

SUNSTONE

WAITING, England
essay contest winner
by **Lara Burton**
(p.16)

**CROSSING THE
BRIDGE**, Brown
fiction contest winner
by **Alex Peterson**
(p.65)

**Kevin Christensen
ON WAGGING
THE DOG** (p.6)

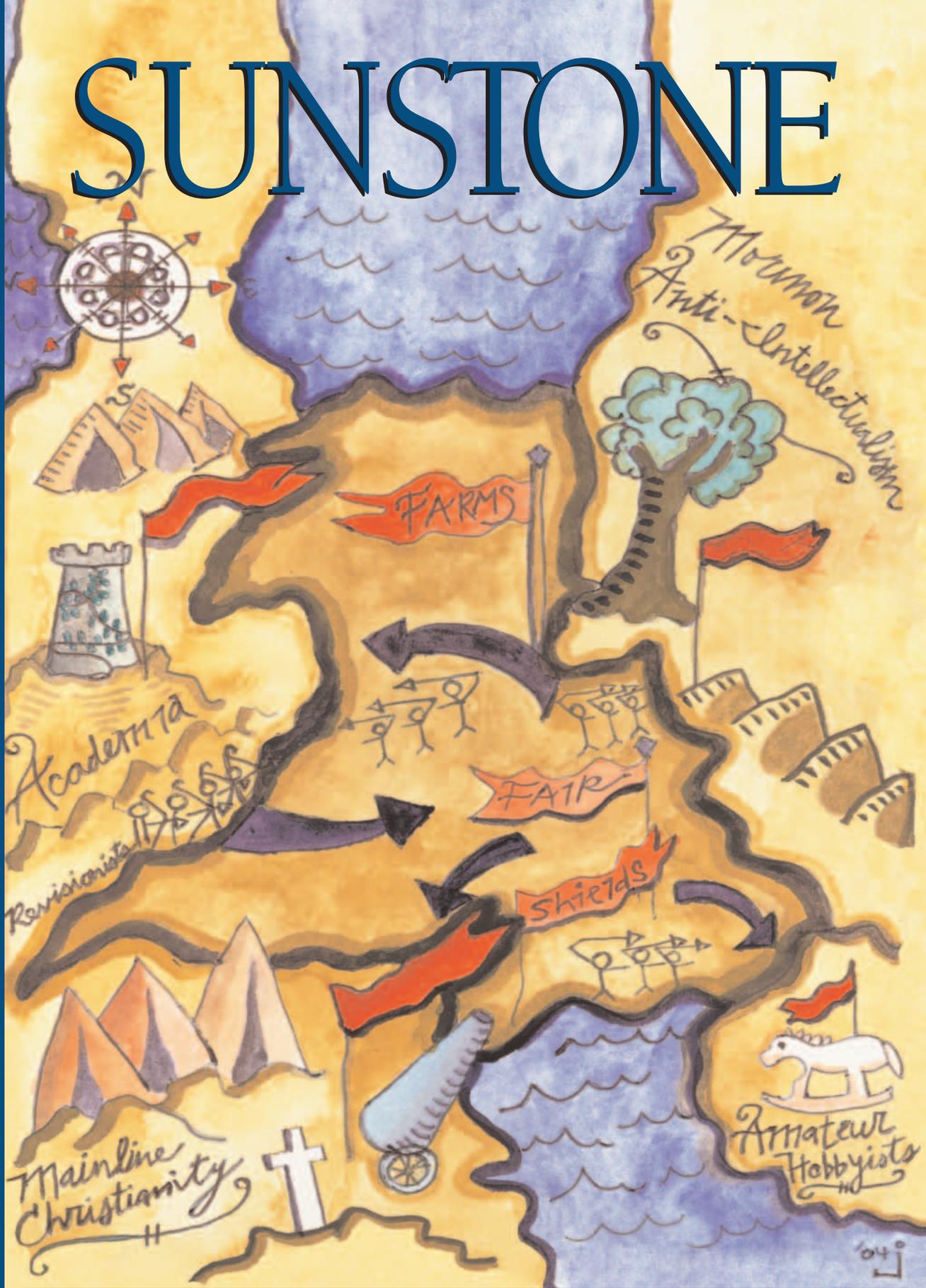
J. Bonner Ritchie
shares his
**Peacemaking
Odyssey** (p.56)

**HOW FOUND
ART FOUND ME**
by **Marylee Mitcham**
(p.62)

Visit **Carol Lynn
Pearson** in the
**Sunstone
Gallery** (p.40)

NEWS

Marjorie Pay
Hinckley passes
away; BYU professor
argues biological
basis for homo-
sexuality; Apostle
offers rare look
inside the Quorum
of the Twelve;
Illinois regrets past
persecution; New
controversy over
temple work for
Holocaust victims;
and much more!
(p.75)



*Defending the Kingdom, Rethinking the Faith:
How Apologetics is Reshaping Mormon Orthodoxy*

by John-Charles Duffy

2004 SALT LAKE SUNSTONE SYMPOSIUM

11–14 August • SHERATON CITY CENTRE HOTEL, SALT LAKE CITY



Join us Wednesday 11 August when Sunstone welcomes MARGARET STARBIRD as this year's Smith-Pettit Lecturer! Margaret's well-known books, *The Woman with the Alabaster Jar* and *The Goddess in the Gospels: Reclaiming the Sacred Feminine* were cited by Dan Brown as major influences in shaping his bestselling novel, *The Da Vinci Code*. Raised Catholic, Margaret taught religious education for many years, was a Fulbright scholar, holds BA and MA degrees from the University of Maryland, and studied at Vanderbilt Divinity School. She travels extensively, speaking about Mary Magdalene and the sacred feminine in Christianity. Her latest books are *The Feminine Face of Christianity* and *Magdalene's Lost Legacy*.

The symposium will also feature its usual, varied fare of topics including panels and papers examining the many facets of LDS experience and history, reviews of the latest books, films, and television which touch on Mormon life, reflections on the Book of Mormon and other scripture, and much more.

Make your plans early! Rooms at the hotel disappear fast.

Watch for a preliminary program in the July SUNSTONE and at www.sunstoneonline.com.

LOCATION:

Salt Lake Sheraton City Centre Hotel
150 W. 500 S.
Salt Lake City, UT 84101

This is the same hotel used for the 2003 symposium.

HOTEL REGISTRATION. Enjoy the convenience of staying at the Sheraton City Centre Hotel, the site of this year's symposium. Special conference rates are: \$99 for single and double occupancy; add \$10 per person for each additional person. Rooms fill up quickly, and you must make your reservation by **24 JULY 2004**. For reservations, call

toll free (800) 325-3535 or, if local, (801) 401-2000. To guarantee these prices, be sure to ask for the Sunstone Symposium room rates. Conference parking at the hotel will be \$4 per day and includes exit and return privileges.

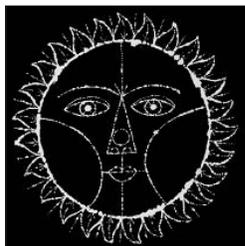
VOLUNTEERS. Sunstone needs volunteer office help in the weeks leading up to the symposium. During the conference, we also need help staffing registration and sales tables and taking tickets. Volunteer hours may be redeemed for free session tickets, cassette recordings, Sunstone T-shirts, back issues of the magazine, or lengthened subscriptions. If you can help, please call Sunstone at (801) 355-5926.

SUNSTONE

MORMON EXPERIENCE, SCHOLARSHIP, ISSUES, & ART

MAY 2004

Issue 132



FEATURES

- 16 *Lara Burton* WAITING: 2004 Eugene England Personal Essay Contest, Second Place Winner
- 22 *John-Charles Duffy* DEFENDING THE KINGDOM, RETHINKING THE FAITH: How Apologetics is Reshaping Mormon Orthodoxy
- 56 *J. Bonner Ritchie* A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM CONFLICT TO PEACEMAKING: A Middle East Odyssey
- 62 *Marylee Mitcham* HOW FOUND ART FOUND ME
- 65 *Alex Peterson* CROSSING THE BRIDGE: 2000 Brookie & D.K. Brown Fiction Contest Moonstone Winner

POETRY

- 11 *Anita Tanner* RECIPE FROM A FAMILY FILE
- 21 *Terry J. Mulert* IN THE LOVE OF MAKE-BELIEVE
- 64 *Ward Kelley* STANDING BELOW THE WATCHTOWER
- 67 *Susan Maurer* DIA DE LOS MUERTES
- 70 *Frank S. Palmisano III* DROUGHT

COLUMNS

- 6 *Kevin Christensen* YEA, YEA, NAY, NAY: On Wagging the Dog
- 10 *Dan Wotherspoon* FROM THE EDITOR: "A Real Fight"
- CORNUCOPIA
- 12 *Vickie Stewart Eastman* ALL THESE THINGS SHALL GIVE THEE EXPERIENCE . . . : Tale of Two Sisters
- 13 *Brian H. Stuy* THE REST OF THE STORY . . . : Shaky Stick
- 14 *Moyne Oviatt* TWENTY YEARS AGO IN SUNSTONE: Silent, Simple, Equal
- 15 *Jana Riess* OF GOOD REPORT: Praying and Slaying
- 40 *Michael Schoenfeld* SUNSTONE GALLERY: Pioneer
- 68 *D. Jeff Burton* BRAVING THE BORDERLANDS . . . : Dealing With Traditions and Policies
- 71 *Elise Eggett* TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . . : Moving On
- 72 *Edgar C. Snow Jr.* LIGHTER MINDS: Writing the History of Pets and Other Animals in Mormondom
- 80 *Richard L. Bushman* AN OLIVE LEAF: To Tell It All

UPDATE

- 75 *Marjorie Pay Hinckley, wife of President Gordon B. Hinckley, passes away; Illinois apologizes for 19th century persecution; BYU professor argues biological basis of homosexuality; Controversy continues over temple work for Holocaust victims; Rare, candid look inside the Quorum of the Twelve; John D. Lee statue constructed, then scrapped; and much more!*

SUNSTONE (ISSN 0363-1370) is published by The Sunstone Education Foundation, Inc., a non-profit corporation with no official ties to The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Articles represent the opinions of the writers only.

SUNSTONE is indexed in *Religion Index One: Periodicals*, the *Index to Book Reviews in Religion*, *Religion Indexes: RIO/RIT/IBBR 1975-on CD-ROM*, and the *ATLA Religion Database*, published by the American Theological Library Association, 250 S. Wacker Dr., 16th Fl., Chicago, IL 60606 (e-mail: atla@atla.com, WWW: <http://atla.com/>).

Submissions may be on IBM-PC compatible computer discs (MS Word or WordPerfect format), or by e-mail attachment. Submissions should not exceed 8,000 words and must be accompanied by a signed letter giving permission for the manuscript to be filed in the Sunstone Collection at the University of Utah Marriott Library (all literary rights are retained by authors). Manuscripts will not be returned; authors will be notified concerning acceptance within ninety days.

SUNSTONE is interested in feature- and column-length articles relevant to Mormonism from a variety of perspectives, news stories about Mormons and the LDS church, and short reflections and commentary. Poetry submissions should have one poem per page, with the poet's name and address on each page; a self-addressed, stamped envelope should accompany each submission. Short poems—haiku, limericks, couplets, and one-liners—are very welcome. Short stories are selected only through the annual Brookie and D. K. Brown Memorial Fiction Contest (submission deadline: 30 June 2004; \$5 fee per story).

Letters for publication should be identified. SUNSTONE does not acknowledge receipt of letters to the editor. Letters addressed to specific authors will be forwarded, unopened, to them.

SUNSTONE will not provide subscriber addresses to mail list solicitors without permission.

Send all correspondence and manuscripts to:

SUNSTONE
343 N. Third West
Salt Lake City, UT 84103-1215
(801) 355-5926
fax: (801) 355-4043
email: info@sunstoneonline.com
website: www.sunstoneonline.com

United States subscriptions to SUNSTONE are \$36 for 6 issues, \$65 for 12 issues, and \$90 for 18 issues. International subscriptions are \$48 for 6 issues; \$89 for 12 issues; \$126 for 18 issues. All payments must be in U.S. funds drawn on a U.S. bank. All international subscriptions will be sent via surface mail. Bona fide student and missionary subscriptions are \$10 less than the above rates. A \$10 service charge will be deducted from refund amount on cancellations.

Printed by  A "Green" Shop

Copyright © 2004, The Sunstone Education Foundation.
All rights reserved.
Printed in the United States of America.

Cover Design: Jeff Hale

SUNSTONE

Founded in 1974
SCOTT KENNEY 1974–1978
ALLEN D. ROBERTS 1978–1986
PEGGY FLETCHER 1978–1986
DANIEL H. RECTOR 1986–1991
LINDA JEAN STEPHENSON 1991–1992
ELBERT EUGENE PECK 1986–2001

Editor

DAN WOTHERSPOON

Publisher

WILLIAM STANFORD

Associate Editor

CAROL B. QUIST

Managing Editor

JOHN HATCH

Section Editors

PHYLLIS BAKER, fiction contest

SCOT DENHALTER, Cybersaints

ALAN AND VICKIE EASTMAN, Righteous Dominion

HUGO OLAIZ, News/Update

DIXIE PARTRIDGE, poetry

MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON, women's studies

MICHAEL SCHOENFELD, Sunstone Gallery

DARRON SMITH, The Long-Promised Day?

ALISON TAKENAKA, Margin Notes

BRAD WOODWORTH, book reviews

Editorial Assistants

NATHAN BANG, JOHN-CHARLES DUFFY

ERIC JONES, HUGO OLAIZ, WILLIAM B. QUIST

Contributing Columnists

MICHAEL AUSTIN, D. JEFF BURTON

MICHAEL NIELSEN, JANA RIESS

Photographer and Taping Engineer

STEVE MAYFIELD

Cartoonists

KYLE ANDERSON, JEANETTE ATWOOD, JEFF HALE, MACADE

Much-Appreciated Volunteers

ADRIANE ANDERSON, SUSAN ANDERSON, DEVERY ANDERSON

PHYLLIS BAKER, DEBRA DICKAMORE, DON GUSTAVSON

BARBARA HAUGSOEN, LEANN HILLAM, BEVERLY HOPPE

CHRIS KEMP, STEVE MAYFIELD, KATHY WILSON



THE SUNSTONE EDUCATION FOUNDATION

The mission of The Sunstone Education Foundation is to sponsor open forums of Mormon thought and experience. Under the motto, "Faith Seeking Understanding," we examine and express the rich spiritual, intellectual, social, and artistic qualities of Mormon history and contemporary life. We encourage humanitarian service, honest inquiry, and responsible interchange of ideas that is respectful of all people and what they hold sacred.

Executive Director

DAN WOTHERSPOON

Board of Directors

J. FREDERICK (TOBY) PINGREE, chair

BILL BRADSHAW, D. JEFF BURTON, JULIE K. CURTIS

CHARLOTTE H. ENGLAND, NADINE R. HANSEN

JORDAN KIMBALL, ROBERT KIRBY, KIM MCCALL

J. BONNER RITCHIE, MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON

MICHAEL J. STEVENS, EARL M. WUNDERLI

Publisher/Business Manager

WILLIAM STANFORD

Sunstone Mercantile Director/Office Manager

CAROL B. QUIST

Symposium Organizers

MOLLY BENNION, Northwest

MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON, JULIE K. CURTIS,

MICHELE OLESON, Symposium West

STEVE ECCLES, Dallas

JOHN HATCH, Salt Lake City

National Advisory Board

ALAN ACKROYD, IRENE BATES, MOLLY BENNION

CARLAN BRADSHAW, BELLAMY BROWN, RENEE CARLSON

BLAINE CARLTON, PAUL CARPENTER, DOUGLAS CONDIE

JOHN COX, D. JAMES CROFT, ROBERT FILLERUP

KENT FROGLEY, SHELDON GREAVES, MARK GUSTAVSON

LIONEL GRADY, NANCY HARWARD, DIETRICH KEMPSKI

GREG KOFFORD, SHUNICHI KUWAHATA, GLEN LAMBERT

PATRICK MCKENZIE, CARRIE MILES, RONALD L. MOLEN

MARY ANN MORGAN, MARJORIE NEWTON

ALICE ALLRED POTTMYER, MARGARET REISER

CHRIS SEXTON, RICHARD SHERLOCK, GEORGE D. SMITH, JR.

NICHOLAS SMITH, RICHARD SOUTHWICK

MARSHA S. STEWART, LORIE WINDER STROMBERG

JOHN TARJAN, JANET TARJAN, NOLA W. WALLACE

HARTMUT WEISSMANN, MARK J. WILLIAMS

Y E A , Y E A  N A Y , N A Y

PHOBIA BY ANY OTHER NAME—FLASHBACK

AH, YES: THE 2004 COMMENT OF Sheri Dew, president of Deseret Book Company and best-selling biographer of Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, that she could barely stomach (i.e., felt nauseated at) seeing a photograph of a returned LDS missionary and his male partner being civilly married in San Francisco, each holding one of their adopted daughters (SUNSTONE, March 2004, 73).

And yet, after expressing comments such as this publicly and privately, social conservatives bristle today when they are called "homophobic" by "so-called liberals," and insist: "It is part of the radical gay agenda to call normal people 'homophobic' merely because good Christians criticize the claim of gays that they have the right to marry. We love gay people, but hate their homosexuality and lifestyle."

FLASHBACK TO 1954: A white Southern Baptist woman of prominence looks at a photo of a black man being civilly married to a white woman in Boston and says publicly that the photo makes her feel nauseated. Criticized by "so-called liberals," she replies: "It is part of the radical Negro agenda to call decent people 'racist' or 'Negrophobic' merely because good Christians criticize the claim of Negroes that they have the right of miscegenation. We love Negro people but hate their blackness and race-mixing."

Different target, same disgust, same fears of allowing a despised group the rights of the dominant group, same denials.

D. MICHAEL QUINN
Los Angeles, California

PARSIMONY

I FOUND SEVERAL ARTICLES IN THE "Reframing The Book of Mormon" section (SUNSTONE, March 2004) to be quite interesting and enlightening. I commend SUNSTONE for having the courage to admit that traditional LDS views of the Book of Mormon need to be re-examined. I must admit up front that I am one of those who has, as Trent D. Stephens describes, adopted the first reaction to the latest data on the Book of Mormon. I happen to believe that "the data refute the historic authenticity of the Book of Mormon," and that "therefore, belief in the book is unfounded and should be abandoned."

That said, I still found the articles very interesting. But, particularly interesting to me was Ralph A. Olsen's article, "A Malay Site for Book of Mormon Events." One reason for this is that, several years ago, I independently put forth the same idea myself. I didn't do the extensive research that Olsen has apparently done, but I find his logic and data quite compelling. He certainly makes a much better case for his argument than any of the apologists at FARMS do for theirs. As a proponent of Occam's Razor (which Olsen cites in his end-notes), I find Olsen's proposition is far more "parsimonious" than the convoluted mental gymnastics required to accept a New World location for the Book of Mormon. Olsen refers to himself as "an old chemist meddling in hallowed ground." I must say that as an old geographer with a specialty in Polynesia, I find his proposition very interesting. If I were to accept, as Olsen does, that "the Book of Mormon is a genuine record of actual peoples and events and not merely a metaphorical or spiritual record," then his proposition is the most reasonable I have seen so far. However, I still have extreme difficulty accepting the Book of Mormon as "a genuine record."

PRESTON BISSELL
Eau Claire, Wisconsin

AGAIN!

GOD BLESS THE THINKERS. THEY keep handing such dilemmas to those who shudder and stammer and scratch their heads over what to do with this little book called the Book of Mormon. (See SUNSTONE, March 2004.) After all, its contents certainly must be accepted only with a wink or an asterisk until the book itself passes a real thinking man's test. For goodness sakes, how can we accept teachings on love and obeying the commandments of God and that Jesus Christ is our Savior until we dig up bones of at least one pre-Columbian horse?

So, year after year, we struggle to follow the promptings of the thinkers. But it takes so much faith.

They told us that all native peoples poured across the Bering Strait, apparently bumping into one another as they hastened to take advantage of a fairly brief environmental opening. Then they told us that settlements in New Mexico showed up before those travelers could get so far south unless they took Interstate 5 through California. Then, they told us that, while, yes, Central and South America were home to ancient civ-

ilizations, none existed at the times suggested in the Book of Mormon. Now they report discoveries placing people in Central America exactly during Book of Mormon times.

Now we have DNA testing. And we are told that all peoples native to North, Central, and South America were made in China. Oh, bother. I don't know what that does to the trade deficit, but I do know one thing for certain. There goes the Book of Mormon. Again. All those teachings down the drain of disbelief. Until some technician pokes a needle into a kid in Chile and pulls out a Middle Eastern connection. But not to worry. There will always be those horses.

Heaven help us if we put the Bible to such tests before we accept its authenticity. Of course we believe in Paul's conversion story. Both versions. The creation story? You bet. Story A or Story B? Judas certainly came to an untimely ending. But was it Ending A or B? We have Abraham's family riding camels before camels were domesticated, Israelites popping up where they were not, Mary and Joseph struggling to get to Bethlehem to follow a Roman edict that didn't exist. Oh my.

Of course one difference between the two books is that Joseph Smith said he translated everything correctly. We have no such claims for the Bible. I suggest, however, a basis for possible error even if Smith translated perfectly. It's not uncommon for generals to expand a bit on the truth when recounting heroics or when estimating enemy casualties. And before the advent of precision instruments and precise geographical boundaries, distances and landmarks tended to be in the eye of the beholder.

I'm not suggesting that books of faith need not answer to some reason and logic, and I welcome each new scientific wrinkle as much as I welcome those working at the ironing board. But most Latter-day Saints are too busy to stand around in the laundry room to watch. In other words, despite the "oh-the-sky-certainly-is-falling-this-time-for-sure" rhetoric, the Church will go on. Babies will still disrupt sacrament meetings. Odd chemical combinations will still show up at ward dinners. Faithful priesthood brethren will still wear white shirts. And only elderly women will be allowed facial hair at Brigham Young University.

GARY RUMMLER
Milwaukee, Wisconsin

THE REAL CONFLICT

IN HIS ATTEMPT TO GRAPPLE WITH problems DNA evidence poses for Book of Mormon historicity (SUNSTONE, March 2004), Trent D. Stephens incorrectly frames the issue as "metaphysics" vs. science. The simple fact is that the Book of Mormon makes historical claims that can be tested. We are not talking about one house and one family, as Stephens hyperbolizes. The Nephites ruled over and dominated the region, if not the continent. A whole nation as described in the Book of Mormon does not simply disappear. So unless the Nephites and Lamanites lived in a fourth dimension, some kind of incontrovertible evidence should have appeared by now.

Stephens's reference to the lack of evidence that large numbers of Israelites occupied ancient Egypt is irrelevant because that portion of the Bible may indeed be based on myth. Stephens seems to be telling readers: if you believe the biblical account of the Exodus and it can't be proven, then you must accept my argument about the Book of Mormon. This line of reasoning works only with those similarly situated and proves nothing to those who do not share his bias.

While Stephens criticizes creationists as "religious fanatics" because they reject the scientific data for evolution, he is guilty of ignoring the implications of Amerindian DNA,

which amounts to the same thing. To escape the implications of DNA and other evidence, Stephens uncritically relies on the Limited Tehuantepec Theory of Book of Mormon geography, which asserts that the vast majority of Native Americans are not Lamanites and that Book of Mormon events took place in the small region of Central America surrounding the Isthmus of Tehuantepec. As Brent Lee Metcalfe and I explain in the introduction to *American Apocrypha* (Signature Books, 2003), this theory is nothing more than an ad hoc hypothesis designed to shield the Book of Mormon from negative evidence. It only exists to save the Book of Mormon and has no other merits.

Stephens's willingness to undermine the Book of Mormon's prophetic spirit in order to save its historicity will no doubt trouble many believers. According to Stephens (and other apologists), Lehi's prophecy in 2 Nephi 1:6-11—that America would be preserved exclusively for those of Israelite blood until a future time of apostasy—was false, for at that time, the Amerasians already occupied the New World. Stephens's suggestion that Lehi uttered this false prophecy because he had no "real concept of the vastness of the area of which he spoke" is hardly reassuring. Stephens then equivocates on the meaning of "this land," but in the end, he can give no other reason for this line of questioning than his need to defend the Book of Mormon.



You can quote most of Isaiah, but it's too hard to engrave the name of your wife?

JEANNETTE ATWOOD

As usual when Mormons find the evidence is not in their favor, Stephens invokes Moroni's promise that sincere prayer will be rewarded by a spiritual witness (Moroni 10:4–5). But, in light of his previous discussion undermining the ability of prophets to interpret “the workings of the spirit,” how confident is Stephens about his own testimony? If history teaches anything, it teaches us not be overly confident about ecstatic religious experience. While Mormons tend to think their spiritual experiences are somehow different, mystical and spiritual states are ancient, cross-cultural, and rooted in biology. Whether we're talking about Nirvana, Brahman, Tao, *Unio Mystica*, Absolute Unitary Being, or lesser mystical states such as divine presence, born-again, burning in the bosom, and religious awe, all originate in specific areas of the human brain and can be triggered through meditation, prayer, and ritual. Scientists are now discovering more about the nature of mystical and spiritual experiences, which originate in the lower part of the brain, the limbic system and, to some extent, the frontal and parietal lobes. Spiritual experiences are part of being human, but they are far from infallible guides to truth. Moreover, they are subject to manipulation, cultural bias, and—unlike science and reason—they are not self-correcting.

Like many believers, Stephens seeks to harmonize religion and science. But why should we? What is it about religion that causes us to want to bend reality to save it? If the truth makes us free, why do we choose conformity? Obviously religion fulfills an emotional need so powerful that it becomes impervious to reason. Scientific method was invented to override emotional biases and help us overcome our tendency to make subjective judgments. Those who use scientific and other scholarly methods had better be prepared to have their false notions challenged. But isn't that the whole purpose of using such tools? It seems to me that the real conflict is not between science and religion, but rather between our emotional attachment to tradition and our inability to embrace change as inevitable and beneficial.

DAN VOGEL
Westerville, Ohio

Trent D. Stephens responds:

DAN VOGEL'S LETTER HELPS PROVE one of the main points of my SUNSTONE essay: the apparent conflict between science and religion comes from the interpretation of texts and data rather than from the texts and data themselves. Vogel claims that “the

Nephites ruled over and dominated the region, if not the continent.” But consider the actual text, which says (476 years after the original colonization), “My son, I would that ye should make a proclamation throughout all this land among all this people, or the people of Zarahemla, and the people of Mosiah who dwell in the land, that thereby they may be gathered together . . . on the morrow” (Mosiah 1:10). The whole land must have had a radius of not much more than twenty miles for a proclamation to go out for everyone to meet one day hence. Vogel also writes, “According to Stephens . . . Lehi's prophecy in 2 Nephi 1:6–11—that America would be preserved . . . was false.” But the prophecy's reference to “this land” does not have to be an allusion to America as a whole. It is Vogel who is reading “America” into the text.

In my essay, I suggested four paths one might take in light of the new DNA data concerning Native American origins: “One: [One may conclude that] belief in the [Book of Mormon] is unfounded and should be abandoned. Two: The data may be ignored. . . . Three: People may take a wait and see attitude. . . . Four: The Book of Mormon story is still true . . . [but] Middle Eastern colonization in the Americas may have been very small compared to the remainder of the population.” I did not suggest which path someone should take. In fact, I stated that, “rejecting the authenticity of the Book of Mormon because its story is not supported by scientific evidence may be the most practical and most rational choice.” I have no argument with anyone who chooses this course, and I understand that position.

I then stated, “The last conclusion, not to reject the Book of Mormon story, but to modify interpretations of that story in light of scientific data, seems a reasonable compromise for anyone who attempts to espouse both science and Mormon theology.” This is the approach I have chosen. Having spent the past thirty-five or more years of my life in the biological sciences and, at the same time, having chosen to follow a religious life, I find such compromise a part of my everyday life.

It appears that, for whatever reason, Vogel is not willing to tolerate such a position. Apparently, in his mind, the choice is black and white: one must reject the Book of Mormon because of the data, or reject the data. My options three and four are apparently out of the question.

According to Vogel, all religious experience is limbic and therefore, by implication, self-originating. He states, “Whether we're talking about Nirvana . . . or . . . burning in the bosom and religious awe, they all origi-

nate in specific areas of the human brain and can be triggered through meditation, prayer, and ritual.” One might note how similar Vogel's list and conclusion is to that of the Book of Mormon's Korihor: “dreams . . . whims . . . visions and . . . pretended mysteries . . . [claimed by believers to originate from] some unknown being, who they say is God—a being who never has been seen or known, who never was nor ever will be” (Alma 30: 28).

Vogel asks, “Stephens seeks to harmonize religion and science. But why should we?” My answer to that question is the same as it is for any of my other scientific and intellectual pursuits: I don't know. I simply feel driven by intellectual curiosity to do so. I find it fulfilling. And it's a heck of a lot of fun—which, as it turns out, is also a limbic function. Vogel asks me a specific question, “How confident is Stephens about his own testimony?” My answer: Very. Do I think the experience of testimony is unique to Mormons? No. Do I find having a testimony confining, forcing a choice of conformity? Not as much as thinking my own limbic lobe is the only creative force in the universe.

TRENT D. STEPHENS
Pocatello, Idaho

INVESTIGATOR-FRIENDLY

I FOUND MYSELF BRISTLING AS I READ the editorial, “On Being Investigator-Safe” in the recent issue of SUNSTONE (March 2004). I wasn't distressed about the overall point that editor, Dan Wotherspoon, was trying to make (I actually think we agree about many points) so much as it was about the concept of “investigator-safe” itself, to which he was reacting. This worry about needing to watch everything we say out of fear we'll somehow hurt the chances that someone will join the Church seems to me to be just another spin-off of the general Mormon moral and intellectual superiority complex: we assume investigators and non-member friends are not able to understand or accept the more controversial areas of our religion. This attitude is based on the false assumption that people outside of the Mormon faith are children who can't sort through issues in an intelligent and understanding way. Did anyone ever stop to think of how investigator-unfriendly this attitude might be?

I firmly reject the paradigm that a person evolves from innocent babe to naive tender investigator to zealous, “true believer Mormon” and then into erudite reader of SUNSTONE magazine. That model is simplistic on both ends of the equation—more ap-

appropriate for a *Flintstones* episode than for today's postmodern, information-driven age.

Most investigators are seeking something better after having been exposed to a wide array of religious ideas. Little published in *SUNSTONE* will seem very radical to someone who has been exploring the big picture of religious diversity. In my experience, most successful investigators have been better informed than the average, comfortable member of the Church who is happily doing all his or her duties. What might be perceived as outrageous by the parochial corridor ostrich is rarely going to scare anyone off who has rummaged round the fringes of religious thought to any extent. "Investigator-safe" implies an enormous arrogance and a profound cluelessness about what most intelligent people think and know outside of the center of this one relatively small church.

In fact, some of the mainstream LDS material comes across to me as potentially more investigator-unsafe than anything that comes out of *SUNSTONE* and its associated forums, symposiums, website, and general rabble-rousing. "Approved material" too often makes Latter-day Saints come off sounding childish, narrow, cultish, and mindlessly obedient.

Consider the recent general conference priesthood session in which a speaker showed pictures of a Latino Priesthood leader visiting and ultimately chasing a reluctant less-active teenager into the waves of the ocean and physically dragging him back to church. How "investigator-safe" is that? I hope most conference participants, awake enough for this story to register, thought of it more as a humorous allegory in service of the "never give up" principle than as a good model for re-activation.

Story time. I have a friend at work who is an evangelical Christian. He is intelligent, nationally respected in his field, teaches college courses, is married with a nice family, and likes to golf. He is politically conservative, carries a handgun, and listens to Rush Limbaugh on the radio. Yet for some reason he is mildly curious about Mormonism. He has read part of the Book of Mormon and other literature, and I would not be surprised to learn that he has taken a couple of the missionary lessons. I doubt he is going to convert. He is dedicated to his church but interested in us to a degree. By accident, I left an old copy of *SUNSTONE* where he could read it.

His response quite surprised me. He told me that the magazine really opened his eyes to the strength, depth, vitality, and diversity of Mormon religious thought. He said that a faith has to be quite mature to spontaneously generate material like this and that *SUNSTONE*

unintentionally refutes most of the false propaganda about Mormons that some evangelicals try to pawn onto the public. Although he might not personally agree with most of what was in the magazine, he wishes his church had a few courageous souls willing to write like this. His respect for us was boosted by *SUNSTONE* more than by anything else he had ever encountered. He said that a cult does not generate or tolerate material like this.

I think we underestimate the potential of *SUNSTONE* magazine as a missionary tool, especially for people not reached by traditional approaches. We Mormons are largely tolerated now: no mobs burning us out. We are respected by some and admired by a few. Yet *tolerance* is far from *admiration*, and most Mormons don't seem to understand this distinction. In the past, conversion to Mormonism required an explosive leap across this entire spectrum. As we become better respected and even admired, the leap is shorter and can happen more methodically. *SUNSTONE* can appeal to those investigators who are already closer to the admiration end of the continuum, because, like us, many are thinking/exploring people, not leapers.

I would love to find a mission president who would try this experiment: Divide the mission into two equal halves, as far as possible. Instruct one half of the missionaries to use the *Ensign* in standard door approaches and street meetings. Instruct the other half to use *SUNSTONE* in a parallel manner. It would be interesting to see how many doors are opened and how much success each half experiences, and how many missionaries would be forced to deepen their perspective on the diversity and strengths of their own tradition as they teach the gospel. Ultimately, my guess would be that the "SUNSTONE-bred" investigators would have better retention five years after baptism, because as J. Golden Kimball said about conversion, "Easy come, easy go."

SUNSTONE is investigator-friendly, as far as I am concerned. I recommend it as part of the arsenal of some missionaries and member-missionaries alike, if they are so inclined.

MIKE HENINGER
Atlanta, Georgia

COMING HOME

I T FEELS LIKE COMING HOME! THAT'S what I thought when I read the December 2003 *SUNSTONE*. Actually, it was the special edition featuring the late Eugene England (January 2002) that re-interested me in the Sunstone community after more than a decade of being away. I still can't believe Gene

is gone. From the day he and I first met at the University of Utah in 1960 and formed a small, five-person "dialogue" study group, his impact on me was powerful and indelible. Gene was easily my most challenging and severe critic, but also one of my most faithful, loving, and generous friends. Thank God he left us a legacy of *Dialogue: a Journal of Mormon Thought*, and its inspired offspring—*SUNSTONE*, the Association for Mormon Letters—as well as his personal example of purity, integrity, and commitment.

Although I've not met the new editor, Dan Wotherspoon, he feels like a long lost brother when, in his "State of the Body" editorial, he expresses his hope that "the Church can be a true home." By "Church," I hope he means the greater community of Christ in contrast to ecclesiastical scaffolding.

Rebecca Chandler, another whom I have not yet met, surely rang my bell with her teaching metaphors and disclosures of the true and varied nature of her birth family. And, Rebecca, your "wish list" is a treasure! Your wise old rabbi who responds to a reluctant prodigal by saying, "Bring him back as far as he will come, and I will go to him," is a choice, to-be-wished-for example. That is how I imagine Jesus would behave. Mormon ecclesiastics should be so wise!

Then, of course, there are the tenth anniversary stories of the "September Six" who had been excommunicated en masse from the Mormon ecclesiastical machine. Two are my old friends Paul Toscano and Lavina Fielding Anderson. I have often wondered if their rallying to aid me during my own excommunication process a year earlier in 1992 in any way prepared them for theirs a year later.

I T FEELS LIKE coming home! Now speak those words in a faint Russian accent. That's what my dad said to my brother and me in late 1961 when we announced our intention to change our name from Kregg to Kovalenko.

My brother Virgil and I had always hated our birth name because we knew it wasn't real. It was a concocted "American-sounding name" to hide the true origin of an illegal Russian/Ukrainian refugee.

I was in graduate school at the University of Utah, and my brother was an officer in the U.S. Air Force in 1961 when Dad and Virgil came to visit me at the university. It was the first time we three had come together as adult men. The first words out of my mouth when they walked through my door were, "Dad, what are we doing with this awful name? It has no meaning, no history, no heritage, and no roots. I hate it!"

YEA , YEA  NAY , NAY

ON WAGGING THE DOG

by Kevin Christensen

Virgil jumped into the fray with the same sentiments. Our dad exclaimed with surprise and excitement, “Oh, my sons, I hate it, too! But I was afraid to say anything because I thought you would laugh at me.”

“That settles it, Pop! We’re changing it back to the original,” the two of us simultaneously announced. Not long after, Virgil and I, independently, on the same day, in different cities in Utah and unknown to each other, had our respective surnames changed to our father’s birth name. It took Dad and Mom in California months to catch up with the same change.

I remember the conservative presiding Salt Lake City municipal judge trying to argue me out of my decision—this being at the height of the Cold War—reminding me what had happened to many people with German names in our country during WWII. Finally, after wrangling with me for some time, the judge threw up his hands and exclaimed, “Well! Here’s a guy who *really* thinks they’re going to take over!”

My dad died in 1964, a little more than two-and-a-half years later, not in his Ukrainian homeland (his “Rodina”), but with his true name restored. He would never have dreamed that thirty-plus years later, in 1995, his sons would find four generations of his Ukrainian family alive and well and then visit them in his own hometown! Nor would he have predicted that five years after that, a Russian convert to the Church in Belarus, named Ivan Kovalenko, would be sent on an LDS mission to California, begin an American family search, and find us, his relatives, in Texas, Utah, and New Mexico! Nor would Dad have believed that his oldest child, Dorothy Kregg, the existence of whom his sons knew nothing about, would initiate a search on the Internet in 2003, looking for any trace of her father whom she had always loved and never forgotten. Dorothy found far more than the gravesite she was looking for. She found two younger brothers and a whole bunch of nephews and nieces—newly discovered first cousins to her four sons! All this, to say nothing of other newly discovered relatives in Ukraine, Belarus, Russia, Latvia, and Canada.

To me, all these events—those published in the December SUNSTONE issue, as well as my own recent family discoveries—are literal examples of the fulfillment of Moroni’s spin on Malachi 4:6 (JST 1:39). They are witness to, and further evidence of, a growing awareness that we all are in process of “coming home.”

EUGENE KOVALENKO
Los Alamos, New Mexico

COMMENTS IN THE March 2004 SUNSTONE raised concerns about whether the influential work of FARMS and FAIR scholars with regard to studies of Book of Mormon geography and culture is akin to “the tail wagging the dog.” As the unsigned introduction to the “Reframing the Book of Mormon” section puts it, “Are these LDS apologists, rather than Church leaders, creating new doctrine, and if so, by what right?”¹

As it happens, in an essay published in SUNSTONE thirteen years ago, Todd Compton wrote a relevant article dealing with “Counter-Hierarchical Revelation,”² by which he means instances where the initial inspiration for a teaching or Church program flows *up* the hierarchy, rather than coming down through channels. Compton took his examples from scripture and from official Church histories, taking particular notice of the consistent patterns in the circumstances. He discusses the stories of Paul’s rebuke of Peter at Antioch, Nephi’s subtle rebuke of Lehi, Emma Smith’s triggering the questions that led to Joseph’s receiving the Word of Wisdom, Orson Pratt’s doctrinal conflicts with Brigham Young, and several others.

