria?” Mormon Mission President Larry Bodhaine asked the eager young men and women gathered at an Accra chapel in February.

Almost all of the hands shot up.

“You know how you get the chills, shivering all over? Well, that’s what it’s like to be in Salt Lake City during a snowstorm,” Bodhaine explained.

But for these missionaries to work effectively in their African lands, knowledge of airborne diseases is much more essential.

Of the eighty-seven missionaries in the Accra, Ghana mission, all but thirteen are Africans. They come mostly from Ghana and its West African neighbors, Nigeria, Liberia, and Sierra Leone.

For some, a mission is their first trip outside of their country or even their village. In a continent long plagued by tribal and national conflicts, they often are paired with companions from other tribes and countries.

“It requires of them a new meaning of tolerance,” Bodhaine said.

Elder Ahmed Kailondo Banya of Sierra Leone joined the LDS church in 1993 after coming across the word “Mormon” in an encyclopedia while studying at Njala University in Sierra Leone.

He contacted missionaries in

Freetown, the capital of Sierra Leone, and presented himself for baptism. Two years later, after finishing his degree in agriculture, Banya, twenty-eight, left for his own mission.

His two-year mission would have ended in January, but it was extended when war broke out in Sierra Leone and kept him from going home. Banya credits his mission with enlarging his character.

“Before my mission, I could not compromise. Now I have learned to live with a companion,” Banya said. “What I used to mock at when I came, I would never mock at now.”

The African missionaries attend a missionary training course in Accra. But unlike most other missionaries, they have not taken temple vows because the nearest one is in Johannesburg, South Africa, and it is too expensive to travel there, Bodhaine said.

“We expect them to do everything they can to support themselves on a mission,” he said. “But sometimes all they can afford is their own passports.”

The rest of the cost of the two-year mission is picked up by the Church’s General Missionary Fund.

Most of the missionaries have been through public schools, but they see their mission experiences as equally beneficial. They are coached through Mormon and biblical scripture and learn skills such as public speaking that will help them in future careers, Bodhaine said.

All are grateful for their new faith.

Sister Bassey Inyon of Nigeria joined the LDS church with her family when she was eleven. She said the conversion transformed her father.

“Before we joined the Church, I was always afraid of my father because he was so strict and rigid,” she said. “After we joined, he treated us like children of God.” ☐

AFRICAN CULTURE PRESENTS CHALLENGES FOR MORMON CONVERTS

by Peggy Fletcher Stack
Salt Lake Tribune religion writer

This story originally appeared in the 4 April 1998 Salt Lake Tribune. Reprinted in its entirety by permission.

CAPE TOWN, South Africa—After the exhilaration of conversion comes the wake-up call of real life in local LDS congregations.

Just ask Nigel Giddey, who heads the Guguletu Branch, a small LDS congregation in a black township outside Cape Town.

“Too few shepherds for too many sheep,” said an overwhelmed Giddey, from his makeshift office in the courtyard between buildings.

The story is in the statistics.

Of twenty-three people baptized into Guguletu Branch of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints during 1997, only three were men age eighteen or older. Of these three, only one remains active in the Church. The branch has 253 members on the rolls, but an average weekly attendance of about sixty-five. Seldom are there more than two married couples. Five married men attend regularly, four have jobs.