In one example, Compton tells the story of a twenty-five-year-old Joseph F. Smith’s refusing the counsel of two apostles who wanted to take a freight boat to shore under circumstances that Smith thought dangerous and unwise. Despite his being told, “Young man, you had better obey counsel,” Smith refused to board the boat, which soon overturned and nearly came to tragedy for the two apostles. Compton reports that “This example shows a young man who simply had more experience and knowledge in a limited area than men who, though they were apostles and his ecclesiastical superiors, were newcomers to Hawaii and probably not well acquainted with seafaring, at least in the local

area. . . . Thus a Church leader who seeks to wield his ecclesiastical authority in an area in which he has little or no expertise perhaps runs the risk of overstepping his bounds.”³

Compton also cites the story of Levi Savage, a member of the Willie Handcart company, for whom both events and Brigham Young confirm that “with expertise in a limited area [he] was more inspired than an apostle [Franklin D. Richards] out of his element.”⁴

In his discussion of non-hierarchical revelation, Compton also observes that “the counselor offices in Church government implicitly acknowledge this pattern of checking leaders. If the prophet were infallible, if he received a steady, direct stream of revelation, and were entirely self-sufficient, he would not need counselors.”⁵ Compton recognizes the tension between “authoritarian wrong-headed” leadership on the one hand, and “authoritarian wrong-headed critics” on the other. “But in none of my examples did the person leave the Church when they received their individual inspirations. . . . Counter-hierarchical revelation does not negate the hierarchy. . . . The people I have looked at are usually on good terms with the Church structure—either as a part of it or related to it somehow.”⁶

The LDS scriptures never describe Church leadership as infallible. To the contrary, the Doctrine and Covenants bluntly states that these commandments are of me, and were given unto my servants in their weakness, after the manner of their language, that they might come to understanding. And inasmuch as they erred, it might be made known; and inasmuch as they sought wisdom, they might be instructed (D&C 1:24–26).

The scriptures do not describe revelation as passive nor as an all-at-once experience, but rather from “time to time” conditioned on



KEVIN CHRISTENSEN, B.A., English, is a technical writer living in Lawrence, Kansas. He has published several articles, including the recent, “The Temple, the Monarchy, and Wisdom: Lehi’s World and the Scholarship of Margaret Barker,” in *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*. His email is kskchris@sunflower.com.

both expedience and seeking (D&C 1:28). We must take thought, and “study it out in [our] mind” before we can expect revelation (see D&C 9). We are to study, to ponder, to “seek out of the best books words of wisdom” (D&C 88:118), with the expectation that by doing so we can always be instructed “more perfectly” not just in the “law of the gospel” but with respect to a “knowledge of countries and kingdoms” (D&C 88: 78–79).

Statements from the Book of Mormon indicate that understanding revelation requires preparation and study. Nephi insists that “none other people . . . understand the things which were spoken unto the Jews . . . save it be that they are taught after the manner of the things of the Jews” (2 Nephi 25:5). When Jesus appears to the Nephites, he tells them, “I perceive that ye are weak, that ye cannot understand all my words. . . . Therefore go . . . and ponder upon the things which I have said, and ask of the Father, in my name, that ye may understand, and prepare your minds for the morrow” (3 Nephi 17:2-3).

Alma’s experiences also seem to indicate something other than easy omniscience when it comes to knowing the exact things of God:

Behold, I do not say that he will come among us at the time of his dwelling in his mortal tabernacle; for behold, the Spirit hath not said unto me that this should be the case. Now as to this thing I do not know; but this much I do know. . . .” (Alma 7:8).

Now these mysteries are not yet fully made known unto me; therefore I shall forbear (Alma 37:11).

Now, I unfold unto you a mystery; nevertheless, there are many mysteries which are kept, that no one knoweth save God himself. But I show unto you one thing which I have inquired diligently of God that I might know. . . . (Alma 40:3).

It sufficeth me to know that this is the case. . . . (Alma 40:5).

I have inquired diligently of the Lord to know; and this is the thing which I do know. . . . Behold it has been made known unto me by an angel. . . . (Alma 40:9, 11).

But behold, I give it as my opinion. . . . (Alma 40:20).

Clearly, according to the Book of Mormon itself, we ought to consider how prophets or other leaders come to say what they say. If we take an eternal view, the most expedient message of the prophets pertains to our salvation. “Now is the time to repent, for the day of sal-

vation draweth nigh. . . . He doth sound these glad tidings among all his people . . . wherefore they have come unto us. And they are made known unto us in plain terms that we may understand. . . .” (Alma 13:21–23). Not everything, though, bears directly on the glad tidings of salvation. Not everything in revelation is plain, and not every tradition or interpretation is authoritative. Some things require more effort to learn, and on some things relevant to the Book of Mormon and the peopling of the Americas, little effort had been made, sometimes because preconceptions interfere with the necessary inquiry. In 3 Nephi, for example, we have this warning: “And now, because of stiffneckedness and unbelief, they understood not my word; therefore I was commanded to say no more of the Father concerning this thing unto them. . . . And they understood me not, for they supposed. . . .” (3 Nephi 15:18, 22) The uncritical presuppositions of the ancient disciples interfered with both inquiry and understanding.

It is no different for us moderns. John Sorenson has shown that the first serious attempt to develop a comprehensive internal geography of Book of Mormon lands from the text did not appear until 1938, more than one hundred years after the book’s publication.⁷ No one had made the effort. On the cultural side, Brant Gardner argues that sufficient information on ancient Mesoamerica has not been available until the past thirty years.⁸

Joseph Smith obviously did not consider his visions and revelations as grounds to exclude himself from the study of Hebrew, and the enthusiasm with which John Lloyd Stephen’s *Incidents of Travel in Central America, Chiapas, and Yucatan* was received in Nauvoo in 1841, shows that he saw new discoveries worth his attention. Even with respect to his own understanding of the Book of Mormon in the Wentworth letter, which heavily borrowed from a previous publication by Orson Pratt, he wrote, “For a more particular account, I would refer to the Book of Mormon.”⁹

With respect to the Saints’ tendency to uncritically take tradition as a guide, Joseph remarked:

But there has been a great difficulty in getting anything into the heads of this generation. It has been like splitting hemlock knots with a corn-dodger for a wedge, and a pumpkin for a beetle. Even the Saints are slow to understand.

I have tried for a number of years to get the minds of the Saints

prepared to receive the things of God; but we frequently see some of them, after suffering all they have for the work of God, will fly to pieces like glass as soon as anything comes that is contrary to their traditions: they cannot stand the fire at all.¹⁰

Given the fact
that there is conflict,
we have to consider
the grounds upon
which disputants
make statements.
Which statements
involve careful
study, and which
involve uncritical
presuppositions and
blind deference
to tradition?

I cannot believe in any of the creeds of the different denominations, because they all have some things in them I cannot subscribe to, though all of them have some truth. I want to come up into the presence of God, and learn all things; but the creeds set up stakes, and say, “Hitherto shalt thou come, and no further;” which I cannot subscribe to.¹¹

Certainly the long-emerging theories which propose that Book of Mormon events took place in ancient Mesoamerica conflict with many LDS traditions, but the traditional understandings about exclusive Hebrew ancestry and hemispheric geographies are clearly pre-critical. Why should these ideas be considered binding? Why suppose that we must set up stakes, rather than prepare our minds to learn more? Arguing that interpretations of certain revelations have been flawed is not the same as arguing that the revelations themselves are so flawed as to be

untrustworthy or false. The New Testament itself contains examples of reinterpretation on matters such as the time of the second coming and the Lord raising the temple in three days. It is one thing to theorize how God would or should do things and quite another to demonstrate the validity of those theories from the evidence at hand.

With respect to the widely held view of Asiatic ancestry for American populations, the SUNSTONE introduction's statement that

All religious communities share in some measure the different kinds of core experience, but once we get to the key historical events that define and bind communities, we start to see separation. Mythic patterns may point to universals, but a shared history makes particular affirmations and concrete demands.

"recent publicity over DNA studies . . . have confirmed long-held scientific notions that Amerindians descend from Asian—not Middle Eastern—peoples" is inaccurately qualified. Scientifically speaking, no DNA scientist could possibly confirm that indigenous peoples have exclusively descended from Asiatic sources. And further, as David A. McLellan writes, "According to the specifics of the Book of Mormon story line, it may not be possible to recover the genetic signature of Lehi or Mulek. Too many influences would have resulted in too many violations of equilibrium-preserving conditions."¹²

Nor is the SUNSTONE introduction accurate in its suggestion that the recent DNA controversy has suddenly sent Latter-day Saint scholars scrambling for a new way to understand the Book of Mormon. Matt Roper's excellent essay, "Nephi's Neighbors" in the *FARMS Review* demonstrates that many LDS

leaders and scholars have for the past eighty years been urging the Saints to recognize the Asiatic contribution to Amerindian ancestry.¹³ Other Church leaders have resisted or ignored such arguments. Given the fact that there is conflict, we have to consider the grounds upon which disputants make statements. Which statements involve careful study, and which involve uncritical presuppositions and blind deference to tradition? If a careful, devotional approach by FARMS and FAIR scholars (among others), is licensed by such scriptures as I have cited, and if such an approach is offered without compulsion, but as part of ongoing study and faith, why object when many Church leaders begin to find these things persuasive and worth the notice and attention of the Saints?

WITH respect to the notion that the Book of Mormon might be read profitably as an ahistorical work, notice that Alma says, "If ye will awake and arouse your faculties, even to an experiment upon my words . . . even until ye believe in a manner that ye can give place for a portion of my words" (Alma 32:27). Alma does not specify *which* portion. That is left to each individual. Whatever works for each is a good place to start.

With respect to core religious experiences in general (in contrast to the doctrinal containers we use to interpret and carry them), there are "divers ways" that God manifests "things unto the children of men, which [are] good" (Moroni 7:24). Scholars of comparative religion¹⁴ observe powerful, life-changing responses to multiple kinds of experience. For example, many people have reported powerful impressions in response to order and design in creation. Plato started here, as well as Joseph Smith (according to the 1832 account of the First Vision). Many people in Western cultures report kinds of numinous experience, which involve a sense of being seized by the Personal Other (as in Moses 1, for example). In the East, however, reports of mystical experience predominate: experiences of unity, serenity, loss of ego boundary, and the impersonal oneness (as described, for instance, by the Buddha). Numinous encounters may also occur in Eastern reports (as with Arjuna's vision in the *Bhagavadgita*), and mystical experience can occur in the West (as with Ralph Waldo Emerson's transcendentalism).

Whatever the particular form they take, such encounters may lead to experiences of reorientation and reconciliation (that is, changes in both thinking and feeling), which provide release from sin or guilt and offer

courage in the face of suffering, mortality, death, and loss, as well as the power to change destructive behaviors. Joseph Smith's first vision and Alma 36 offer accounts of such reorientation and reconciliation. These experiences can lead in turn to deepened experience of moral obligation or awakened conscience, and of what Martin Buber calls "I and Thou," the sense of life lived in the presence of God, where God speaks through events, and we answer through actions.¹⁵

The point is that there are many ways for people to have the kinds of core religious experience that Latter-day Saints associate with the restored gospel. Scriptures and rituals from a variety of traditions, even works of literature, contain mythic patterns with genuine power to guide us through life. The Book of Mormon can also, therefore, be profitably approached as myth.

But something fundamentally important is missing from the mythic approach: the discovery of key historical events in which the work of God seems manifest. The recognition of such events gives a community a shared history—and shared history, more than anything else, is what defines and binds communities. The shared history of Jews centers on the Exodus. For Christians, it is the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. And the shared history of the Latter-day Saints includes Joseph's translation of the Book of Mormon.

All religious communities share in some measure the different kinds of core experience, but once we get to the key historical events that define and bind communities, we start to see separation. Mythic patterns may point to universals, but a shared history makes particular affirmations and concrete demands. Richard Bushman has observed that what makes us Mormons is not philosophy, but what we believe happened to real people.¹⁶ "Is not this real?" Alma asks (Alma 32:35). Those who say "no" aren't bound in the same way as those who say "yes."

GRANTING that space was limited in the March 2004 "Reframing the Book of Mormon" issue of SUNSTONE, and that the focus of the authors was elsewhere, it is still important to observe that none of the essays discussed at all the Old World correlations in the Book of Mormon. This area of work has implications for approaching the Book of Mormon as historical. Starting with Hugh Nibley's *Lehi in the Desert* and adding the new Potter and Wellington book *Lehi in the Wilderness* and the recent compilation *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem*, we have an impressive body of

work, and a much more settled approach to geography and history than is possible with the New World portion of the book.¹⁷

Methodist researcher Margaret Barker's work on Christian origins and the temple adds to the weight of all of this in an exponential fashion.¹⁸ Barker argues that "the original gospel message was about the temple, not the corrupted temple of Jesus' own time, but the original temple which had been destroyed some six hundred years earlier."¹⁹ One common criticism of the Book of Mormon is that it anachronistically projects Christian ideas into the time of the Old Testament (as in Lehi's preaching or Nephi's vision of the Savior). Barker's efforts to recover an understanding of the first temple may help to establish that the Book of Mormon's Old Testament-era Christianity isn't an anachronism after all.

I'm also personally very impressed with Brant Gardner's recent work on the Mesoamerican side of things—particularly his comment that for him, everything changed when, instead of "looking for the Book of Mormon in Mesoamerica," he started "looking for Mesoamerica in the Book of Mormon." He says this conceptual shift made a huge difference in the nature and quality of the correlations he has seen.²⁰

But, as Thomas Kuhn says, in paradigm debates, we all get to decide for ourselves "which problems are more significant to have solved."²¹ It's the unconstrained picking and choosing and weighing that makes for the chaos in Book of Mormon geographies. In his Book of Mormon sourcebook, Sorenson includes a long checklist of requirements the Book of Mormon text demands that any potential Book of Mormon geography would have to solve.²² In the fourteen years since then, various authors have proposed alternate geographies to Sorenson's, but not one has used the list. Why not? We prefer not to constrain our choice of which problems are more significant to have solved. For some, Nephite "north" must be precisely our north. For those who like to believe the New York Cumorah is the only one, traditions about the New York hill anchor their approaches to geography. Gardner and Sorenson offer other solutions, a very complex set all dependent on a single correlation and time period. In all cases, "To be accepted as a paradigm, a theory must seem better than its competitors, but it need not, and in fact, it never does, explain all the facts with which it may be confronted."²³ My preference for the Sorenson model simply says that I appreciate the problems that it solves, and I expect that further solutions and refinements will be forthcoming.

For individuals, if a mythic approach to the Book of Mormon keeps you here, fine. I think it's a valid option, and the presence of such things is healthy both for a religious tradition and for individuals, whether in the extreme form C. Jess Groesbeck offers in the March 2004 SUNSTONE, or Ostler's 1987 approach via an "expanded" Book of Mormon with a partially compromised historicity,²⁴ or Nephi's exemplary "likening" approach which takes symbolic types from historical, even biographical, models.

But to adopt a mythic approach as a replacement for, rather than a complement to, historicity, would be suicidal for our faith community. We'd fall apart. I am reminded of Hugh Nibley's description of "a real knock-down, drag-out fight between the 'Allegorists' and the 'literalizers' in the [Christian] Church, ending in a complete victory for the intellectuals."²⁵ We should take that history as a caution for ourselves.

Revisionist critics such as Thomas W. Murphy and Brent Lee Metcalfe clearly lobby for a re-framing of the Book of Mormon that consists of abandonment of any pretensions to historicity. Capitulation to these scholars and their position would amount to their not only wagging the dog, but also stuffing and mounting it as well. ☹️

NOTES

1. "Reframing the Book of Mormon," SUNSTONE, March 2004, 19. The context for this question is the issues raised in Brent Lee Metcalfe's essay, "Reinventing Lamanite Identity," about why "Joseph Smith's revelation of the Book of Mormon is trustworthy enough to extract a detailed limited geography, yet his revelations about Amerindian identity and origin are flawed, if not erroneous, and why their word should count more than that of LDS prophets on one hand, and that of secular scholars on the other?" Brent Lee Metcalfe, "Reinventing Lamanite Identity," SUNSTONE, March 2004, 23.
2. Todd Compton, "Counter-Hierarchical Revelation," SUNSTONE 82 (June 1991): 34–41.
3. *Ibid.*, 37.
4. *Ibid.*
5. *Ibid.*, 38.
6. *Ibid.*, 40.
7. John Sorenson, *The Geography of Book of*

Mormon Events: A Source Book (Provo: FARMS, 1992), 22–23.

8. Brant Gardner, email to author, 17 May 2004. For details, see his essays and Book of Mormon commentary at <http://frontpage2000.nmia.com/~nahualli/LDStopics.htm>.

9. See this discussion in Matt Roper, "Nephi's Neighbors" *FARMS Review* 15, no. 2 (2003): 97–99.

10. Joseph Smith Jr., *Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, Joseph F. Smith, ed. (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1973), 331.

11. Joseph Smith, *History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints 1805–1847*, 7 vols., ed. B.H. Roberts (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1978), 6:57.

12. David A. McLellan, "Lehi's Genetic Signature," *FARMS Reivew* 15, no. 2 (2003), 89.

13. Roper, 99–113.

14. Ian Barbour, *Myths, Models, and Paradigms: A comparative Study of Science and Religion* (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), 53–55.

15. *Ibid.*, 54–55.

16. Richard Bushman, *Joseph Smith and the Beginnings of Mormonism* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1984), 187–88.

17. Hugh Nibley, *Lehi in the Deseret: The World of the Jaredites: There Were Jaredites* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1988). George Potter and Richard Wellington, *Lehi in the Wilderness* (Springville: Cedar Fort, 2003). John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, eds, *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* (Provo: FARMS, 2004).

18. William Hamblin, ed. FARMS Occasional Papers 2. Kevin Christensen, "Paradigms Regained: A Survey of Margaret Barker's Scholarship and Its Significance for Mormon Studies" (Provo: FARMS, 2001).

19. Margaret Barker, *Temple Theology: An Introduction* (London: SPCK 2004).

20. Brant Gardner, email to Kevin Christensen, 22 October 2002. Publication forthcoming.

21. Thomas Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970), 110. For a lengthy discussion of paradigm debates in LDS circles, see Kevin Christensen "Paradigms Crossed" in *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon*, vol. 7, no. 2 (1995), 144–218.

22. Sorenson, 357–64.

23. Kuhn, 17–18.

24. C. Jess Groesbeck, "The Book of Mormon as Symbolic History: A New Perspective on Its Place in History and Religion," SUNSTONE, March 2004, 35–45; Blake Ostler "The Book of Mormon as an Expansion of an Ancient Source," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, 20, no. 1 (Spring 1987): 66–124.

25. Hugh Nibley, *The Ancient State: The Rulers and The Ruled* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991), 353.

Pontius' Puddle



FROM THE EDITOR

“A REAL FIGHT”

By Dan Wotherspoon

I N PREPARING THIS issue for press, I've been struck by the intensity of emotions which have given energy to the various letters, stories, and essays in its pages. I do not mean to say that the writers have not shown restraint, nor that I think you'll feel emotionally exhausted by the time you close the final cover. Rather, I believe it's more a matter of the subjects that occupy the writers and how close the issues they are discussing are to their hearts.

As evidenced by the letters section and the letter-turned-essay by Kevin Christensen that follows it, the “Reframing the Book of Mormon” section in the March 2004 SUNSTONE seems to have energized readers. In putting that section together—from essays we already had on hand as well as two that were written by invitation—we had hoped its variety of approaches, issues, and positions would invite vigorous exchanges. As our note introducing the essays states, many feel this is a crossroads moment for our foundational scripture and our tradition's relationship with it. We're pleased to see that revisionists *and* traditionalists, critics *and* defenders, have responded. We hope all voices, all perspectives, will continue to feel invited to the conversation table set by our various forums. Please bring your faith, whether it's strong or feeling worse for recent wear—and even if it's based on purely naturalistic presuppositions. We'll do our best to give you a chance to be heard.

Besides the feelings fueling the most recent Book of Mormon discussions, a great deal of emotion is uncovered in John-Charles Duffy's cover article, “Defending the Kingdom: Rethinking the Faith.” We believe it's the longest single piece ever published in SUNSTONE, but we don't believe the story of the rise in influence of LDS apologetics could have been effectively told in fewer pages (or with fewer endnotes!). It's a wonderful, carefully written, well-articulated analysis of this growing field and its impact on Mormonism and Latter-day Saint faith.

Duffy has taken great care to look at the various traditions and attitudes that have set the stage for the shape LDS apologetics has taken, as well as the variety of temperaments and approaches to defending the faith evi-

dent among the leading players. He writes with a keen eye, and weighs in with his own preferences and hopes for how the discourse might be improved. It's not an emotional article, but apologetics is an emotional subject and an enterprise driven by deeply felt, soul-level concerns. It's fed by conviction and energy wells that range from a passionate drive to proclaim the true gospel, to the fear of being duped, to a zest for intellectual sport. It is, in short, a subject bound to excite.

And I'm excited by that fact. As we had hoped would happen in inviting diverse views on the Book of Mormon, we hope readers of this article (and *all* the soulful articles and essays in this issue) will feel welcome to respond. Write letters and thoughtful pieces for publication. Join the discussions at our August Salt Lake symposium. We'll work hard to help you be heard.

THE Mormonism I love is our faith's most robust version. It's the version that proclaims radical agency and unfettered freedom for souls to grow. It's the tradition that says a real contest for souls was and is going on, a genuine adventure in which, every day, we decide the risk/reward level we're willing to embrace. Do we welcome more or less? Are we willing to risk more pain in order to love more? Are we feeling up to leaving our comfortable lives for challenges that lie beyond the veil? This version of Mormonism says that even God could (not would) “cease to be God” if God were to stop loving so completely, stop hoping for us and calling to us to be more than we ever thought possible.

I love the sensibilities and possibilities in the well-known-to-many William James thought experiment:

Suppose that the world's author put the case to you before creation, saying: “I am going to make a world not certain to be saved, a world the perfection of which shall be conditional merely, the condition being that each several agent does its own level best. I offer you the chance of taking part in such a world. Its safety, you see, is unwarranted. It is a real adventure, with

real danger, yet it may win through. It is a social scheme of cooperative work genuinely to be done. Will you join the procession? Will you trust yourself and trust the other agents enough to face the risk?”¹

Though sometimes I get tired and feel like sitting out an inning or two, this is the kind of proposal I choose to say “yes” to.

And that, baseline, is why I like apologists *and* revisionists, those who are sure the Book of Mormon is a literal translation of an ancient record *and* those who are equally convinced it's better understood as the product of Joseph's myth-making imagination. It's why I like both professional academics *and* amateurs with raw and refreshing perspectives. The Mormonism I love is Zion Mormonism, which knows there's a “social scheme of cooperative work genuinely to be done” and isn't ready to say it has no need of this energy, or that twist, or this temperament, or even that fear. If it's our level best, both we and the world will win through.

As much as I like the William James idea above, I find myself thinking even more often of another of James's sensibilities:

For my own part, I do not know what the sweat and blood of this life mean, if they mean anything short of this. If this life be not a real fight, in which something is eternally gained for the universe by success, it is no better than a game of private theatricals from which we may withdraw at will. But it feels like a real fight—as if there were something really wild in the universe which we, with all our idealities and faithfulness, are needed to redeem.”²

I try very hard to keep my eye on developments in the worlds of both religion and science. I find myself naturally predisposed to prefer the empirical to the merely ideal. I'm fascinated with the workings of the universe and sense that the sciences have much to teach us. But when push comes to shove, I find I can't go down the reductionist road that some feel is endemic to the scientific enterprise. The science that attracts me is the science that suggests the universe's limitless potentialities.

Perhaps I'm wrong; perhaps I am ultimately just chemicals and energies dancing their dance, with my life and hopes no more than a throwaway part in their drama. But oh my, do I feel like I'm in a “real fight”—that something real is at stake in the questions I have and the issues that occupy my mind and wrench my heart. Maybe I ultimately

have no soul, and there is nothing real, individual or collective, to redeem; but I'm spilling sweat and blood that *feels* real, that feels redemptive of . . . *something!*

I'VE been struck by the emotions evident in this issue of SUNSTONE. It's been a pleasure to be engage in a cooperative work with these writers and their perspectives. We're all in a "real fight." May we all win out. 🙏

NOTES

1. William James, *Pragmatism* (Buffalo: Prometheus Books, 1991), 127.

2. William James, "Is Life Worth Living?" *The Search for Meaning in Life: Readings in Philosophy*, ed. Robert F Davidson (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1962): 61.

PLEASE FORGIVE . . .

In the March 2004 issue, we accidentally attributed Anita Tanner's poem, "Recipe from a Family File," to the wrong poet.

*Our sincerest apologies to Anita.
Please enjoy the poem once more!*

RECIPE FROM A
FAMILY FILE

The smell burns my nostrils.
Lye soap, made from rendered fat
and kerosene, stirred with a stick
in a giant tub
over the old woodstove out back.

Then it is cooled for hours,
tipped from the tub onto a board
spread with a sheet, scored into bars
to last all year.

Meaner than dirt,
healing any grease or cow dung,
saviour of clothes in a wringer washer.
Stronger than bleach or sun.

After the bar smooths in the wash,
I reach in,
grasp the slick oval moon,
scour my hands
until they resemble sliced bread,
the backs sunslapped,
curved palms opening white
from the lye knife.

—ANITA TANNER

A Gift of Peace

REVISED THIRD EDITION

FOR THOSE
WHO WONDER

Managing Religious Questions and Doubts



D. Jeff Burton

With Foreword by Lowell L. Bennion

\$7 • LDS Bookstores
ISBN 1-883992-06-0



reform mormonism

focused on individual progression
morality and accountability
mormon tradition and philosophy
freedom from judgment and condemnation

www.reformmormonism.org



CORNUCOPIA

SUNSTONE invites short musings: chatty reports, cultural trend sightings, theological meditations. All lovely things of good report, please share them. Send submissions to: <SunstoneED@aol.com>

All these things shall give thee experience . . .

TALE OF TWO SISTERS

ONE WAY TO DESCRIBE MY FEMINIST JOURNEY IS to relate it to my relationship with my sister, Janet. Despite the narrow, twenty-month age difference between Janet and me, I always felt that there was some sort of generational gap between us. I seemed to be in the last of the group who didn't get feminism in college, and she seemed to be in the first group who did.

My suspicions about this were validated by Martha Beck in her book, *Breaking Point*, in which she identifies "cohorts" of women, meaning groups of women who move through the same experiences at the same point in time. I was born in 1948, in the cohort Beck calls "The Betrayed," composed of women born between 1940 and 1949. Beck writes:

This cohort came of age in the 1950s and early 1960s, in a United States where the ideal of True Womanhood was perhaps more extreme than at any time before or since. . . . This particular group of women made enormous sacrifices to preserve their culture's values, only to find that while they were giving their all, their society switched course so suddenly and drastically that they were castigated and accused for the very sacrifices they had made out of heroism. [The] bewildering switch . . . trapped women born in the forties in a massive double bind. Very few were able to avoid being wounded in the transition from "fascinating womanhood" to "liberated womanhood."

For me, feminism really hit when I was married and almost through college, so I spent a lot of time picking it up on my own, all the while trying to live the dream of the perfect Mormon wife and homemaker. To say that I was torn is an understatement.

In contrast, my sister Janet was born in 1950, putting her in the cohort of those born between 1950 and 1959, a group Beck calls "The Overwhelmed." Of these, Beck says:

Women in this cohort were raised knowing the phrase "women's liberation" as something more than an obscure activist movement on the fringes of society. Because American attitudes about female roles were changing so rapidly, this cohort of women born in the 1950s planned their lives very differently from their mothers, or even their older sisters. They stayed in school longer, started

not only jobs but genuine careers, and waited longer to marry and bear children. Many met intense opposition in the male-dominated professional worlds they entered. They also received criticism or cautionary advice from older women, who warned them against "unfeminine" behavior. Typically, they greeted this advice with disdain and irritation. . . .

The tension between these two cohorts played out in the friction between Janet and me. While I ended my education after a bachelor's degree and immediately went in pursuit of motherhood, she went on for a master's degree, law degree, and MBA. I stayed active in Mormonism while she left it during her time at UCLA, partly because she received no support from the LDS community there in her pursuit of a law degree. She says that because of her unorthodox behavior, everyone there was amazed to learn she was not a convert. Every time I got pregnant, she sent me literature from Zero Population Growth. When she graduated from law school, I gave her a casserole dish when she really merited a briefcase. It seemed we would never be on the same page.

I married at twenty and had four children by the time I was thirty-two. Things began to change for me in the late 1970s during the campaign for the Equal Rights Amendment. It was that experience that made me define myself as a feminist, particularly when my one and only daughter was born in the middle of the fray. Practically the first place I took newborn Megan was to hear Sonia Johnson speak shortly after her excommunication. I engaged in a months-long struggle to stand in the circle when Megan was blessed. When that wasn't allowed, I gathered my friends and gave her a mother's blessing at home.

Janet and I crossed lives at about age forty. By then, she had married in her thirties to an actor and writer, willingly taking on the role of main breadwinner. Pushing against the time barrier and struggling to have children, she ended up bearing one daughter and adopting a son. Meanwhile, in my forties, I was suddenly thrust into the world of work, becoming the sole support of my family after many years as an at-home mom. After my divorce, I launched off on a life of my own, raising my four teenagers and running my own business. Janet spent a lot of time sympathizing with my financial and career struggles, and I listened to her worries about raising her children in New York and keeping up her career, too. At last, we were in the same boat.

Now in our fifties, the gap has widened again. I have remarried happily and am tapering off on work and, our children grown and gone, starting to enjoy a life of semi-retirement with my husband. My darling daughter Megan, my youngest, is now twenty-four and working at Xerox. On the other hand, Janet is

The All-seeing Eye

THE NEW ARMOR OF GOD

E NTERPRISING MINDS CONTINUE TO provide Church members and Christians everywhere with a variety of clothing options. Mormons are now encouraged to let everyone know we're a part of "Club Moroni—10% and you're in!" Those with the gift of tongues (or a guide to the Deseret Alphabet) will be able to tell you that a T-shirt displaying archaic-looking letters above a fish spells out J-E-S-U-S. For the general Christian market, one new shirt proudly proclaims that "Modest is Hottest." And last, but certainly not least, new boxers ask the question, WWJD—What Would Jesus Do?

One might think that message alone would serve as the last line of defense in keeping a testosterone-driven young man chaste. But the normal-looking boxers contain an additional defensive feature: a false fly! *Access denied!*



just starting her oldest child in college this fall and dealing with the tumult of a middle-school-aged son, all the while immersed in a 24/7 job. Motherhood remains a major task in her life while she is still in the thick of a demanding career.

Looking at our two lives, who could say who has been treated more kindly by life? Is it me, who was indeed betrayed but who has found comfort and peace at last in a traditional setting, or Janet, the first wave of those who intended to have it all and do it all, and having achieved that goal, see no end in sight?

VICKIE STEWART EASTMAN
Salt Lake City, Utah

The Rest of the Story

SHAKY STICK

The word of the Lord came again unto me, saying, Moreover, thou son of man, take thee one stick, and write upon it, For Judah, and for the children of Israel his companions: then take another stick, and write upon it, For Joseph, the stick of Ephraim, and for all the house of Israel his companions: And join them one to another into one stick; and they shall become one in thine hand. And when the children of thy people shall speak unto thee, saying, Wilt thou not shew us what thou meanest by these? Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; Behold, I will take this stick of Joseph, which is in the hand of Ephraim, and the tribes of Israel his fellows, and will put them with him, even with the stick of Judah, and make them one stick, and they shall be one in mine hand (Ezekiel 37:15–19).

F ROM THE EARLIEST DAYS OF THE CHURCH, Ezekiel's "Stick of Judah and Joseph" prophecy has been interpreted as a prophecy of the coming forth of the Book of Mormon. According to traditional LDS understanding, Ezekiel here describes the eventual doctrinal union between the

Book of Mormon (the stick of Ephraim—of which tribe Lehi is a descendent) and the Bible (the stick of Judah). A reference to the Book of Mormon as the stick of Ephraim is even canonized: an August 1830 revelation declares that Moroni was sent to Joseph "to reveal the Book of Mormon, containing the fulness of my everlasting gospel, to whom I have committed the keys of the record of the stick of Ephraim" (D&C 27:5).

How do non-LDS Old Testament scholars interpret this prophecy? The unanimous consensus in the leading commentaries is that Ezekiel is prophesying of the eventual reunification of the Northern Kingdom (the Kingdom of Ephraim) with the Southern Kingdom (the Kingdom of Judah).

Ezekiel was written shortly after the fall of Judah in 598 BC. Chapter 37, written around 585 BC, describes the prophet's confidence that one day not only Judah would be restored but also the kingdom of Israel, which had been taken captive by the Assyrians in 732 BC. This message of the rejoining of the two kingdoms is clearly presented in the verses following those that Latter-day Saints cite. Verse 21 has the Lord promise that he will gather the children of Israel and "bring them into their own land." According to verse 22, they shall no longer be divided into two countries, as they had been since the death of Solomon. They will be ruled by a single king, who, verse 24 informs us, will be a descendant of David. This restored people will be righteous, and they shall not "defile themselves any more with their idols, nor with their detestable things, nor with any of their transgressions," a result of the cleansing action of the Lord (verse 23). The Lord will also dwell among them, and the world will know that God has restored his people (verses 26–27).

In this chapter, Ezekiel is giving words to Israel's most powerful hope during the centuries that followed the destruction of Jerusalem: God's eventual forgiveness of Israel's sins and their restoration to glory as God's covenant people. Although several Old Testament books speculate that the destruction of

Views from the Street

Brigham Young University is renewing its emphasis against bare midriffs. What do you think?



"It's a woman's responsibility not to tempt men, while being sexy enough to make me want to marry her and have babies."



"Well, it makes more sense than the rule against beards. After all, Brigham Young never appeared in public with a bare midriff."



"I think we should just start pretending that none of us have any naked parts, ever, anywhere."



"While they're at it, I hope they'll do something to keep plumber's butt where it belongs—on hairy, fat, middle-aged men."



"If the girls all cover up, who are we going to blame for our impure thoughts and actions?"



"The guys keep asking me if I'm cold and if I could use some Spackle in the back. What's that supposed to mean?"

(c) 2004 *The Sugar Beet*.

Reprinted from *The Sugar Beet*, print edition.

To receive this LDS satire magazine, write to thesugarbeet2@cs.com or visit thesugarbeet.com.

Israel was a result of God's testing the Jews (this may be one message of the Book of Job, for instance), the interpretation that gained the greatest acceptance was that Israel had been scattered by God as punishment for sin.

MANY OF THE scriptures the Church uses to teach the Restoration and millennial expectation come from these books that deal with Israel's hope for restoration and divine forgiveness. The first half of Ezekiel 37, for example, contains a vision in which Ezekiel sees the nation of Israel as a field of dry bones which once again receive the Lord's favor, recovering sinews, flesh, and ultimately breath, becoming again a great people whom the Lord will lead back into their promised land. Ezekiel and any member of the house of Israel living during his time would have clearly understood the vision as allegorical of God's redemption and restoration of Israel. But LDS teachers have interpreted this same passage about the dry bones as support for the doctrine of a literal resurrection (see, for example, the chapter heading for Ezekiel 37 in the LDS edition of the Bible).

Is any real harm done by the literalizing methodology and the desire to read ourselves into the Old Testament text that lead to these misinterpretations? Joseph Smith asserted that the gospel revealed to him was a restoration of doctrines and ordinances that had existed in previous dispensations of the world. He taught that we live in the dispensation of the fullness of times, and therefore knowledge of the Restoration was foreshadowed and predicted by ancient prophets. The scrip-

tures discussed here are among those that we as Latter-day Saints claim presage this restoration. We see them as lending validity to the unfolding Restoration, strengthening our faith.

But doesn't this strength actually become weakness when the "scriptural evidences" used by Mormon missionaries and General Authorities to "sell" the gospel are shown to be false? When we attempt to use the scriptures to convey a sense of the Church's antiquity that is not really warranted by the particular passage we're using, I believe we shortchange not only the message but also ourselves. Ezekiel did not prophecy of a record written by members of the tribe of Ephraim that would someday be joined with the record of Judah. His words were a powerful message of encouragement and hope to his people and a wonderful teaching about God's mercy and continued care for them. It's the kind of message from which we, too, could draw strength. Why trade that assurance about God's character and longsuffering for an interpretation that ultimately cannot withstand scrutiny, and which, when abandoned, leaves us feeling foolish? Ultimately, the Book of Mormon will stand or fall on its own merits. It gains nothing, and loses much, when we attempt to prop it up with shaky scaffolding.

BRIAN H. STUY
Lehi, Utah

Twenty Years Ago In Sunstone

SILENT, SIMPLE, EQUAL

The January-February 1984 SUNSTONE includes a short study by Moyne Oviatt, "The Quaker Mystical Model: What Can the Society of Friends Teach the Society of Saints?" In the essay, Oviatt offers a brief outline of Quaker origins and the Society's spiritual sensibilities, but the essay concentrates primarily upon the Quaker form of worship and the methods used to commune with God through focus upon the Inward Light, or Light of Christ, given to every person who enters the world. Moyne concludes with the following:

IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE MORMONS CAN LEARN some lessons from the Quaker philosophy and method of worship. One such lesson is the value of silence. Much inward spiritual activity can take place when nothing of an outward visual or auditory nature is apparent. Silence in testimony meeting does not necessarily mean that "this precious time is going to waste" as members sometimes comment.

A second lesson is the importance of simplicity. High tech or high entertainment is not the essence of spirituality. Bringing simplicity to our lives and our methods of worship may be as conducive to spiritual development as are handouts, visual aids, and multimedia presentations.

Quaker philosophy can also teach us about equality and brotherhood among people. As the Church becomes more and more international, and the gospel net gathers more of every kind, we need to heighten our appreciation of differences, and realize that differences need not be divisive.

A final lesson is that of individual responsibility for our spir-

itual lives. If the kingdom of heaven is within, then our search for God both begins and finally concludes with ourselves. Others may aid, support, and encourage along the way, and the institutional Church may provide ordinances for salvation. But

in the end, the kind of people we are, the kind of life we want to live, and the kind of relationship we develop with God depends on us. That makes the inward search for meaning and individual spiritual development not just important, but vital.

Of Good Report

PRAYING AND SLAYING

*It would be difficult to find a more engagingly written and convincingly argued book about the incredibly strong—albeit unconventionally articulated—spiritual values of Generations X and Y than Jana Riess’s *What Would Buffy Do?: The Vampire Slayer as Spiritual Guide*. In the book’s introduction, Riess, who holds a Ph.D. in religion from Columbia University and is the religion books editor for *Publisher’s Weekly* (and a regular SUNSTONE columnist), admits, “In the early days, I was a little embarrassed to admit that I enjoyed watching *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, a popular TV series about a young woman who (quite literally) stakes out the undead.” But one needs to read only a few pages to understand what it is about the show that compelled Riess first to confess *Buffy* as a guilty pleasure and finally throw caution to the wind in writing a 180-plus page treatment that celebrates the core values of the “Buffyverse” and the twenty- and thirty-somethings for whom it served as an important cultural and spiritual touchstone. SUNSTONE readers may also be interested in the book’s six-page interview with Eliza Dushku, who played the character Faith in the series and is the daughter of long-time Sunstone friend, Judith Dushku.*

BUFFY IS A CLASSIC MEDIEVAL MORALITY PLAY—only with skimpier clothes, wittier dialogue, and cutting-edge alternative music. During its seven-season run from March 1997 to May 2003, it was easily one of the most moralistic programs on TV, depicting a world in which evil never goes unpunished and doing good is its own reward. It also offered one of TV’s strongest and most intelligent female heroines, a savior in a micro-miniskirt who courageously battled the evil powers of demon-packed Sunnydale, California. . . .

But *Buffy* did more than give us a heroine who could kick some dastardly derriere. It asked probing metaphysical questions and often dared to leave them unanswered. . . . It offered powerful depictions of core spiritual values at work in the lives of the major characters, . . . from redemption and self-sacrifice to the need for humor and forgiveness in fighting our spiritual battles. *Buffy* and the show’s other characters have valuable spiritual lessons to impart, offering wisdom for the faith journey, the courage to make ethical choices, and forgiveness when our actions have harmed others. As Xander tells *Buffy* at the beginning of the fourth season, “When it’s dark and I’m all alone and I’m scared or freaked out or whatever, I always think, ‘What would Buffy do?’ You’re my hero.” . . .

If the Buffyverse does contain an active God, divine interventions and messages are most clearly visible through the courageous choices of human beings. . . . [In a] fourth-season scene in which vampires have taken over a Sunnydale church, . . . the Vampire slayer Faith (in *Buffy*’s body) strides in to save the day. The vampire, who has just started to feed off a man in the front pew, is forced to abandon his would-be victim and deal with Faith, who says she has “just come to pray” but is actually there to slay. As she does her job—dusting one of the bloodsuckers with the wood from a hymn rack—we are left to understand that on *Buffy*, praying and

slaying may well be the same thing. “Have you accepted Jesus Christ as your personal savior?” *Buffy* is asked when strolling across campus on her first day at UC Sunnydale. “Uh, you know, I meant to, and then I just got really busy,” she replies (4:1). What has kept her busy is saving the world, time and time again. Like the biblical heroine Esther, *Buffy* is a young woman who feels the burden of preserving her people. And just as God is nowhere mentioned in the book of Esther, God is merely implicit in the Buffyverse, present every time the characters put their own lives on the line to save others. . . .

Buffy offers Christian symbols, Buddhist themes, a generous helping of Wiccan ethics, and some sprinkled references to Judaism, among other traditions. Rather than adopting the worldview of any one religion, *Buffy*’s general approach is one voiced by its star, Sarah Michelle Gellar: “I believe in an idea of God, although it’s my own personal ideal. I find most religions interesting. . . . I’ve taken bits from everything and customized it.” This customizing is the key to understanding the show’s approach and appeal. *Buffy* might be paradigmatic of Generations X and Y because it’s so spiritually eclectic, borrowing freely from several different religious traditions at the same time. The power lies not with religious institutions but with spiritual individuals who forge their own paths. One of the catchphrases of Generation X has been, “I’m not religious, but I’m very spiritual.” The same might be said for the show as well. . . . It is deeply spiritual, and at its heart *Buffy* understands the real purpose of religion. Religion is more than creeds and dogmas and institutions—all things that can be a real turnoff to the kinds of mavericky people who love *Buffy*. At its heart, religion is actually about community.

JANA RIESS
excerpted from *What Would Buffy Do?*
(Jossey-Bass, 2004), xi–xvii

2004 Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest, Second Place Winner

WAITING

By Lara Burton

We do not know our own souls, let alone the souls of others. Human beings do not go hand in hand the whole stretch of the way. There is a virgin forest in each. A snowfield where even the print of birds' feet is unknown. Here we go alone, and like it better so.

—VIRGINIA WOOLF

(A note she wrote to her husband before she walked into the river and drowned herself)¹

“DON'T stick your finger in the outlet. It will kill you.”

My mother was always able to come up with one ominous consequence or another. “Don't sit on the counter when I'm emptying the dishwasher. A little boy did that and fell into the dishwasher, and a knife stabbed him in the back.” Apparently children were dropping dead everywhere. Whether they were falling off counters, being run over by cars, getting electrocuted, drowned, crushed, or bitten by savage dogs, my mother seemed to know all the stories, as if she read a secret newspaper, only for mothers, that reported the daily and ghastly deaths of children across the country.

I don't know why I stuck my finger in the electrical outlet. I was five. We lived in a Spanish-style brick house in Fresno, California. In the long hallway that ran through the house, I was sitting on the 1970s golden-yellow shag carpet and tracing my finger around and around the faceplate of the electrical outlet. I don't remember what was on my mind at the time, only the tingle that shot through my hand when I realized that I'd stuck my finger in the outlet. I was going to die.

I was too afraid to tell my mother. I wondered when it would happen. I didn't change my behavior. I didn't hug my parents, because we didn't hug. I didn't worry about what I would miss. With a resignation that now surprises me, I went to bed that evening, thinking, *any time now*. I sat up in my bed,



LARA BURTON lives with her husband Robert and their two sons, Tom and Forrest, in Sundance, Utah. She holds a degree in computer science and consults for several technical publishers. Lara's current interests lie in mythology (particularly Eastern), its impact on the human psyche, and its presence in religion. This essay is her first effort in creative nonfiction. She welcomes comments at <lara@sundanceburtons.com>.

watching the falling dusk siphon the colors out of my room until lifeless gray shadows were all that remained. In the darkened room, I waited. I waited and waited. I knew I would die because my mother had said I would. Strange that I wasn't afraid; curious, but not afraid. *What will it be like? Will I know when it happens? How long do I need to wait?* I waited and waited. Eventually I drifted off to sleep. In the morning, I woke up alive and continued living my five-year-old life.

I'M now thirty-three. At thirty-three, I've been introduced to psychotherapy. I've just discovered one of the joys of psychotherapy—finding out how many things are wrong with me. The third therapist I first visited a few months ago, the one who bleaches her hair and wears tight pants and high heels, diagnosed me with anorexia nervosa. An eating disorder.

“The disorder of high school cheerleaders,” I responded.

The therapist chastised me, “People of all ages have eating disorders.”

PSYCHOTHERAPISTS can't seem to stick with one diagnosis. Do they have a roulette wheel or dart board in a back room where they determine their diagnoses? Therapist number three informed me that I also have obsessive-compulsive disorder, body dysmorphic disorder, an anxiety disorder, long-term chronic depression, and probably symptoms of post-traumatic stress disorder. A new theory, trauma reenactment syndrome, posits that I'm constantly reenacting childhood trauma. She had a nice, cheery office. A puffy flowered couch to sit on and a jar of potpourri. Every time I arrived for my appointment, she turned on her space heater. “People with eating disorders get cold easily,” she informed me. I finally had to ask her to turn it off. The heat made her office so hot and stuffy that it became intolerable.

A MONTH ago, I toured the inpatient center at the eating disorder clinic. The first room I entered is a living area. It reminds me of a grandparent's home. Old couches, a rocking chair, blankets and stacks of board games tucked neatly into a bookcase. A long corridor leads from the living area to a row of bedrooms. Two patients share a bedroom. Two twin beds with a locked

bathroom. “You must get permission to use the bathroom,” the therapist informed me. The neatly made beds fit with the stark artificiality of the room. I couldn’t visit the eating area because the patients were having lunch. I could hear voices of teenaged girls. Downstairs I was shown what I suppose is the “rec room.” The brown walls are decorated with the patients’ art work. I walked slowly around the perimeter of the room, pausing to examine the work. Cut-out tracings of the patients’ bodies lined the wall immediately left of the door. On the bodies, the patients had drawn pictures; broken hearts were common. Collages made by the patients lined the back wall. Cut-out magazine pictures were arranged haphazardly on black construction paper. I noticed pictures of sunsets, smiling women and children. The picture that stayed with me was a cut-out of Nexium—“the little purple pill.” Nexium treats gastric reflux. I wondered why someone would cut it out. Do they take it a lot? It seemed an odd juxtaposition next to the happy, cut-out magazine pictures.

A few weeks later in my break-up-with-the-therapist session, I told her, “I just don’t see myself with blunt-nosed scissors cutting pictures out of magazines to paste into collages.”

She didn’t believe I had any hope of a cure unless I went into inpatient care. She told me that I “look like shit.” She topped the session off by informing me, “You may just drop dead one day.”

I wondered when it would happen.

WHEN I was almost six, we moved from California. I spent most of my growing-up years living in a well-manicured suburb hacked out of the dense, deciduous forests of north-eastern Ohio. Several acres of untouched maple and oak trees, with patches of blackberries, mayapples, and poison ivy, stood across the street from my house. My brothers and I named these, “the woods.”

“The woods” became my sanctuary. I roamed the trails and filled my books with pressed leaves and flowers I collected. My scratched legs often bore the telltale marks of poison ivy. Growing up, I spent hours alone exploring the acres of forest surrounding my house. Often I’d run off the trails, trample through the dense underbrush, and think, “I bet I’ve stepped in a spot where no one has ever stepped before.” What were the odds? Surely I would be able to step somewhere first.

PEOPLE have started to notice. I’ve lost more than eighty pounds this year, at least twenty too many. I wasn’t really trying, and I didn’t really notice. I still don’t notice, but I’ve

been getting phone calls, “I’ve been thinking of you,” “How are you doing, *really*?” “We care.” People hug me more often. People invite me to dinner more often. People say things such as, “We don’t want to lose you.”

“Really, I’m fine. I am.”

My changed appearance gives me a certain anonymity that I enjoy. I can walk by people who haven’t seen me in a year, and they don’t recognize me.

My hiking group friends told me they had decided to fast for me. “Good! I’ll fast too!” was my response. They told me



ILLUSTRATIONS BY MELANIE WARNER

they wouldn’t enable me by laughing at my comments anymore.

My hair has started falling out. Every day in the shower more strands come out. I wind the hair carefully around my fingers and place it on the windowsill. I tell my husband Rob I put the hair there so that it doesn’t clog the drain. Actually, I’m not sure why I put it there. Every few days the windings of hair disappear from the windowsill. I’m not throwing them away, so Rob must be removing them. Rob is worried, and when I ask why, he says that I “look too bony.” I track my blood test results. I’m becoming anemic. My kidneys are struggling. My heartbeat is irregular. My white blood cell count is low. I don’t have enough protein intake. My body is starting to break down my muscles.

I NOW live in a canyon. Bill, an overweight fellow canyon-dweller with perfectly coiffured hair took it upon himself to fix me. “You need a personal relationship with God,” he preached at me. “Until you turn this over to the Lord, nothing will change. Give it to God.”

Why would God want an eating disorder?

IN my youth, I searched for God, or at least one of his messengers. When I was nine, I wanted to see an angel. In Primary class, I learned about righteous people. I learned about faith. With faith, I could do anything. I could see an angel. I decided I would see an angel in “the woods.” Joseph Smith did it, didn’t he? If I believed hard enough, I could see one. I envisioned faith as a wonderful power within, something that could move mountains and stop rivers, as long as I learned how to summon it to life. Faith became something like the power a superhero has: X-ray vision, laser beams, force fields, psychic waves.

Across the creek, in the middle of the woods, a few hundred yards from the far end of a swamp stood a large boulder of ancient gray granite. There, in the woods, surrounded by greenness and shadow, with the humidity and mosquitoes bearing down on me, I knelt as a nine-year-old and prayed as hard as I could. Rotting maple leaves soaked through the knees of my jeans and stained them. Twigs left map-like indentations on the skin of my knees.

I mustered as much faith as I could. After praying for an uncomfortably long time—you need to experience discomfort to achieve results don’t you?—I opened my eyes. No angel. *Pray more. Concentrate. Feel it in my heart.* Open eyes. No angel. *Wait, my faith is being tested. Persevere.* No angel. I spent the better part of the afternoon on my knees by the boulder in the woods. I was waiting. No angel. Finally I returned home.

WHOSOEVER therefore shall humble himself as this little child, the same is greatest in the kingdom of heaven. Where does childhood innocence go? Do we protect it—sequester it away deep in our souls to shield it from the disappointments? Or do we discard it, like a pair of shoes we’ve outgrown?

I TRIED again when I was sixteen. I was raised to be the prescribed LDS young woman. I went to seminary. I said morning and evening prayers. I went to church weekly and exuded the healthy Mormon glow of spiritual well-being. I read the Book of Mormon, a chapter a day. When I finished, I was determined to try “Moroni’s promise.”

And when he shall receive these things, I will exhort you that ye would ask God, the Eternal Father, in the name of Christ, if these things are not true; and if ye shall ask with a sincere heart, with real intent, having faith in Christ, he will manifest the truth of it unto you, by the power of the Holy Ghost (Moroni 10:3–4).

I followed the steps. *Remember how merciful the Lord hath been . . . Ponder it in your heart. Ask God if these things are not true.* I made sure I had a sincere heart and real intent. And faith in Christ. Faith is the key. I knelt and prayed in the seclusion of my darkened bedroom. I wanted to know. *What will it be like? Will I know when it happens? How long do I need to wait?* I waited and waited. I didn’t receive the answer I was seeking.

Perhaps I did not have enough faith. I reread the Book of Mormon and tried again. *Pray more. Concentrate. Feel it in my heart.* No answer. *Wait, my faith is being tested.* Where was the answer I needed? I waited and waited. Didn’t I follow the steps?

I’VE been thinking about God lately. God and sparrows. I learned about God and sparrows in the New Testament. Matthew writes that a sparrow will not fall to the ground unnoticed by God. *Ye are of more value than many sparrows.* Will I ever learn this?

I BIRD watch. I drive my car on muddy roads with my Leica spotting scope loaded in the trunk and with binoculars and a copy of *Sibley’s Field Guide to Birds* on the seat next to me. For years, I wanted to hear a hermit thrush. In my *Birds of the Great Basin*, I read, “Most critics of bird music recognize the hermit thrush as the finest songster in North America, among the greatest bird voices in the world.”² More than a hundred and fifty years ago, John Burroughs wrote that the song of the hermit thrush “appeals to the sentiment of the beautiful in me, and suggests a serene religious beatitude as no other sound in nature does.”³ I listened to its song repeatedly on my bird song CD so I could identify it. *Song begins with long clear low flutelike note and then rises with delicate ringing tones ending in thin, silvery notes; each phrase is repeated, and the pitch differs from the previous song.*⁴ Words cannot capture the haunting beauty of the song.

The canyon where I live is in the mountains in the middle of a spruce-fir forest, edged by oaks and mountain mahogany, above a stream: the perfect environment for hermit thrushes. After ten years in my mountain home, I had not heard a hermit thrush. In the summers, the cacophony of bird songs that starts at dawn often awakens me. In the early mornings, I used to lie in bed trying to detect a hermit thrush’s song among the mess of MacGillivray’s warblers, robins, cordilleran flycatchers, pine siskens, grosbeaks, and Cassin’s finches. I couldn’t hear a hermit thrush. I began to doubt their presence.

Two summers ago, our good friends, Perry and Jana, invited our family to stay overnight with them at their cabin by Silver Lake, at the end of a steep, winding, dirt road up a branch of American Fork Canyon. Given the choice between sleeping in a hot, musty cabin full of children and a dog, or sleeping outside, my husband and I chose outside. We rolled out our sleeping bags in the back of our Ford pickup truck and settled down for the night. Early that morning, I was awakened mostly by the cold but also by the faint yellow light of dawn. As I snuggled in my sleeping bag, breathing in the cold air and watching the sky brighten through the aspen trees, I heard a hermit thrush. I counted at least six distinct hermit thrushes singing. I smiled as I listened.

The next day, at home, the early morning birdcalls awakened me. As I listened to them, I heard a hermit thrush’s song among the other birds’ songs and calls. They were there all

along. I needed to hear the thrushes at Silver Lake before I was familiar enough with their song to be able to hear them in the jumble of songs outside my home.

HOW do I find faith? Is it something I can capture and hold in my hand? Is it something so visceral that it cannot be separated from a person? Can I lose it? Can I find it again? Can I sew it back on the bottom of my feet like a shadow?

MY sons tell me that they don't want to go to Primary because "It's boring."

"You need to go anyway," is all I can give them for a reason. I too thought Primary was boring. When I was their age, my mother subjected me to a weekly ritual of combing and tugging my hair to make it presentable for church. I had to wear a dress. I loathed dresses. My earliest memories of sacrament meeting are of the bright white ceiling of the chapel. To assuage my boredom, I'd stare at the ceiling and imagine that I was upside down. I'd try to imagine what it would be like to walk on the ceiling. The cylindrical hanging lights would become lampposts. The step around the perimeter of the ceiling would form benches and stairs. Primary gave me headaches. I never enjoyed singing and had to endure an hour of singing every week. I'd kick my feet, fidget, and stop paying attention. "The bishop's daughter needs to be an example," my Primary teacher chided me. The over-the-top exuberance of the moon-faced music leader bored me, as she'd squeal, "Boys and girls, all faces up front! Sing like you would sing if Jesus were here!" Exasperated teachers chastised me for setting my scriptures on the floor. "You need to show more respect," they scolded. I shifted my weight on the clanky, metal, folding chair and tried to be "more reverent."

WHEN I was nine, my son Tom's age, I didn't want to go to heaven. An eternity of church: hair subjected to combing, dresses, insensitive leaders, childish songs, chastisement, respect, uncomfortable chairs, and headaches. Around that time, I had a dream about heaven. I dreamed of orange trees. Orange trees everywhere. I was running through orange trees. Trees with shiny, dark green leaves, heavy with ripe, round oranges. I could run and laugh, and I was happy. I knew everyone there, and I'd wave as I ran by them. I felt better about heaven after that. Now I could block out the antiseptic and mildew smells of our old church building, endure monotone lessons, and think of running through orange trees.

PAUL, my friend and former bishop, sent me an email. Now in the stake presidency, he sent it after a high council meeting,

Last night after we met and I was sitting in my meeting, I just happened to read a scripture that caused me to immediately think of you (and it also applies to me). Read Alma 15:6–10. The thing I like about this scripture is it's specifically talking about emotional and spiritual healing.

I imagine he was flipping through his scriptures instead of enduring the tedium of his high council meeting. I looked up the reference. Verse 8 carries the strongest message, *If thou believest in the redemption of Christ thou canst be healed.* Verse 10 carries the faith onus, *O Lord our God, have mercy on this man, and heal him according to his faith which is in Christ.* I closed the book. What do I know about faith?

MY close friend Gail asked me what I was waiting for. "Where do you think this is headed?" "You can't lose weight forever. What are you going to do?"



MELANIE WARNER

"I don't know." I'm just waiting. I'm not sure what I'm waiting for. I reread some emails from her:

It seems obvious that half of you wants to live and half of you wants to die. Sometimes the living pulls harder, and sometimes the dying pulls harder. You are walking on a razor's edge, so sharp and precipitous that anything can push you one way or the other.

Tonight on the way home from Ogden, I realized that if things progress as you want, this time next year you might not be here anymore.



MELANIE WARNER

I feel certain that the answers are within you, and as you talk about them, you'll find the key. If you don't find it sometime in the near future, I'm afraid I will lose you.

I've been thinking about God. I don't know if he's been thinking about me.

THIS summer I was facing the ocean. I had just decided one day that I needed to go to the ocean. Gail had been suggesting a trip and offered to come along. Twenty-four hours later, we were sharing the driving in her husband's Audi, speeding through the seemingly lifeless high desert of northern Nevada. Without a map, we followed Interstate 80 until it ended, just over the Oakland Bay Bridge. After freeing ourselves from the suffocating Bay Area traffic, I saw the first beach in the town of Pacifica. "I'm stopping here," I announced. I pulled the car over, and we got out. "Mind if I just go see the ocean?" I asked.

"Sure," Gail replied, "take your time."

I took off my sandals and walked across the hot pavement to the sand. I started running across the length of the beach. At the far end of the beach, out of breath, I stopped, folded myself

up, and squatted with my arms wrapped around my knees. I blocked out the roar of the cars on the highway and the chatter of the tourists on the beach. I heard only the waves crashing and the gulls crying as they flew overhead. Sometimes the waves slid past my ankles and soaked the cuffs of my pants. I stared out over the water to the horizon and tried to make out the edge of the ocean before it blurred into the sky. I wanted to get lost in the immensity of the sea. Thoughts of everyone's predictions of my impending self-destruction echoed in my head and interrupted my silence. I wasn't sure what to do, but I threw all the "thee's" and "thou's" and "thine's" away and prayed as intently as I could. *How long was I there?* My feet were numb. I slowly stretched and stood up. As the numbness left my feet, I made my way back to the car, stepping over kelp and plastic bottles scattered in front of me, while the waves echoed in my ears. I've been waiting for something to happen.

LAST week, a woman in my ward asked if I was doing any better. My usual reply is, "How do I look? That's how I feel." I decided to be more forward, "I've relapsed a bit."

"Well," she replied abruptly, "don't let all of our prayers and fasting go to waste." I wasn't sure how to respond. Where is the answer? I feel again like the five-year-old tracing her finger around and around the outlet's faceplate. I'm watching the dusk fall and

waiting for something—anything—to happen. Do I need to look elsewhere? Turn things upside down, turn hanging lights into lampposts? Faith hasn't come to me as it was supposed to come. I've tried to follow the steps. I'm stuck in the confines of what I'm expected to do religiously, but I'd rather be running through the orange trees.

THE second therapist I went to reminded me of a beaver. I was nervous and could concentrate only on his slightly protruding front teeth, framed by a brown goatee. I wanted to draw a caricature of him—a beaver, with a blow-dried hairstyle. Even his laugh reminded me of a sound that would come out of a beaver. A series of breathy "huh-huh-huh's." In an overly paternal manner, he leaned toward me and announced, "You have been abused as a child."

I didn't know what he expected. Was I supposed to jump up and hug him or break down in tears and proclaim him my liberator?

"No, I haven't," was my response.

"People with eating disorders are covering up emotions. You are angry."

"No, I'm not."

"Yes, you are."

"I'm not."

"You are." He proceeded into a sermon on Christ in the temple scourging the moneychangers. "Anger is OK."

"No, it isn't." I don't have any moneychangers around me.

He gave me a short, multiple-choice test and proclaimed me "Co-dependent."

"But I like to be alone. How can I be co-dependent?"

He told me he wanted "to love" me and asked, "Have you started shoplifting yet?"

We parted ways shortly after he declared eating disorders a continuation of the war in heaven and offered me the services of a friend who gives "powerful blessings." I wondered if I needed to pre-authorize his friend's services with my insurance company.

IN Beaver Man's clinic, I found an article written by two therapists:

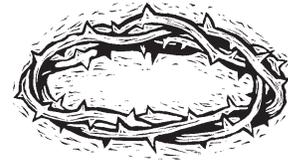
For many . . . women, deep spiritual struggles are a major impediment to their ability to recover from an eating disorder. . . [A] spiritual issue that impacts eating disorder recovery is the difficulty in surrendering, trusting, and acting in faith. Many eating disorder patients become experts at controlling or numbing their emotions, and consequently are often unable to experience sensitive spiritual feelings. . . . Thus, to "let go" and begin to exercise faith and trust in God becomes a frightening challenge to these women. They may feel so afraid of losing control, or whatever sense of control their eating disorder brings them, that they struggle with giving up their control to a "higher power."

WHO has left whom? Have I left God, or has he left me? Or was he ever there? Am I spending too much time looking at the ceiling and imagining orange trees? Do I just not know how to hear him in the muddle of life? Where do I go to hear the thrushes? Is there really a snowfield where the print of birds' feet are unknown? Am I in this alone?

I'm five years old, sitting in my bed, waiting and anticipating. *Any time now.* ☺

NOTES

1. Kay Redfield Jamison, *Touched with Fire: Manic-Depressive Illness and the Artistic Temperament* (New York: Free Press Paperbacks, 1993), 226.
2. Fred A. Ryser, Jr., *Birds of the Great Basin: A Natural History* (Reno: University of Nevada Press, 1985), 433.
3. *Ibid*, 434.
4. Fred J. Alsop III, *Smithsonian Handbook Birds Of North America: Western Region* (London: DK Publishing, 2001), 553.
5. Randy K. Hardman and Michael E. Berrett, *Eating Disorder Recovery: A Spiritual Perspective* (Orem, Utah: Center for Change, n.d.).



IN THE LOVE OF MAKE-BELIEVE

Together we live
a fantasy of old doves
who leave their nests
when the pear tree
is naked and their paths
in the air collide
with nothing

in the morning
our gradual night
sheds its dark
spare change
to the beggars
of light

water boils a soft tin sound

the baby's mouth is full of teeth
and he surprises the world
with his hands full of dreams
and outerspace around his head

in the morning our house
slowly comes alive
as the tide of sunlight
melts the glass

if i could find nutmeg trees
in these snowy fields

or just your skin under
the weightless cotton
of a blouse

—TERRY J. MULERT

Although defending the kingdom might seem to be a conservative mission, apologists are having a progressive influence on how Latter-day Saints understand their faith.

DEFENDING THE KINGDOM, RETHINKING THE FAITH: HOW APOLOGETICS IS RESHAPING MORMON ORTHODOXY

By John-Charles Duffy

By analogy, Mormon apologetics would be the “defense of [Mormonism] on intellectual grounds” by attempting to demonstrate that the basic ideas of Mormonism are “entirely in accordance with the demands of reason.” . . . Under this definition, I am an “apologist”; indeed, I am proud to be a defender of the Kingdom of God.

—WILLIAM J. HAMBLIN¹

OVER THE PAST TWENTY YEARS, THERE HAS BEEN a dramatic rise in the quantity, sophistication, and prestige of LDS apologetics. The bulk of this discourse has been produced under the auspices of the Foundation for Ancient Research and Mormon Studies (FARMS), which since 1985 has enjoyed a publishing partnership with Church-owned Deseret Book and, in 1997, received official status (and thus Church funding) as an entity of Brigham Young University.² Drawing on the gifts of LDS academics from various disciplines, FARMS has published a wealth of literature that, in the eyes of many Saints, establishes the plausibility of LDS faith claims on scholarly grounds.³ In addition, the *FARMS Review*⁴ has been an important outlet for polemical essays rebutting challenges to LDS orthodoxy raised by Christian countercultists, Mormon revisionists, or secular academics. Additional outlets for LDS apologetics have emerged in recent years: the Foundation for Apologetic Information and Research (FAIR), the Scholarly and Historical Information

Exchange for Latter-day Saints (SHIELDS), Zion’s Lighthouse Message Board (ZLMB), and websites by passionate amateurs, including LDS-themed pages at Jeff Lindsay’s Cracked Planet, Michael Ash’s Mormon Fortress, and Wade Englund’s Apologetics.

The recent surge in LDS apologetic activity is noteworthy given certain Mormon traditions that militate against the development of apologetics. First, there is a tradition within Mormonism that eschews argument on the grounds that “the spirit of contention is of the devil” (3 Nephi 11:29). LDS leaders and teachers have explicitly cited this tradition to advocate against apologetics. Second, Mormonism has long emphasized that knowledge of the truth comes through spiritual manifestations (testimony), understood as something apart from the intellect, which has often been negatively valorized. This tradition, too, has been invoked by Latter-day Saints who disparage the search for rational arguments or evidences in support of faith.

The increased prominence of apologetics within Mormonism has meant a corresponding decline for Mormonism’s anti-contention and anti-intellectual traditions. In other words, the recent rise of LDS apologetics has involved (1) an increase of openly confrontational discourse or verbal aggression, and (2) an increase in the value attributed to scholarship and the intellect. I am inclined to regard the first as negative and the second as positive, which is to say that I regard the new apologetics as a mixed blessing for the Saints. However, my view of LDS apologetics is more positive, overall, than that espoused by some revisionist Mormons. Whereas critics have dismissed apologetics as a reactionary “pseudo-scholarship,” I have come to see apologetics, rather, as contributing to a more progressive version of LDS orthodoxy. Paradoxically, as apologists seek to defend the



JOHN-CHARLES DUFFY is a writing instructor at the University of Utah, where for three years he coordinated a monthly brown bag series highlighting scholarship related to Mormonism. In the fall, he will begin doctoral work in religious studies.

claims of orthodoxy, they promote a new understanding of Mormonism that, in certain ways, is less hostile toward the world.

THE ANTI-CONTENTION TRADITION

Apologetics has been critiqued as contentious and unchristian.

Little is to be gained by kicking skunks or entering into a spitting contest with camels. . . . Our commission is to bear witness of the restored gospel . . . not to respond to every objection the adversary and his legions raise against it.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE⁵

A HARD-LINE VERSION of Mormonism's anti-contention tradition maintains that the best way for the Saints to respond to criticism of their faith is to not respond at all: keep away from detractors; do not try to answer them; in the words of Boyd K. Packer, "ignore them."⁶ In this view, reacting to criticism draws the Saints' energies away from the positive work of proclaiming the gospel and building the kingdom. At the least, then, apologetics represents a poor investment of time; at worst, apologists may play into the hands of Satan, who would naturally seek to lure the Saints away from the weightier tasks to which they have been called.⁷ Proponents of this view tend to equate the desire to respond to critics with an unchristian desire to retaliate.⁸ General Authorities who have preached this view include Elders Carlos E. Asay, Marvin J. Ashton, and Boyd K. Packer. Also, a 1983 First Presidency directive maintains that it is neither "wise [n]or appropriate to react to all criticisms" and that the Saints ought not to "enter into debates with [critics] either individually or before audiences."⁹ More recently, this view has been reiterated by BYU religion professor Joseph Fielding McConkie (son of Apostle Bruce R. McConkie and grandson of President Joseph Fielding Smith).

An attenuated version of the anti-contention tradition recognizes that it isn't always possible to simply ignore challenges to the faith. A Saint may be confronted by a hostile questioner during a public presentation, for instance, or a loved one who has been exposed to anti-Mormon claims may be in danger of falling away. In such cases, one may have to engage the criticism but should do so in a non-argumentative manner. An institute instructor writing for the *Ensign* suggests that when confronted by a challenger, you should "explain that you are not interested in debating or arguing—but in sharing your point of view and lis-

MAJOR APOLOGETIC GROUPS AND WEBSITES

FARMS

(<http://farms.byu.edu>)

FOUNDED in 1979 by John W. Welch, FARMS is the most professional, the best-financed, and the most prolific contributor to Mormon apologetics. The organization has published dozens of titles for both LDS and mainstream academic audiences; also two major periodicals, the *FARMS Review* and the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, in addition to a newsletter, *Insights*. FARMS has organized symposia, provided fellowships to promising LDS scholars, and funded archaeological excavations in Arabia and Mesoamerica. In 1997, FARMS was officially incorporated into BYU, where it now forms part of the Institute for the Study and Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (ISPART).

FAIR

(<http://www.fairlds.org>)

FOUNDED in 1997, FAIR serves as a clearinghouse of apologetic information with special attention to serving Latter-day Saints who find FARMS materials too specialized for their use. FAIR's online resources include short papers and brochures, a bookstore, and a sister site dedicated to issues of blacks in the Church: <http://www.blacklds.org>.

SHIELDS

(<http://www.shields-research.org>)

A WEBSITE which has been owned since 1997 by amateur apologists Stan Barker, Gene Humbert, and Malin Jacobs, SHIELDS is combative and mocking in tone. One of the site's major features is an archive of email correspondence between countercultists and LDS apologists, including FARMS scholars Daniel Peterson, Louis Midgley, and William Hamblin.

ZLMB

(<http://pub26.ezboard.com/bpacumenispages>)

THIS high-traffic public message board was founded in 2000 as a place where apologists, revisionists, and evangelicals could come together into a single online community. Moderators are "selected from across the spectrum of belief" in an effort to foster "passionate but civil exchange" on apologetic questions.

JEFF LINDSAY'S CRACKED PLANET

(<http://www.jefflindsay.com>)

A PATENT agent living in Wisconsin, Lindsay is probably the most prolific of the amateur apologists. His extensive personal website includes numerous, often lengthy, essays on apologetic topics (in addition to other pet issues).

MORMON FORTRESS

(<http://www.mormonfortress.com>)

A WEBSITE by Michael Ash, who aspires "to eventually offer my own articles [responding to] every hostile charge made against the LDS Church, its doctrines, or past/present leaders." Interactive media features satirizing anti-Mormonism have made this site quite popular.

WADE ENGLUND'S APOLOGETICS

(<http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/Anti.htm>)

ENGLUND may be most well known for creating "mirror sites" that rebut or satirize anti-Mormon websites (replicating the look of each anti-Mormon site but replacing the content).

tening to his.” The same writer cautions against the “temptation to accuse or attack an antagonist, to try to embarrass him or put him down, especially if you feel he is purposely distorting the facts.”¹⁰ In this attenuated approach, avoiding contention is understood as a question of the tone or the form of one’s engagement with criticism (in contrast to the hard-line approach, which urges one not to engage at all).

Prominent BYU religion professors have modeled two different approaches to engaging criticisms of the faith in non-argumentative ways. One approach is exemplified by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet in their book *Sustaining and Defending the Faith*. The authors decline to “respond to specific questions or challenges,” since they equate that project with the spirit of contention condemned by the Savior in 3 Nephi 11:29. In this they echo the hard-line anti-contention tradition. They depart somewhat from that tradition, however, in that they do seek to “show the inconsistency and sham of our antagonists’ questions.”¹¹ They do this by reiterating general principles that allow them to neutralize challenges to the faith in broad strokes. For example, by reminding readers that Satan has always waged war on the truth, McConkie and Millet encourage the Saints to view critics in terms provided by LDS orthodoxy: as deceitful persecutors, self-justifying apostates, or misguided people blinded by false traditions.¹² The goal of this approach is to persuade the Saints to reject criticism of the faith *a priori*, thus obviating any need to produce counterarguments to specific criticisms. This approach also allows the authors to maintain a proactive stance (preaching gospel principles) rather than a defensive one (arguing with critics).

Another BYU religion professor, Stephen E. Robinson, likewise elaborates a non-argumentative response to criticism of the faith though his approach is very different from that of McConkie and Millet. In his book *Are Mormons Christian?*¹³ and then again in an interfaith dialogue with evangelical theologian Craig L. Blomberg, *How Wide the Divide?*¹⁴ Robinson seeks to neutralize challenges to Mormonism’s claim to be Christian. He proceeds by arguing for fundamental similarities between Mormonism and mainline Christianity, especially its evangelical wing (which is the source of most Christian polemics against Mormonism). Robinson maintains, for example, that the LDS view of the Bible is equivalent to that set forth in the evangelical Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy;¹⁵ and he argues that even with distinctive elements such as the Book of Mormon and the King Follett discourse, Mormonism should qualify as Christian by evangelical standards of orthodoxy.¹⁶ Robinson decries the unfairness of anti-Mormon polemics. However, by framing his discourse as an effort to build bridges with more fair-minded Christians, Robinson avoids a contentious tone: he is not so much rebutting the Saints’ detractors as he is inviting mainline Christians to stand in solidarity with the Saints against the detractors.¹⁷

The writings of Robinson, McConkie, and Millet can be described as apologetic inasmuch as they aim to neutralize challenges to Mormonism. I suspect, however, that these authors would object to being labeled apologists, given that they

model alternatives to the more argumentative discourse generally evoked by the term apologetics. McConkie and Millet protest that they “have little interest in theological dogfights,”¹⁸ and Robinson distances himself from “those contentious souls who simply want to carry on a war of words with the anti-Mormons,” reminding readers that “the spirit of contention is always un-Christian.”¹⁹ These statements are an implicit critique of LDS apologists who do engage argumentatively with detractors.

IN DEFENSE OF CONTENTION
*Apologists view polemics as indispensable—
not to mention entertaining.*

We did not pick this fight with the Church’s critics, but we will not withdraw from it. I can only regret that some may think less of us for that fact.

—DANIEL C. PETERSON²⁰

NOT ALL LATTER-DAY Saints are willing to ignore their critics, as the hard-line anti-contention tradition would have them do. Nor do all Saints feel obligated to avoid discourse that is argumentative in form or belligerent in tone, as advocated by the more attenuated version of the anti-contention tradition. LDS apologists have developed rebuttals to specific criticisms directed at their faith (an approach rejected by McConkie and Millet). Some even engage critics in direct confrontation or debate (for which Robinson sought to model a better way). Apologetic discourse found in the pages of the *FARMS Review* or at SHIELDS and other websites, can be unabashedly aggressive: scornful, peremptory, propelled by hostile emotion (see sidebar, pages 26–27).

Latter-day Saints who engage in such discourse recognize that the anti-contention tradition is a problem for them. Daniel Peterson, long-time editor of the *FARMS Review*, reports that he and other apologists have “on a number of occasions” been challenged by fellow Saints for being “so polemical, so argumentative.”²¹ Apostle Henry B. Eyring, speaking at the FARMS annual banquet in the aftermath of a publicized clash between FARMS and Signature Books, felt it necessary to warn that “a spirit of contention will drive away the very influence by which [people] can know truth.” Eyring exhorted FARMS writers to practice “kindness toward each other and those you hope to invite rather than to vanquish.”²²

In response to the anti-contention tradition, apologists have had to develop an apologia for apologetics itself—to defend their defense of the faith. A talk by Elder Boyd K. Packer, which cited Nehemiah 6:3 to make the point that the Saints should “not be drawn away to respond to enemies,” seems to have been particularly problematic for apologists, who have devised various careful ways to neutralize this challenge to their project²³ (see sidebar, page 29). Fortunately for the apologists, Church leaders have not always promoted the hard-line anti-contention tradition: apologists can cite a number of past Church publications that endorse defending the faith against detractors.²⁴ Especially useful has been a statement by Apostle

Neal A. Maxwell that the Church's critics should not be allowed to get away with "uncontested slam dunks."²⁵

One way that apologists justify their confrontational approach is to represent criticism of the faith as an extreme threat. If apologetics is, as Robinson says, "a war of words,"²⁶ it is, in apologists' view, a war that must be fought—"a battle against Satan for souls."²⁷ "The attacks of the critics create casualties," Peterson warns.²⁸ He "regularly" responds to members and investigators around the globe whose faith is threatened by exposure to anti-Mormon claims, and he laments that Saints have fallen away for lack of access to adequate rebuttals.²⁹ Indeed, the threat posed by anti-Mormons is not only spiritual: the Saints' very lives are claimed to be at risk. Peterson claims there is "abundant evidence" that some anti-Mormons would violate the Saints' constitutional right to religious freedom if they could,³⁰ he accuses *The God Makers'* Ed Decker of being responsible for chapel bombings in Chile and state repression of the Church in Ghana,³¹ he compares fundamentalist crusades against Mormons to the Nazis' campaign against the Jews.³² In this view, persecution of the Saints—even the threat of extermination—is as real in the twenty-first century as it was in the nineteenth.³³ Given this apocalyptic outlook, it is not surprising that apologists reject the counsel to ignore detractors as naïve,³⁴ nor is it surprising that apologists' responses to critics can be at times so belligerent.