“My ideal convert would be a married man with a job who can

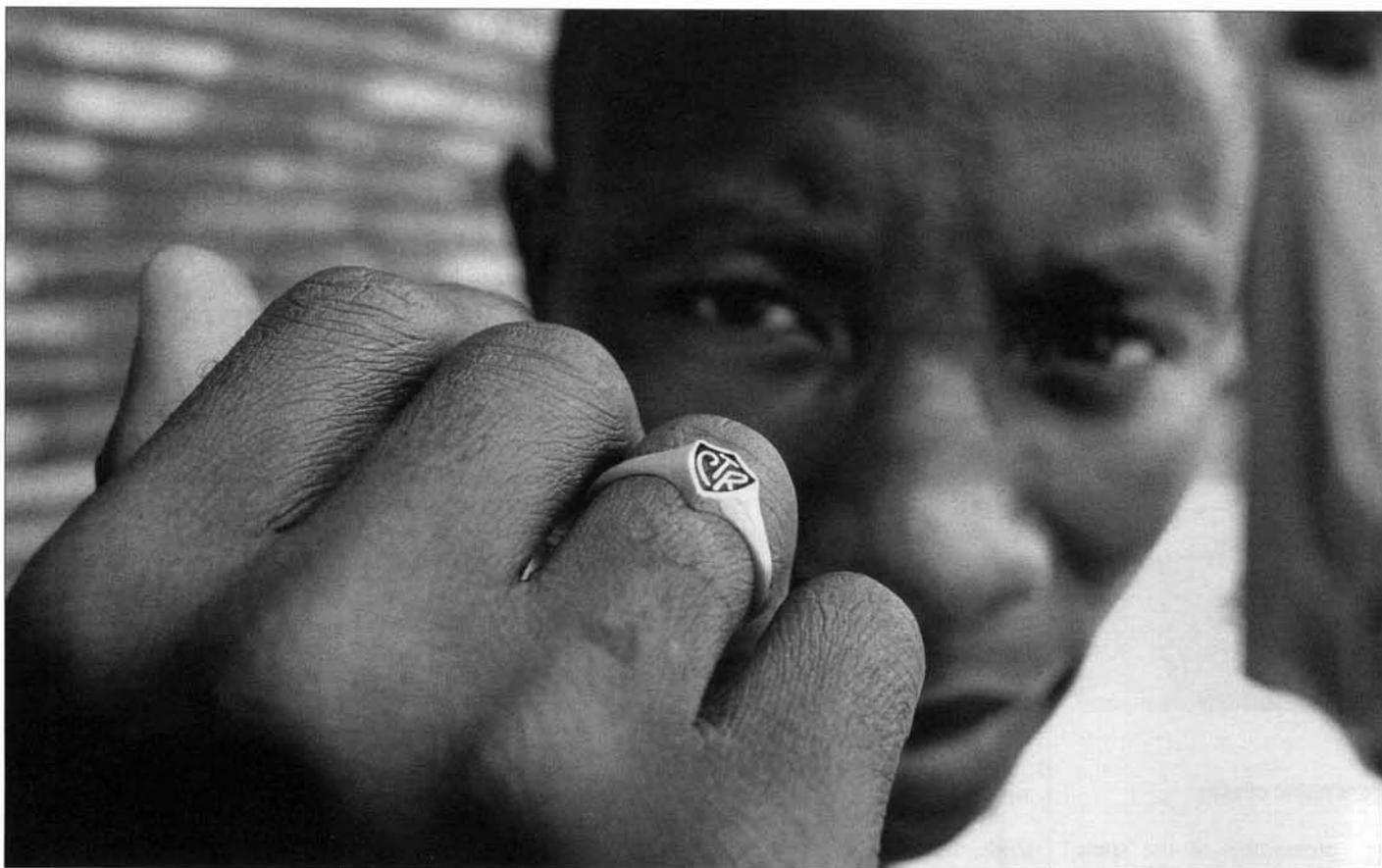
out in concentric circles.

the promptings of the spirit,” President Hinckley said in an interview in Zimbabwe. “They are growing in the faith, being helped by those in a position to help them. People can talk to them.”

And in many places, missionaries and members offer free literacy classes as a way of reaching out to the community. In the past decade, the LDS church has become immersed in such humanitarian service projects in Africa. It has provided money and workers to dig wells in Kenya, distributed clothing to war victims in Uganda, sent textbooks for schoolchildren in Ghana, and gave food staples to Somalian refugees.

Technology, training, economic aid and better management will be enormously helpful to Africans, said Elder Alexander Morrison of the LDS Quorum of the Seventy in a recent speech.

But for the peoples of Africa to reach their divine potential, Morrison said, “only the gospel of Christ, in my view, will suffice.” ☐



TREVIN NELSON

Victor Kpah, an African Saint, displays a familiar icon of his faith.
LDS practices often conflict with African cultures—in the Xhosa tribe, for example, nineteen-year-old boys are initiated into manhood in a three-week ceremony of revelry and circumcision.

read [English] comfortably," Giddey said, adding that many members struggle with LDS lessons and scripture.

Giddey also questions how well missionaries prepare candidates for baptism.

"I do not think that the missionaries read much beyond a few key scriptures to the potential converts or possibly a few pages of the Book of Mormon," he said.

Getting potential converts to ask questions is another hurdle. In the Xhosa [pronounced CAUSE-A] tribe, people are expected to agree with leaders and often are uncomfortable saying they do not understand.

Mormon practices also conflict with the local culture, said Phila Jordan, Giddey's second counselor.

At nineteen, Xhosa men are initiated into manhood in a

three-week ceremony that includes circumcision. Although the LDS church permits circumcision, (most LDS men are circumcised as babies), the accompanying revelry can include drinking, smoking, swearing and "carousing" with women.

During Jordan's initiation, he was isolated in a hut because he eschewed some of the activities.

"It created tension between me and my family, especially my uncles," Jordan said. "But they respected my beliefs even though they were not happy."

Many promising young men drop out of the LDS church after the experience, he said. "It's hard for some people to have courage to stand against the clan elders."

Another Xhosa tradition is that between death and burial, a period of about ten days, all local

ministers are expected to preach to surviving family members.

"If you don't come and visit every night, the other churches will get up and say, 'Look, the Mormons don't care,'" Giddey said.

On the day of the funeral, the family must feed everyone who attends—which might number five hundred or more—and the cost is enormous.

Some impoverished LDS members have asked Giddey to help pay for the funeral. He cannot, and that has antagonized some converts.

But for all the headaches, there have also been joyous moments and important advances.

For example, last month thirteen-year-old Nyameka Ntshoko became the first person to play the piano for the branch. She is the daughter of Relief Society President Linda Ntshoko, who

has been a member for nearly thirteen years. Ntshoko's ex-husband, Victor, took off with another woman and was excommunicated. But Ntshoko and her two children, Rosemary and Nyameka, have remained faithful.

During Giddey's three-year tenure, the branch has sent its first two young men on missions, produced its first temple marriage, found a place to build Guguletu's first chapel, established the branch's auxiliaries (Young Women, Relief Society and Primary), and updated membership records.

And he has felt God's hand on his shoulder.

Giddey, who is white, spends endless hours and many nights in the black township. On at least three occasions, he felt endangered, and each time, something or someone intervened.

UPDATE

MORMONS WILL PROVE TO BE
INVALUABLE VOLUNTEERS

Governor Mike Leavitt

UTAH'S MORMON Governor Mike Leavitt recently expressed a belief that Mormons would provide valuable assistance during the Olympic Winter Games of 2002 in Salt Lake City. During an interview while attending the 1998 winter Olympics in Hakuba, Japan, the governor told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that Mormons "have the ability to motivate people to participate. If you need . . . Japanese-speaking volunteers, they can find them. If you need people who speak Russian, they'll get them." According to Leavitt,

the LDS church's returned missionaries will provide a volunteer pool from which Olympic organizers may draw workers. These volunteers are expected to assist people at information booths, venues, and press centers, utilizing a variety of languages. John Fowler, state Olympic

coordinator, said, "There's no language we don't have resources for." Leavitt's off-the-cuff comments disturbed the beehive back home as individuals of other faith traditions said they had a volunteer spirit, too, and complained that they were being left out of the Olympic plans.

SEX ABUSE LITIGATION
BLAMES LDS CHURCH

A RECENTLY filed Oregon lawsuit alleges that an eleven-year-old boy was sexually molested by an LDS Sunday School teacher and the Church was negligent in reporting the incident. The lawsuit claims that Church leaders and Bishop Gregory Lee Foster knew eighty-seven-year-old Franklin Richard Curtis had a history of sexually abusing children but failed to report the incidents to authorities or members of the Church. The lawsuit claims that Bishop Foster did not inform the boy's mother of Curtis's sexual misconduct when she told him of her intentions to house and care for the aged man. Curtis lived with the family for approximately one year, during which time he sexually abused the boy. After the boy's family moved out of state i

PEOPLE

AWARDS & HONORS

- **President Thomas S. Monson** of the First Presidency and his wife **Frances** were presented with the Continuum of Caring Humanitarian Award on 22 April 1998 by the Friends of St. Joseph Villa. The St. Joseph Villa, a health-care facility for the elderly, is owned and operated by the Sisters of Charity of the Incarnate Word, a Catholic order. The Rev. George Niederauer, Catholic Bishop of the Salt Lake Diocese, said the Monsons are "the personification of human faces of concern and love and outreach to the entire community here in Salt Lake, here in Utah, and around the world."



Marjorie P. Hinckley

- **Marjorie P. Hinckley**, wife of Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, was presented with a Distinguished Service Award by the Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists on 2 April 1998. Sister Hinckley's "service has been in the form of steady, unwavering, and continual expressions of care, interest and support for all her brothers and sisters in all areas of the world and at all levels of status," said association president Janet Scharman in presenting the award, according to the *Church News*.

DEATHS

- Sixties rebel and later Mormon **Eldridge Cleaver** died at age sixty-two on 1 May 1998. Cleaver was the famous Black Panther leader and a major force in the U.S. civil rights movement who was once involved in a shoot-out with Oakland, California, police and subsequently jumped bail, fleeing to Cuba, Algeria, and the Soviet Union. Throughout his life, Cleaver advocated such disparate causes



Eldridge Cleaver

as Black rights, environmentalism, overthrow of the U.S. government, and, later, Mormonism and Republicanism. Baptized into the LDS church in 1983, Cleaver became less active in the '90s but continued to support the Church.

- **Alma P. Burton**, LDS theologian, author, and educator, died 30 April 1998 at age eighty-five. Burton served as superintendent of the Alpine (Utah) School District, as dean of admissions at BYU, and, also at BYU, as a professor of Church history and doctrine. He was also assistant administrator of seminaries and institutes for the Church.

Burton authored and co-authored many books, his latest, *The Divine Mission of Jesus Christ*, being released in 1997.

ANXIOUSLY ENGAGED

- RLDS church **President Grant McMurray** recently visited the LDS church's East Lansing Michigan Institute of Religion at Michigan State University. The visit was an informal opportunity for the church leader to see the Student Living Center and institute program while having a "nuts and bolts" discussion with institute coordinator Steven Henrie.

- A copy of *Max Weber's Methodology*, Lowell Bennion's doctoral dissertation, was donated to the **Harold B. Lee Library** at Brigham Young University by the University of Utah's **Marriott Library**. Only twenty copies of Bennion's work—the first on Weber ever printed in English—are known to exist out of an original one hundred copies. Prior to the donation, which was originally suggested by the late Sterling M. McMurrin, the BYU library did not possess a copy of the work.

in 1993, the boy informed his mother of the abuse. She contacted Bishop Foster to warn him about Curtis's behaviour. The suit claims that Foster said he already knew about Curtis's abusive habits—from both Curtis himself and Church leaders. Curtis later died in a nursing home, but it was revealed that he had been excommunicated in Pennsylvania for sexual abuse and later re-baptized in Oregon. The lawsuit claims Church officials in Oregon were fully aware of the reasons for the excommunication, and Curtis allegedly molested five other children in a Portland ward following his rebaptism. Church spokesperson Don LeFevre called the allegations "preposterous," telling the *Salt Lake Tribune* that the LDS church does not have a history of keeping child sexual abuse committed by members secret from Church or government authorities. "The church deplors child abuse in all its forms," he said. "It was not involved in any way in the abuse, which occurred in the plaintiff's own home by a man the family invited to live with them."