Underlining the serious threat posed by anti-Mormons, and thus the need for aggressive engagement, is one strategy for defending apologetics in the face of the anti-contention tradition. Curiously, that strategy is deployed side-by-side with a very different one: apologists deflect accusations that they are contentious by downplaying how actively or extensively engaged they are with anti-Mormonism, or by denying that they find pleasure in that engagement. Apologists may speak of themselves as having just happened to "run across" anti-Mormon literature or to "wander" into a Christian bookstore that sells anti-Mormon material.³⁵ One SHIELDS apologist who debated with a protester outside a temple open house represents this as a kind of self-sacrifice—drawing the protester's fire so that others would be spared.³⁶ Corresponding with evangelical countercultists by email, apologists Louis Midgley and Barry Bickmore represent themselves as seeking clarification, not con-

tention.³⁷ Peterson minimizes his apologetic activities when he writes that he and others "occasionally feel called upon" to engage with anti-Mormonism (my emphasis); he professes to find this "an increasingly wearisome chore."³⁸

Such rhetoric rings hollow, however, given that apologists also speak of their engagement with anti-Mormonism as wildly entertaining. A tabloid produced by one anti-Mormon ministry is said to have an LDS fan base who find the publication "uproariously funny."³⁹ Attendees at the FAIR symposium have enjoyed "sidesplitting" readings of anti-Mormon literature.⁴⁰ Peterson describes reading an anti-Mormon book that left "tears of laughter flowing down my face" and had him phoning friends "time and again" to "share particularly funny passages."⁴¹ Elsewhere he writes of a road trip during which he played anti-Mormon literature on tape for the amusement of his children: "We laughed till our sides ached."⁴² In a volume of the *FARMS Review*, Peterson reprints "with considerable delight" an outrageously inaccurate, bigoted article on Mormonism from a foreign newspaper, and he invites readers to submit more of the same: "Perhaps we will even select and publish some of the ones we find most entertaining."⁴³

To a certain degree, this laughter needs to be understood as a hostile rhetorical pose: attacking the enemy by heaping scorn upon him. Still, there are indications that apologists genuinely enjoy what they do—that they find apologetics pleasurable to the point of addictive. Michael Ash, creator of the apologetic



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

Please, Lou, stop reading anti-Mormon literature . . . for the children's sake!

website Mormon Fortress, uses the self-satirizing term *apolo-holic* to describe

an LDS Apologist who can't seem to leave apologetics alone. Despite his (or her) best endeavors, the Apolo-holic stays up too late discussing Mormonism on message boards, reads a little too much (is there such a

thing?) pro and anti literature, and occasionally forgets to feed the dog due to writing rebuttals to criticisms.⁴⁴

Peterson invokes this same trope—apologetics as addiction—in answering the question, “Why does the *FARMS Review of Books* devote so much attention to [anti-Mormon] books of little or no merit?”

HOSTILITY AND CONTEMPT IN LDS APOLOGETICS

Tone is everything!

—NEAL LAMBERT¹

LDS APOLOGISTS, FARMS in particular, have gained a reputation for rancor.² Even an article in the Church-owned *Deseret News* once characterized polemical essays in the *FARMS Review* as “vitriolic.”³ Though not all apologists write this way,⁴ there is an unmistakable trend within LDS apologetics toward hostility and contempt—sometimes blatant, sometimes relatively muted. Apologists who write this way insist that anti-Mormonism requires this response: as one team of writers puts it, when dealing with some anti-Mormons, it’s impossible to “tell it like it is and still satisfy conventional expectations about politeness and fair play.”⁵

Apologists profess to be both “amused and disgusted” by their enemies: amused by the absurdity of critics’ arguments, disgusted by critics’ fraudulence.⁶ Two themes, then, recur in LDS apologetic discourse: (1) the stupidity and (2) the mendacity of anti-Mormons. Not only their arguments, but anti-Mormons themselves are said to be stupid. This point is made over and over, in hostile reviews,⁷ in cartoons,⁸ in jokes,⁹ even in insulting statements made directly to non-LDS correspondents.¹⁰ But in addition to being stupid, anti-Mormons are also accused of being liars. They knowingly misrepresent LDS beliefs;¹¹ they lie about their credentials;¹² it is even said that anti-Mormons have posed as Church members or investigators in order to infiltrate the flock.¹³

Apologists are happy to publicize samples of anti-Mormon discourse they believe exemplify their enemies’ stupidity: hence Gary Novak’s *Worst of the Anti-Mormon Web*,¹⁴ Wade Englund’s catalogue of anti-Mormon fallacies,¹⁵ and the Philastus Hurlbut award that Daniel Peterson and other apologists launched to “recognize” the most absurd anti-Mormon statement of the year.¹⁶ By contrast, when apologists encounter discourse they regard as mendacious, they strive to suppress it. Much of the correspondence between apologists and countercultists that is archived at SHIELDS was initiated for this purpose. In some cases, apologists have taken a soft approach to trying to convince countercultists to retract allegedly false claims—professing concern for the countercultists’ reputation, for instance.¹⁷ At other times, the approach has been more preemptory.¹⁸ Unable to make the countercultists yield,

apologists may bear witness against them in the name of Christ or command them to repent.¹⁹ Peterson quite bluntly accuses one countercultist of serving Satan.²⁰

A related strain of apologetic discourse represents anti-Mormons as people who know deep down that they’re wrong but who persist in fighting the truth.²¹ If a correspondent declines to engage further, apologists often take this to mean that the anti-Mormon has seen his arguments cannot prevail and is fleeing the scene: apologists have dubbed this the “Robert McKay maneuver” after a countercultist with whom William Hamblin corresponded.²² In their exchanges with anti-Mormons, apologists almost invariably claim the last word.²³

LDS apologists often appear to be driven by strong emotion. Peterson’s writing, in particular, shows signs on occasion of having been produced in a surge of scorn or anger.²⁴ In their correspondence with countercultists, apologists seem to champ at the bit, impatient for their opponents to respond so they can continue the debate.²⁵ Their zeal to “score points” or “demolish” enemy arguments²⁶ may cloud apologists’ reason, leading them to rebut a claim that an opponent didn’t make,²⁷ or to claim to have rebutted an argument when they patently have not.²⁸

Occasionally apologists “admit” that anti-Mormons make them angry.²⁹ But fearing, perhaps, that this will give their enemies the satisfaction of thinking they’ve struck a nerve, apologists are more likely to claim that anti-Mormonism merely amuses them.³⁰

Apologists firmly resist accusations of “verbal viciousness,”³¹ preferring instead to describe their polemics with words such as “forthright” or “hard-hitting.”³² If accused of acrimony, they may protest that they are simply being “droll” and that their opponents should “lighten up.”³³ Alternatively, they may deflect the accusation back to their critics.³⁴ When Eugene England chastised FARMS for being proud and unmerciful during a public conflict with Signature Books in 1991, Peterson protested that FARMS had behaved in a Christian manner and hinted that England, on the contrary, was being unchristian in accusing FARMS.³⁵

At times, apologists openly denigrate those they regard as the enemy—as when SHIELDS characterizes detractors as people who “have nothing better to do with their pitiful lives,”³⁶ or when Louis Midgley calls non-LDS historian and past MHA president Lawrence Foster “an idiot.”³⁷ At other times, contempt has taken the form of underhanded digs. The most famous of these is an acrostic message, “Metcalfe is Butthead” that William Hamblin is reported to have embedded

The answer to this question lies partly in my quirky predilections as the *Review's* founder and editor. The hostile mendacity of much anti-Mormon literature fascinates me, in an odd sort of way. And dealing with such writing is, simply, good clean fun. (As I tell my wife, it's an odd hobby, but there are worse ones: it

might have been cocaine.)⁴⁵

Likewise, from Louis Midgley:

My interest in this literature goes deeper than a mild curiosity for the odd leaflet, tract, or book that happens to come along. One might even say that I am hooked on the stuff. I have even corresponded with

in an essay for the *FARMS Review*.³⁸ In a response to critiques leveled at the *FARMS Review* by John Hatch, Peterson disdained to reply to Hatch by name, but he did work four variations of the word “hatch” into his essay—hatch, hatched, hatchery, and hatchling—apparently for the amusement of cognoscenti.³⁹ Peterson and Midgley have made what look like furtive jabs at the homosexuality of individuals in liberal or revisionist Mormon circles;⁴⁰ and Peterson has said that he would “give [his] right arm” to be able to fool anti-Mormons into “publish[ing] a side-splitting satire of themselves.”⁴¹

Though they complain when detractors use epithets such as Morg or FARMS-boys,⁴² apologists have developed a rich satirical vocabulary of their own: anti-mormonoids,⁴³ Deckerites,⁴⁴ Signaturi,⁴⁵ Quinnspeak,⁴⁶ and B.S. (for “Big Scholars”).⁴⁷ Michael Ash has compiled a whole glossary of satirical coinages, including Metcalferrhea, Quinnosis Syndrome, Tannerexia, and Tannertantrium.⁴⁸ Peterson waggishly calls *Dialogue* “a journal of allegedly Mormon thought,”⁴⁹ and there may be witty intent in D. Michael Quinn’s having been dubbed “a former Mormon historian” (former Mormon? or former historian?).⁵⁰

Another way that apologists ridicule opponents is highlighting trivial errors in their writing—through the apparently malicious use of “sic,” for example,⁵¹ or by caviling about the misuse of words like evince or apocrypha.⁵² Obviously intended to undermine opponents’ credibility, such moves also let apologists revel in scorn: John Gee once offered a list of errors in a book he was reviewing for the “amusement,” so he said, of his readers.⁵³

Finally, apologists have a penchant for describing their work with metaphors of violence: blowing away zombies;⁵⁴ force-feeding countercultists;⁵⁵ stomping out weeds;⁵⁶ dropping a hydrogen bomb.⁵⁷ *FARMS* recently published a polemic review under the pseudonym Rockwell D. Porter, an allusion to the legendary Mormon gunslinger Porter Rockwell.⁵⁸ Apologists implicitly invoke the threat of divine destruction for their enemies when they compare detractors to Book of Mormon apos-



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFEY

—That’s not very Christian.

—I agree. I think I’ll make fun of them on my website.

tates Nehor or Korihor, or to New Testament dissemblers Ananias and Sapphira,⁵⁹ all of whom met violent ends.

As I read the more hostile apologists, I am reminded of literary critic Jane Tompkins’s reflections on the “bloodless violence” that academics perpetrate on one another through words. Tompkins proposes that “although it’s not the same thing to savage a person’s book as it is to kill them with a machine gun, . . . the nature of the feelings that motivate both acts is qualitatively the same.”⁶⁰ Michael McGough, writing about high school debaters for the *New Republic*, suggests that debate provides an experience akin to that offered by fantasy role-playing games such as *Dungeons and Dragons*: “the thrill of combat in an imaginary universe,” where victory depends on intellectual, not physical, prowess.⁶¹ I suggest that apologetics provides the same kind of thrill. If I’m right, this would help explain why LDS apologists are virtually all male:⁶² a wealth of research shows that males are more overtly aggressive than females are, ergo more likely to relish an exchange of verbal hostilities.⁶³

The notes for this sidebar begin on page 51.

some of those “antimormonoids.” My wife warns me about the utter futility of such behavior. And she is not mollified by my descriptions of the amusing side of anti-Mormon literature. Responding to her remonstrances and entreaties, I occasionally resolve to leave the stuff alone. But then a newsletter will arrive in the mail or a rumor will surface and I will begin to rationalize: what harm can come from having a look at some unsavory details about the latest unpleasant quarrel among the antimormonoids, or from glancing through a tract, or writing just one more letter? And then, like one who cannot pass the swinging doors of a bar, I am back into it again.⁴⁶

Far from ignoring or shunning anti-Mormonism, apologists seek it out with the passion of devoted hobbyists: purchasing anti-Mormon materials from Christian bookstores;⁴⁷ subscribing to countercultist newsletters;⁴⁸ visiting anti-Mormon websites or message boards;⁴⁹ listening to anti-Mormon tapes while driving;⁵⁰ attending anti-Mormon presentations and rallies;⁵¹ leaving one another voice messages to share the latest “juicy news about still another . . . anti-Mormon outrage.”⁵² Apologists have contacted Mormonism’s critics directly by email or phone;⁵³ they have called in to radio programs to challenge critics on the air.⁵⁴ Peterson once offered to publicly debate Ed Decker⁵⁵ and has alluded to an instance when “several Latter-day Saints,” including “a fairly well-known defender of the faith,” went out with Decker for lunch at a restaurant.⁵⁶ Midgley was forcibly escorted from Jerald and Sandra Tanner’s bookstore after he confronted them there,⁵⁷ and he

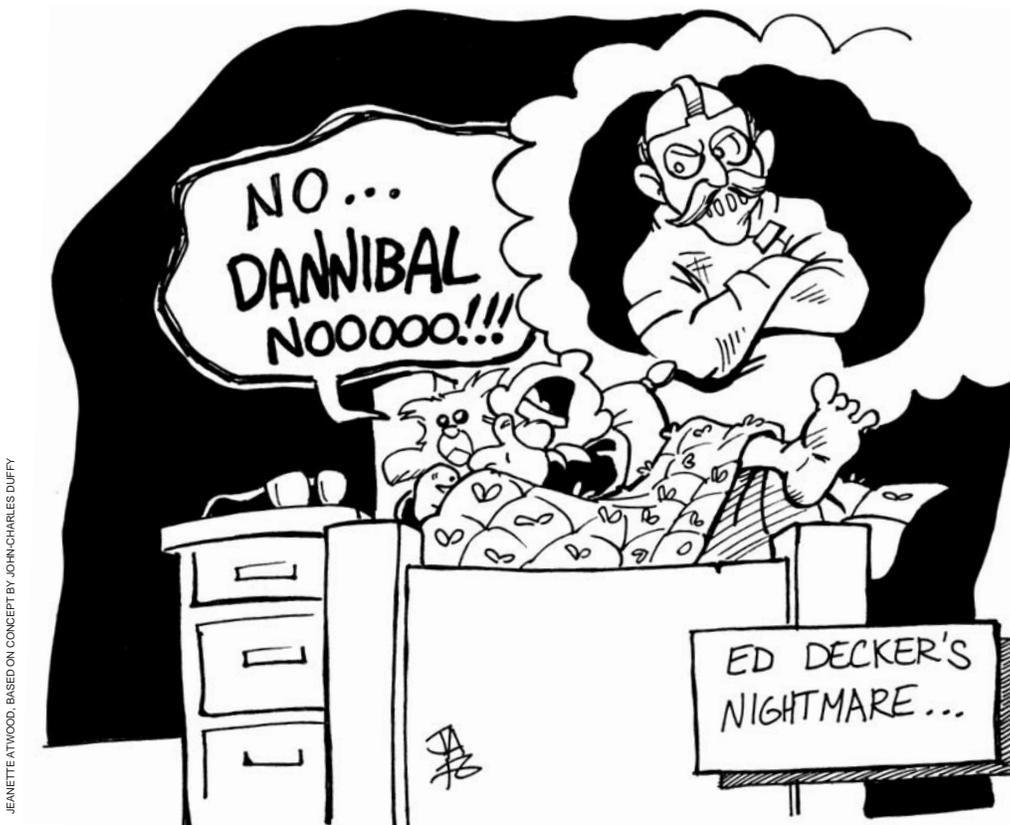
recently attended a book signing to publicly challenge Grant Palmer, a retired institute director who has questioned traditional LDS faith claims.⁵⁸

The relish with which some apologists pursue their work can be understood in terms developed by Dominic Infante, an influential theorist of aggression in communication. Infante maintains that certain individuals have personalities that incline them toward *argumentativeness* (“the trait to present and defend positions on controversial issues while attacking the positions which other people take”) or *verbal aggressiveness* (“the inclination to attack the self-concepts of individuals instead of, or in addition to, their positions on particular issues”).⁵⁹ Infante sees argumentativeness as a positive trait and verbal aggression as a negative one, though this distinction has been questioned.⁶⁰ In any case, LDS apologists display both traits. To be an apologist is, by definition, to be argumentative—that is, inclined to “present and defend positions on controversial issues.”⁶¹ And the more confrontational apologists engage in discursive practices that Infante defines as verbal aggression, including challenges to competence, character attacks, teasing, ridicule, and commands.⁶²

Despite its antisocial character, verbal aggression is rewarded by the prestige it yields within the mutually supportive network of LDS apologists: Peterson, for example, has won from other apologists admiring epithets such as “Dannibal Lector—he who eats anti-Mormons for lunch” or “the Meanest Man in Mormonism.”⁶³ Verbal aggression is validated also by apologists’ sense of being locked in combat with unscrupulous and potentially lethal enemies—by their perception that they

are an important line of defense for the Church. If twenty-first century anti-Mormonism is the equivalent of nineteenth-century persecution, then verbally aggressive apologists are the intellectual equivalent of Danites: meeting violence with violence, defending the Saints through a counteroffensive of their own.⁶⁴

Verbal aggression is not the only way to respond to persecution. Proponents of Mormonism’s anti-contention tradition share the apologists’ sense that the Saints are under attack but have nevertheless advocated non-argumentative responses. Indeed, Infante has suggested ways to respond to verbal attack that recall themes from LDS anti-contention discourse: “Avoid verbally aggressive individuals. . . .” “In argumentative



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

situations . . . reaffirm the opponent's sense of competence, allow one's opponent to speak without interruption, emphasize attitudes and values shared with the opponent, . . . use a calm delivery, . . . allow the opponent to save face."⁶⁵

Though I confess to being guilty of it myself,⁶⁶ I deem verbal aggression to be unchristian and spiritually corrosive. I therefore wish that the LDS community generally and FARMS specifically would be more emphatic in disapproving the verbally aggressive apologetics to which individuals such as Peterson and Midgley are inclined. At the same time, it needs to be noted that verbal aggression is hardly a universal style among LDS apologists: FAIR, for example, makes a concerted effort to be (in Infante's terms) argumentative but not verbally aggressive.⁶⁷ It also needs to be noted that many of the LDS scholars who work with FARMS eschew altogether the sorts of polemical discourse I have been discussing thus far.⁶⁸ These scholars do not see themselves as pursuing an apologetic agenda, even though others perceive their work thus. This brings me to my second area of interest: the anti-intellectual tradition in Mormonism and its relationship to apologetics.

THE ANTI-INTELLECTUAL TRADITION

Apologetics is disparaged by Saints who see little value in rational argument or evidence.

One seductive danger vying for the attentions of Latter-day Saints is the temptation to substitute various "evidences" for faith.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE⁶⁹

MORMONISM HAS LONG been ambivalent about the value of scholarship and the intellect. Mormon traditions affirming the importance of education and the enlightened rationality of LDS beliefs have existed side-by-side with a Jacksonian disdain for intellectual elites (theologians, doctors) and a tendency to underline the limitations of mortal wisdom in order to make clear the need for revelation.⁷⁰ Latter-day Saints maintain that knowledge of the truth comes ultimately through "testimony," understood as spiritual manifestations that transcend normal intellectual activity. Out of this belief has grown a discourse that tends to denigrate intellectualism and to represent reason and scholarship as irrelevant to questions of faith. This discourse is what I have in mind when I speak of an anti-intellectual tradition in Mormonism. Recent spokesmen for this tradition include BYU religion professors Joseph Fielding McConkie, Robert L. Millet, and Monte S. Nyman, all of whom take a dim view of apologetics.

Citing 1 Corinthians 2:13–14, McConkie maintains that the things of God can be understood only through the Spirit of God: only by receiving a testimony can a person come to know the truth of the restored gospel.⁷¹ For McConkie, this means that rational arguments for the faith have no power whatsoever to persuade nonbelievers. To contend is not only unchristian; it is unavailing. McConkie holds, for example, that it is "fruitless" to argue for LDS faith claims by appeals to the Bible, because the Bible can be correctly understood only by "a revealed understanding"—i.e., by those who have received a testimony of the restored gospel.⁷² Likewise, McConkie insists that if you try

WRESTLING WITH NEHEMIAH

And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

—Nehemiah 6:3

THIS verse has been problematic for apologists since Elder Boyd K. Packer used it to enjoin the Saints "not be drawn away to respond to enemies."¹ McConkie and Millet allude to Nehemiah in their own critique of apologetics,² and several apologists have taken up the task of neutralizing the challenge the verse poses. The constraints of orthodox discourse do not allow apologists to explicitly rebut Packer; however, they subtly offer alternative interpretations of the verse.

One strategy has been to minimize, in one way or another, the extent of the prohibition against responding to detractors. An institute instructor writing for the *Ensign's* "I Have a Question" column referred to Elder Packer's use of Nehemiah 6:3 as if the apostle had intended to prohibit the Saints from responding only in the case of temple exposés.³ Other apologists have cited Nehemiah to explain why General Authorities,⁴ full-time missionaries,⁵ or even most members⁶ do not or should not engage with critics—while rejecting a notion that apologetics should be altogether shunned.

Daniel Peterson offers the boldest challenge to Elder Packer's use of Nehemiah. On one occasion, Peterson cites

Nehemiah 6:3 in a bow to the notion that generally detractors do not merit a response.⁷ But elsewhere Peterson cites an earlier passage from the same book (Nehemiah 4:13–23) to show that "Nehemiah's construction workers [labored] with one hand while the other [held] a sword."⁸ Implicitly dissenting from Elder Packer's conclusion, Peterson writes: "The attacks of the critics create casualties. . . . Sometimes it is necessary to climb down from the wall."⁹

That apologists have been able to work around the prohibition against responding to critics may reflect a shift in Church leaders' thinking about how to cope with detractors. Statements such as Elder Packer's were made in the early 1980s, during *The God Makers* controversy. As the new millennium begins, however, the hierarchy seem more comfortable responding openly to perceived criticism: witness the "Mistakes in the News" page on the Church website,¹⁰ or the Church's official responses to John Krakauer's *Under the Banner of Heaven*.¹¹

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

to defend gospel truth using arguments elaborated “according to [the] rules of scholarship, you will lose.”⁷³ Without a witness from the Spirit, a person will not recognize the truth of LDS claims, no matter what arguments or evidences are offered. Apologetics is therefore a pointless endeavor when directed at non-believers; if we hope to persuade others of our faith’s claims, our only option is to bear testimony and invite listeners to gain testimonies of their own.⁷⁴

What about those who already have testimonies? Can apologetics supplement spiritual witnesses in order to strengthen faith? McConkie and Millet concede that evidences may “add to” one’s testimony or “anchor the converted.”⁷⁵ But they fear that the Saints will be tempted to rely on evidences in place of faith, scholarship in place of revelation. Faith requires assent to “things that defy the intellect,” a willingness to believe against reason or in the absence of evidence.⁷⁶ What then, McConkie asks, is the point of seeking scholarly evidence for faith claims?

Given that it is the Lord’s purpose that our testimony of the Book of Mormon rest on faith, what is our purpose in so zealously seeking evidences of all sorts . . . ? If such evidence supplants the necessity of faith, are we not at odds with the Lord’s purposes? . . . Some seem to be more interested in proving the Book of Mormon true than in discovering what it actually teaches. [Yet] the *only* meaningful evidence that the book is true is its doctrines.⁷⁷ (my emphasis)

Sensitive to accusations of anti-intellectualism, McConkie is quick to add that he does not mean to disparage scholarship; he and Millet make several disclaimers of this sort.⁷⁸ Still, McConkie, Millet, and others emphasize the threat they believe scholarship poses to faith. Faith in the unseen, Millet fears, “may be particularly difficult for one who is devoted to research and study.”⁷⁹ One contributor to the *FARMS Review* warns that “the use of scholarly tools” may “breed habits of mind that reflexively privilege secular scholarship over the gospel.”⁸⁰ McConkie goes so far as to assert that “true science and true religion are incompatible by their very definition,”⁸¹ which does much to explain the pessimism of the following passage from McConkie and Millet’s *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon* (a passage criticized by writers associated with FARMS):



But is it faithful astronomy?

As to the world’s scholarship, it ought be observed that the best of man’s learning, as it has been directed toward the Bible, has not resulted in an increase of faith in that holy book. . . . Scholars are far too wont to sift the sands of faith through screens of their own making, and in doing so often find themselves left with nothing but the rocks of their own unbelief. Similarly, with some concern we sense among many Latter-day Saints a preoccupation with “evidences” to “prove” the Book of Mormon.⁸²

It is not only the search for evidence that troubles McConkie. Even the idea that scholarship can help the Saints better understand the scriptures makes him uneasy, for he sees this as tending to place the scholar between unschooled believers and God, “precisely what happened in the Great Apostasy.”⁸³

Thus, notwithstanding concessions that scholarship has a “secondary” role to play, Latter-day Saints moving in the anti-intellectual tradition incline to speak in either/or terms: the Saints must choose between scholarly and devotional study of the scriptures. Hence Nyman asks: “Should we not learn and teach what the Book of Mormon itself teaches concerning the sacred preaching, the great revelations, and the prophecies *rather than* what others have said about its contents, literary styles, or external evidences?” (my emphasis).⁸⁴ Similarly, another LDS writer disapproves of Saints who are “inordinately preoccupied with proving the authenticity of the Book of Mormon by going on at great length about textual, linguistic, historical, cultural, and geographical matters . . . *rather than*

concentrating on the spiritual message of the book” (my emphasis).⁸⁵ These either/or constructions denigrate apologetics—and the writers clearly have in mind scholarship produced by FARMS.

IN DEFENSE OF INTELLECT
*Apologists and other orthodox scholars
seek to integrate faith and intellect.*

*The glorious burden of the disciple-scholar is fides
quaerens intellectum, faith seeking—and finding—
“reason of the hope that is in [us]” (1 Peter 3:15).*

—STEPHEN D. RICKS⁸⁶

SIX OF THE first eight volumes of the *FARMS Review* contain critical responses to the anti-intellectual tradition, either as articulated by McConkie and Millet or as reflected in anthologies of Book of Mormon commentary edited by Nyman. The passage from *Doctrinal Commentary*, cited above, is a particular target: Louis Midgley characterizes this passage as “an attack on all biblical scholarship” as well as on Book of Mormon scholarship produced by FARMS.⁸⁷ Reviewers complain about McConkie and Millet’s “anti-intellectual bias”⁸⁸ or the “anti-learned” and “narrow” attitude implicit in a Nyman anthology’s preference for devotional study over scholarship.⁸⁹ “If this is the attitude with which our university students are taught to approach the scriptures,” one writer laments, “can we really expect them to become the kind of people who can reconcile discovered and revealed truth without feeling they have to reject one or the other?”⁹⁰ FARMS reviewers eschew the either/or mentality of the anti-intellectual tradition.⁹¹ The Saints, they insist, need meat in addition to milk: we deserve a scholarship that moves beyond the equivalent of “a good-to-excellent Sunday School Gospel Doctrine lesson,”⁹² beyond the “platitudes, kitsch, and clichés” toward which devotional study was said to tend.⁹³

Champions of scriptural scholarship do not deny the primacy of testimony or the Spirit. FARMS readily concedes that “the insights of studies such as those produced in the name of FARMS are of secondary importance when compared with the eternal truths” revealed through the guidance of the Spirit⁹⁴ and that scholarship must therefore “complement, not replace” devotional study of the scriptures “for spiritual and moral ends.”⁹⁵ FARMS scholars have repeatedly denied that they aim to “prove” LDS faith claims: they speak, rather, of “plausibility,”⁹⁶ “probability,”⁹⁷ “corroborations,”⁹⁸ or “reasonable grounds”⁹⁹ for belief. Testimony alone can offer “ultimate proof.”¹⁰⁰

The constraints of LDS orthodoxy make these disclaimers *de rigueur*. Nevertheless, FARMS scholars and FAIR apologists attach considerable importance to argument and evidence as means of strengthening faith, refuting critics, and even persuading nonbelievers. As John W. Welch puts it (quoting B. H. Roberts), evidence may be “secondary” to testimony, but it is also “of first-rate importance.”¹⁰¹ Lance Starr of FAIR defends apologetics on the grounds that it can “strengthen faith and fortify

CRITIQUES OF APOLOGETICS IN THE CHRISTIAN MAINSTREAM

THE value of apologetics has been questioned not only within the LDS community but also in the Christian mainstream. In the wake of the Enlightenment, and especially during the twentieth century, apologetics experienced a decline in prestige among Christians. As liberal Christians have come to doubt the “propriety” of insisting that one religion is right, apologetics has become the province of conservative evangelicals and fundamentalists, whose discourse may not rise above the “wanton cult-bashing” with which Latter-day Saints are all too familiar.¹

Prominent theologians of the twentieth century—liberal and orthodox alike—took a dim view of apologetics, typically on the grounds that the search for proof was antithetical to the call to walk by faith. Already in the nineteenth century, Kierkegaard had maintained that faith must “regard the proof as its enemy. . . . [W]hen faith begins to cease to be faith, then a proof becomes necessary so as to command respect from the side of unbelief.”² These sentiments were echoed in the next century by Rudolf Bultmann, who rejected apologetics in an application of the Reformation principle *sola fide* (faith alone),³ by Karl Barth, who complained that in attempting to argue on unbelievers’ terms, apologists step out of faith instead of bearing witness to it;⁴ and by H. Richard Niebuhr, who characterized apologetics as idolatrous trust in human reason, motivated by defensiveness and doubt.⁵

Liberal theologian Paul Tillich had harsh words for what he saw as apologists’ misuse of science. Specifically, Tillich disdained apologists who exploit “gaps” in the present state of scientific knowledge in an effort to leave room for the claims of faith. This methodology required that “whenever our knowledge advanced, another defense position had to be given up”—an “undignified procedure” which Tillich believed had “discredited” apologetics.⁶ In Tillich’s view, the only way to avoid this problem was to place the “truth of faith” and the “truth of science” in entirely separate spheres.⁷

Tillich’s representation of apologists as people retreating from damning evidence recalls accusations that Mormon revisionists have lodged against the “limited geography” hypotheses of the Book of Mormon, for instance. On the other hand, Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet echo conservative theologians such as Barth in their tendency to see the search for evidence as antithetical to faith. When Elder Boyd K. Packer insists that the Saints should ignore detractors, he parallels a conviction of Niebuhr’s: that efforts to defend the faith distract Christians from “single-minded devotion” to their true vocation.⁸

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

If apologetics is “a war of words,”
it is, in the apologists’ view, a war
that must be fought — “a battle
against Satan for souls.”
“The attacks of the critics
create casualties.”

testimonies,” citing his own experience as a Church member unprepared for the “attack[s]” and “accusations” against his faith that he experienced in college.¹⁰² Noel B. Reynolds makes a similar claim when he writes that FARMS scholarship can “provide important shelter for fledgling testimonies” by lending credibility to LDS faith: “it may be important for young people or others . . . to know that the most serious scholarly students of the Book of Mormon are led to conclusions exactly opposite those of the book’s critics.”¹⁰³

For apologists, evidence not only strengthens faith in those who already have testimonies; it can also play a role in missionary work (something McConkie and Millet specifically oppose).¹⁰⁴ LDS apologists frequently quote a statement by Austin Farrer, who said, regarding the writings of C. S. Lewis, “Though argument does not create conviction, the lack of it destroys belief. . . . Rational argument does not create belief, but it maintains a climate in which belief may flourish.”¹⁰⁵ Along this same line, John Sorenson writes that faithful scholarship “can clear away obstacles in the minds of those prejudiced by unfriendly scholars or bigots so that the honest will give belief a chance,”¹⁰⁶ while Noel Reynolds maintains that because not everyone finds it “easy to believe on the testimony of others,” arguments and evidences can help “persuade the ambivalent.”¹⁰⁷ Consistent with this view, missionaries have used apologetic resources by FARMS and FAIR to “remov[e] the stumbling blocks” to conversion.¹⁰⁸ California institute director Ross Baron has become famous at FAIR for his “missionary firesides,” apologetic presentations during which he fields hostile questions from nonmembers; Baron claims that his firesides have resulted in “close to a hundred baptisms” and more than fifty reactivations.¹⁰⁹ FARMS scholars, too, have given fireside presentations targeting nonmembers and the less active.¹¹⁰

Scholarly evidence may stop short of proving LDS faith claims, but it seems, in the eyes of some, to stop *just* short. Consider, for example, a statement by Warren and Michaela Aston, discoverers of the Arabian site that has come to be widely accepted among the Saints as Bountiful (1 Nephi 17:6). Immediately after affirming that testimony alone can provide “ultimate ‘proof’” of the authenticity of the Book of Mormon, the Astons continue in a vein that shows they attribute to their work considerable significance as empirical evidence of the Book of Mormon.



But in [naming and describing specific places], the Book of Mormon makes available to us the simple test of matching its claims against the physical world. . . . We sincerely hope that those who already know the Book of Mormon is true will have additional verification of their faith and that the uninterested will have new reasons to more seriously consider the claims of the book. And those who still dismiss the book as a fraud or merely the product of Joseph Smith’s environment will have to explain how so much specific information (which was not available to anyone in 1830) can now be demonstrated as totally accurate.¹¹¹

David Rolph Seely has complained that what scholarship tentatively proposes, Latter-day Saints may be quick to hail as established fact.¹¹² Even FARMS scholars, careful as a rule not to speak of “proof,” can at times sound remarkably confident about the possibility of empirically establishing the claims of faith. Welch (a lawyer) speaks of “prov[ing] Joseph Smith a true prophet by circumstantial evidence.”¹¹³ Reynolds believes that with the Book of Mormon, “we are presented, possibly for the first time, with a claimed major miracle which can be

readily subjected to rigorous public, empirical tests,” the results of which would serve as empirical evidence for the existence of God.¹¹⁴ Reynolds is also confident that scholars have successfully “refute[d] most of the criticisms” leveled at the Book of Mormon.¹¹⁵ Others among Reynolds’s colleagues might prefer more tempered versions of his claims, but FARMS scholars do seem to share a sense that their work has made anti-Mormons (in Reynolds’s words) more “cautious.”¹¹⁶ A 1998 article by Christian apologists Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, which argues that evangelicals have greatly underestimated the apologetic challenge FARMS poses, has contributed to apologists’ feelings of vindication.¹¹⁷

At this point, however, I need to underline an important fact. One of the ways FARMS scholars have defended themselves against the accusation that apologetics competes with testimony is to deny apologetic motives. Reynolds, for instance, claims that while FARMS research has been “appropriated for apologetic purposes,” apologetics “rarely” motivates the research.¹¹⁸ “Our primary objective,” he says, “is to understand the [Book of Mormon] itself.”¹¹⁹ The idea that FARMS is devoted not to apologetics but to “understanding and appreciation” of the scriptures has been echoed by Welch and Sorenson and is canonized in FARMS’s statement of purpose.¹²⁰ Even Daniel Peterson, while acknowledging that he and others are “temperamentally inclined” to play the role of apologist, reiterates that apologetics is not FARMS’s primary mission when he describes the apologetic role as having “been thrust upon us.”¹²¹

These statements are not merely an evasive rhetorical ploy. There is a significant distinction between scholarship that sets out to defend LDS faith claims and scholarship that assumes LDS faith claims. Much of the work produced under the auspices of FARMS is of the latter category. As Welch explains, “We assume that the Book of Mormon is an ancient book and then look for insights by seeing it in terms of ancient language, culture, and history.” Such work is implicitly apologetic inasmuch as by its very existence, it asserts the plausibility or credibility of uniquely LDS beliefs. Still, the explicit objective of this kind of work is not to refute detractors but to use the tools of scholarship to “enhance our understanding of the text,” a quite different agenda.¹²² In the same way that archaeology, history, and literary studies have shed new light on the Bible and the world from which it comes, FARMS scholars seek to produce a scholarship that sheds new light on the Book of Mormon (understood as a translation of a Hebrew record from an ancient American milieu).

Work that assumes, but does not necessarily defend, LDS faith claims I prefer to call “orthodox scholarship.” Henceforth, I will use the term apologetics to refer only to discourse that explicitly responds to criticisms of the faith. Apologetics, then, as I use the term, is a subset of orthodox scholarship. Apologetics includes polemical essays from the *FARMS Review*, the materials produced by FAIR, and the polemics found at websites such as SHIELDS and Mormon Fortress. Orthodox scholarship is the most appropriate term for much of what appears in the *Journal of Book of Mormon*

Studies (especially under John Sorenson’s editorship),¹²³ as well as many of the FARMS Reprints and books such as *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* or *Glimpses of Lehi’s Jerusalem*.¹²⁴ Orthodox scholars’ commitment to understanding the ancient world for purposes beyond apologetics is further exemplified by FARMS’s work on the Dead Sea Scrolls project, as well as other endeavors to preserve or translate ancient texts of mainstream scholarly interest.¹²⁵

By insisting on the term orthodox scholarship, I aim to highlight the intellectualism demonstrated by FARMS scholars, by less formally schooled apologists, and by the thousands of Latter-day Saints who read this material.¹²⁶ The popularity of orthodox scholarship (including apologetics) suggests that a significant segment of the LDS population has high levels of what psychologists call “need for cognition.” Need for cognition is a personality trait, defined as “a need to understand and make reasonable the experimental world,” a “tendency to engage in and enjoy thinking,” the possession of an “active, exploring mind”—in layman’s terms, an intellectual temperament.¹²⁷ Latter-day Saints who value orthodox scholarship and apologetics demonstrate this trait. Though they might be uneasy about the label, given the pejorative connotations it has come to have in LDS discourse, these Saints are “intellectuals.”¹²⁸ Many are lay intellectuals,¹²⁹ but they are intellectuals nevertheless.