ELDER BALLARD URGES LDS TO "BUILD BRIDGES OF UNDERSTANDING"



Elder M. Russell Ballard said Latter-day Saints should "peacefully coexist with others not of our faith."

IN A speech at the Logan Institute of Religion near the campus of Utah State University, Apostle M. Russell Ballard called for LDS church members to "build bridges of understanding among the peoples of the world," reported the *Deseret News*. Elder Ballard said the Church has been engaged in just such an activity for a couple of years, establishing contacts and meetings with media, business, and government leaders. He cited the CBS *60 Minutes* interview with Church President Gordon B. Hinckley as an example of this type of "bridge building." "We must remember that the Lord expects us to peacefully coexist with others not of

our faith," he said. "We can pleasantly agree to disagree with them on certain points of doctrine even while we unite with them in the great common denominators of faith in God and benevolent service to others." He went on to outline five areas of doctrine in which those of other faiths often accuse Mormons of not being Christian. "May I suggest that what we want most of all is for Christian and Non-Christian alike to understand that we love the Lord Jesus Christ," he said. "We revere his name. We count it a great honor and privilege to take upon ourselves the name of Christ as Christians and as members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints." Further, he stated that Saints should respect the beliefs of others and expect the same in return.

RUSSIAN OFFICIAL RECANTS CRITICISM OF LDS CHURCH

ALEXANDER LEBED told a rally in 1996 that "[a]ll these Mormons are mold and filth which have come to destroy the state. The state should outlaw them. They should not exist on our soil." In 1996, Lebed was Russia's national security director but is now no longer with Boris Yeltsin's administration. At a National Press Club roundtable in Washington, D.C., Lebed spoke through an interpreter when he responded to a question about his earlier remarks. "I have taken

back my words. I have said that I am wrong. And I am not going to explain that the rest of my life," reported the Restoration Press News Service. Lebed then criticized a new Russian law, enacted by those who mistrust foreign-based religions, that restricts permission and recognition granted toward organizations engaged in missionary work. He called the law "short-sighted" and said that he, personally, has "become more flexible, more loyal to other religions."

RLDS CHURCH APPOINTS FIRST FEMALE APOSTLES



Gail Mengel and her sister in the faith . . .

THE RLDS CHURCH, headquartered in Independence, Missouri, named two women to its Council of Twelve Apostles on 30 March 1998. Linda Booth and Gail Mengel are the first women to hold positions on the council since a 1984 vote allowed female priesthood holders in the church. Both women were sustained to the council at the church's biannual World Conference, at which "less than a handful" of the twenty-eight hundred delegates voted against the women's appointment, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. In a statement given prior to the vote, Booth said, "I began a one-year argument with God. I had a

long list of arguments why I could not be an apostle. And every time I had an argument that I thought was particularly strong, God would dispel it," reported the *Deseret News*. Booth and Mengel replace retiring apostles Phillip Caswell and Joe Serig. Before the vote, Caswell stated, "I am grateful personally and ministerially that my change in responsibility enables the church to take another step in this direction. And I would respectfully remind us [RLDS church] that we have a long way to go." The 250-thousand member church also considered a name change, to the World Church of Jesus Christ, in an effort to draw a clearer distinction between it and the LDS church, but the resolution was defeated.



. . . Linda Booth are the first women apostles in the RLDS church.

WASHINGTON STATE LDS WARDS URGED TO OPPOSE SAME-SEX MARRIAGES

THE LDS church in Washington issued a letter on 25 January 1998, urging its members to exert influence in passing the Washington State Defense of Marriage Act. The letter was read during priesthood and Relief Society meetings on 28 January. The letter reads:

Dear Brethren:

On January 24, 1997, we wrote to you concerning the Washington State Defense of Marriage Act—legislation pending before the Washington State legislature that defined marriage as between a male and a female, and refused to recognize same-gender marriages.

The leaders and members of the Church in Washington responded promptly in great numbers from nearly every com-

munity across the state. As you will recall, the measure passed by a wide margin in both the state Senate and House of Representatives, but was vetoed by governor Gary Locke. Subsequent efforts to pass the measure as a referendum to the voters of the state were defeated in the final days of the 1997 session.

We are informed that the sponsors of the bill will reintroduce this as a referendum in the 1998 legislature. We again encourage members to write and to call your legislators to urge passage of this legislation. Brother Perrin Walker of Tacoma has been asked by the Area Presidency to coordinate efforts on this issue. He may be reached at (253) 591-8561 or in the evenings at (253) 654-8852.

We pray for the blessings of the Lord to be with each of you as you exercise your influence concerning this worthy cause.

Sincerely, North American Northwest Area Presidency
Glenn Pace, Melvin Hammond, Scott Grow.

LDS THEOLOGIANS DEFEND CHURCH'S CHRISTIANITY

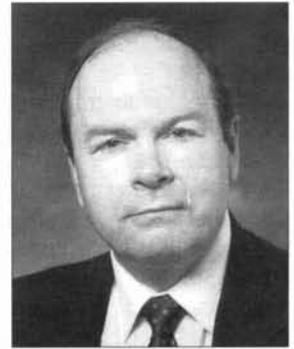
JUNE 1998 will bring more than warm weather to Salt Lake City. Thousands of Southern Baptists will converge on Utah's capital for the faith's annual convention, one of whose activities will include door-to-door tracting to Mormons. The prospect of all that "witnessing," according to the Baptists, may create an atmosphere conducive to either sharing or shouting.

BYU Dean of Religious Education Robert Millet has made it his mission to dispel the misinformation concerning LDS theology that seems to circulate among other faiths, particularly the Baptists. Millet believes the vast differences between the LDS church and traditional

Christianity will remain, but he hopes to create an open forum for discussion between the Latter-day Saints and the Baptists. Millet and BYU professor of ancient scripture Stephen Robinson met in spring 1997 with Tal Davis and Mark Coppinger, two Baptist representatives, to clarify LDS theology and discuss doctrinal differences. "[P]eople are saved by grace and not at all by works," Coppinger told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. "We do not enhance our access to the highest heaven by being wed in the temple or by tithing or what have you."



Elder Boyd K. Packer
asked Saints to avoid using
the term "Mormon Church."



Robert Millet is on a mission
to dispel misinformation
about Mormonsim.

Meeting again in December, Millet, Robinson, Coppinger, and Davis discussed the Baptist video, "The Mormon Puzzle." The video was created in an effort to explain LDS beliefs to Baptist churchgoers. "We asked for their [Mormons'] reactions to the video," Coppinger stated. In the six- or seven-hour meeting, the LDS representatives pointed out that the video incorrectly portrays the Mormon concept of grace. "To say that our understanding of grace is deficient or mistaken is one thing,"

TLC Church Leader Faces Lawsuit. The fiery, irreverent Jim Harmston, polygamist leader of the "True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days," is being sued by former followers who donated money to the church with expectations of having "Jesus Christ [delivered] in the flesh," according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*. Cindy Stewart, one of three plaintiffs suing Harmston for \$264,390, said "This is not about money. . . . [T]his is so not one more person gets sucked in." When Harmston first organized his church in Manti, Utah, he was welcomed into town by city leaders (see SUNSTONE JUNE 1996). Now, however, the Manti residents are becoming concerned as Harmston's rhetoric is turning virulent and violent against the LDS church. In a video-taped speech Harmston gave on 23 February 1998, Harmston refers to LDS leaders as "jackasses," and he says Apostle Boyd K. Packer's skin will be turned black as coal. "[H]ow do I know that? Because I am the one that's going to make it that way!"

LDS History Exhibited in Missouri Capitol. In a 24 April ribbon-cutting ceremony, Missouri Governor Mel Carnahan unveiled an exhibit featuring Mormon history in Missouri that will be on display for three months. Elder Pinnock of the Seventy and several other Church leaders also participated in the ceremony and presented the governor and his wife with copies of their genealogy. Elder Pinnock noted that in 1976, then-Missouri-Governor Christopher S. Bond issued an executive order officially rescinding Governor Lilburn Boggs's 1838 "extermination order." But Elder Pinnock also said the people of Missouri had "at least one hundred

years earlier" already rescinded the order by providing "a kind and wonderful climate" for "Mormonsy!"

NCAA Eliminates "BYU Rule." On 22 April 1998, the National Collegiate Athletic Association's board of directors voted to do away with the so-called "BYU rule" which prevented college sports championship events from being held on Sundays. "This decision will have no effect on BYU's policies against Sunday competition," BYU Athletic Director Rondo Fehlberg told the *Salt Lake Tribune*. While the decision will not affect BYU policies, it may effect BYU athletics. Non-revenue-generating sports such as golf are expected to begin holding championship events on Sundays for the sake of receiving television moneys. Athletes in such sports may start choosing not to attend BYU if they will have no possible opportunity to compete for a national championship.

Church to Shell-Out Five Million for Intersection Improvement in Kirtland. One of Kirtland, Ohio's most dangerous intersections will soon be redesigned and rebuilt, thanks to five million dollars from the LDS church, reported the Restoration Press News Service. The city of Kirtland has no available funds to pay for the reconstruction, and the LDS church has agreed to pay for the project. The intersection is part of a triangle of roads surrounding a general store that once housed Joseph Smith upstairs. The area is now listed as a National Historic Site and contains a museum that attracted thirty-two thousand visitors last year.

Millet said, "but to suggest that we have no notion of grace in our beliefs is a misrepresentation."