These Saints hunger for a faith that is reasonable and compatible with mainstream scholarship. Valuing novelty, they chafe under a devotional discourse that circulates the same correlated insights over and over.¹³⁰ They lament the lack of “curiosity” among the Saints;¹³¹ they champion “original thinking and asking the unanswerable questions” as foundational to the Restoration.¹³² In counter-distinction to Elder Bruce R. McConkie’s low assessment of the value of scholarly tools for scriptural study,¹³³ orthodox intellectuals maintain that scholarship can “aid immeasurably in permitting us to plumb the profound truths” of the scriptures.¹³⁴ Scholarship thus functions as a vehicle of revelation—a source of “further light and knowledge,” as John Sorenson has said.¹³⁵ Far from seeing scholarship as a threat to faith, orthodox intellectuals describe their faith as being “enhanced,” “enriched,” and “deepened” by scholarship.¹³⁶ We have seen how the constraints of orthodox discourse require intellectually inclined Saints to concede that intellect is subordinate to testimony. But it would be more accurate to say that these Saints integrate intellect and testimony, breaking down the wall that in anti-intellectual discourse separates the intellectual from the spiritual.

In this attempt at integration, FARMS scholars, apologists, and their readers resemble “Sunstone Mormons”—with the crucial distinction that where Sunstone forums tolerate heterodoxy, orthodox intellectuals are orthodox. They insist on the historicity of LDS faith claims, the literal reality of the plan of salvation, the exclusive authority of the restored Church, and the obedience owed to the hierarchy. However, the orthodoxy of a John Sorenson is not that of a Joseph Fielding McConkie, which is why I see apologetics—or, more broadly now, orthodox scholarship—as a progressive influence on LDS orthodoxy.

PARADIGMS AND PROOF: A HYPOTHETICAL CASE

THE role of paradigms in shaping how people react to evidence can be illustrated by the following hypothetical scenario (inspired by one that Louis Midgley once proposed during a confrontation with Sandra Tanner).¹

Imagine that tomorrow, archaeologists in Mesoamerica unearth a Hebrew inscription bearing the name Nephi. Naturally, news of this discovery will cause waves of excitement among Latter-day Saints, many of whom will hail the find as definitive evidence for the Book of Mormon. FARMS scholars and other orthodox intellectuals will be more reserved, urging the Saints not to jump to conclusions until the artifact has been authenticated. FARMS's cautious enthusiasm will be echoed in a statement by LDS Public Affairs.

By contrast, revisionists and evangelicals will immediately conclude that the artifact must be a hoax, and they will hold to that position despite any evidence to the contrary. If studies tend to confirm that the artifact is genuine, skeptics will question the studies' integrity or insist on the forger's skill. Meanwhile, outside Mormon and anti-Mormon circles, most scholars will regard the find as a minor curiosity, akin to the Bat Creek Stone (a Hebrew inscription discovered in Tennessee). Orthodox intellectuals will interpret this scholarly indifference as prejudice; revisionists will claim vindication.

No one in this hypothetical scenario is being unreasonable or intellectually dishonest: each group judges the new evidence in a way that is consistent with the presuppositions yielded by the group's paradigm. It is no more unreasonable for skeptics in this hypothetical scenario to discount the Nephi inscription than it is for Latter-day Saints to discount the studies which—in real life—are cited to support the authenticity of the miraculous icon of the Virgin of Guadalupe, for example.² Everyone walks by the light of faith, be it of a religious or secular variety, which means that no one looks upon the world through objective eyes. Proof is in the eyes of the beholders, who see what their paradigms train them to see.

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

IS THIS "PSEUDO-SCHOLARSHIP"?

*Academic credibility is a problem for orthodox scholars—
but not in the way revisionists believe.*

Closely examined, whether historically or in the contemporary laboratory, [science] seems an attempt to force nature into the preformed and relatively inflexible box that [one's] paradigm provides.

—THOMAS S. KUHN¹³⁷

ORTHODOX SCHOLARSHIP HAS been criticized from within the Mormon world by revisionists—that is, by researchers (LDS or former LDS) who offer ac-

counts of Mormon history or scripture that are at odds with traditional LDS accounts, typically because the revisionist accounts reflect a naturalistic perspective (one that does not invoke the supernatural). Where orthodox accounts present Joseph Smith as a bona fide prophet and translator, revisionist accounts tend to attribute Mormonism's founding texts and teachings to Smith's own psychology in combination with environmental influences: folk magic, religious controversies of the day, speculations about the Mound Builders, and so on.

Revisionist Mormons critical of orthodox scholarship represent it as scholarship done backwards. According to revisionists, where a true scholar is "dedicated to pursuing the truth, regardless of where it leads," an apologist "knows the conclusions at the start and sifts the facts and evidence to find support."¹³⁸ Revisionists therefore dismiss orthodox scholarship as "pseudo-scholarship,"¹³⁹ mere "rationalizations" to shore up LDS faith claims against contrary evidence.¹⁴⁰ They claim apologists "misrepresent data";¹⁴¹ apply a "double standard" (e.g., faulting opponents for things apologists do themselves);¹⁴² use "Machiavellian" rhetorical ploys—"distortion, mislabeling, deletion, false analogy, semantic trick[s]."¹⁴³ Thus revisionists portray apologists the same way apologists portray anti-Mormons: as unscrupulous, deceitful individuals, desperate to defend a position they know, deep down, is untenable.¹⁴⁴ Anti-apologetic discourse of this type has been deployed by Edward Ashment, Brent Lee Metcalfe, D. Michael Quinn, and Dan Vogel.

I see two problems with this discourse. First, I am not convinced that orthodox scholars seek to deceive. Certainly I can identify cases where apologists' rational faculties appear to have been clouded by hostility, leading them to make arguments that are inaccurate or unfair; and I can identify cases where apologists have done underhanded or vicious things.¹⁴⁵ But as I consider particular allegations of deception, it seems to me that revisionists may be quick to attribute malicious intent where a more innocent explanation is possible. For example: Responding to a hostile review by Stephen Robinson of *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, Quinn accuses Robinson of deliberately withholding from readers information that works against Robinson's claims. Yet shortly before this, Quinn had responded to similar accusations Robinson had made against him by insisting that he did not intend to omit the information Robinson accuses him of concealing.¹⁴⁶ If Quinn's omission can be due to innocent oversight, why must we assume that Robinson's omission is malicious?¹⁴⁷

Second, revisionist critiques of apologetics invoke a view of scholarship that in today's postmodern climate seems naïve. As non-LDS observer Massimo Introvigne points out, many revisionists profess an Enlightenment-era faith in the possibility of arriving at truth through objective, rational method¹⁴⁸—hence revisionist complaints that apologists have an agenda, the implication being that true scholarship would simply follow the evidence to its logical conclusions. Postmodernism, however,

maintains that there is no scholarship without an agenda; there is no such thing as simply following the evidence to its logical conclusions. Some orthodox scholars have espoused this post-modern outlook to rebut accusations of pseudo-scholarship and to lend academic credibility to the notion that LDS scholars should work, without apologies, from the distinctive perspective of their faith.¹⁴⁹ In this regard, these orthodox scholars are more in tune with prevailing trends in academia than are Mormon revisionists (though as we will see, Mormon revisionists have the advantage in other ways when it comes to academic credibility).

Philosopher of science Thomas Kuhn's notion of paradigms is helpful here. In his classic *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, Kuhn maintains that scholarship—or to use his term, science—is never simply a question of elaborating theories that adequately account for the known facts, since “more than one theoretical construction can always be placed upon a given collection of data.”¹⁵⁰ Which construction will prove most persuasive to a scholarly community depends on that community's paradigm, defined as the “constellation of beliefs, values, techniques, and so on shared by the members of a given community.”¹⁵¹

A paradigm contains the underlying assumptions that scholars bring to their work: it dictates what scholars view as established fact, what kind of new data they look for, the relative significance they assign to different data, the questions or puzzles that preoccupy them, and the interpretative lenses they prefer. Paradigms constrain scholarship—they limit what scholars see and think—but without paradigms, there would be no scholarship. Most importantly, paradigms are not embraced on strictly scientific grounds (i.e., on the grounds of how adequately a paradigm solves the problems posed by the data) but on the basis of criteria that “lie outside the apparent sphere of science entirely.” Among these extra-scientific criteria, Kuhn names religious convictions, “idiosyncrasies of autobiography and personality,” or the reputation, even the nationality, of those promoting a particular paradigm.¹⁵² This is to say that scholarship is rhetorical and political: it is never an exercise in the purely objective apprehension of truth.¹⁵³

Because I am persuaded by Kuhn's discussion of paradigms, I am not moved by revisionist complaints that apologists “invent *ad hoc* hypotheses to protect and maintain a crumbling central hypothesis”¹⁵⁴ or that they “presumptuously admit as relevant only those facts that support [their] conclusions.”¹⁵⁵ I am not moved by these complaints because, the pejorative tone aside, they accurately describe what *all* scholars do. In the face of contrary evidence, all scholars invent hypotheses that will preserve the paradigm to which they are committed, unless extra-scientific forces prompt them to convert to a different paradigm. All scholars assign the greatest relevance to those facts for which their paradigm accounts; facts they cannot explain, they set aside as problems for which solutions will later have to be found.¹⁵⁶ As Kuhn says, scholarship is “a strenuous and devoted attempt to force nature into the conceptual boxes supplied by” one's paradigm.¹⁵⁷ This is as true for orthodox scholars as it is for revisionists. Orthodox schol-

arship is shaped by one paradigm (LDS orthodoxy); revisionism is shaped by a different paradigm (naturalism).¹⁵⁸ Inevitably, intellectuals committed to each paradigm will see themselves as possessing the best account for the data, and they will see adherents of the other paradigm as ignoring significant data. In Kuhn's view, however, neither paradigm is “right” in the way its adherents imagine, and no paradigm ever could be: “no paradigm ever solves all the problems it defines and . . . no two paradigms leave all the same problems unsolved.”¹⁵⁹

I deem it inaccurate, then, to label orthodox scholarship “pseudo-scholarship” if the point of the label is to accuse orthodox scholars of being unscientific in their method. Orthodox scholars, just like revisionists, work scientifically (in Kuhn's sense of that term) within the constraints of a paradigm they have embraced for extra-scientific reasons—that is, they use scholarly methods to make sense of data in ways that are consistent with their underlying religious or philosophical commitments.

Nevertheless, the label “pseudo-scholarship” can be illuminating to the degree that it signals the problematic position orthodox scholarship occupies in academia. To a certain extent, the “constellation of beliefs, values, [and] techniques” (in Kuhn's words) embraced by orthodox scholars corresponds to that of academia generally, inasmuch as orthodox scholars have embraced what FARMS calls the “tools of sound scholarship.”¹⁶⁰ But orthodox scholars work in a paradigm that fundamentally sets them apart from all of their non-LDS colleagues. Orthodox scholarship presupposes and promotes a worldview that no one outside of LDS orthodoxy accepts. The assumption that the Book of Mormon is an ancient record translated by supernatural means is patently at odds with the naturalism that permeates contemporary academic discourse. And while scholars from other religious traditions may share with the Saints a belief in the supernatural, other scholars' faith commitments naturally incline them to reject Mormonism's particular supernatural claims.

Mormon revisionists do not have this problem. Granted that revisionists' Enlightenment-era understanding of scholarship places them outside the postmodern mainstream; still, as converts to naturalism, revisionists operate more within the paradigm of mainstream scholarship than do apologists. Thus, even when revisionists may lack academic credentials, their work is positioned to enjoy credibility in non-LDS spheres inasmuch as it coincides with non-LDS understandings of Mormonism (e.g., the assumption that the Book of Mormon is a nineteenth-century document). By contrast, orthodox scholars may have academic credentials, but they have an ongoing problem with academic credibility, since they operate from assumptions that are incredible to non-LDS eyes.

One way FARMS has sought to enhance its academic credibility is by producing non-apologetic works that serve mainstream scholarly interests. The most prominent of these has been the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library, produced by FARMS in conjunction with Oxford University Press and Brill Academic Publishers. This important electronic re-

source makes photos, transcriptions, and translations of the scrolls available on CD-ROM.¹⁶¹ Other FARMS publications for mainstream academic use include bibliographies on ancient temples and pre-Columbian contact with the Americas,¹⁶² as well as translations of Muslim, Eastern Christian, and Mayan documents produced as part of ISPART.¹⁶³ While projects such as these have not led to academic acceptance of LDS faith claims (such as the antiquity of the Book of Mormon), these projects have established the technical competence of FARMS scholars. This in turn has enhanced the credibility that certain evangelicals accord to LDS apologists and their work—as when Mosser and Owen insist that evangelicals need to put greater effort into rebutting FARMS scholarship.¹⁶⁴

In addition to producing mainstream work, LDS academics have enjoyed a limited success importing distinctively orthodox scholarship into mainstream scholarly forums. Eric G. Hansen, John Tvedtnes, and Angela Cromwell have read papers at the annual joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature, discussing Hebrew or Near Eastern characteristics of the Book of Mormon;¹⁶⁵ Jewish scholar Raphael Patai asked FARMS scholar John Lundquist to write an appendix on the Book of Mormon for a history of Jewish seafaring;¹⁶⁶ and Grant Hardy's reader's edition of the Book of Mormon, published by University of Illinois Press, includes a map of Lehi's journeys through Arabia, with reference to orthodox scholarship by John Welch

ORTHODOX SCHOLARS VS. ORTHODOX AMATEURS

ORTHODOX scholarship must be distinguished from amateur work along the same lines by hobbyists without academic credentials. Sometimes amateurs compete with orthodox scholars, as in the case of hobbyists who promote alternatives to John Sorenson's Mesoamerican geography of the Book of Mormon.¹ Or amateurs may attempt to capitalize on work done by orthodox scholars—plowing in the furrow of Book of Mormon chiasmus dug by John Welch, for example,² or recycling rebuttals to familiar anti-Mormon arguments.³ Such works often receive negative (if diplomatic) assessments in the *FARMS Review*, which thus draws a line between amateurs, who are not to be taken very seriously, and orthodox scholars, who are.

Amateur attempts at scholarship grow out of Mormonism's Jacksonian anti-intellectual tradition. LDS teachings about testimony and personal revelation hold out the promise that anyone can come to a knowledge of truth, apart from scholarly training. This promise lends impetus to a culture of dilettantes, zealous but undertrained researchers who often self-publish their work (following a precedent established when Joseph Smith self-published the Book of Mormon). Such authors either see no need for an advanced degree, or they vaunt degrees or certifications in areas unrelated to the subjects on which they write. Precisely because they lack advanced academic

training, amateurs probably do not realize how crude their work looks to scholars.

Though they are not as hostile toward amateurs as they are toward countercultists or revisionists, orthodox scholars are troubled by the amateurs' disdain for academic credentials and methodologies; they fear that amateurs "may do more harm than good."⁴ On a related note, orthodox scholars have lamented that the Saints display a general lack of critical thought⁵ and a susceptibility to "superstitious fad[s]" such as *The Bible Code*.⁶

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.



JEANNETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

*Self-published research by a scholar with a degree in dairy science
has concluded that this is the exact site where Nephi*

and Warren Aston.¹⁶⁷ The crowning achievement in this area is Terry L Givens's recent Oxford University Press publication, *By the Hand of Mormon*, which provides a history of LDS scholarship about the Book of Mormon. Givens denies that his aim is to establish the Book of Mormon's authenticity; nevertheless, his discussion is slanted against revisionism, while he describes recent discoveries as "corroborating Book of Mormon historicity."¹⁶⁸ Orthodox intellectuals have hailed Givens's book as a sign that mainstream academic venues are opening up to orthodox scholarship. "We are nearing the point," Noel B. Reynolds believes, "when it might be acceptable for non-LDS academic presses to publish academic books on Book of Mormon topics that would be written from a faithful perspective in the language of standard scholarship."¹⁶⁹

In my view, such optimism is misplaced. Orthodox intellectuals are naïve if they imagine they can persuade non-LDS scholars to seriously consider the possibility that the Book of Mormon is an ancient document.¹⁷⁰ As Jan Shippo has observed, "Literal acceptance of the Book of Mormon automatically turns people into Latter-day Saints (whether they join the Church or not)."¹⁷¹ Outside of a relatively small number of academics who may convert to Mormonism following exposure to orthodox scholarship, I believe the most that orthodox scholars can hope for in the long run is tolerance, not persuasion. Orthodox scholars may be able to forge alliances of convenience with other scholars on the margins, such as the alliance that John Sorenson has cultivated between FARMS and non-LDS scholars who champion diffusionism (the view that pre-Columbian transoceanic contact between the Old and New Worlds was more common than most anthropologists currently accept).¹⁷² And orthodox scholars may receive an initially warm welcome from non-LDS scholars who see connections between FARMS scholarship and their own work (as Patai was intrigued by Book of Mormon narratives that coincided with his interest in ancient Jewish seafaring).¹⁷³ Initial enthusiasm will wane, however, once scholars realize that accepting the Book of Mormon's antiquity also means coming to terms with LDS claims about Joseph Smith's access to supernatural powers and thus, by extension, about his prophetic vocation and the divine origins and authority of the LDS Church.

Mainstream scholars may be polite about their skepticism, given Mormonism's status as a formerly persecuted religion; but in the end, I predict that orthodox scholars will find mainstream skepticism insurmountable. Given the difference in paradigms, I believe it is inevitable that most non-LDS academics will see orthodox scholarship as analogous to much that falls under the rubric of "creation science." Others may even view it as lightly as much of the literature that flourishes on topics such as Atlantis, the Grail, extraterrestrial contact, or the paranormal.¹⁷⁴ That is to say, non-LDS academics will relegate orthodox scholarship to the category of "pseudo-scholarship." I reiterate that this label represents a political judgment rather than an objective assessment of orthodox scholarship's quality or truth value. Still, the political reality is that orthodox scholarship falls outside the pale of academic credibility.

PROGRESSIVE ORTHODOXY
*Orthodox intellectuals are accommodating
of worldly wisdom.*

[Do] we square the revelations of God with the theories of men, or test the theories of men against the revelations[?] . . . If we try to square religion with science, and this has been done plenty of times, we simply say that the language of the revelation doesn't mean what it says it means.

—JOSEPH FIELDING MCCONKIE¹⁷⁵

Many Latter-day Saints will have to change their thinking markedly to adjust to the dimensions [for a limited Book of Mormon geography] we have discussed. . . . [B]ut that would only be a manifestation of our healthy correction of former error.

—JOHN L. SORENSON¹⁷⁶

DESPITE WHAT SOME Saints may hope, orthodox scholarship will not result in mainstream academics taking LDS faith claims seriously. But the flourishing of orthodox scholarship does show how seriously a segment of the LDS population takes mainstream scholarship. Orthodox intellectuals want their faith to have scholarly credibility—at least in their own eyes, if not in the eyes of outsiders—and they are willing to revise traditional faith claims in order to achieve that. In other words, orthodox intellectuals are willing to judge the truth of traditional faith claims by how well those claims coincide with conclusions yielded by scholarship. This willingness distinguishes orthodox intellectuals from Saints of a more dogmatic stripe, who, like Christian fundamentalists, insist on judging the truth of scholarship by how well it coincides with traditional faith claims.

We can see this difference in the relative openness that orthodox intellectuals display toward organic evolution. There is, of course, a strong tradition within Mormon orthodoxy of denouncing evolution as inconsistent with scripture. The most prominent representatives of the anti-evolution tradition have been President Joseph Fielding Smith and his son-in-law Elder Bruce R. McConkie; Joseph Fielding McConkie continues to champion this tradition.¹⁷⁷ Among orthodox intellectuals, however, we find voices that are less dogmatic. According to Daniel Peterson, at least one member of the FARMS Board of Trustees is "a convinced evolutionist;" Peterson himself professes to be undecided but open to "some modified form of evolution."¹⁷⁸ A presenter at one of the FAIR conferences has proposed such a modified scenario, hypothesizing that Adam and Eve were transplanted to the Garden of Eden from an existing early human society.¹⁷⁹ Michael Ash, creator of the apologetic website Mormon Fortress, dismisses as "myth" the belief that evolution is inconsistent with LDS faith.¹⁸⁰ And the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* establishes the credibility of an LDS geneticist by citing his published work on "walking sticks that re-evolved the ability to fly 50 million years after losing it": apparently the *JBMS* editor did not anticipate that

readers would find this reference to evolution problematic.¹⁸¹

A clearer example of orthodox intellectuals' willingness to rethink traditional faith claims is the limited geography of the Book of Mormon. Orthodox intellectuals acknowledge that among the Saints, the prevailing understanding of Book of Mormon geography is the hemispheric model: the view that Book of Mormon history spanned the entire Americas and that indigenous peoples throughout the two continents—as well as peoples of the Pacific—are descended from Lehi.¹⁸² This view has played an important role in shaping the religious identity of Latter-day Saints in Latin America and Polynesia,¹⁸³ it even enjoys quasi-canonical status, appearing in the Introduction to the 1981 edition of the Book of Mormon.¹⁸⁴ Notwithstanding, orthodox intellectuals reject the hemispheric model because they see it as scientifically untenable. BYU geneticist Michael F. Whiting has decisively declared the model to be “incorrect” on the grounds that “current population genetics suggests that Native Americans (presumed by some to be the direct genetic descendants of the Lamanites) have an Asian genetic signature.”¹⁸⁵ Orthodox intellectuals prefer a limited geography, such as that championed by John Sorenson,¹⁸⁶ because they see that model as consistent with the evidence yielded by scholarship. In other words, a limited geography allows orthodox intellectuals to affirm the antiquity of the Book of Mormon without having to maintain an account of Native American origins that lacks academic credibility.

Revisionists have seen the new preference for a limited geography as intellectually dishonest—a desperate ploy to evade damning evidence.¹⁸⁷ Admittedly, orthodox scholars have made some moves that lend themselves to cynical interpretation. If studies had turned up genetic markers that lent plausibility to the idea of a Semitic colony in Mesoamerica, I find it hard to believe that LDS scholars would be making statements such as, “DNA evidence does *nothing* to speak to the authenticity of the Book of Mormon” (my emphasis).¹⁸⁸ And Apostle Dallin H. Oaks's frank preference for a limited geography because it makes the Book of Mormon impossible to disprove sounds lawyerly.¹⁸⁹ It's not difficult to see why revisionists would accuse orthodox scholars of trying to create an unfalsifiable hypothesis.¹⁹⁰ Still, orthodox intellectuals are doing what, in principle, all scholars do: adjusting their theories to new discoveries, within the frame provided by the paradigm to which they are committed. For orthodox intellectuals, that frame includes a bedrock conviction that the Book of Mormon is an ancient text. They make sense of new evidence in light of that conviction—and in the process, they promote a new understanding of the Book of Mormon.

Latter-day Saints could react differently to such contrary evidence: they could have simply dismissed DNA evidence that militates against the traditional hemispheric model. A precedent for this more dogmatic approach can be found in the writings of Joseph Fielding McConkie. For instance, citing LDS teachings that Latter-day Saints are “literally Abraham's seed,” McConkie declares that individuals who are not literally descended from Abraham experience upon baptism “an actual change in their blood.” He believes this even though, he

ORTHODOX SCHOLARSHIP AS ANTIDOTE TO DOUBT

THEIR commitment to mainline scholarship leads orthodox intellectuals into a non-LDS world. This can be disorienting and challenging: looking through the lenses of scholarship, Latter-day Saints are brought to see their faith, at least to some degree, the way outsiders see it. No doubt Daniel Peterson speaks for many orthodox intellectuals when he describes how his studies in Cairo with a prominent Catholic scholar of Islam led him to doubt the credibility of LDS faith claims: “At a certain stage in our relationship, I was overcome by a feeling of inferiority before the vast and ancient intellectual traditions Father Anawati represented—both Islamic and Catholic. How improbable it suddenly seemed to me that God's true church resided in the arid Great Basin of the American West, among a relatively unsophisticated people with a very short history.”¹

Catholic cardinal Avery Dulles once wrote that apologetics has become “a dialogue between the believer and the unbeliever in the heart of the Christian himself.”² In other words, apologetics is less important as a means of convincing outsiders than as a means of reassuring the converted. Christians in the contemporary West live in a secular milieu, which shapes their values and worldview to a considerable degree; apologetics assures such Christians that the claims of their faith are consistent with the secular criteria of credibility they have internalized.

Orthodox scholarship serves a similar function for intellectually inclined Latter-day Saints. As intellectuals, they have internalized to a great degree the criteria for credibility that prevail in contemporary scholarship. LDS faith claims do not fare well by these criteria: hence the doubt Peterson experienced in Cairo, his sudden sense of the provinciality and implausibility of his faith. Orthodox scholarship provides an antidote to doubt. It reassures orthodox intellectuals that their faith is credible by scholarly standards. Outsiders remain unconvinced, which is to say that orthodox scholarship enjoys little success as an apologetics *ad extra*, for the persuading of skeptics; but it does succeed as an apologetics *ad intra*, for the strengthening of believers.³

The notes for this sidebar appear on page 55.

writes, “I have been repeatedly told that this statement is genetically and physiologically indefensible. That may well be the case, but then, so is the promise of a resurrection. I, for one, believe in both.”¹⁹¹

I do not know where McConkie stands on the questions of Book of Mormon geography or Lamanite descent. However, his defiant attitude toward science—his readiness to embrace a belief that “is genetically and physiologically indefensible”—points toward a potential response to the DNA controversy very different from that embraced by orthodox intellectuals. Latter-day Saints with an outlook similar to McConkie's could take

the view that if scientific evidence appears to disprove the hemispheric model, then science must somehow be wrong. Perhaps, the Saints could argue, the curse of the dark skin altered the Lamanites' DNA, causing Semitic genetic markers to disappear. Or perhaps, they might argue, geneticists have been deceived by Satan.¹⁹²

The fact that orthodox intellectuals have not reacted in these ways shows that their outlook is not so dogmatic. Orthodox intellectuals are not content with the position that if the scriptures say a thing must be so, then it must be so. Others *have* taken that position. Surprisingly, perhaps, given his reputation as a scientist, Apostle James E. Talmage took the more dogmatic position in regard to the claim that horses did not exist in the Americas prior to the arrival of the Spanish. For him, the matter was simple: "The Book of Mormon states that Lehi and his colony found horses upon this continent when they arrived; and therefore horses were here at that time."¹⁹³ Contrast Talmage's approach to that taken by John Sorenson in *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*. Sorenson does not discount the possibility that horses preceded the Spanish; he cites archaeological evidence supporting that possibility. But Sorenson is also prepared to argue that the Book of Mormon uses the word horse to refer to New World animals for which the Nephites had no name.¹⁹⁴ Where Talmage, like McConkie, simply reasserts a traditional understanding of the Book of Mormon in spite of scholarship that militates against it, Sorenson and other orthodox intellectuals are prepared to reshape their understanding of the Book of Mormon to accommodate contrary evidence. Their new understanding is orthodox inasmuch as it affirms the historicity of the Book of Mormon; but it is a more progressive orthodoxy than that of McConkie or of Talmage (at least in the case examined above), an orthodoxy more accommodating to "the wisdom of the world."

This progressive outlook can be seen not only in orthodox intellectuals' relationship to mainstream academia, but also in their relationship to mainline Christianity. Orthodox intellectuals seem to share mainline Christian sensitivities in ways that Saints from earlier generations did not. For example, some orthodox intellectuals, like Mormonism's evangelical critics, appear scandalized by the idea that God the Father had sexual intercourse with Mary the mother of Jesus. They therefore distance themselves from earlier LDS teachings to this effect, insisting that those teachings are not doctrinally binding and that the Saints' official beliefs about the virgin birth and Jesus's divine Sonship are entirely in accordance with the Bible.¹⁹⁵ Probably the most famous example of an orthodox scholar having a theologically progressive influence on Mormonism is Stephen Robinson's successful promotion of an LDS discourse emphasizing grace—a concept the Saints have traditionally associated with apostate Christianity.¹⁹⁶

In his interfaith dialogue with evangelical Craig Blomberg, Robinson champions various ideas that might be labeled "liberal"—ideas that contradict traditional LDS understandings of scripture as articulated, for instance, by Joseph Fielding McConkie. Robinson maintains that the removal of plain and

precious truths from the Bible, spoken of in the Book of Mormon, refers to the exclusion of certain books from the canon, not—as a more traditional view would have it—to the alteration of books in the canon.¹⁹⁷ He believes that the Joseph Smith Translation "should be understood to contain additional revelation, alternate readings, prophetic commentary or midrash, harmonization, clarifications, and corrections of the original as well as corrections to the original."¹⁹⁸ He is prepared to accept the Book of Abraham as scripture even if it was not literally translated from the Chandler papyri.¹⁹⁹ He defines the parameters of official LDS doctrine very narrowly: he claims that only statements issued by the First Presidency or the Quorum of the Twelve are doctrinally binding, a definition which could serve to legitimize dissent in the Church.²⁰⁰ There is a similarly subversive potential in apologists' explicit rejection of selected statements by past Church leaders,²⁰¹ which Saints of a more dogmatic stripe might characterize as presuming "to judge the prophets of God."²⁰²

Notwithstanding verbally aggressive exchanges with some countercultists, orthodox intellectuals' attitude toward other denominations is less hostile than the "anti-sectarian" sentiments expressed earlier in the Saints' history.²⁰³ While the Church's official rhetoric about other faiths has since become more diplomatic, a hard-line attitude toward "false churches" persists in the LDS community's more conservative sectors. This attitude is most visible today in the still widely read writings of the late apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who was convinced that "believers in the doctrines of modern Christendom will reap damnation to their souls."²⁰⁴ Joseph Fielding McConkie carries on this hard-line tradition when he expresses bemusement that some of his LDS students deem him "intolerant" for insisting, "We believe all other churches to be false."²⁰⁵ Joseph Fielding McConkie, like his father before him, is unapologetic about his conviction that "faith [cannot] be found in other than the true church" given that "faith cannot be exercised in principles that are false. . . . To pray to a god concocted from the speculations of philosophers is no different from praying to a god carved from wood or chiseled from stone."²⁰⁶

By contrast, orthodox intellectuals use a discourse that, without relinquishing the LDS Church's exclusive claims to priesthood authority or the fullness of the gospel, legitimizes the faith and spiritual experience of mainline Christians. A cynic might see this tolerant discourse as an ploy to seize the moral high ground over combative fundamentalists; a more generous take is that orthodox intellectuals are trying to extend to mainline Christians the partial acceptance (without compromising fundamentals) that they wish mainline Christians would extend to Latter-day Saints. Orthodox intellectuals moving in this vein emphasize that the First Vision's condemnation of creeds should not be understood as condemning individual members of other churches nor the churches themselves.²⁰⁷ One LDS scholar even maintains that Christians outside the LDS Church can be spiritually reborn—

(Continued on page 42)

SUNSTONE GALLERY

PIONEER

My people were Mormon pioneers.
Is the blood still good?
They stood in awe as truth
Flew by like a dove
And dropped a feather in the West.
Where truth flies you follow
If you are a pioneer.

I have searched the skies
And now and then
Another feather has fallen.
I have packed the handcart again
Packed it with the precious things
And thrown away the rest.

I will sing by the fires at night
Out there on uncharted ground
Where I am my own captain of tens
Where I blow the bugle
Bring myself to morning prayer
Map out the miles
And never know when or where
Or if at all
I will finally say,
"This is the place,"

I face the plains
On a good day for walking.
The sun rises
And the mist clears.
I will be all right:
My people were Mormon pioneers.

"Pioneers,"
by CAROL LYNN PEARSON

"Where truth flies you follow, if you are a pioneer."

COULD any phrase better capture the life and spirit of Carol Lynn Pearson? For following truth's feathers is what she does—even when they don't land softly.

Descended from both ship Brooklyn and Mormon Battalion ancestors, pioneering does course within Carol Lynn's blood. But while their frontiers were water and prairie, Carol Lynn's have been the border territories of identity, heart, spirituality. Many of the truths dropped into her life's path have been exceptionally challenging: the loss at age fifteen of her mother, marriage to a homosexual husband, the death of a daughter, Katy, to cancer. Yet, unbroken, she insisted on rising above the landscape in what she calls her "spiritual helicopter," assessing the territory from a higher perspective, and mapping out what she saw in words that have blazed bright trails for others.

MOTHERLESS on earth, Carol Lynn found and then taught others of the Heavenly Mother. Through poetry, essays, and performances of her one-woman play, *Mother Wove the Morning*, femaleness found a divine face.

Denied the happiness of a partner who could fully give himself to her, Carol Lynn was able still to love courageously even in the extremity of his death to AIDS. Her story of their time together, *Goodbye, I Love You*, continues to shine as a beacon to struggling families.

Searching the skies with eyes and mind and wit sharpened by her years on the experiential frontier, Carol Lynn has now turned to trying to capture the subtle truths that fall featherlight in dreams and synchronicities. Carol Lynn's ongoing connection with Katy has been blessed by surprising hints often carried on butterfly wings. Now with her recent book, *Consider the Butterfly*, and other projects still unfolding, Carol Lynn is exploring and teaching about spirit, the connectedness of all in all.

MICHAEL Schoenfeld was inspired to photograph Carol Lynn from below. He has perfectly captured the image of a pioneer: a strong base; ageless hands that bear witness to a lifetime of work and love; and wisdom's smile and gaze as she faces even more uncharted ground, "plains, on a good day for walking." 



PHOTOGRAPH BY MICHAEL SCHOENFELD

an assertion which pulls against the doctrine that priesthood ordinances are required for salvation.²⁰⁸ Other LDS intellectuals might see this as stretching the limits of orthodoxy too far: Robinson's *How Wide the Divide?* has been criticized for that reason by contributors to the *FARMS Review*.²⁰⁹ These critics—including Daniel Peterson and William Hamblin—are not willing to go quite as far as Robinson in redefining orthodoxy. Still, in their attitude toward other faiths, they resemble Robinson much more than they do McConkie.

Orthodox intellectuals might resist the characterization that they are, as my title says, “rethinking the faith.” They might also resist the label “progressive.” But outsiders—revisionists as well as evangelicals—have recognized the shift in Mormon thought represented by FARMS scholarship and the new LDS apologetics: evangelical Craig Blomberg, for instance, describes Robinson as belonging to Mormonism’s “progressive wing.”²¹⁰ Progressive orthodoxy needs to be distinguished from “liberal Mormonism,” since liberal often denotes a willingness to question the historicity of faith claims and to challenge teachings of contemporary Church leaders, neither of which is characteristic of orthodox scholarship. (Although there is subversive potential in the narrow definitions of binding doctrine offered by apologists such as Robinson, apologists show no inclination toward developing that potential). Nevertheless, orthodox intellectuals are progressive in the sense that they champion new understandings of the faith in an effort to accommodate outside standards of credibility.

THE MIXED SUCCESS OF ORTHODOX INTELLECTUALS

They've failed to convince outsiders, but progressive orthodoxy is on the rise within the Church.

The Book of Mormon shows so many striking similarities to the Mesoamerican setting that it seems to me impossible for rational people willing to examine the data to maintain any longer that the book is a mere romance. . . .

—JOHN SORENSON²¹¹

Not a single person, place, or event that is unique to the Book of Mormon has ever been proven to exist. Outside the fanum of true believers, these tales cannot help but appear to be the product of fantasy and fabrication.

—FR. RICHARD JOHN NEUHAUS²¹²

ORTHODOX INTELLECTUALS OCCUPY a kind of borderland between LDS tradition and two other spheres of mainstream thought: academic and mainline Christian. Like liberals and revisionists, orthodox intellectuals have advanced beyond the narrower brand of orthodoxy represented by, for instance, Joseph Fielding McConkie. But unlike liberals and revisionists, orthodox intellectuals have not crossed the borders of orthodoxy. Rather, they push to expand the borders, bringing new ideas and understanding into the pale of orthodoxy.

This project makes orthodox intellectuals at once accom-

modating and defensive. They are accommodating inasmuch as they are willing to redefine orthodoxy to make it more closely resemble non-LDS thought in certain ways. But they are defensive inasmuch as they are still concerned with maintaining a clear boundary between orthodoxy and heterodoxy and with championing distinctive LDS claims in the face of outside skepticism.

Indeed, their position on the borderland makes it inevitable that orthodox intellectuals will serve as the front line of defense against skeptics and detractors. Joseph Fielding McConkie can afford to adopt a stance of non-engagement toward skeptics because he is far removed from the borderland. His orthodoxy is provincial: realms outside the dogmatic traditions espoused by his father and grandfather hold no attraction for him. By contrast, as orthodox intellectuals extend the borders of orthodoxy to encompass new territory, they inevitably encounter resistance: evangelicals who insist on excluding Mormonism from the pale of Christianity, or academics whose accounts of Mormonism rest on naturalist assumptions at odds with Mormon faith claims.

The more that orthodox intellectuals try to “colonize” Christianity and academia—laying claim to a Christian identity and introducing orthodox scholarship into academic forums—the more that they will be resisted by mainline Christians and academics who have concerns of their own about boundary control. Increased resistance from evangelicals can already be seen in recent publications such as *The Mormon Puzzle* and *The New Mormon Challenge*.²¹³ Secular academics are not as intensely preoccupied with boundary control as are evangelicals, so there has not yet been a direct scholarly challenge to orthodox scholarship (aside from revisionist publications within the Mormon world). But I predict that scholarly resistance will come, probably in the form of quietly shutting orthodox scholarship out of mainstream venues. Evangelical and academic resistance will lead to further apologetic activity, yielding an ongoing cycle.

As I have explained already, I do not anticipate that orthodox intellectuals will persuade mainstream academics to take LDS faith claims seriously, nor do I anticipate that they will convince mainline Christians to stop challenging LDS claims to the Christian label.

However, orthodox intellectuals have been remarkably successful at promoting their progressive orthodoxy within the Church. Terryl Givens has argued—correctly, I believe—that the incorporation of FARMS into BYU represents a “stamp of approval” for orthodox scholarship and intellectualism that reverses the “studied caution” Church leaders maintained through most of the twentieth century.²¹⁴ Despite the lingering reference to the hemispheric model that appears in the 1981 Introduction to the Book of Mormon, limited geography has become the Church’s preferred model, as reflected in Church art and film.²¹⁵ A page at the Church’s online newsroom citing the work of FARMS scholars in response to the recent DNA controversy gives an unprecedented degree of official recognition to orthodox scholarship and progressive orthodoxy.²¹⁶ Mormonism’s anti-contention and anti-intellectual tradi-

tions—which had their heyday in the dogmatic writings of Joseph Fielding Smith and Bruce R. McConkie—appear to be waning.