In response to criticism and such misrepresentation of the LDS church's doctrine, Acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles Boyd K. Packer reaffirmed the Church's Christianity before a large satellite audience at the monthly Church Educational System fire-side on Sunday, 1 February. He cited LDS hymns as an example of the Church's Christianity, reported the *Deseret News*. "These hymns certainly are not the voice of non-Christians," he said. "Instead they reveal a people of devotion and faith who love, indeed worship, our Saviour and our Redeemer." President Packer also urged Church members to avoid referring to the organization as the "Mormon Church," but rather, to use the full name of the Church to emphasize Christ's place in the doctrine and belief system. President Packer then went outlined several beliefs in Church doctrine that serve as focus points for contention and criticism, such as:

- The belief in the saving power of works in conjunction with Christ's sacrifice, rather than salvation by grace alone.
- The teaching that humans are literal "spirit children" of God and may themselves progress to Godhood.
- The doctrine of the trinity, maintaining that the Godhead consists of the three separate, individual components of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.
- The belief in the concept of continuing, modern-day revelation through living prophets.
- The use of canonical scripture other than the Bible.
- The Doctrine and Covenants' passage that maintains the LDS church is "the only true and living church upon the face of the whole earth."
- The teaching of the eternal nature of marriages and families.

PRESIDENT GORDON B. HINCKLEY ANNOUNCES CONSTRUCTION OF THIRTY NEW TEMPLES

DURING HIS closing remarks at the 168th annual General Conference, President Gordon B. Hinckley announced plans for the Church to expand its temple-building projects to include thirty new structures, reported the *Deseret News*. The announcement follows a 4 October 1997 plan to build smaller, less-expensive temples in areas without a large Church member population. The October announcement called for the smaller temples to be built in Anchorage, Alaska, northern Mexico, and Monticello, Utah. President Hinckley did not in his April conference address specify the locations of these thirty newest additions to the temple system but stated, "Stake Presidents will be advised as property is secured. I am confident the membership of the church will do a lot of speculating as to whether one of these will be in their cities."

In his 26 April remarks before 6,800 people in Columbus, Ohio, President Hinckley did say that one of the thirty new temples would be built near Columbus. The temple will be the first for the Church in Ohio since the 1830s' temple construction in Kirtland.

The smaller temples are able to perform all of the functions of



Thirty new, small temples—one to be built near Columbus, Ohio—will be constructed similar to this rendition.

their larger counterparts but may be erected at about the same costs as it takes to maintain a larger temple for one year. Smaller temples will lack such amenities as laundry facilities, cafeterias, and full-time staff. The construction of these new temples, to begin "immediately," according to President Hinckley, will provide services to those in rural or isolated areas. Currently, the Church's fifty-one temples are located near densely populated LDS regions, and those Church members who reside in central Africa, for example, must travel to either Johannesburg, South Africa, or Europe to perform temple work. President Hinckley expressed his hope that the additional temples would ease the travel and economic burdens placed on Latter-day Saints who must journey great distances to visit a temple.

PRESIDENT HINCKLEY PACKS NEW YORK'S MADISON SQUARE GARDEN

REVEALING his "great expectations" for LDS church members—that each Saint "carry in his or her heart a conviction that Jesus is the Christ" and that Joseph Smith was a true prophet—President Gordon B. Hinckley addressed twenty-four thousand Saints on 26 April 1998 in New York City's famed Madison Square Garden. The address was the first by a Mormon prophet to New York Saints since a 1975 address given by President Spencer W. Kimball and a first meeting of Latter-day Saints in the venerable New York arena.

Dave Checketts, a Mormon and CEO of the corporation that oversees the Madison Square Garden, arranged for the prophet's visit after witnessing there a memorial service in 1995 for slain Israeli leader Yitzhak Rabin. Orthodox Jews filled the facility to capacity to honor their leader. Checketts immediately thought of Mormons filling the arena to listen to a leader of their own. Three years later, Checketts's dream was fulfilled.

Saints came to New York in droves to hear their prophet. One group chartered a train, and another group rented twenty-four buses. So many people attended the meeting that the square's luxury suites were opened to accommodate attendees, while others were able to get no closer to the prophet than the lobbies outside the arena. Some seven hundred missionaries from three New York and New Jersey missions also attended. At one point in President Hinckley's address,

the audience broke into applause, apparently startling the prophet who is unaccustomed to such a response in an LDS service, according to the *Salt Lake Tribune*.

Before the "fireside," President Hinckley met with international dignitaries, corporate executives, and members of the press, including a *Time* correspondent and *60 Minutes'* reporter Mike Wallace, who has previously hosted the prophet on the CBS program.

PRESIDENT HINCKLEY ADDRESSES REGIONAL NAACP CONFERENCE

IN A first-ever address of an LDS church president before a meeting of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, President Gordon B. Hinckley counseled that the father needs to be reinstated throughout the United States and the world as the head of the family. "[I]n far too many cases, families of all races have been denied leadership, the leadership of a good and devoted father who stands at the side of an able and kindly mother in quietly training, gently disciplining, and prayerfully helping the children for whom they both are responsible."

President Hinckley spoke to some 250 attendees at a 24 April 1998 Western Region 1 Leadership Conference of the NAACP, according to the *Church News*. The *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that the four-day conference in Salt Lake City drew people from as far as California, Alaska, and Korea.

President Hinckley was received very warmly, and his speech was interrupted by three ovations. Afterward, the prophet was presented



President Gordon B. Hinckley and Jeanetta Williams, Salt Lake NAACP president, converse during the conference in which an LDS leader for the first time addressed the African-American association.

with a Distinguished Service Award by Jeanetta Williams, who is the Salt Lake NAACP President, conference chair, and a national board member.

SUNSTONE CALENDAR

1998 Sunstone Symposium Announced. The summer symposium will be July 29–August 1 at Redwood Road campus of Salt Lake Community College. Individuals outside of the Intermountain West wanting a copy of the preliminary program should contact Sunstone, 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City, UT 84103 (801/355-5926; fax 801/355-4043; <SunstoneUT@aol.com>).

1998 Washington, D.C., Symposium to Be Held in Fall. Contact Sunstone to be put on the mailing list.

1998 Chicago Symposium to Be Held in November. Contact Sunstone to be put on the mailing list.

1998 Northwest Sunstone Symposium date set. The conference will be held on 14 November in Seattle, Washington. Contact Molly Bennion for information (206/325-6868; <Bennion@Bennion-seanet.com>).

1999 Symposium West date set. The conference will be on 16–17 April at the San Francisco Airport Clarion. Contact Richard Rands (415/969-6567; email <RANDS7@aol.com>).

1999 Sunstone Symposium to be held at Salt Palace.

1999 marks the silver anniversary of the founding of the Sunstone Foundation, and the annual symposium will be held at the Salt Palace in Salt Lake City on 14–17 July 1999.

THE MORMON UNIVERSE

Latter-day Saint Museum Displays Jewish Library Collection. A collection of fifty-two rare library items—including a 1632 Holy Land map and rabbinic texts, lithographic prints, ritual liturgy, and books—is on display at the Museum of Church History and Art until 29 June. The exhibit, "Towards the Eternal Center: Israel, Jerusalem, and the Temple," is on loan from the Library of the Jewish Theological Seminary of America.

Journal of Latter Day Saint History organized. A periodical covering the divergent paths of Latter Day Saints and/or other followers of the Joseph Smith tradition may be subscribed to for \$15 (U.S. funds) per year in the U.S. and Canada, \$25 overseas. For more information write to S. L. Shields, 6055 East Lake Mead Blvd. #A183, Las Vegas, Nevada, 89115-6909; or e-mail at <steveelseg@aol.com>.

AN OLIVE LEAF

"... plucked from the Tree of Paradise, the Lord's message of peace to us."
(See History of the Church 1:316 and D&C 88.)

"REVERENCE AND RESPONSIBILITY"

By Leonard Arrington

Since his controversial release as Church historian, in 1982, many have hoped that Leonard Arrington would tell his side of the story. In the just-released *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Illinois, 1998), the dean of Mormon history provides a well-written, engaging tale of the challenges when professionalism and ministering attempt to collaborate. This excerpt is from the concluding chapter.

THERE ARE MANY challenges in writing religious history. On the one hand, the historian must convey the facts of history in an honest and straightforward manner. The historian must strive against the conscious or unconscious distortion of events to fit the demands of current fashions; he or she must renounce wishful thinking. On the other hand, many religious historians wish also to bear testimony of the reality of spiritual experience. We all know by now that the pretense of "objectivity" can be a hypocritical dodge to cover up unspoken, perhaps even incorrect, assumptions.

Speaking for myself and, I think, for most of the historians who have worked with me, some tension between our professional training and our religious commitments seems inevitable. Our testimonies tell us that the Lord is in this work, and for this we see abundant supporting evidence. But our historical training warns us that the accurate perception of spiritual phenomena is elusive—not subject to unquestionable verification. We are tempted to wonder if our religious beliefs are intruding beyond their proper limits. Our faith tells us that there is moral meaning and spiritual significance in historical events. But we cannot be completely confident that any particular judgment or meaning or significance is unambiguously clear. If God's will cannot be wholly divorced from the actual



UTAH STATE HISTORICAL SOCIETY

course of history, neither can it be positively identified with it. Although we see evidence that God's love and power have frequently broken in upon the ordinary course of human affairs, our caution in declaring this is reinforced by our justifiable disapproval of chroniclers who take the easy way out and use divine miracles as a short-circuit of a casual explanation that is obviously, or at least defensibly, naturalistic. We must not use history as a storehouse from which deceptively simple moral lessons may be drawn at random.

I hope that LDS historians will be known for the sense of reverence and responsibility with which they approach their assignments. There should exist a certain fidelity toward and respect for the documents and a certain feeling for human tragedy and triumph. LDS history is the history of the Latter-day Saints, in their worship and prayer, in their mutual relationships, in their conflicts and contracts, in their social dealings, in their solitude and estrangement, in their high aspirations, and in their fumbling weaknesses and failures. We must be responsive to the whole amplitude of human concerns—to human life in all its rich variety and diversity, in all its misery and grandeur, in all its ambiguity and contradictions.

Undeniably, part of that human life is its religious dimension. Latter-day Saint historians will not do their subject justice, will not adequately understand the people they are writing about, if they leave out the power of testimony as a motivating factor in their lives. . . . The great histories of our people . . . must reflect both the rigor of competent scholarship and the sensitivity to recognize, as the New Testament records, that "the wind bloweth where it listeth" (John 3:8). ☐

SUNSTONE MERCANTILE

Summer reading? Pick your pleasure . . .