In the end, I have mixed feelings about the rise of orthodox scholarship. As someone who does not believe in the historicity of the Book of Mormon, I dismiss *a priori* much of the work FARMS scholars have done around the book.²¹⁷ Like Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert Millet, I frown on apologetics in missionary work; and I wish that the verbally aggressive polemics of some apologists would be roundly denounced by their peers. At the same time, my assessment of LDS apologetics is complicated by the realization that Mormonism’s anti-contention tradition (with which I sympathize) is bound up in the anti-intellectual tradition (which I reject). As someone who values the life of the mind, I look favorably on orthodox intellectuals’ desire to integrate faith and intellect, though I do not take their particular approach to that problem; and I believe that orthodox scholarship has not received due credit as an important site of intellectual activity within Mormonism. Notwithstanding the polemic excesses, and despite the paradoxically conservative nature of their mission to defend the kingdom, apologists exercise a progressive influence on the way the Saints understand their faith and their relationship to the world—and ultimately, I believe that is for the good. ☞

NOTES

1. William J. Hamblin, “An Apologist for the Critics: Brent Lee Metcalfe’s Assumptions and Methodologies,” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 439–40.
2. “FARMS Is Honored by Invitation from President Hinckley and BYU Board of Trustees,” *Insights*, October 1997, 1+; Noel B. Reynolds, “FARMS Will Publish More Books,” *Insights*, October 1997, 4.
3. FARMS scholars have insisted that their work is not primarily apologetic in its aims, while recognizing that it may serve apologetic ends. This is a significant distinction, about which I say more later in the body of the article; for now, it suffices to note that FARMS has been a key site of apologetic discourse or producer of apologetic resources, even if that is not the organization’s *raison d’être*.
4. This periodical has also been known as the *Review of Books on the Book of Mormon* and the *FARMS Review of Books*. For simplicity’s sake, I will always cite it as the *FARMS Review*.
5. Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Answers: Straightforward Answers to Tough Gospel Questions* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1998), 55–56.
6. Boyd K. Packer, “Come, All Ye Sons of God,” *Ensign*, August 1983, 69.
7. Marvin J. Ashton insists, “We have no time for contention. We only have time to be about our Father’s business.” “No Time for Contention,” *Ensign*, May 1978, 7; see also Marvin J. Ashton, “Pure Religion,” *Ensign*, November 1982, 63.



JEANNETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAIZ

—Is he going to show us DNA evidence?

—No, the latest Book of Mormon limited geography model.

Carlos E. Asay describes responding to detractors as a “waste [of] time and energies” and exhorts the Saints not to “be swayed or diverted from the mission of the Church.” “Opposition to the Work of God,” *Ensign*, November 1981, 68. Boyd K. Packer makes the same appeal: “We have a work to do. Why should it cease while we do battle with our enemies?” (69). Joseph Fielding McConkie echoes these General Authorities when he writes: “Few falsehoods deserve response. The adversary will often use such things to divert our attention from the greater labor of declaring our message” (*Answers*, 56).

8. Marvin J. Ashton recounts meeting with missionaries who had seen anti-Mormon literature circulating in their area and “were eager to plan retaliation” (“No Time for Contention,” 7). In connection with an anecdote about a protester outside Temple Square, Ashton reminds the Saints that “the gospel of Jesus Christ reminds us that we are not to retaliate nor contend. . . . [W]e encourage all our members to refuse to become anti-anti-Mormon” (“Pure Religion,” 63). In exhorting the Saints not to contend with detractors, Carlos E. Asay warns that if we “strike back,” we will be “resort[ing] to Satanic tactics” and thus will lose the Spirit, ensuring our “ultimate defeat” (67–68).

9. Quoted in “Leaders Urge Positive Reply to Critics,” *LDS Church News*, 18 December 1983, 2.

10. Steve F. Gilliland, “I Have a Question,” *Ensign*, September 1986, 58–59.

11. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), viii–ix.

12. *Ibid.*, chaps. 1–3, 8.

13. Stephen E. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1991).

14. Craig L. Blomberg and Stephen E. Robinson, *How Wide the Divide? A Mormon and an Evangelical in Conversation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1997).

15. *Ibid.*, 56.

16. *Ibid.*, 16–19, 74, 86–87, 130–33, 146–47.

17. *Ibid.*, 11; Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii–ix, 9–10.

18. McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, viii.

19. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii. While Robinson frowns on contending with critics outside the Church, he has contended rather hotly against Mormon revisionists, whom he regards as enemies within: Stephen E. Robinson, review of *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel, *FARMS*

A SELECTED "WHO'S WHO" OF ORTHODOX SCHOLARS

JOHN GEE: Ph.D., Egyptology (Yale); specializes in faithful scholarship related to the Book of Abraham.

TERRYL L. GIVENS: Ph.D., comparative literature (University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill); author of *By the Hand of Mormon*, an Oxford University Press publication slanted toward faithful scholarship.

WILLIAM J. HAMBLIN: Ph.D., history (University of Michigan); specializes in Near Eastern history; a frequent contributor to the *FARMS Review*.

LOUIS MIDGLEY: Ph.D., political science (Brown); a fierce champion of historicity as a bedrock principle for orthodox LDS faith and scholarship.

DANIEL C. PETERSON: Ph.D., Near Eastern languages and cultures (UCLA); founding editor of the *FARMS Review*; director of ISPART's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative.

NOEL B. REYNOLDS: Ph.D., political science (Harvard); past president of FARMS and current executive director of ISPART.

STEPHEN D. RICKS: Ph.D., Near Eastern religions (University of California, Berkeley); past president of FARMS, founding editor of the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*.

JOHN L. SORENSON: Ph.D., anthropology (UCLA); creator of the limited model for Book of Mormon geography most widely accepted among orthodox scholars.

JOHN A. TVEDTNE: M.A., Middle East studies (University of Utah); began but did not complete a Ph.D. in Egyptian and Semitic languages at Hebrew University; currently senior resident scholar at ISPART.

JOHN W. WELCH: M.A., classical languages (BYU); J.D. (Duke); founding director of FARMS; first to study chiasmus in the Book of Mormon.

Review 3 (1991): 312–18.

20. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): vii.

21. *Ibid.*, v.

22. "Elder Eyring Inspires F.A.R.M.S. Workers and Friends at Annual Banquet," *Insights*, November 1994, 1. There is some ambiguity in Eyring's remarks: Does he mean that FARMS writers should seek to "invite" the Church's critics instead of trying to "vanquish" them, or does he mean that FARMS should seek to "invite" some and "vanquish" others? Contentious apologists might favor the second interpretation.

23. Packer, 69.

24. See Matthew Roper, "A Black Hole That's Not So Black," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 160 n. 7; Matthew Roper, "Unanswered Mormon Scholars," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 89–91.

25. Maxwell himself has not made this statement in print, but it was cited in Gilbert W. Scharffs, "I Have a Question" *Ensign*, January 1995, 62; also, Gary Bowler, "What Is FAIR, and Why Are You Apologizing?" March 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/brochures/AboutFAIR.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

26. Robinson, *Are Mormons Christian?* viii.

27. Michael R. Ash, "Who's Who on the 'Web' in regards to Mormon Apologetics," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/who1.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

28. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii.

29. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction" *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): viii; Daniel C. Peterson, "QnA," *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): xxi.

30. Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word: How Anti-Mormons Play Word Games to Attack the Latter-day Saints* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992): 178–79.

31. *Ibid.*, 180–81; Daniel C. Peterson, "P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*," *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 63–66.

32. In *Offenders for a Word*, Peterson and Ricks tell of an institute instructor who attended an anti-Mormon rally that he said made him feel like a Jew at a Nazi rally (180). On other occasions, Peterson expresses alarm over a fundamentalist boycott of an LDS-owned business. Peterson sees the boycott organizers as making "an absolutely perfect argument for segregation, for a 'Christian' crusade to exile all Latter-day Saints, however innocent or secular their businesses, whether they are physicians, accountants, or paperboys, into an economic ghetto. (Welcome to the Balkans!) This is, sadly, not the first such case that has been brought to my attention. And I am forcefully reminded of the fate of Jewish businesses in 1930s Germany." "Skin Deep," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 141. Later, of this same boycott, Peterson writes, "It grows eerily reminiscent of the Nazis' *Kristallnacht* . . ." "Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch? What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 94–95. See also *Offenders for a Word* (83), where Peterson and Ricks quote Martin Niemoeller's famous statement, "In Germany, they came first for the Communists, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Communist . . ." If the fundamentalists have their way with the Mormons, Peterson and Ricks ask, who might they go after next?

33. Persecution is a prominent theme of LDS apologetic discourse. Louis Midgley appears to regard apologetics as a fulfillment of Joseph Smith's charge to document the persecution of the Saints found in D&C 123. "On Caliban Mischief," *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): xxxv. Contributors to the *FARMS Review* compare Michael Quinn's *Same-Sex Dynamics* to "the dishonest and lurid 'exposés' of the past" and therefore conclude that the book is "a form of persecution." George L. Mitton and Rhett S. James, "A Response to D. Michael Quinn's Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 261. Another *FARMS Review* contributor suggests that trying to pass out literature to Latter-day Saints on their way to general conference infringes on the Saints' freedom of religion. Russell C. McGregor, "Letters to an Anti-Mormon," *FARMS Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 257. The SHIELDS website dedicates a whole page to what are meant to be inspiring quotes about persecution from nineteenth-century Church leaders. "Quotables: Persecution," http://www.shields-research.org/General/Quotables_Persecution.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Inevitably, perhaps, in a post-9/11 world, one apologist has taken persecution rhetoric to another level, equating anti-Mormonism with spiritual terrorism: see <http://www.geocities.com/ldsbeliefs/antimormonterroristnetwork.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

34. Midgley characterizes that approach as "plac[ing] one's head in the sand" ("On Caliban Mischief," xxxv).

35. On someone having "happened to wander into a Christian bookstore" (and then disagreeing with the proprietor over whether or not *naunoo* is really a Hebrew word), see "Ask the Apologist," *FAIR Journal*, June 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200206.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). For a reference to Saints who "run across" anti-Mormon material, see Scott Gordon, "Dealing with Difficult Issues," <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/misc/misc28.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Daniel Peterson makes the same kind of move when he tells readers of the *FARMS Review* that he recently "happened (as I occasionally do) to tune in" to an anti-Mormon radio program. Along similar lines, Robert Millet writes that he once read anti-Mormon literature "out of sheer curiosity"; cf. the fictional elder in Russell McGregor's "Letters to an Anti-Mormon" who "admit[s]" that he is corresponding with a countercultist because "missionaries have just as much curiosity as everyone else." Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): viii; Robert L. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," in *Expressions of Faith: Testimonies of Latter-day Saint Scholars*, ed. Susan Easton Black (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1996), 91; McGregor, 237. I am struck by how these writers have chosen phrasing that represents their engagement with anti-Mormonism as passive or casual: I propose that, wittingly or not, these writers are reacting to pressure from the anti-contention tradition, which frowns on active engagement with anti-Mormonism.

36. "Jim Valentine/Malin Jacobs Correspondence," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/JValc01.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Jacobs reports that he had "several long conversations" with Valentine on the rationale that "any time Mr. Valentine spent with me could not be spent handing out tracts or talking to those

who came to the open house out of genuine interest in the church.” The interaction did not end there, however: Valentine subsequently sent Jacobs a paper (they had apparently swapped addresses), for which Jacobs researched and wrote a rebuttal.

37. That each apologist seeks, in fact, to challenge his correspondent becomes clear as the correspondence unfolds. By the end of his email exchange with Ron Rhodes, Bickmore admits, “I AM questioning your character,” which earlier he had only hinted at. Email to Ron Rhodes, 28 July 1999, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/RftSM_Rhodes_Bickmore01.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Midway through his correspondence with James White, Midgley acknowledges his effort to “demonstrate” that White has made an untrue claim. Nevertheless, Midgley wants to keep insisting that he seeks information, not a quarrel. When it becomes simply implausible for Midgley to deny that he is engaged in an argument, he accuses White of having “bait[ed]” him—to which White retorts that it was Midgley who initiated the correspondence. A sarcastic bent becomes clear when Midgley asks White, “How come you love to label Professor Peterson as ‘childish’ and so forth, and yet never accuse me of those kinds of behavior. Do I somehow fail to measure down?” The Midgley/White correspondence is archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_02.html (accessed 1 April 2004).

Midgley seems invested in denying that he has contentious motives; note that he likes to end his correspondence, “Grace and peace.” Yet even among admirers, Midgley has a reputation for being “feisty”: see Ross Baron, “Feeding the Multitudes: Being Fishers of Men,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001BarR.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). The dynamic we see in Midgley’s correspondence with White—denying contentious motives while providing contrary indications—can also be seen when we contrast two documents connected to a confrontation with Sandra Tanner that resulted in Midgley’s being thrown out of the Tanners’ store. In a letter to Tanner, Midgley professes to be “at a loss to figure out what I might have said to you that warranted our being tossed out of your bookstore. . . . I do not recall either feeling or expressing hostility towards you in any of our conversations.” Louis Midgley, to Sandra Tanner, 2 July 1997, electronic copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). Yet in an account of the confrontation written for SHIELDS, Midgley describes himself as having “teased Sandra Tanner” and boasts that he was able to lead her along until she was “caught in her own little trap.” “Standards of Proof,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

38. Peterson, “Skin Deep,” 99–100. Although in this issue of the *Review*, Peterson professes to find apologistics “wearisome,” by the very next issue, readers find him chortling about “the fun of it all.” See “Editor’s Introduction: In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): v.

39. Peterson, “In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” ix.

40. D. E. Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference Will Be Hard to Top,” *FAIR Journal*, August 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200308.html>; D. E. Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference: The First Day,” *FAIR Journal*, September 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200309.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

41. Daniel C. Peterson, “A Modern Malleus maleficarum,” *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 231.

42. The material they were listening to was Arthur Conan Doyle’s Mormon-themed story, *A Study in Scarlet*. Peterson, “In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters,” vii.

43. *Ibid.*, xix, xxiv.

44. Michael R. Ash, “Apologeez: The Language of LDS Apologetics,” <http://www.mormonfortress.com/gloss2.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

45. Peterson, “QnA,” xxi.

46. Louis Midgley, “Playing with Half a Decker: The Countercult Religious Tradition Confronts the Book of Mormon,” *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 140.

47. Daniel C. Peterson, “Chattanooga Cheapshot, or The Gall of Bitterness,” *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 1. Cf. Matthew Roper, “Right on Target: Boomerang Hits and the Book of Mormon,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2001RopM.html> (accessed 1 April 2004), where Roper recounts visiting the Tanners’ bookstore because he “had to acquire some materials for a research project.” Ezra Taft Benson once instructed religious educators not to purchase materials from anti-Mormons on the grounds that this will merely “help sustain their cause” (quoted in Scharffs, 62).

48. I have already mentioned the LDS “fan base” for the countercultist tabloid *The Utah Evangel* (see note 39, above). Midgley mentions receiving at least one anti-Mormon newsletter at home (“Playing with Half a Decker,” 140).

49. William Hamblin and Wade Englund have both posted to the “Recovery from Mormonism” board and have subsequently been banned. “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace,’” <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/exmo01.html>; Wade Englund, “Why We Left Stories,” <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/stories.htm>. Michael Ash reports that the webmaster of the Utah Lighthouse Ministry Message

Board has been dubbed “Web-Nazi” by apologists for deleting their posts: see the alphabetical listing for “Webguy” at <http://www.mormonfortress.com/who1.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

50. Daniel C. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: The Worst Herry Man Can Preach,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): xx. See also note 42, above, for a reference to Peterson playing anti-Mormon tapes for his children.

51. Peterson and Ricks, *Offenders for a Word*, 179–80.

52. Midgley, “Playing with Half a Decker,” 141 n. 51.

53. For email correspondence with countercultists, see the archives at SHIELDS’s “Critics Corner,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). For mention of Peterson’s phoning a countercultist in Atlanta, see Daniel C. Peterson, review of *Mormonism*, by Kurt Van Orden, *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): 95.

54. Peterson refers to an instance in 1992 when he questioned Ed Decker on air while the latter was speaking on AM radio (“P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*,” 56). In 1998, Hamblin called in to confront countercultist James White on air, leading to a very lengthy email correspondence, archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_01a.html (accessed 1 April 2004).

55. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: Triptych (Inspired by Hieronymous Bosch),” *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): xi.

56. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 104–05. This is not quite as bizarre as it may sound if it’s the same instance Malin Jacobs recounts at <http://www.shields-research.org/Humor/Q&Q.html> (accessed 1 April 2004), in which LDS apologist Van Hale took Decker to lunch, as was customary, after Decker had been a guest on a talk show Hale co-hosted. Still, if one takes seriously Peterson’s claims that fundamentalists like Decker pose a threat to Mormonism comparable to Nazi persecution of the Jews, then Hale’s lunch with Decker becomes equivalent to a Jewish talk show host sitting down to eat with late neo-Nazi leader William Pierce.

57. “An Incident at the Utah Lighthouse Ministry Bookstore,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

58. “Update,” *SUNSTONE*, December 2002, 76. For Midgley’s own account of the incident, see Louis Midgley, “Prying into Palmer” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 2 (2003): 365–410, especially the section beginning on page 403.

59. Dominic A. Infante, *Arguing Constructively* (Prospect Heights, IL: Waveland Press, 1988), 7; Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students to Understand and Control Verbal Aggression,” *Communication Education* 44 (1995): 52–53.

60. Researchers Mark A. Hamilton and Paul J. Mineo have challenged Infante’s claim that teaching students to be argumentative (that is, to attack issues) will decrease verbal aggression: Hamilton and Mineo conclude that, in fact, argumentation training tends to “enhanc[e] the motivation to argue” and thus “increas[es] the level of verbal aggressiveness in society.” “Argumentativeness and Its Effect on Verbal Aggressiveness: A Meta-Analytic Review,” in *Interpersonal Communication Research: Advances through Meta-Analysis*, ed. Mike Allen et al. (Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 2002): 284. Hamilton and Mineo thus challenge Infante’s distinction between argumentativeness (good) and verbal aggression (bad), though they concur with Infante that verbal aggression is undesirable.

That latter notion—that verbal aggression is necessarily undesirable—has been challenged by some researchers of “flaming” (verbally aggressive communication online). These researchers argue that communications of a kind Infante would probably type as aggressive in fact serve positive functions: educating others, disciplining Internet users who violate the protocols of online communication, or helping individuals become “more tolerant of negative criticism.” Hongjie Wang and Yan Hong, “Flaming: More Than a Necessary Evil for Academic Mailing Lists” (ERIC Document Reproduction Service no. ED 385261), 7; online at *Electronic Journal of Communication* 6, no. 1 (1996), <http://www.cios.org/www/ejcv6n196.htm> (accessed 2 April 2004). See also Heidi McKee, “YOUR VIEWS SHOWED TRUE IGNORANCE!!! (Mis)Communication in an Online Interracial Discussion Forum,” *Computers and Composition* 19 (2002): 411–34. In light of the comparison I make between LDS apologists and Danites (see article text and note 64, below), I am especially interested in Susan Herring’s suggestion that flaming functions for men as “a form of self-appointed regulation of the social order, a rough and ready form of justice on the ritual frontier.” “Bringing Familiar Baggage to the New Frontier: Gender Difference in Computer-Mediated Communication,” in *CyberReader*, ed. Victor J. Vitanza (Boston: Allyn & Bacon, 1996), 151.

61. A Catholic writer approvingly quoted by a *FARMS Review* contributor aptly expresses the argumentativeness of apologists, i.e., their predilection for making arguments: “We all like a good argument. We like the give-and-take, and we enjoy watching one party score a point and the second return the favor. A good argument, particularly on an important theme, stimulates our minds and helps us

draw our own conclusions.” Quoted in Barry R. Bickmore, “A Passion for Faultfinding: The Deconversion of a Former Catholic Priest,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 280.

62. Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students,” 53. Cf. Wang and Hong, whose definition of flaming (verbal aggression online) includes “venomous remarks” and “sarcastic barbs,” as well as a tendency to “admonish, rebuke, reprimand, and reproach” to a degree that would be considered impolite in analogous face-to-face interactions (3).

63. Ash, “Apologeez.” Though Ash does not identify Peterson as the apologist referred to, the pun on Peterson’s name (Danibal) is unmistakable.

64. For a historical introduction to the Danites as a kind of independent militia with an avowed intent to protect the Saints from mob violence, see Leland H. Gentry, “The Danite Band of 1838,” *BYU Studies* 14, no. 4 (Summer 1974): 421–50. My comparison of LDS apologists to Danites is not a sensationalist metaphor: I am literally proposing that the same impulse toward violence which produced Danites in the nineteenth century produces hostile polemicists today. See the last paragraph of my callout essay, “Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics,” on pages 26–27 of this article. Lest I be misunderstood, let me add that the comparison to Danites is not intended as a pun on Dan Peterson’s name.

65. Dominic A. Infante, “Teaching Students,” 55–56.

66. For example, in the wake of Elbert Peck’s resignation from Sunstone, I wrote a verbally aggressive letter to the editor of which I have since been ashamed: John-Charles Duffy, letter to the editor, *City Weekly*, 12 July 2001, 4; quoted in Gary James Bergera, “Only Our Hearts Know”—Part 2: SUNSTONE During the Elbert Peck Years,” *SUNSTONE*, July 2003, 34.

67. Leaders of FAIR have said that the organization eschews “personal attacks,” “bashing,” or efforts to “destroy detractors.” Kathryn Richards, “Leaders of FAIR Organization Seek BYU Involvement,” *BYU NewsNet*, 18 January 2001, <http://newsnet.byu.edu/story.cfm/12952> (accessed 1 April 2004).

68. Major FARMS scholars who appear generally to shun polemics include Noel Reynolds, Stephen Ricks, John Sorenson, and John Welch. Although John Tvedtnes has written polemical, even satirical, essays in response to anti-Mormons, he seems to abstain, as a rule, from actually corresponding with anti-Mormons—unlike William Hamblin, Louis Midgley, and Daniel Peterson, who debate anti-Mormons directly. (I make this judgment based on the correspondence and essays archived at the SHIELDS website.)

69. Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Here We Stand* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1995): 119.

70. Davis Bitton, “Anti-Intellectualism in Mormon History,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 3 (Autumn 1966): 111–34. Recently Bitton wrote a self-deprecating review of this essay, in which he chastises himself for oversimplifying Mormon attitudes toward intellectualism: “The lines of the ‘anti-intellectualism’ thesis are firm and simple, but, lacking shading and coloration, the result is a caricature. . . . Something as multifaceted as Mormonism across more than a century of time is neither intellectual nor anti-intellectual. . . . it is both/and.” “Mormon Anti-Intellectualism: A Reply,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 61. To me, the 1966 essay is quite clear in explaining the both/and nature of the phenomenon, so I’m not sure why Bitton felt the need to write what appears to be an effort at self-rehabilitation.

71. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 119. McConkie’s reading of 1 Corinthians echoes that of his father: *Doctrines of the Restoration: Sermons and Writings of Bruce R. McConkie*, ed. Mark L. McConkie (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1989), 278.

72. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 88, 183. “Why have those of the Bible-believing world not read the words of Isaiah, Ezekiel, the Savior, and the Revelator and found themselves saying, My goodness, these passages are speaking of the Book of Mormon—we had better get hold of the Mormon missionaries! . . . The answer is simple: revelation. . . . We are confident in professing the meanings of those texts because we have a revealed understanding of them, and were it not for that revealed understanding, we would probably not see any more in them than



JEANNETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY HUGO OLAIZ

“I thought you were driving?”

do our sectarian friends" (88).

73. McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 80.

74. "Latter-day Saints have fought many a valiant fight on the wrong battlefield. Our message concerns living prophets, the restoration of all truths, and answers that have been revealed anew; our commission is to get that testimony into the hearts of people. We are to get them to read the Book of Mormon with a prayerful spirit. We are to testify to our friends and neighbors of Joseph Smith, and then when they have that testimony we can show them the revelations of the Restoration wherein the Lord has given the answers to their questions" (McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 110–11). Cf. *Here We Stand*, where McConkie writes that trying to persuade others of LDS doctrine by arguing from the Bible "short-circuits the conversion process" (184).

75. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 2, Jacob through Mosiah* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), xiii.

76. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 119. Cf. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith": "There are times when faith requires us to act in the face of what the world would consider to be the absurd" (96).

77. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 120.

78. *Ibid.*, 114, 120; McConkie and Millet, *Sustaining and Defending*, 83; Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 1, First and Second Nephi* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1987): xv; Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," 93–94, 100. Despite the disclaimers, in the end, Millet is content to be called anti-intellectual: "Ultimately, doctrinal truth comes not through the explorations of scholars, but through the revelations of God to apostles and prophets. And if such a position be labeled by some as narrow, parochial, or anti-intellectual, then so be it. I cast my lot with the prophets" ("Knowledge by Faith," 100).

79. Millet, "Knowledge by Faith," 96.

80. Nathan Oman, "'Out of Zion Shall Go Forth the Law' (Isaiah 2:3)," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 132.

81. McConkie, *Answers*, 171–72. On this point, McConkie contradicts his father, who held that "there is no . . . conflict . . . between true science and true religion." Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1966), 681.

82. McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, vol. 2, xiii.

83. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 120–21.

84. Monte S. Nyman, "To Learn with Joy: Sacred Preaching, Great Revelation, Prophesying," in *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon, To Learn with Joy*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr. (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1990), 207.

85. Marvin Folsom, review of *The Easy-to-Read Book of Mormon*, by Lynn Matthews Anderson, *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 15. McConkie and Millet likewise use either/or rhetoric when they ask, "In our search for truth ought we to turn to prophets or scholars, temples or universities?" (*Sustaining and Defending*, 77).

86. Stephen D. Ricks, "Fides quaerens Intellectum: The Scholar as Disciple," in Black, *Expressions of Faith*, 173.

87. Louis Midgley, review of *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon*, vols. 1 and 2, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 1 (1989): 96–97.

88. J. Michael Allen, review of *Doctrinal Commentary on the Book of Mormon: Volume 3, Alma through Helaman*, by Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): 150.

89. Bryan J. Thomas, review of *The Book of Mormon: Fourth Nephi through Moroni*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): 49.

90. Allen, 151.

91. In direct response to the either/or language used by Monte S. Nyman (note 83, above), Scott Woolley protested, "If we have to choose one approach only, of course we would be foolish to ignore the Book of Mormon itself in favor of external matters. Luckily, we do not have to make such a choice . . ." Review of *The Book of Mormon: Jacob through Words of Mormon*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 116.

92. Mack C. Stirling, review of *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi* 8, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 218.

93. Thomas, 47; Thomas is quoting Hugh Nibley. Cf. Mack C. Stirling's complaint that a collection of Sperry Symposium proceedings included papers "relatively devoid of insight, originality, or scholarship." Review of *Doctrines of the Book of Mormon: The 1991 Sperry Symposium*, ed. Bruce A. Van Orden and Brent L. Top, *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 304.

94. Under "By Study and Also by Faith," <http://farms.byu.edu/>

[aboutfarms.php](http://farms.byu.edu/) (accessed 1 April 2004).

95. Statement on the back inside cover of *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 10, no. 1 (2001).

96. John Gee and Stephen D. Ricks, "Historical Plausibility: The Historicity of the Book of Mormon as a Case Study," in *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001): 63–98.

97. Leonard J. Arrington, Truman G. Madsen, and John W. Welch, foreword to *An Ancient American Setting for the Book of Mormon*, by John L. Sorenson (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1985): xi.

98. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1: A Conversation with John Welch and John Sorenson," *Insights*, November 1999, 7.

99. Hamblin, "An Apologist for the Critics," 498.

100. Warren P. Aston and Michaela Knoth Aston, *In the Footsteps of Lehi: New Evidence for Lehi's Journey across Arabia to Bountiful* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1994), 3.

101. John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon: The F.A.R.M.S. Updates* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1992), xiii.

102. Lance Starr, "Why Apologetics?" 22 July 2001, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/WhyApologetics.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

103. Noel B. Reynolds, preface to Black, *Expressions of Faith*, xiii; Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited: The Evidence for Ancient Origins* (Provo: FARMS, 1997), 3.

104. McConkie and Millet, *Doctrinal Commentary*, vol. 2, xiii.

105. Austin Farrer, "The Christian Apologist," in *Light on C. S. Lewis*, ed. Jocelyn Gibb (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1965), 26.

106. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7.

107. Noel B. Reynolds, ed., *Book of Mormon Authorship: New Light on Ancient Origins* (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 1982), 1.

108. Scott Gordon, "Message from the President," *FAIR Journal*, December 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/journal/FJ200312.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Former mission president and MTC president Ed Pinegar has said that "F.A.R.M.S. materials were especially invaluable to him" during his mission presidencies. See "Fund-raising Committee Is Expanded," *Insights*, March 1991, 5. Following the recommendation of his own mission president, John Hatch subscribed to the *FARMS Review* so that he and other missionaries would know "how to handle an investigator who had encountered anti-Mormonism." John P. Hatch, "Why I No Longer Trust *FARMS Review of Books*," paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 2001; online at <http://www.signature-books.com/sigstories2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).

109. Baron, "Feeding the Multitudes." Though Baron dislikes to have his presentations called "missionary firesides," they are popularly referred to as such. See the FAIR gateway page, under "What Every Mission Leader Should See," <http://www.fair-lds.org> (accessed 1 April 2004); J. Cooper Johnson, "Are Mormons Christians? One Way to Get Your Community's Attention," *Meridian Magazine*, <http://www.meridianmagazine.com/missionaryjournal/020418christians.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

110. FARMS scholars have spoken at firesides in various parts of the United States, as well as in Austria and Switzerland. Some of these have been "directed specifically to less-active members and those not of the LDS faith," as well as to missionaries. "Denver Stakes Host Symposium on Book of Mormon," *Insights*, January 1997, 5; "FARMS Provides Speakers for Several Recent Firesides and Conferences," *Insights*, October 1997, no page number. FARMS scholars attending the annual joint meeting of the American Academy of Religion and the Society of Biblical Literature have taken the opportunity to speak at firesides in the locality. "BYU, Institute Continue Presence at Scholarly Conference," *Insights* 23, no. 1 (2003): 1+.

111. Aston and Aston, 3–4. Barry Bickmore likewise uses empiricist rhetoric when he writes: "Mormonism claims to be a restoration of the apostolic Church. I test this hypothesis by trying to find doctrines and practices similar to those of the LDS Church in early Christianity." "Barry's Homepage," <http://www.geocities.com/afmjock> (accessed 1 April 2004).

112. David Rolph Seely, review of *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, ed. John W. Welch, *FARMS Review* (1993): 313–14. Seely refers specifically to an *Encyclopedia of Mormonism* article which takes a FARMS scholar's "very tenuous" speculations about the Hebrew origin of the name Mulek and presents them as if they were "unquestioned facts."

113. John W. Welch, ed., *Reexploring the Book of Mormon*, xiii. Welch is quoting Joseph Smith at this point; as we will see shortly (note 119, below) Welch is elsewhere reluctant to speak of proving LDS faith claims. However, Welch endorses Smith's notion of "circumstantial evidence": "Thus, to probe and ponder the circumstantial evidences of the scripture's truthfulness is one of the purposes of Book

of Mormon research" (xiii).

114. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship*, 3.

115. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, 3.

116. "FARMS through the Years, Part 2: A Conversation with Stephen D. Ricks and Noel B. Reynolds," *Insights*, December 1999, 6.

117. Carl Mosser and Paul Owen, "Mormon Scholarship, Apologetics, and Evangelical Neglect: Losing the Battle and Not Knowing It?" *Trinity Journal* 19 (Fall 1998): 179–205.

118. "FARMS through the Years, Part 2," 6.

119. Reynolds, *Book of Mormon Authorship Revisited*, 3.

120. Welch protests that FARMS has been "misunderstood" as trying to "prove the Book of Mormon true"; in fact, "our methodology is aimed more at understanding and appreciation" ("FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7). Likewise, Sorenson insists that his work on Book of Mormon geography aims not to "test" the book's truthfulness but to cast light on "the intricate, human, historical process that is the backdrop to its main spiritual message" (*Ancient American Setting*, xvi, xviii). FARMS reports that its objective is to help readers "more fully appreciate and better understand" LDS scripture. Look under "Work Done in the Name of FARMS," <http://farms.byu.edu/aboutfarms.php> (accessed 1 April 2004).

121. "FARMS through the Years, Part 3: A Conversation with Daniel Peterson and Daniel Oswald," *Insights*, January 2000, 7.

122. "FARMS through the Years, Part 1," 7.

123. The *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* was founded in 1992 to complement the *FARMS Review*, which at that time published essays only under the form of the book review, not under the form of the scholarly paper. In 1998, John Sorenson took over as editor of *JBMS*, immediately transforming it from an academic-type journal into a glossy magazine for a lay intellectual audience. This transformation reflects Sorenson's special concern for making orthodox scholarship accessible to readers without academic training. "An Interview with John L. Sorenson," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 84.

124. John L. Sorenson and Melvin J. Thorne, eds., *Rediscovering the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake City and Provo: Deseret Book and FARMS, 1991); John W. Welch, David Rolph Seely, and Jo Ann H. Seely, eds., *Glimpses of Lehi's Jerusalem* (Provo: FARMS, 2004).

125. FARMS's involvement in producing the Dead Sea Scrolls Electronic Reference Library was touted as "the first major contribution of the LDS community to the larger world of Christian and Jewish scholarship on the Bible and related literatures." "Joint E.A.R.M.S.-BYU Project Will Create Dead Sea Scrolls Database on Computer," *Insights*, November 1993, 1. In addition, at least four LDS scholars have participated on the International Dead Sea Scrolls Editing Team (Mosser and Owen, 189). In 1997, FARMS announced the creation of a Center for the Preservation of Ancient Religious Texts (CPART), which has produced electronic images of documents in Beirut and the Vatican library, among other places. "New Center Created to Preserve Ancient Religious Texts," *Insights*, December 1996, 1+; "CPART Assesses Manuscript Archives in Beirut, Vatican," *Insights*, April 1999, 1+; see also <http://cpart.byu.edu>. ISPART, the umbrella institution that now houses FARMS, also houses the Middle Eastern Texts Initiative (METI), headed by Daniel Peterson, which translates Islamic, Graeco-Arabic, and Eastern Christian texts for academic use: see <http://meti.byu.edu>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

126. Terry L. Givens reports that FARMS "has a subscribing audience of many thousands." *By the Hand of Mormon: The American Scripture that Launched a New World Religion* (Oxford, Oxford UP, 2002): 121.

127. Arthur R. Cohen, Ezra Scotland, and Donald M. Wolfe, "An Experimental Investigation of Need for Cognition," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology* 51 (1955): 291; John T. Cacioppo and Richard E. Petty, "The Need for Cognition," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 42 (1982): 116; John T. Cacioppo, et al., "Dispositional Differences in Cognitive Motivation: The Life and Times of Individuals Varying in Need for Cognition," *Psychological Bulletin* 119 (1996): 199.

128. Ralph C. Hancock has complained that when the media speak of Mormon intellectuals, "they are not talking generally about members of the LDS Church who are well-educated, or who have advanced degrees, or who love learning. They are talking, rather, about Mormon dissidents." "What Is a 'Mormon Intellectual?'" *This People*, Fall 1994, 23 (emphasis in original). This complaint has been echoed by FAIR's Juliann Reynolds and SHIELD's Malin Jacobs. Juliann Reynolds, "Critics in Wonderland: Through the Liberal Looking Glass," *FAIR Journal*, April 2003, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/misc/misc24.html>; "Malin L. Jacobs," http://www.shields-research.org/Authors/MLJ_Bio.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

129. By lay intellectual, I mean individuals interested in scholarship and apologetics but lacking formal training in relevant academic disciplines. As noted

earlier (note 122, above), Sorenson has been especially concerned about serving the needs of lay intellectuals among the Saints.

130. Contributors to the *FARMS Review* have complained about devotional works that lack "newness or originality" or that fail "to dig below the surface for any novel insight." Brian M. Hauglid, review of *The Book of Mormon: Alma*, ed. Monte S. Nyman and Charles D. Tate, Jr., *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 199; Amy L. Livingstone, review of *Timely Truths from the Book of Mormon*, by Allan K. Burgess, *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 4. Bryan Thomas endorses Hugh Nibley's endeavor to always "dig up hidden mysteries, new things, for my hearers" (Thomas, 47; emphasis in original).

131. "It continues to strike me how incurious many of our people are, how they want to hear the same thing over and over again. Too much of our scripture 'study' is like a bedtime story where, if we get one syllable wrong, the child says, 'Oh, that's not the way it goes.' . . . The first thing we need is an opening up of curiosity, a willingness to accept that it is okay to be curious, it is okay to try to learn something new." "An Interview with John L. Sorenson," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 11, no. 1 (2002): 85.

132. Thomas, 49.

133. *Doctrines of the Restoration*, 283–93. On a scale of one to ten, McConkie rated the importance of various tools for understanding the scriptures as follows: knowing Greek and Hebrew, one; learning local customs and traditions, two or three; studying passages in context, two or three; using the King James Bible, five or six; using the Joseph Smith Translation, eight or nine; using modern scripture to interpret ancient scripture, ten or more. McConkie instructed listeners to "forget" other translations of the Bible (288); as for commentaries on "historical and geographical matters[,] they drop off the scale to a minus ten, a minus one hundred, a minus one thousand, depending on the doctrine" (285).

134. Stirling, review of *The Book of Mormon: Helaman through 3 Nephi* 8, 218.

135. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, xvii–xviii.

136. "FARMS through the Years," 8.

137. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, 2nd ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1970), 24.

138. D. James Croft, letter to the editor, *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 14, no.1 (Spring 1981): 6–7. Brent Lee Metcalfe draws a similar distinction: for critical scholars, "methods lead to conclusions," while for apologists, "conclusions lea[d] to methods." "Apologetic and Critical Assumptions about Book of Mormon Historicity," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 3 (Fall 1993): 156.

139. Representatives of Signature Books have referred to FARMS materials as "pseudo-scholarly." Quoted in Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Questions to Legal Answers," *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): x; and in Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): v.

140. Edward H. Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance: The Book of Abraham as a Case Study," in *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1990): 231.

141. Edward H. Ashment, "A Record in the Language of My Father: Evidence of Ancient Egyptian and Hebrew in the Book of Mormon," in *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon: Explorations in Critical Methodology*, ed. Brent Lee Metcalfe (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1993): 375.

142. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998): xxix. Note that Quinn uses the term polemicist in the same pejorative sense that other revisionists use apologist.

143. Ashment, "Reducing Dissonance," 230; Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 403 n. 248.

144. "[FARMS scholars'] sometimes less-than-civil manner of responding to naysayers also suggests an undercurrent of insecurity, if not desperation." Dan Vogel and Brent Lee Metcalfe, *American Apocrypha: Essays on the Book of Mormon* [Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002], viii. For a similar statement by Quinn, see *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 403 n. 248. On the deceitfulness of apologists, Quinn writes: "Aside from their verbal viciousness, polemicists often resort to any method to promote their argument. . . . Moving beyond apologist persuasion, LDS polemicists furiously (and often fraudulently) attack any non-traditional view of Mormonism. They don't mince words—they mince the truth" (*Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., x).

145. See the callout essay, "Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics," on pages 26–27 of this article.

146. Quinn, *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 420–21 n. 104; 422 n. 126; 429 n. 214. For another, similar situation, see *Early Mormonism*, rev. ed., 499–504 n. 108, where Quinn accuses John W. Welch of deliberately withholding from readers information which undermines his claim that Joseph Smith could not have known about chiasmus. Welch responds implicitly to this accusation in "How Much Was Known about Chiasmus in 1829 When the Book of Mormon Was Translated?"

FARMS Review 15, no. 1 (2003): 63–64. There Welch acknowledges that his past work contained regrettable—but unintentional—“misinformation.”

147. In Quinn’s defense, I can think of various reasons why he might assume malicious motives. Quinn has spent years studying under-the-table LDS operations such as the Council of Fifty, post-Manifesto plural marriages, the Benson-Wilkinson spy ring at BYU, and efforts to conceal the centrally organized nature of the Church’s campaign against the ERA. D. Michael Quinn, “The Council of Fifty and Its Members, 1844 to 1945,” *BYU Studies* 20, no. 2 (Winter 1980): 163–97; D. Michael Quinn, “LDS Church Authority and New Plural Marriages, 1890–1904,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 18, no. 1 (Spring 1985): 9–105; D. Michael Quinn, “Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 2 (Summer 1993): 1–87; D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1997), 373–402. Behind-the-scenes actions by LDS apostles factored into Quinn’s own resignation from BYU and his excommunication. D. Michael Quinn, “On Being a Mormon Historian (and Its Aftermath),” in *Faithful History: Essays on Writing Mormon History*, ed. George D. Smith (Salt Lake City: Signature Books: 1992), 69–111; see also “Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy,” *SUNSTONE*, November 1993, 65–73; Lavina Fielding Anderson, “DNA Mormon: D. Michael Quinn,” in *Mormon Mavericks: Essays on Dissenters*, ed. John Sillito and Susan Staker (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2002) 329–63. And Quinn himself is alleged, during his time at the Church Historical Department, to have written a booklet that allowed the Church to anonymously rebut the Tanners while feigning to ignore them. “Quinn and Controversy,” *Salt Lake City Messenger*, April 1997, <http://www.utlm.org/newsletters/no92.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). For Quinn, this pattern of arguably underhanded activities may lend ready plausibility to the premise that Robinson and Welch are acting underhandedly as well.

148. Massimo Introvigne, “The Book of Mormon Wars: A Non-Mormon Perspective,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 5, no. 2 (1996): 6–9.

149. Louis Midgley, “The Myth of Objectivity: Some Lessons for Latter-day Saints,” *SUNSTONE*, August 1990, 54–56; Louis Midgley, “The Acids of Modernity and the Crisis in Mormon Historiography,” in Smith, *Faithful History*, 189–225; David B. Honey and Daniel C. Peterson, “Advocacy and Inquiry in the Writing of Latter-day Saint History,” *BYU Studies* 31, no. 2 (Spring 1991): 139–79; Oman, “Out of Zion Shall Go Forth the Law.”

150. Kuhn, 76.

151. *Ibid.*, 175.

152. *Ibid.*, 152–53. On religious convictions affecting a scholar’s openness to a particular paradigm, see Kuhn’s claim that Kepler was drawn to the heliocentric model of the universe because he was a sun-worshiper (152).

153. The terms rhetorical and political are my usage, not Kuhn’s. To say that scholarship is rhetorical means that it is shaped by persuasion: scholars accept as true what they are persuaded is true, but whether scholars find an idea persuasive has nothing to do with whether the idea is objectively true. To say that scholarship is political means that scholarship is shaped by ideology and by competitions for prestige and influence: when proponents of one idea manage to beat out competitors, that idea secures the status of truth for a given community—but again, this has nothing to do with whether the idea is objectively true.

154. Vogel and Metcalfe, ix.

155. Edward H. Ashment, “Making the Scriptures ‘Indeed One in Our Hands,’” in Vogel, *The Word of God*, 251.

156. On the role of paradigms in assigning relevance to facts, see Kuhn, 15; on setting aside inexplicable problems for future solution, see Kuhn, 84.

157. *Ibid.*, 5.

158. This statement is complicated by the fact that Quinn, whom I have been calling a revisionist, professes to believe in the supernatural world postulated by Mormonism. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, 1st ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1987), xx; see also D. Michael Quinn, “The Rest Is History,” *SUNSTONE*, December 1995, 50, 55 n. 2, where Quinn responds to my skepticism about his profession of faith.

159. Kuhn, 110.

160. “Journal of Book of Mormon Guidelines,” <http://farms.byu.edu/publications/jbmsguidelines.php> (accessed 1 April 2004).

161. “FARMS, Oxford University Press, and E. J. Brill Join in Publishing Venture,” *Insights*, April 1996, 1+.

162. Donald W. Parry, Stephen D. Ricks, and John W. Welch, *A Bibliography of Temples of the Ancient Near East and Mediterranean World* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1991); John L. Sorenson and Martin H. Raish, *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, 2 vols. (Provo: Research Press, 1990).

163. Most of the texts I have in mind have been produced as part of ISPART’s

Middle Eastern Texts Initiative, <http://meti.byu.edu> (accessed 1 April 2004). FARMS has also helped to digitally preserve Maya murals and has published its own translation of the Popol Vuh. “New Center Created to Preserve Ancient Religious Texts,” *Insights*, January 1997, 1; Allen J. Christenson, trans., *Popol Vuh: The Mythic Sections—Tales of First Beginnings from the Ancient K’iche’-Maya* (Provo: FARMS, 2000).

164. Mosser and Owen, “Mormon Apologetics.”

165. “LDS Scholarship at SBL,” *Insights*, February 1998, no page number; “Institute Scholar Speaks at Congress of Jewish Studies,” *Insights* 21, no. 9 (2001): 1.

166. John M. Lundquist, “Biblical Seafaring and the Book of Mormon,” appendix to *The Children of Noah: Jewish Seafaring in Ancient Times*, by Rafael Patai (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1998), 171–75.

167. Grant Hardy, ed., *The Book of Mormon: A Reader’s Edition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003), 687.

168. Givens, 121. A low-key apologetic slant can be detected when Givens writes, “The naked implausibility of gold plates, seer stones, and warrior-angels finds little by way of scientific corroboration, but attributing to a young farmboy the 90-day dictated and unrevised production of a 500-page narrative that incorporates sophisticated literary structures, remarkable Old World parallels, and some 300 references to chronology and 700 to geography with virtually perfect self-consistency is problematic as well” (156). For Givens’s denial that his book seeks to establish the Book of Mormon’s authenticity, see the “Author’s Note” (no page number). For his discussion of revisionism, see chap. 6.

169. “FARMS through the Years, Part 2,” 6.

170. John A. Tvedtnes claims to know one non-LDS scholar who has “acknowledged” the Book of Mormon to be an ancient text and another who is “very open” to its being a translation from Hebrew. “Hebrew Names in the Book of Mormon,” paper presented at the Thirteenth World Congress of Jewish Studies, Jerusalem, August 2001; online at <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/HebrewNames.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004). I would be interested in knowing more about this, but I am skeptical that these scholars understand the religious implications of assenting to the Book of Mormon’s antiquity or Hebrew provenance: see my comments in note 173, below.

171. Jan Shipps, “An ‘Insider-Outsider’ in Zion,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 15, no. 1 (Spring 1982): 143. Louis Midgley concurs with Shipps’s assertion in his “No Middle Ground: The Debate over the Authenticity of the Book of Mormon,” in Hoskisson, *Historicity*, 158.

172. *Pre-Columbian Contact with the Americas across the Oceans: An Annotated Bibliography*, coauthored by Sorenson and published by FARMS, is intended to serve diffusionists outside LDS circles. Also, Sorenson sits on the review panel of a diffusionist journal, *Pre-Columbiana: A Journal of Long-Distance Contacts*. “Journal Devoted to Questions of Ancient Transoceanic Contacts,” *Insights*, April 2000, 9. For another allusion to Sorenson’s connection to the broader world of diffusionist scholarship, see John L. Sorenson, *Images of Ancient America: Visualizing Book of Mormon Life* (Provo: Research Press, 1998), 16.

173. Patai’s interest in the Book of Mormon was accompanied by a serious misunderstanding about what the book professes to be. Despite having visited BYU, Patai (now deceased) was under the impression that the Book of Mormon gives an account of Mormon origins—that is, Patai thought that Mormons believed themselves to be descended from Israelites who sailed to the New World (*Children of Noah*, xiii, 21). This may explain why Patai was open to the possibility that the Book of Mormon is grounded in historical fact: he may have imagined that the book contains traditions handed down to the Mormons from their remote ancestors. Had Patai understood what the Book of Mormon actually professes to be, would he have been so open to claims for the book’s historicity?

174. Givens complains that mainstream scholars categorize the Book of Mormon with legends about Atlantis (145–46). But that categorization is inevitable given the current politics of knowledge in academia. Givens himself acknowledges that “the double burden of prevailing paradigms in anthropology and the Book of Mormon’s insistent claims to supernatural provenance do not bode well for any change soon in the general scholarly neglect” (149–50). Still, Givens appears to hope that “a critical mass in [the] volume and quality” of orthodox scholarship can “force a serious engagement on the part of academics” (145), and he holds open the possibility of “an increasingly persuasive Book of Mormon apologetics” (175). As I’ve said, I judge this hope naïve.

175. McConkie, *Answers*, 157.

176. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 16, 95.

177. Joseph Fielding Smith, *Man: His Origin and Destiny* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954); Bruce R. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 247–56; Joseph Fielding McConkie, *Answers*, 158–62.

178. Daniel C. Peterson, “Editor’s Introduction: Doubting the Doubters,”

FARMS Review 8, no. 2 (1996): vii–viii, x.

179. Trent D. Stephens, “Evolution and Latter-day Saint Theology: The Tree of Life and DNA,” paper presented at the 2003 FAIR Conference, Orem, Utah, August 2003; Stephens’s talk is summarized in Neighbors, “Fifth Annual FAIR Conference: The First Day.” Note that Stephens’s rethinking of traditional LDS beliefs about the historical Adam and Eve recalls John Sorenson’s rethinking of traditional LDS beliefs about Book of Mormon geography: in both cases, a scriptural narrative is reconceived as unfolding in the midst of other societies whose existence had not previously been imagined.

180. Michael R. Ash, “The Mormon Myth of Evil Evolution,” *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 35, no. 4 (Winter 2002): 19–38.

181. “Editor’s Notebook,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 3.

182. The hemispheric model is also known as the global hypothesis: see Michael F. Whiting, “DNA and the Book of Mormon: A Phylogenetic Perspective,” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 27. For an admission that the hemispheric model “is still held by most [Church members] today,” see D. Jeffrey Meldrum and Trent D. Stephens, “Who Are the Children of Lehi?” *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003): 40.

183. This, of course, is a problem for proponents of the limited geography. In *Ancient American Setting*, 269, John Sorenson delicately addresses the challenge his Mesoamerican geography poses for Polynesian claims to Lamanite identity. More recently, Meldrum and Stephens have suggested that native American peoples not literally descended from Lehi can be considered Lamanites inasmuch as that term refers to everyone non-Nephite, as the term Gentile refers to everyone non-Jewish (51). Meldrum and Stephens also seem to suggest (the argument is not clearly articulated) that non-Lehite peoples may be Lamanite by virtue of a kind of spiritual adoption, similar to that by which all baptized Saints become the family of Abraham and are assigned to a lineage in Israel. Sorenson had anticipated this latter move (Lamanites by spiritual adoption) in *Ancient American Setting*, 93–94.

184. The Introduction states that the Lamanites “are the principal ancestors of the American Indians” (no page number). Predictably, detractors have made much of this statement, either to put FARMS scholars in the uncomfortable position of appearing to contradict Church teaching or to embarrass the Church for making a statement from which it now seems to want to move away.

185. Whiting, 28, 31.

186. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*; see also John L. Sorenson, “Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture,” *Ensign*, September 1984, 26–37; John L. Sorenson, “Digging into the Book of Mormon: Our Changing Understanding of Ancient America and Its Scripture, Part 2,” *Ensign*, October 1984, 12–23.

187. See Vogel and Metcalfe, who describe the limited geography as “a last gasp of Book of Mormon apologetics” (viii) and “an *ad hoc* hypothesis designed to shield a central hypothesis from adverse evidence” (ix). Though I have not seen anyone say so in print, I sense that some Mormon liberals resent seeing orthodox intellectuals “get away with” championing ideas that contradict widely held LDS beliefs, while liberals have been viewed with suspicion—even disciplined—for doing the same thing.

188. Whiting, 33. This statement appears in a callout box, so it may represent an editor’s summary of Whiting’s position instead of Whiting’s own views.

189. Dallin H. Oaks, “The Historicity of the Book of Mormon,” in Hoskisson, *Historicity*, 238–39.

190. Vogel and Metcalfe, xiii.

191. McConkie, *Answers*, 182–85, 201.

192. Anecdotally, I have heard of an individual standing up in testimony meeting to denounce “those who are preaching that DNA evidence shows that the Book of Mormon isn’t literally what it says it is.” Is this individual denouncing revisionists? Or is he denouncing proponents of the limited geography? Does he recognize a difference?

193. Quoted in Givens, 110.

194. Sorenson, *An Ancient American Setting*, 295–96.

195. Blomberg and Robinson, 135; Gary Bowler, “Does The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints Teach That God Had Sex with Mary?” February 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/brochures/GodMary.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

196. Stephen E. Robinson, “Believing Christ,” *Ensign*, April 1992, 5–9; Stephen E. Robinson, *Believing Christ: The Parable of the Bicycle and Other Good News* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1992). Though Joseph Fielding McConkie welcomes an LDS discourse on grace, he points out that such discourse is not traditional for the Saints: “During my growing-up years in the Church, I cannot remember a single Sunday School, priesthood, or seminary lesson on the subject of grace. Nor do I remember anyone speaking on the matter in sacrament meeting. Grace was generally thought to be a Protestant doctrine, and Latter-day Saints

knew that all blessings were predicated upon obedience to gospel laws” (*Answers*, 59–60).

197. Blomberg and Robinson, 63. Robinson believes that “informed Latter-day Saints will affirm with me that the present books of the Bible are the word of God . . . and that the texts are essentially correct in their present form.” I imagine this statement must irk Joseph Fielding McConkie, who in fact does not affirm Robinson’s view. McConkie holds to the notion that the original biblical texts were altered by “evil and designing men,” requiring the Lord to make “textual restorations” through Joseph Smith (*Answers*, 202).

198. Blomberg and Robinson, 63–64. Like Robinson, Joseph Fielding McConkie sees the JST as providing “additions to and clarifications of the King James Version.” However, McConkie differs from Robinson—and adheres more closely to an earlier tradition—in emphasizing the idea that the JST restores material “taken from the Bible by evil and designing men” (*Answers*, 203–04).

199. Blomberg and Robinson, 65.

200. *Ibid.*, 140. Earlier, in *Are Mormons Christian?* Robinson had asserted that the sustaining vote of the membership is required to make documents binding on the Church (13–14). This statement has even more subversive potential than that from *How Wide the Divide?* The statement is also absurd, since the Church makes no effort to count the “votes” of members not physically present at general conference. I am therefore not surprised that Robinson dropped the stipulation about members’ votes when he defined official doctrine for *How Wide the Divide?*

At the recent conference of the Society for Mormon Philosophy and Theology (SMPT) held 19–20 March 2004 at Utah Valley State College in Orem, Utah, BYU religion professor Robert Millet used an approach very similar to Robinson’s in *How Wide the Divide?* to clarify which doctrines are and aren’t binding on Latter-day Saints. Millet, who currently holds BYU’s Richard L. Evans Chair in Religious Understanding, says he teaches this principle of doctrinal latitude during “An Evangelical and Latter-day Saint in Dialogue” series he and Reverend Greg Johnson, a Utah-based Baptist pastor, give around the United States.

201. Examples include orthodox intellectuals’ rejection of past statements about Book of Mormon geography, the method of Jesus’s conception, or the reasons for denying the priesthood to blacks. Naturally, orthodox intellectuals understand these statements to represent the “opinions” or “speculations” of leaders rather than revealed doctrine. Still, the very act of distinguishing one from the other has subversive potential: if past leaders can preach their own opinions or attitudes from the pulpit, how do we know that contemporary Church leaders are not doing the same when they teach, for instance, about traditional gender roles?

202. Neal A. Maxwell, *Sermons Not Spoken* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 53. Cf. Ezra Taft Benson: “The learned may feel the prophet is only inspired when he agrees with them; otherwise, the prophet is just giving his opinion—speaking as a man.” *The Teachings of Ezra Taft Benson* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1988), 138.

203. Brigham Young once declared that “the sectarian world [are] infidels” and that “the divines of that day, when they have graduated from the schools, seminaries and colleges, so far as their knowledge of heavenly things goes, are a bundle of trash and ignorance” (*Journal of Discourses* 14:159–60). John Taylor pronounced Christians to be “the veriest fools,” “imbecile,” and “as ignorant of the things of God as the brute beast” (*Journal of Discourses* 2:25; 13:225). Along these lines, one may think of the satirical representation of a Christian minister that formed part of the temple drama until as recently as 1990.

204. McConkie, *Mormon Doctrine*, 177. My claim that Bruce R. McConkie’s writings are the “most visible” manifestation of the hard-line attitude toward false churches is based on a search of the CD-ROM *GospelLink 2001* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2001). Searching for the term “false churches” yields seventy-seven hits, of which forty-one come from works by Bruce R. McConkie.

205. McConkie, *Here We Stand*, 6.

206. *Ibid.*, 152–53.

207. Blomberg and Robinson, 61, 161; Michael R. Ash, “Does Mormonism Attack Christianity?” 20 November 2002, <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/LDSattack.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

208. “I believe sincerely that many of my evangelical Christian friends, and countless others like them, have been reborn spiritually also. The fact that their hearts are changed through faith on his name” (Moses 5:7) is clear in their honest efforts to show the example and teachings of Jesus in their lives.” Kent P. Jackson, “Am I a Christian?” *FARMS Review* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002): 134. Jackson clarifies in a footnote that he believes the priesthood ordinances of baptism and confirmation are necessary to “fully activate” the new birth “in the most complete sense” (134 n. 6).

209. Benjamin I. Huff believes that Robinson “arguably goes too far in minimizing differences” between Mormonism and evangelicalism: “How Polemicalism Corrupted Latter-day Saint Apologetics,” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 309. See also William J. Hamblin and Daniel C. Peterson, “The Evangelical Is Our Brother,”



JEANETTE ATWOOD, BASED ON CONCEPT BY JOHN CHARLES DUFFY

“And deep down inside, he knows what he’s saying isn’t true!”

FARMS Review 11, no. 2 (1999): 186–87.

210. Blomberg and Robinson, 25.

211. Sorenson, *Ancient American Setting*, 354.

212. Richard John Neuhaus, “Is Mormonism Christian?” *First Things*, March 2000; accessed online at <http://www.firstthings.com/ftissues/ft0003/public.html> (accessed 1 May 2004).

213. *The Mormon Puzzle: Understanding and Witnessing to Latter-day Saints*, kit containing manuals, video, and pamphlets (Alpharetta, GA: North American Mission Board of the Southern Baptist Convention, 1997); Francis J. Beckwith, Carl Mosser, and Paul Owen, eds., *The New Mormon Challenge: Responding to the Latest Defenses of a Fast-Growing Movement* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2002).

214. Givens, 5, 152–53.

215. *Book of Mormon Stories* (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1997) depicts Book of Mormon societies as simple and occupying what looks like ancient Mexico. The Church’s feature-length film *The Testaments: Of One Fold and One Shepherd* (2000) sets its Book of Mormon narrative in a racially diverse society in a tropical landscape with art and architecture that call to mind the Maya.

216. “DNA and the Book of Mormon,” 11 November 2003, <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-18078,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). While the articles are prefaced by a disclaimer that they “are not official Church positions or statements,” the fact that they are cited on the Church website at all validates the articles to a significant degree.

217. For a more complete view of how I understand the Book of Mormon as

scripture even as I doubt its historicity, see my short essay, “What Makes Scripture ‘Scripture?’” *SUNSTONE*, November 2001, 16–17.



NOTES TO SIDEBAR ESSAYS

Notes to “Hostility and Contempt in LDS Apologetics” (pages 26–27)

1. Quoted in Richard Lloyd Anderson, review of *Joseph Smith’s New York Reputation Reexamined*, by Roger I. Anderson, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 80, emphasis in original.

2. Non-LDS observers Richard N. and Joan K. Ostling describe *FARMS* as “shrill in its rhetoric, an odd pose for an organization that seeks to win intellectual respectability for the church.” *Mormon America: The Power and the Promise* (New York: HarperSanFrancisco, 1999), 376. Jan Shipps, writing of the controversy provoked by John L. Brooke’s *The Refiner’s Fire*, says it was predictable “that the most extended, scathing, and downright ugly reviews . . . were written by scholars connected with” *FARMS*. *Sojourner in the Promised Land: Forty Years among the Mormons* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2000), 205.

3. Vern Anderson, “Book of Mormon Scholars Unleash Salvo of Barbs,” *Deseret News*, 22 March 1994, B5.

4. See footnote 68 of the main essay (page 46).
5. K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac, "One Response to a Singularly Worthless Genre," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 117.
6. Louis Midgley, "A 'Tangled Web': The Walter Martin Miasma," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 386.
7. William Hamblin quotes the Tanners' explanation that they use underlining so much in their published materials because they "have found that the average reader cannot read a page of material and digest it to come out with the most important point." Hamblin comments: "This provides a very interesting insight into the Tanners' opinion of the intellectual capacity of their intended audience—an insight which I find no reason to question." Review of *Archaeology and the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 252–53. Reviewing LDS author Michael Griffith's response to several countercultists, K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac declare that the countercultists "are even stupider than Griffith makes them out to be" (115).
8. See the cartoons at amateur apologist Kerry Shirt's website, Mormonism Researched: <http://www2.ida.net/graphics/shirtail/cartoons.htm>. Similar depictions of anti-Mormons by cartoonist Greg Kearny appear at the FAIR website: <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/humor/humor07.html> and <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/humor/humor08.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
9. A joke at the SHIELDS website hinges on the idea that anti-Mormons are so stupid they have to have things explained to them three times. "Jokes," <http://www.shields-research.org/Humor/Jokes.htm>. Elsewhere on the SHIELDS site, an animated graphic of an ape shakes its head at anti-Mormon absurdity. "The Anti-Mormon Crusade," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/AMC-ASco.html>. At his Mormon Fortress website, Michael Ash writes "that those who are engaged in an enterprise to destroy the LDS Church . . . do not have all the facts, do not have a full six pack, or do not have the little plastic thing which holds the six pack together. AND GUESS WHAT? I'M GOING TO POKE FUN AT THEM!" "Fun Stuff," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/fun2.html>. One of the ways Ash pokes fun at anti-Mormons is placing a link on his site labeled, "Anti's Enter Here"; when you click the link, a message informs you—falsely—that your hard drive is being reformatted. "Apologetics: Defending the Faith," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/apolog1.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
10. While corresponding with countercultists, Peterson adopts at times the persona of a teacher speaking to a slow student. He calls his correspondence with one countercultist a "tutorial." Emails to Doug Harris, 29 July 1998, 1 August 1998, 3 August 1998, 4 August 1998 http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. To another countercultist he writes condescendingly, "I will explain . . . Please try to follow the steps." Email to James White, 15 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Similarly, Wade Englund comments in the course of an email to a non-LDS correspondent, "I doubt that you will be able to grasp this obvious fact." Email to Robert Schmidt, 25 April 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. Malin Jacobs concludes his correspondence with one countercultist by praying, "Lord, forgive him, for he hasn't a clue." Email to Lane Thuet, n.d., http://www.shields-research.org/General/LDS_Leaders/1stPres/Joseph_Smith/Response_to_56-Year_criticism.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
11. Daniel Peterson accuses representatives of Reachout Trust ministry of knowingly making a false claim about Mormon beliefs (that is, persisting in the claim even after Peterson and others have told them it's false): see the email correspondence archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. He makes the same kind of accusation against Utah Missions, Inc. "Shall They Not Both Fall into the Ditch? What Certain Baptists Think They Know about the Restored Gospel," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 51–52. Similarly, Mark D. Ellison has accused Jerald and Sandra Tanner of "deceptively omitt[ing] material" from quotations used in their book *Mormonism: Shadow or Reality*. Email to "LDS Apologetics," 26 October 1999, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/ULM_Ellison01.htm. (Electronic materials accessed 1 April 2004.)
12. Robert L. and Rosemary Brown, *They Lie in Wait to Deceive*, 4 vols. (Mesa, AZ: Brownsworth Publishing, 1981–1995); see vol 1, chap. 1; vol. 2, chaps. 2–3, 5; vol. 3, chaps. 1–3. See also "Phony Academic Credentials," http://www.shields-research.org/Phony_degrees.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).
13. Michael Ash posts to his website the allegedly true confession of a woman who, as a member of a countercult ministry, pretended for years to be a member of the Church in order to undermine the faith of new converts and tape-record the endorsement. "Conversion of an Anti-Mormon," <http://www.mormonfortress.com/anticonv.html>. SHIELDS has posted a similar report of countercultist Loftes Tryk posing as an investigator. Scott Spendlove, email, 18 December 1997, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Trykback.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
14. Worst of the Anti-Mormon Web is an online archive of anti-Mormon discourse that Novak finds particularly outrageous; the site, Novak explains, "is intended to mock the worst of the anti-Mormon sites." Novak no longer maintains the site, but its archives can be reached from the SHIELDS website at <http://www.shields-research.org/Novak/Novak.html> (accessed 1 April 2004). Peterson recommended Novak's site to readers of the *FARMS Review*: "Editor's Introduction: In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): xxiv.
15. Wade Englund, "Anti-Mormon Fallacy Alert!" <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/fallacya.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
16. Daniel Peterson announced his plans to create this award in "In the Land of the Lotus-Eaters," xxiv–xxv. The award was actually given for three years by SHIELDS, complete with a certificate for the "recognized" anti-Mormon writer. See <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Awards/Awd-Philastus.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
17. Peterson professes to be concerned for the reputation of countercultist James White: emails to James White, 16 April 1998, 17 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Malin Jacobs makes a similar move: email to Dennis A. Wright, 10 April 1998, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-4.htm>. Midgley claims to want to help one anti-Mormon ministry avoid the embarrassment of publishing false claims: email to Dennis A. Wright, 12 January 1998, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-2.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
18. For example, writing to Concerned Christians, Inc., about a claim they had made on their website, Peterson says, "Your claim is utterly, completely, false and baseless, as even a cursory bit of research would have shown you. I will be checking back to see that you have removed it and apologized for your error." Electronic post to "Concerned Christians" website, 4 January 1999, copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/CC02.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
19. Mike Parker writes to Reachout Trust, "I sternly warn you, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, that LIARS do not inherit the kingdom of God." Email to Doug Harris, 15 July 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_MP.htm. Peterson similarly calls his correspondent at Reachout Trust to repent—"Repent. Now. Cleanse your soul of falsehood"—but he also writes that he does not "have any great expectation that you will repent and begin to tell the truth. . . I have too much experience with anti-Mormonism to expect integrity from you. Rather, I have been discharging my duty to warn you of your folly and your sin. If you do not change your ways, I will be a witness against you." Emails to Doug Harris, 29 July 1998, 1 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)
20. I say "quite" bluntly because Peterson makes the accusation as part of a satirical list titled "Ten Reasons Why We [Reachout Trust] Believe That to a Mormon Joseph Smith is Equal to Jesus Christ." In other words, Peterson makes the accusation while writing as if he were the people at Reachout Trust: "We are doing the bidding of our infernal Master, the well-known father of lies." Writing in the first person plural ("we"), the accusation is not as pointed as if Peterson had made it in the second person ("you"). Still, the gist is the same. Email to Doug Harris, 4 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).
21. "Most anti-Mormons are motivated by a deep, intrinsic core of insecurity." L. Ara Norwood, review of *Mormonism*, by Kurt Van Gorden, *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 200. Midgley characterizes anti-Mormons as people who "seem very anxious to find ways of making Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon go away"—the implication being that their conscience condemns them. "Playing with Half a Decker," *FARMS Review* 5 (1993): 171. Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet take a similar view: they recount an anecdote which suggests that apostates who challenge the faith are rationalizing their unwillingness to keep the commandments. *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 116.
22. Daniel C. Peterson, "Skin Deep," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): 143.
23. In the SHIELDS archive of correspondence between apologists and countercultists, I can find only three instances (out of nearly thirty) where the last message is not written by the apologist. In one case, when the countercultist tries to end the correspondence with a parting allusion to Ephesians 5:15–16, apologist William Hamblin secures the last word by firing back with his own list of scriptures: see email to James White, 24 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_01f.html (accessed 1 April 2004). In another instance, when the countercultist refuses to cede control of the argument, apologist Ross Baron backs out but saves face by insisting that the countercultist wasn't addressing his arguments and therefore "the conversation was going nowhere." See the note affixed to the end of "Ross Baron/Gary Wilson Correspondence," http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/Baron_Wilson_correspondence.htm (ac-

cessed 1 April 2004). This need to have the last word perhaps accounts for the phenomenon of Hamblin's writing a critique of Stephen E. Thompson's critique of the *FARMS Review's* critiques of Brent Metcalfe's *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*. William J. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 4, no. 2 (Fall 1995): 82–92.

24. The clearest example of this is Peterson's email correspondence with representatives of Reachout Trust, with whom Peterson becomes patently angry when he cannot get them to retract their assertion that Mormons hold Jesus Christ and Joseph Smith in equal esteem. The correspondence is archived at http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm (accessed 1 April 2004). Consider also the following example of an apparently emotion-fueled passage from Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Fictionary," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): vi–vii. Note how adverbs and parenthetical asides—including asides within asides—give the language an intense, surging momentum beyond the already scornful tone of what Peterson has to say:

I will admit that my first reaction to Howsepian's article was a somewhat angry one. The piece is clever, but fundamentally and, I think, obviously wrong-headed. Indeed, maliciously wrong-headed. Not only do I find it sophistic—*sophomoric* struck me initially as the more appropriate, and etymologically more precise, term—but I think its anti-Mormon motivation, though evidently sufficiently well hidden to get past the (perhaps naïve) editors of *Religious Studies*, manifests itself in unmistakable ways. (all emphasis in original)

25. Peterson tells countercultist Dennis Wright that he's "disappointed" not to have received a response; he tries to draw Wright into debate by informing him that their correspondence is being forwarded to other apologists and it looks as if Wright is afraid to respond. Emails to Dennis A. Wright, 15 December 1997, 16 December 1997, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-1.htm>. Malin Jacobs also appeals repeatedly to Wright for a reply: when Wright finally sends a brief message promising a longer response as opportunity permits, Jacobs can contain himself no longer and delivers a series of missives, none of which Wright ever engages with. Jacobs/Wright correspondence archived at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-4.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

26. Peterson speaks of LDS polemicists such as himself as being engaged in a work "of criticism and, occasionally, of demolition." "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii. Grant Hardy describes LDS apologists—disparagingly—as trying to "scor[e] rhetorical points" at their opponents' expense. "Speaking So That All May Be Edified," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 83.

27. For example: Peterson derides Sandra Tanner at some length for asserting (in his words) that "Latter-day Saints [are] more Hindu than Christian" or that "the faith of the Latter-day Saints is as much Hindu as Christian." Since when, Peterson retorts, have Mormons worshipped Vishnu, revered the Vedas, or taught karma and reincarnation? ("Skin Deep," 100–01; "In the Land of the Lotus Eaters," vi). But Tanner never said that the religious content of Mormonism resembles that of Hinduism. Rather, she asserted that Mormon "theology is as close to Christianity as Hinduism"—i.e., that Mormonism, like Hinduism, should be viewed as a non-Christian religion (quoted in Peterson, "Skin Deep," 100). Either Peterson is knowingly mischaracterizing Tanner to his readers for the sake of scoring points at her expense, or his eagerness to ridicule her has clouded his ability to recognize what she is actually saying.

28. Example: In response to Douglas F. Salmon's critique of Hugh Nibley's "parallelomania," Hamblin accuses Salmon of misreading Nibley: "Salmon first insists that Nibley claims that the seventh-century *Conflict of Adam and Eve with Satan* contains 'perhaps the oldest Adam traditions.'" To show that this is a misreading, Hamblin then quotes Nibley, who wrote: "Perhaps the oldest Adam traditions are those collected from all over the ancient East at a very early time, which have reached us in later Ethiopian and Arabic manuscripts under the title of '*The Combat of Adam and Eve against Satan*.'" Hamblin continues: "From Nibley's entire statement in context, it is quite clear that Nibley recognizes that the Ethiopian and Arabic *Combat* is not itself the oldest tradition but is in part a collection of earlier Adam material, a fact on which all scholars agree." But Salmon didn't say that Nibley claimed *Combat* "is . . . the oldest tradition" (my emphasis). Salmon said, in Hamblin's words, that Nibley claimed *Combat* "contains 'perhaps the oldest Adam traditions'" (my emphasis)—a perfectly accurate paraphrase of Nibley as quoted by Hamblin. I have to conclude either that Hamblin is misrepresenting Salmon (and perhaps also Nibley) for the sake of appearing to have made a sound rebuttal, or that Hamblin's zeal to defend Nibley has led him to make what he sincerely, but mistakenly, believes is a sound rebuttal. William J. Hamblin, "Joseph or Jung? A Response to Douglas Salmon," *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): 95–96.

29. See note 23 (above), where Peterson "admit[s]" that Howsepian's article

made him angry. Similarly, Robert Millet reports that his first reaction to the revisionist scholarship of the Jesus Seminar "was a form of quiet rage: How dare they? Who do they think they are? What audacity to suppose that they know enough about our Lord and Savior to set us straight, to tell the world what Jesus said and what He did not say!" In Millet's case, rage gives way to condescending pity: "How unfortunate it is that basically good men and women, people who have at least an affection or an admiration for holy writ, should wander so far afield." "The Historical Jesus: A Latter-day Saint Perspective," *Historicity and the Latter-day Saint Scriptures*, ed. Paul Y. Hoskisson (Provo: BYU Religious Studies Center, 2001), 173.

30. To a countercultist who accused him of being "an angry and intemperate character," Peterson writes: "Actually, as anyone who knows me could tell you, I am a relaxed, good humored fellow who very rarely gets upset and certainly is not angered by incompetent scoundrels such as you have revealed yourself to be. I am not even angry about this most recent insult. Sorry if that disappoints you. I have already shared it with a rather large number of friends, who will very likely chuckle and shake their heads, as I have, at the pathetic quality of your message." Email to Mike Thomas, 14 August 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/rot_DCP.htm. Similarly, Louis Midgley and John Tvedtnes deny feeling hostile or angry toward the Tanners. Louis Midgley, to Sandra Tanner, 2 July 1997, electronic copy at <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannerIn.htm>; John A. Tvedtnes, "Great and Specious Arguments: Jerald and Sandra Tanner on FARMS," http://www.shields-research.org/Reviews/Tanners_and_FARMS_a_review.htm. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

31. D. Michael Quinn, *Early Mormonism and the Magic World View*, rev. ed. (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1998), x.

32. Hamblin, "The Latest Straw Man," 84. Cf. Peterson's protest that he cannot stop sending "nastigrams" because he does not write such things: email to James White, 24 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. Similarly, Wade Englund tells one critic, "It is not that I am being 'vicious,' it is just that self-proclaimed 'anti-mormons,' such as yourself, take the truth to be hard, and 'kick against the pricks.'" Email to April Tappana, 27 August 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

33. Example: "What Signature Books affects to disdain in F.A.R.M.S. as 'immature,' 'tasteless,' and 'infantile,' is, I think, simply the tendency of some of us to drollery (occasionally at their expense). And inviting them to 'lighten up' will probably have no effect." Daniel C. Peterson, "Text and Context," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 536 n. 41. And again: "Let me simply say, in passing, that, if we have occasionally been guilty of levity at the expense of some of our critics, this has been because they tempted us with irresistible targets. It isn't our fault." Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Triptych (Inspired by Hieronymus Bosch)," *FARMS Review* 8, no. 1 (1996): xxxvii n. 98. When countercultist James White protests Peterson's aggressive style, Peterson replies that he was merely "having fun. (You know, teasing somebody who responds in satisfying ways to such teasing)." Email to James White, 17 April 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html (accessed 1 April 2004). For another example of an apologist recommending that outraged critics "lighten up," see Matthew Roper, "On Cynics and Swords," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 146. On the other hand, Peterson remarked after the announcement of FARMS's incorporation into BYU: "FARMS has often had a polemical edge and we are curious to see how or whether that will be accommodated. . . . The minute I write something offensive, we'll see if I get a call." Quoted in Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Group Trying to Prove LDS Works Joins with BYU," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 November 1997, B1.

34. Wade Englund responds thus to a critic: "If you think that softening is needed, you may wish to first approach those who, without provocation, have launched their baseless attacks on my faith. Second, given your own harsh rhetoric (loath, pity, etc.) you may want to follow the edict of Christ, and remove the beam from your own eye before attempting to remove the supposed mote from mine." Email to Seth Mitchell, 9 March 2000, <http://www.aros.net/~wenglund/inane.htm>. Similarly, after a confrontational correspondence punctuated with sarcasm and digs, Peterson tells James White, "I have never sent you an insulting post. You, on the other hand, have insulted me repeatedly and without provocation." Email to James White, 8 June 1998, http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/A-O_03.html. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

35. Eugene England, "Healing and Making Peace—In the World and the Church," *SUNSTONE*, December 1991, 38; Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Questions to Legal Answers," *FARMS Review* 4 (1992): xiii, xxviii–xxix.

36. "Hoaxes: Mormon Soldier Killed in Iraq," http://www.shields-research.org/Hoaxes/Mormon_soldier_killed_in_Iraq.htm (accessed 1 April 2004).

37. "I have a really low regard for Foster as an historian. And they could have

added, as a person as well. . . . Incidentally, Foster now argues that Joseph Smith can be explained in psychological terms—he was bi-polar. But so was Jesus and just about every large figure in the history of religion. If we had only had lithium, we would not be troubled with religion. What an idiot.” Louis Midgley, “Standards of Proof,” <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004). Midgley apparently made this statement in an email intended to circulate among apologists; when communicating directly with non-Mormons, Midgley adopts a very different tone.

38. Anderson, “Book of Mormon Scholars,” B5; “F.A.R.M.S./Signature Feud Continues with Attack on Metcalfe,” *SUNSTONE*, June 1994, 78–79.

39. John P. Hatch, “Why I No Longer Trust *FARMS Review of Books*,” paper presented at the Sunstone Symposium, Salt Lake City, Utah, August 2001, online at <http://www.signaturebooks.com/sigstories2.htm>; Daniel C. Peterson, “QnA,” *FARMS Review* 13, no. 2 (2001): xi–xxvi. For the variations on the word hatch, see Peterson, xii (“escape hatch”), xiii (“hatched”), xxi (“hatchery”), and xxiii (“hatchlings”). For anonymous allusions to Hatch’s presentation, see Peterson, xi n. 1; xx.