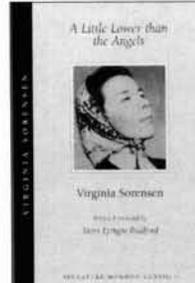
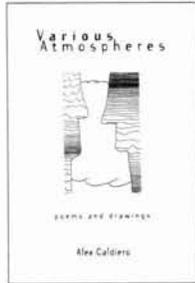


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Mormon studies is going high-tech! This jam-packed, searchable CD-ROM contains the entire Signature Books library through 1996 (excluding fiction), all Mormon titles from University of Illinois Press, the earliest editions of LDS scriptures, all issues of *Dialogue* and *Sunstone* through 1996, nineteenth-century LDS church classics, and more. **Over 950 works with illustrations—an incredible value!** For Macintosh and Windows. (Smith Research Associates)

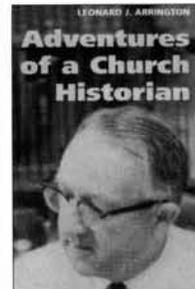
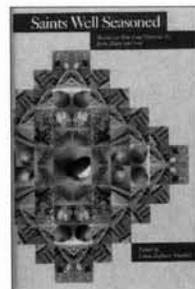


Various Atmospheres by Alex Caldero, pb. \$10.95 \$9.85

The quiet of reverie. The smell of warm bread in a Sicilian kitchen. The dissonance of the mind in conversation with itself. The sensation of air on naked skin. The embrace of salt and sea. Heads under clouds and placed in boxes. The jaggedness of a snake's memory shed among the rocks. These are the various atmospheres that Alex Caldero conjures in his sometimes meditative, sometimes playful poems and drawings that celebrate both holiness and farce. (Signature Books)

A Little Lower than the Angels by Virginia Sorensen, pb. \$14.95 \$13.45

This first novel by one who has been christened "Utah's First Lady of Letters" has seen a revival of interest among Mormon critics who paid the book scant attention when first published in 1942. This timely reprint "convincingly explor[es] . . . the tragic, comic and gorgesque problems of plural marriage," once said the *New Yorker*, and it successfully captures the tone of old Nauvoo. A Mormon classic. (Signature Books)



Saints Well Seasoned edited by Linda Hoffman Kimball, hb. \$16.95 \$15.25

Containing the musings of Elouise Bell, Richard Cracroft, and Eugene England, Cathy Stokes, Emma Lou Thayne, and Orson Scott Card—among many others—this book brings together a smorgasbord of delightful Mormon essays about food in all its aspects: humorous, poignant, nostalgic, and unexpected. Read, ponder, and laugh about "Rice Christians," "Jan's Red Jello," and "Faith, Refreshments, and Baptism." (Deseret Book)

Adventures of a Church Historian by Leonard J. Arrington, hb. \$32.50 \$29.25

This long-awaited account of what happened with Camelot gives fascinating glimpses into the workings of the LDS church's presiding councils, with riveting chapters on the Church history controversies that resulted in Arrington's release and the removal of his staff to BYU. (University of Illinois Press)

Black Saints in a White Church: Contemporary African American Mormons by Jessie L. Embry, \$18.95 \$17.05

Case Reports of the Mormon Alliance, Vols. 1 and 2 edited by Lavina Fielding Anderson and Janice Merrill Allred, \$20.00 \$18.00

The Folk of the Fringe stories by Orson Scott Card, \$22.00 \$19.80

In Our Lovely Deseret: Mormon Fictions stories edited by Robert Raleigh, \$17.95 \$16.15

In Sacred Loneliness: The Plural Wives of Joseph Smith groundbreaking, controversial history by Todd Compton, \$20.95 \$26.95

Love Chains: Stories fiction by Margaret Blair Young, \$14.95 \$13.45

Lowell L. Bennion: Teacher, Counselor, Humanitarian biography by Mary Lythgoe Bradford, \$24.95 \$22.45

Making Peace: Personal Essays by Eugene England, \$14.95 \$13.45

Restless: The Memoirs of Labor and Consumer Activist Esther Peterson by Esther Peterson with Winifred Conkling, \$27.50 \$24.75

Mormons on the Internet by Lauramaery Gold, \$18.00 \$16.20

Only When I Laugh by Elouise Bell, \$9.95 \$8.95

Pat & Kirby Go to Hell by Pat Bagley and Robert Kirby, \$9.95 \$8.95

Quality of Mercy by Eugene England, \$10.95 \$9.85

Sunday of the Living Dead by Pat Bagley and Robert Kirby, \$8.95 \$8.05

Wake Me for the Resurrection by Pat Bagley and Robert Kirby, \$9.95 \$8.95

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RAVELL CALL - DESERT NEWS

When the University of Utah's Utes basketball team returned from the NCAA finals on 1 April 1998, the homecoming parade passed by the Church Administration Building, and U. alumnus Gordon B. Hinckley (class of '32) led the Church's A-team to the building's steps to cheer the defeated heroes and toss a ball or two.