40. In his response to the Signature publication, *New Approaches to the Book of Mormon*, Peterson suggests “that Korihor may have been a homosexual whose theology flowed directly from his and his followers’ need for self-justification” (“Text and Context,” 539 n. 48). In this same vein, Peterson provides five pages of historical examples of individuals whose liberal theology or irreligiosity coincided with sexual immorality, including, particularly, homosexuality (536–41). Peterson concludes, “It must be clearly understood that I am not charging any particular individual, at Signature or anywhere else, with sexual immorality” (541)—a protestation which sounds sly under the circumstances. What looks like another homosexual-related dig appears two years later when Peterson says that some *FARMS* reviewers “may have been born that way, with the nastiness gene” (“Editor’s Introduction: Triptych,” xxxvii). During this same period, Louis Midgley made what strike me as oblique accusations of homosexuality against David Knowlton and D. Michael Quinn: “Atheists and Cultural Mormons Promote a Naturalistic Humanism,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 254 n. 60, 259 n. 69.

In subsequent years, Peterson has made direct, disdainful allusions to Quinn’s homosexuality and that of Signature Book’s Ron Priddis. To a countercultist who predicted that Peterson would “eventually go the way of” Michael Quinn and other revisionists, Peterson writes, “I am not sure why you think that I am going to become a practicing homosexual and be excommunicated like Mike Quinn. Have I ever given you any reason to expect something like that? Should I warn my wife?” Email to John L. Smith, n.d., <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/UMI-5.htm>. On another occasion, Peterson informs a countercultist that Priddis “is involved in what we sometimes euphemistically call an Alternative Lifestyle.” Email to Mike Burns, 5 January 1999, <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/CC02.htm>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.)

41. Daniel C. Peterson, “A Modern *Malleus maleficarum*,” *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 231–32.

42. John A. Tvedtnes, “Shades of Darkness,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 435; Allen Wyatt, “Motivation, Behavior, and Dissension,” n. 27, <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/200207.html>; “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace,’” <http://www.fairlds.org/apol/antis/exmo01.html>. (All webpages accessed 1 April 2004.) William Hamblin views the terms *Morg* and *Morgbot*—coined by analogy to *Star Trek*’s the Borg—as equivalent to the anti-Semitic epithet *kike* (quoted in “Their ‘Little Corner of Cyberspace’”).

43. Louis Midgley calls this—approvingly—“a somewhat contemptuous label formulated by Professor Daniel C. Peterson” (“Playing with Half a Decker,” 140).

44. Daniel C. Peterson and Stephen D. Ricks, *Offenders for a Word* (Salt Lake City: Aspen, 1992): 4.

45. William Hamblin is credited with coining this term. John W. Redelfs, “Who Are the Signaturi,” <http://www.zionsbest.com/signatur.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

46. Klaus Hansen, “Quinn’speak,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 132–40; William C. Hamblin, “That Old Black Magic,” *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): 227. The term appears to have been coined by analogy to “Newspeak,” the language of the totalitarian regime in George Orwell’s *1984*.

47. John L. Sorenson, “Viva Zapato! Hurray for the Shoe!” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 303.

48. Michael R. Ash, “Apologeez: The Language of LDS Apologetics,” <http://www.mormonfortress.com/gloss2.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

49. Peterson, “Skin Deep,” 144.

50. Louis Midgley, “F. M. Brodie—‘The Fasting Hermit and Very Saint of Ignorance’: A Biographer and Her Legend,” *FARMS Review* 8, no. 2 (1996): 225. George Mitton and Rhett James pick up the term in “A Response to D. Michael

Quinn’s Homosexual Distortion of Latter-day Saint History,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 1 (1998): 141. Cf. Midgley’s description of Quinn as “currently a former Mormon intellectual.” “The Current Battle over the Book of Mormon: ‘Is Modernity Itself Somehow Canonical?’” *FARMS Review* 6, no. 1 (1994): 201 n. 5.

51. Against accusations that *FARMS* reviewers use *sic* to highlight minor errors in their opponents’ writing, Tvedtnes protests that *sic* is regularly used to indicate that an error originates in the material being quoted (“Shades of Darkness,” 432). However, *FARMS* reviewers can handle that problem less obtrusively when they want to. See for example John Gee, review of *By Grace We Are Saved*, by Robert L. Millet, *FARMS Review* 2 (1990): 100. Millet had erroneously attributed a Book of Mormon passage to Nephi instead of Jacob; Gee very gently points out the error. And Peterson takes the liberty of simply correcting typographical errors in some documents from which he quotes: see “Editor’s Introduction: Of Polemics,” v n. 2; “Editor’s Introduction: Through a Glass Darkly,” *FARMS Review* 9, no. 2 (1997): ix n. 8. The style guide developed by FAIR instructs that organization’s contributors not to use *sic* in a way that could “make the reader think you are being condescending to the original author.” “FAIR Editorial Style Guide,” 14 August 2001, 6–7, <http://www.fairlds.org/EdStyle.pdf> (accessed 1 April 2004).

52. Midgley, “F. M. Brodie,” 178–79; Wyatt, n. 36.

53. John Gee, “‘Bird Island’ Revisited, or the Book of Mormon through Pyramidal Kabbalistic Glasses,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 1 (1995): 220.

54. “This absurd criticism has been blown away so many times, and has staggered to its feet again so often, that one begins to wonder if one has wandered, by mistake, into a Grade B zombie movie.” Daniel C. Peterson, “P. T. Barnum *Redivivus*,” *FARMS Review* 7, no. 2 (1995): 96. Peterson was so pleased with this metaphor that he used it again in two subsequent issues of the *Review*: “Editor’s Introduction: Triptych,” x; “Skin Deep,” 99–100.

55. Louis Midgley reports that he has tried “to force-feed countercultists” by sending them unsolicited *FARMS* materials. “On Caliban Mischief,” *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): xii.

56. “I am not big on suppression, though I grow very tired of what passes for knowledge these days among those pointing their fingers at the church I love. . . . [I]t amazes me how many times *FARMS* (or anyone else) can spray *Weed Be Gone* on some of the blight. It never dies. Like morning glory, its interlocking roots spread all over the place. Stomp it out here, and it grows over there. What you get is nothing new, just more of the same old weed.” Gregory Taggart, “Mormonism on the Internet II,” *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): 201.

57. “[The Tanners] flatter themselves to think that *FARMS* planned to spend millions of dollars to ruin their mom-and-pop business. It would be like using a hydrogen bomb to kill a fly” (Tvedtnes, “Great and Specious Arguments”).

58. Rockwell D. Porter, “A Dancer/Journalist’s Anti-Mormon Diatribe,” review of *One Nation under Gods*, by Richard Abanes, *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 259–72. In comments about the use of the pseudonym, Midgley explains that “this essay was written by Latter-day Saint scholars from several disciplines, none of whom, for various reasons, are eager to be known as having given attention to” the book (“On Caliban Mischief,” xvi). It’s not clear what that means: Do the authors use the pseudonym because they do not want Abanes to know that they reviewed his book? Or do they not want other Latter-day Saints to know that they read this book?

59. L. Ara Norwood, review of *Covering up the Black Hole in the Book of Mormon*, by Jerald and Sandra Tanner, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 158; Stephen E. Robinson, review of *The Word of God: Essays on Mormon Scripture*, ed. Dan Vogel, *FARMS Review* 3 (1991): 312; L. Ara Norwood, “Nehors in the Land: A Latter-day Variation on an Ancient Theme,” <http://www.fairlds.org/pubs/conf/2000NorL.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).

60. Jane Tompkins, “Fighting Words: Unlearning to Write the Critical Essay,” *Georgia Review* 42 (1988): 589. Tompkins’s description of verbal violence in academia applies well to the hostile polemics of LDS apologists: “withering sarcasm” (589) and “razor sharp” wit (587); ridiculing another’s word choice or “stylistic gaffes” (588); accusing other writers of “stupidity, ignorance, fear, . . . malice, and hypocrisy” (588); writing out of a sense of “righteous wrath” (589); justifying verbal violence on the grounds that opponents’ work “is pernicious and damaging to the cause” (587).

61. Michael McGough, “Pull It Across Your Flow: The Decline of Debate,” *New Republic*, 10 October 1988, 17–19. McGough reports the director of a summer debate workshop at Georgetown University as saying, “Intellectual competition turns [debaters] on. They’re the same kind of kids who would play fantasy games and war games.” McGough then comments: “Debate as ‘Dungeons and Dragons’? It’s not that far-fetched a notion when you consider what debate and D&D have in common: arcane lore, a premium on quick thinking, and the thrill of combat in an imaginary universe” (19).

62. A growing number of women participate in non-polemical arenas such as the *Journal of Book of Mormon Studies*, and women have made non-polemical contributions to the *FARMS Review* since that publication's beginnings. However, polemics (such as the correspondence archived at SHIELDS or the more combative essays in the *FARMS Review*) remains the province almost exclusively of male writers.

63. A highly accessible introduction to this subject is Deborah Tannen, *The Argument Culture: Moving from Debate to Dialogue* (New York: Random House, 1998), chap. 6.



Notes to "Wrestling with Nehemiah" (page 29)

1. Boyd K. Packer, "Come, All Ye Sons of God," *Ensign*, August 1983, 69.
2. The allusion is subtle: "But if we have been commissioned to *build anew the temple* of gospel understanding, then we ought not to spend our time running around putting out theological brush fires." Joseph Fielding McConkie and Robert L. Millet, *Sustaining and Defending the Faith* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1985), 110, my emphasis.
3. Gilbert W. Scharffs, "I Have a Question," *Ensign*, January 1995, 62. This interpretation of Packer's remarks may seem plausible to Scharffs because Packer began with an allusion to a recent temple exposé. However, as I read Packer's remarks, it seems perfectly clear to me that they are meant to be applied more broadly.
4. Matthew Roper, "A Black Hole That's Not So Black," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 160.
5. Russell C. McGregor, "Letters to an Anti-Mormon," *FARMS Review* 11, no. 1 (1999): 263.
6. John Gee, "One Side of a Nonexistent Conversation," *FARMS Review* 15, no. 1 (2003): 82.
7. Daniel C. Peterson, "Yet More Abuse of B. H. Roberts," *FARMS Review* 9, no. 1 (1997): 69–70. Peterson professes to be frustrated that replying to anti-Mormon materials "obliges an advocate of the restored gospel to take time off from the pleasant duty of affirmatively teaching the truth. One is tempted to respond much the way Nehemiah did [Peterson then quotes Nehemiah 6:3]. . . . Nevertheless, since Mr. Spencer's arguments are superficially plausible, and since questions and sometimes even concerns continue to surface from those who have been exposed to them, it seems to me advisable (not to say efficient) to respond to Mr. Spencer in print."
8. In deploying this image, perhaps Peterson intends to call to mind similar folklore about the builders of the Nauvoo Temple working "with the sword or rifle in one hand and the trowel in the other." George Q. Cannon, *Journal of Discourses* 14:320.
9. Daniel C. Peterson, "Editor's Introduction: Of Polemics," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): viii.
10. "Mistakes in the News," <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).
11. The Church issued three official responses to Krakauer's book: essays by Mike Otterson, director of Media Relations for the Church, Richard E. Turley of the Family and Church History Department, and Robert L. Millet of the BYU Religion Department. See <http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes/0,15331,3885-1-17125,00.html> (accessed 1 April 2004).



Notes to "Critiques of Apologetics in the Christian Mainstream" (page 31)

1. Alan PF Sell, *Confessing and Commending the Faith: Historic Witness and Apologetic Method* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), 3–4. On the decline of apologetics, see also Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (New York: Corpus, 1971), xv, 244–45.
2. Kierkegaard's *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, trans. David F. Swenson and Walter Lowrie (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 1941), 31.
3. Rudolf Bultmann, *Jesus Christ and Mythology* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1958), 72, 80, 83–84.
4. Karl Barth, *Protestant Thought: From Rousseau to Ritschl*, trans. Brian

Cozens (New York: Harper & Row, 1959), 323–24.

5. H. Richard Niebuhr, *The Meaning of Revelation* (New York: Macmillan, 1941): 23–24, 28.
6. Paul Tillich, *Systematic Theology*, vol. 1 (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951), 6.
7. Paul Tillich, *Dynamics of Faith* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1957), 81.
8. Niebuhr, 28.



Notes to "Paradigms and Proof: A Hypothetical Case" (page 34)

1. Louis Midgley, "Standards of Proof," <http://www.shields-research.org/Critics/TannrIn2.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).
2. Allegedly, the cactus-fiber cloth on which the Virgin's image is imprinted should have deteriorated 450 years ago; infrared treatments have revealed that the image is not paint; and a digital enlargement of the Virgin's eyes reveal a microscopic reflection of what she would have "seen" when her image was first unveiled in the chambers of Bishop Juan de Zumárraga in 1531. For a brief introduction to this subject, see Zenit, "Science Stunned by Virgin of Guadalupe's Eyes—Engineer Sees a Reflection, Literally from 1531," news release, 14 January 2001; online at <http://www.freerepublic.com/forum/a3a7621e30f75.htm> (accessed 1 April 2004).



Notes to "Orthodox Scholars vs. Amateurs" (page 36)

1. Arthur J. Kocherhans, *Lehi's Isle of Promise: A Scriptural Account with Word Definitions and a Commentary* (Fullerton, CA: Et Cetera, 1989); Delbert W. Curtis, *Christ in North America* (Orem, UT: Delbert Curtis, 1993); Phyllis Carol Olive, *The Lost Lands of the Book of Mormon* (Springville, UT: Bonneville Books, 2000).
2. See, for example, Wade Brown, *The God-Inspired Language of the Book of Mormon: Structuring and Commentary* (Clackamas, OR: Rainbow Press, 1989); H. Clay Gorton, *A New Witness for Christ: Chiastic Structures in the Book of Mormon* (Bountiful, UT: Horizon, 1997).
3. K. Codell Carter and Christopher B. Isaac review one such work in "One Response to a Singularly Worthless Genre," *FARMS Review* 6, no. 2 (1994): 114–17.
4. Diane E. Wirth, "The Bearded, White God Is Everywhere—or Is He?" *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 8. John Sorenson fears that amateur efforts at Book of Mormon archaeology or geography make it easy for critics to scoff. John L. Sorenson, "Instant Expertise on Book of Mormon Archaeology," *BYU Studies* 16, no. 3 (Spring 1976): 431. Melvin J. Thorne recounts with dismay an encounter with an amateur researcher who failed to see why a graduate degree would be a prerequisite to serious scholarship. "The Role of Amateurs in Book of Mormon Studies," *FARMS Review* 10, no. 2 (1998): 3–4. Though diplomatic in his review of the particular amateur author in question, Stephen D. Ricks warns against "the triumph of the *idée fixe*, where focused attention shades off into monomania and channeled energy becomes a kind of fixation that brooks no alternative explanation and dismisses those who would raise questions as academic or religious obstructionists." "God's Name?" *FARMS Review* 12, no. 1 (2000): 4.
5. Sorenson, "Instant Expertise," 431–32.
6. John A. Tvedtnes, "The Bible Code," *FARMS Review* 14, nos. 1–2 (2002): 335.



Notes to "Orthodox Scholarship as Antidote to Doubt" (page 38)

1. Daniel C. Peterson, "'What Has Athens to Do with Jerusalem?' Apostasy and Restoration in the Big Picture," *FARMS Review* 12, no. 2 (2000): xlv.
2. Avery Dulles, *A History of Apologetics* (New York: Corpus, 1971), xvi.
3. On apologetics *ad extra* and *ad intra*, see Johannes-Baptist Metz, "Apologetics," *Encyclopedia of Theology: The Concise "Sacramentum Mundi"*, ed. Karl Rahner (New York: Seabury Press, 1975), 22.

Paradigms and the criteria we use to judge between values may be hard and painful to change; but human dignity, religious duty, and world progress demand that we try.

A PARADIGM SHIFT FROM CONFLICT TO PEACEMAKING

A MIDDLE EAST ODYSSEY

By J. Bonner Ritchie

SHIFTING PARADIGMS IS AN INTRIGUING AND critical part of the maturation process. Whether it is a major scientific revolution as described in Thomas Kuhn's classic work, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*,¹ or a small change in eating habits as Kurt Lewin documented in his early studies,² the phenomenon has always evoked a sort of intense curiosity and idiosyncratic fascination.

This essay describes a paradigm shift that has had a major impact on my personal orientation and career. This shift has to do with my evolving perspective on conflict and peacemaking. The specific pieces which led to this shift derived from what I call my Middle East odyssey.

I grew up in a U. S. and Mormon culture that strongly identified with the house of Israel (of which Mormons considered themselves a part) and the Jewish settlement of the land of Palestine. The part of Latter-day Saint theology that classifies us as part of the tribes of Israel seemed to be more important when I was in my youth than it is now. I felt an unconscious link to these current children of Israel returning to their promised land. Our many hymns with the terms Israel and Zion also imply this direct connection. I clearly remember the stirring words of General Authorities (especially Elder LeGrand Richards) regarding the last days and the significance of the creation of the state of Israel.³ The Church's sporadic at-

tempts to proselyte in Jewish communities (especially in Los Angeles and New York City) generated a different kind of excitement. I experienced some of that challenging, but not very productive, effort in Pittsburgh, New York, and Washington, D.C. while I served in the Eastern States Mission from 1955 to 1957. Although preaching the gospel to the Jews was seen as a prelude to the fulfillment of prophecy, I felt that neither the Jewish community nor the missionaries were ready. However, I still often heard the statement that we cannot be against God's plans and the prophecies of the last days. While some clearly felt that the last days were upon us, others of us felt that the time was in the distant future.

In addition to a theological connection, many of us identified strongly with the development of Jewish national identity through the formation of the state of Israel. I recall watching the vivid Saturday afternoon movie newsreels showing the horrors of the Holocaust and the glorious victories of the Allied forces in World War II. Like many others with Judeo-Christian sentiments, I assumed that the European Jews deserved a homeland; I didn't realize the cost of displacing those long-term inhabitants of Palestine. I recall the excitement when President Truman gave immediate official recognition to the new state of Israel announced by David Ben Gurion, on 14 May 1948. All of the people I knew, and the limited news I listened to, strongly supported the creation of the state of Israel and this diplomatic recognition. We perceived the immediate declaration of war by the surrounding Arab states to be just an unfortunate interruption in the big picture. And, of course, we viewed the Arabs as the bad guys in a predetermined drama.

The world of art (music, literature, and film) added power to the story we held uncritically. Works such as the best-selling *Anne Frank: The Diary of a Young Girl*, first published in 1947, and, *Exodus*, the 1958 novel by Leon Uris, enlisted support for the fledgling nation and induced guilt for the Western world's failure to support the tragic victims of Nazi oppression. These



J. BONNER RITCHIE is professor emeritus of international organizational behavior at Brigham Young University and a scholar in residence at Utah Valley State College. He has been a visiting scholar at the BYU Jerusalem Center for Near East Studies, a visiting professor at the University of California (Berkeley), Stanford University, BirZeit University in Palestine, the University of Southern Europe, the University of Jordan, and the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy. He currently serves on the Sunstone board of directors and, with his wife, Lois, as a Primary teacher in their Provo, Utah, ward.

print, film, and stage productions reached epic impact in our education and culture.

I strongly admired what I regarded as the Israeli forces' brilliant strategy during the "Six-Day War" in 1967 (viewed more critically by contemporary Israeli historians).⁴ One of my graduate school colleagues during that time was a reserve officer in the Israeli Army. He answered his call to active duty but arrived in Israel after the brief war was over. When he returned to Berkeley, he helped me understand why Moshe Dyan had become an immediate and symbolic hero. I also recall political cartoons of that time criticizing U.S. involvement in Vietnam and suggesting that Israel lend Moshe Dyan to the U.S. in order to save us from our bungling military strategy.

With this background, including a firmly constructed American-Mormon cosmology, I was barely prepared to even consider a different perspective on the Middle East. Three events dramatically changed my simple and limited paradigm.

THE FIRST STAGE in my transition came from a chance encounter one fall day in 1981 when I was walking down the hall from my office in the Kimball Tower at BYU. I passed my friend and colleague, Omar Kader, who said he was going to Jerusalem at Thanksgiving time to take care of some family business. He surprised me by asking if I would like to go with him. I had always been interested in travel and thought the Holy Land would be an interesting tourist destination (although the sacred sites made it a little more compelling). I realized that Omar knew the territory well, and since I hate to go on organized tours and am also temperamentally predisposed to respond to spontaneous opportunities, I said, "Sure, I'd like to go." It was only a two-minute encounter, and, to be honest, I promptly forgot about our discussion. Two weeks before the Thanksgiving holiday, I received a call from Clark's Travel Agency saying that they had a round-trip ticket for me from Salt Lake to Tel Aviv and asking me how I wanted to pay for it. At that point, I realized that Omar had been serious about this adventure, and I decided I should start to prepare.

My original impression of the Holy Land surprised me. I'll never forget the drive from Ben Gurion airport to Jerusalem. Seeing road signs with directions to Jerusalem, Bethlehem, and Jericho had a powerful impact. I realized I was someplace special and should start to pay close attention. That first night, as we wandered through the streets of the Old City, I realized there was no place like this, and I needed to know—do, understand, experience—more. The "holy" places (Church of the Nativity, Garden Tomb, Garden of Gethsemane, and so forth) impacted me both positively and negatively. I was moved by the power of the events which had happened there but

slightly put off by the commercial aspect and the jurisdictional battles between different Christian sects for control of some of the sites.

However, while I knew about the religious context of Jerusalem, my most powerful experiences on the trip came from learning and observing something entirely new. We watched a Palestinian home just south of Jerusalem being blown up by Israeli Defense Forces because a child had thrown a rock at an Israeli jeep. It had been a beautiful old Jerusalem limestone building, and now it was in shambles. Three generations had been living in the family home, including several small children. They had been given a one-hour warning in which to remove as many things as possible. The family was gathered in the yard with a little furniture and some personal items scattered around. The Red Crescent (the Islamic counterpart to the Red Cross) was setting up a tent for them to sleep in. They could not get a permit to rebuild, and if they left the land, they would forfeit ownership. The frustration and tragedy were seen in their voice and demeanor, as they could see no "legitimate" strategy for the future. That was the beginning of my paradigm shift. After returning home, I often thought about my encounter. I read a few books and listened more critically to the news, but I had no specific agenda for future action.

THE SECOND EVENT leading to my eventual paradigm shift came in 1989 when I was invited to become a visiting scholar at the newly completed BYU Jerusalem Center for Near East Studies. My research agenda there would be to study Arab and Israeli management and to conduct leadership development programs. I was considering the opportunity but had not yet decided to go. There were several negatives—kids in school, administrative and academic assignments for the next year, consulting commitments, and the logistics of taking a family to Jerusalem for a year. In the midst of the uncertainty, I was invited to a "meeting" to discuss the opportunity with BYU's Academic Vice President, Bill Evenson. The meeting turned out to be in Salt Lake City and included President Howard W. Hunter (then president of the Quorum of the Twelve), Elder James E. Faust, and Elder Jeffery R. Holland (then a member of the Seventy and also president of BYU). After very little small talk, President Hunter said, "I understand you are going to

Pontius' Puddle



JOEL KAUFFMANN

Jerusalem.” I said I had not yet decided, but it sounded interesting. He responded, “Can you decide now?” I asked why, and he said, “You need to go and build bridges to the Palestinians.”

In addition to President Hunter’s bridge-building metaphor and challenge, he cited a scripture for my consideration. He said the following verses from Isaiah might provide a little different perspective:

In that day shall there be a highway out of Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian shall come into Egypt, and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians shall serve with the Assyrians. In that day shall Israel be the third with Egypt and with Assyria, even a blessing in the midst of the land: Whom the Lord of hosts shall bless, saying, Blessed be Egypt my people, and Assyria the work of my hands, and Israel mine inheritance (Isaiah 19:23–25).

While not being too specific, President Hunter said there would be a period of peace prior to the Second Coming and that we should be part of creating that peace. He suggested that we should look at possibilities for cooperation rather than accept the “inevitable” conflict between Israel and its Arab neighbors (especially Egypt, Jordan, and the Palestinians). This was during 1989—the height of the first Intifada (the uprising of Palestinian youth against the Israeli occupation). There was considerable instability in the region, and even Jordan was still technically at war with Israel. President Hunter said there would be peace treaties and economic and political development and interdependence prior to the last days. He said that many things still needed to happen prior to the Second Coming, and he referred to a speech he had given years before at BYU, “All Are Alike unto God.” In that speech, he stated:

As members of the Lord’s church, we need to lift our vision beyond personal prejudices. We need to discover the supreme truth that indeed our Father is no respecter of persons. Sometimes we unduly offend brothers and sisters of other nations by assigning exclusiveness to one nationality of people over another.

Let me cite, as an example of exclusiveness, the present problem in the Middle East—the conflict between the Arabs and the Jews. We do not need to apologize nor mitigate any of the prophecies concerning the Holy Land. We believe them and declare them to be true. But this does not give us justification to dogmatically pronounce that others of our Father’s children are not children of promise. . . .

Sometimes they [members of the Church in the Muslim world] are offended by members of the Church who give the impression that we favor only the aims of the Jews. The Church has an interest in all of Abraham’s descendants, and we should remember that the history of the Arabs goes back to Abraham through his son Ishmael. . . .

A cabinet minister of Egypt once told me that if a

bridge is ever built between Christianity and Islam it must be built by the Mormon Church. In making inquiry as to the reason for his statement I was impressed by his recitation of the similarities and the common bonds of brotherhood.

Both the Jews and Arabs are children of our Father. They are both children of promise, and as a church we do not take sides. We have love for and an interest in each. The purpose of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to bring about love, unity, and brotherhood of the highest order.⁵

Of course, we moved to Jerusalem. During the year, I had an opportunity to get acquainted with many Palestinian political, academic, and business leaders. I learned about their strong commitment to family and about the threats to the family posed by both the Israeli occupation and the Palestinian Intifada. I learned that many families were afraid to have their children come to America for higher education because the U.S. is such a violent culture. I learned that most of them clearly want peace, but peace with dignity.

That experience taught me I needed to learn even more and needed to make additional contributions to building peace. I also became acquainted with Amer and Rebecca Salti in Amman, Jordan. They had met as students at BYU and had become business and community leaders in Jordan. Their efforts in economic and political development opened more doors for me to learn and serve in Jordan. Following up on these connections, I accepted academic appointments teaching at BirZeit University in Palestine and at the University of Jordan. I spent two different semesters at each of these institutions learning from students and helping students deal with organizational complexities. I also was fortunate to teach a term at the Jordan Institute of Diplomacy.

THE THIRD STAGE of my shift came in the fall of 1992 when I traveled with Omar Kader to Tunis to spend several days with Yasser Arafat and the executive committee of the Palestinian Liberation Organization (PLO). The PLO leadership was interested in discussing the recent U.S. elections. I was impressed by their familiarity with our government structure and philosophy and with particular individuals in the incoming Clinton administration. I was also surprised to learn how many PLO leaders had been educated in the U.S. and had children living there. The PLO was preparing for the Oslo negotiations with Israel, and we discussed various strategies they might pursue in the future with the U.S., Israel, and the Arab states. At dinner that night, Suha Arafat (who had only recently married the PLO leader) told me,

Since 1964, Yasser has been married to the PLO. Now he is married to me, and we are going to have children. Those children must grow up in peace in a Palestinian state. Therefore, it is time to get on with the peace process.

Certainly, many other factors were relevant in the impetus for peace negotiations—the breakup of the Soviet Union, the

Gulf War, the election of Yitzhak Rabin as prime minister of Israel—but the vision of Palestinian children growing up in peace in Palestine provided a very compelling motivation. One PLO officer told me that, “In the past, it was unacceptable to advocate peace; now it is unacceptable not to.”

Although I did not realize it, Suha Arafat was pregnant at the time of our conversation. So her perspective had a powerful and very personal imperative. And the vision of reconciliation for the children became especially poignant a few months later when she gave birth to a daughter, Zahwa. The press announcements heralded, “The Tiniest Diplomat,” “And Baby Makes Peace,” and “Having a Baby Warms Relations with Rabin.” The image has enormous power. Despite the hard-line warriors on both sides who are willing to hold out until all their demands are satisfied, the vision of Palestinian children who need love, an education, a stable home, and a world “safe for play” calls for the ultimate in work and sacrifice.⁶

A telling example of these experiences came after the 9/11 destruction, when many former students from Jordan and Palestine sent emails to my wife and me expressing their sorrow for the terrorist attacks. One student said that Lois and I were the only Americans he knew, and he just had to tell us that the terrorists did not represent him nor the Arab and Muslim world of which he is a part. The ongoing love and affection shared with these students and other contacts in many parts of the Middle East have become one of the most satisfying aspects of my professional career.

These events gradually convinced me that I (and we) should be actively working for peace, that the conflict is not inevitable, and the end of the world is not imminent. I experienced a major change of heart. I certainly do not hold a view in which I can justify terrorist activity, but I do understand the frustration and desperation that may lead to such behavior. More important, I recognize the failure of policies (repeated many times in history) that do not treat people with dignity nor address genuine human needs. The long-term corruption of human values and the cost of inhumanity is so great to both the oppressor and oppressed that I have become convinced that the world needs a different paradigm for dealing with differences and with conflict.

THE PEACEMAKING SHIFT

THE FOREGOING DESCRIBES how the transition in my personal perspective occurred. I developed a corresponding theoretical perspective through long years of intellectual inquiry and struggle, plus a variety of on-the-ground experiences.

One high-impact experience came while serving as an army officer in Germany when the Berlin Wall went up. We prepared to go to war, and without consciously intending to do so, I found myself turning the enemy (Soviet Union and East Germany) into animals in order to justify killing them. I realized how easy it is to depersonalize those who are different—



(L to R) J. Bonner Ritchie, Yasser Arafat, Suha Arafat, Omar Kader
November 1992, Tunis, Tunisia

PHOTO BY OFFICIAL PLO PHOTOGRAPHER

Suha told me, “Since 1964, Yasser has been married to the PLO. Now he is married to me, and we are going to have children. Those children must grow up in peace in a Palestinian state. Therefore, it is time to get on with the peace process.”

to convince ourselves that they deserve to be victims.

While on the University of Michigan faculty, I observed firsthand the tragedy of the civil rights conflict. I taught classes in black economic development, consulted with groups in Detroit as well as the deep South, and tried to understand the strong currents of racism in American and Mormon culture. My struggle with the U.S. involvement in Vietnam along with several influential encounters with Martin Luther King, Jr., led me to develop a reconciliation philosophy. After moving to BYU, I worked with Native American groups and started to teach courses in ethics and conflict resolution.

My theoretical framework was greatly influenced by the thoughtful work of a Mennonite pacifist, John Paul Lederach. His books, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* and *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to*

International Peacebuilding,⁷ describe how a fundamental Christian commitment can be translated into a proactive, early intervention strategy instead of one which simply tries to put out fires after the city is half-burned.

Lederach helped me construct an evolving framework for thinking about conflict. I had originally thought in terms of the inevitability of conflict and the need to suppress its manifestation. This suppressive kind of conflict resolution is often imposed by those with the power to dictate conditions, and it is often accomplished with military or police force. While the objective may genuinely be to make the world better, often the reality is just to make things “look good,” to give the illusion of a peaceful environment. Most often, no improvement occurs in the fundamental conditions that gave rise to the original tensions.

A paradigm of peacemaking allows us to develop strategies that empower rather than manipulate, and help us love rather than use others.

I came to recognize that although this conflict resolution strategy comes late in the process, it is often the only option. When individuals or groups reach a genuine impasse, or when violence within a society or between nations seems to be irreversible, we do need creative strategies for bringing the parties to a negotiating table or sometimes even to impose a solution by force. However, this very realization also means we should try harder to find alternative paradigms for thinking about and dealing with conflict.

The next step in my evolving paradigm shift came as I moved from a conflict *resolution* approach to a strategy of conflict *management*. This philosophy holds that because of diverse and conflicting interests, many differences will not go away and perhaps can never be resolved. So we learn to live with the differences. We “manage” the conflict, realizing that we must develop an understanding which takes into account limited resources and divergent demands, and that we need to introduce institutional mechanisms for dealing with these unresolvable conflicts. In this approach, we try to prevent the outbreak of overt conflict, but often this approach still does not confront the underlying sources of the tension. Hence, we need to become more than managers; we need to become peacemakers.

I find it curious to realize how often I read or quote scriptures without realizing their implications for my behavior in a great number of different settings. The following scriptural passages remind me of my responsibility to explore ways and avenues in which they should impact my behavior:

Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God (Matthew 5:9).

And above all things, clothe yourselves with the bond of charity, as with a mantle, which is the bond of perfectness and peace (D&C 88:125).

And again I say unto you, sue for peace, not only to the people who have smitten you, but also to all people; And lift up an ensign of peace and make a proclamation of peace unto the ends of the earth (D&C 105:38–39).

In an attempt to translate some of the Savior’s injunctions and my own experience into a viable strategy for action, I moved from attempts to resolve conflict, to managing conflict, and then to a philosophy of peacemaking.

WHEN ACCEPTING THE challenge of peacemaking, at whatever stage of an existing conflict, our first concern is to address the people and conditions that cause the tensions, frustrations, or inequality. The goal should be to understand first, before passing any judgment. While all problems cannot be eliminated or managed to everyone’s satisfaction, we must overcome the arrogance and hubris that lead to abuse of power. We as Latter-day Saints are warned against practicing “unrighteous dominion”—and that warning is given to those who are supposedly fulfilling priesthood responsibility! The failure to be a peacemaker (to exercise unrighteous dominion) is often an unintentional act on the part of leaders. We often provoke unnecessary conflict by default rather than by intent.

The challenge and opportunity of peacemaking is to engage in a teaching and development process that reflects our own moral commitment to peace while at the same time providing a means for helping others to achieve that same objective. Since all systems have human and institutional imperfections, any effort will fall short to a degree, but the ultimate criterion and commitment must be clear.

In my work, I have defined the criteria for effective peacemaking as follows:

1. *A commitment to providing accurate information.* It is critical that the constituent population have adequate education, decision-making ability, and access to relevant and valid information. There also must be a culture that values honest information sharing and debate. If these conditions do not exist to begin with, they must be developed.
2. *Mechanisms for justice.* Whatever a new system is created, it must provide just solutions to problems. Moral laws and rules must be enforced, and citizens must be able to trust in those who administer the laws. If these conditions do not exist, the peacemaker must help people understand their necessity and engage in the task of creating them.
3. *A culture of human dignity.* There must be a commitment to creating a culture in which all people are seen as having equal dignity and worth. Mistakes

must be seen as human failures rather than the result of evil intent. This is especially difficult in settings marked by generations of mistrust and where the existence of evil conspiracies is simply assumed. One of the sad realities is that this assumption may be true in some contexts. In this case, one of the peacemaker's greatest challenges is to facilitate change in both the current reality and the perceptions.

4. *A philosophy and reality of freedom.* There must be reasonable access to education, jobs, and political power. People must feel free to think, speak, assemble, and worship as they desire. In the attempt to export freedom and democracy, we have to realize that liberty must precede democracy. Without the values and reality of liberty, ostensibly democratic processes usually produce negative results.

5. *The value of reconciliation.* There must be a commitment to explaining another's point of view to his or her satisfaction and a willingness to forgive past ills. Vengeance cannot belong to the individual, the tribe, or even the state. Punishment may be enforced by the state, and God may exact an eternal measure of judgment; but for the peacemaker and the community served, reconciliation must be seen as essential if there is to be any long-term peace.

6. *Transcendent metaphors.* People need to share higher values than simple personal power. The sad reality is that many of the same forces that provide transcendent metaphors (such as family, theology, nation, and political philosophy) can be twisted by zealots or extremists into concepts that justify initiating or perpetuating violence. Peacemakers need to work hard and creatively in order to keep such people from hijacking higher values.

The power of transcendent metaphors is easily seen in the Palestinian setting. Distributive strategies for resources (money, land, power) are usually difficult and divisive, but the metaphor—and reality—of considering the children can help to overcome our inadequate efforts to achieve a perfect organization.

I have found the following hierarchy of relationship metaphors to be helpful in getting adversaries to the necessary level of understanding. As people see themselves developing higher levels of commitment to others (similar to moving from an ethics of “an eye for an eye . . .” to one of “turning the other cheek”), both strategy and behavior change considerably.

1. *Fights.* The objective is to employ whatever means to destroy the other party.

2. *Games.* The objective is to compete and win within the rules of the game.

3. *Debates.* You argue and discuss in order to convert the other party.

4. *Love.* You care enough about the other party to want what is best for them.

5. *Children.* You love, serve, and sacrifice in order to make the world better for your children and for all of the world's children.

Each of these levels has its own criteria for judging the quality and substance of a relationship. When one is preoccupied with winning a war, game, argument, or election, it is very easy to dehumanize the other party. The challenge is to find the humanity in those who may not share our vision of the world. Too often we are trapped in a lower-level metaphor when the person in need—a friend, spouse, child, subordinate, student, minority, ethnic or religious group—is in need of love and care. We find ourselves competing in a self-defined conflict when they are crying for love, understanding, and help.

A paradigm of peacemaking allows us to develop strategies that empower rather than manipulate, and help us love rather than use others. I have found this especially true during my experiences in the Middle East, but, of course, these principles are also applicable in a general context. I like the simple line, attributed to President Spencer W. Kimball, that “We should love people and use things, not use people and love things.” That is a transcendent truth worthy of the best peacemaker.

As I have struggled in my odyssey to develop new metaphors and to work out of a peacemaking paradigm, I find that I think and behave differently in both my private and professional roles. I have not overcome all of my old or instinctual motivations, but I am aware of their cost for me and for those I work with. Acknowledging that sometimes “we talk better than we act,” I am still impressed and touched by those, primarily in the Middle East, who report that they are better able to handle the old conflicts and avoid new ones as a result of our efforts. Paradigms and the criteria we use to judge between values may be hard and painful to change; but human dignity, religious duty, and world progress demand that we try. Mohandas Gandhi said, “We must first become the change we want to see in others.” When we accomplish that change, we have at least changed one person, and hopefully someone else, and perhaps the world. This is the essence of peacemaking, and striving to be proactive in applying its values is worth our best effort. ☺

NOTES

1. Thomas S. Kuhn, *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1962).

2. Kurt Lewin, “Group Decisions and Social Change,” in G. E. Swanson, T. M. Newcomb, and E. L. Hartley, eds, *Readings in Social Psychology*, 2nd ed. (New York: Holt, 1952), 459–73.

3. LeGrand Richards, *Israel! Do You Know?* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1954).

4. Shimon Peres, *The New Middle East* (New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993).

5. Howard W. Hunter, “All Are Alike unto God,” *Ensign*, June 1979, 72–74.

6. While subsequent developments in the Middle East have been sadly disappointing, the image and tragic reality of children suffering in Israel, Palestine, and Iraq has reinforced the critical importance of working for peace, as well as the high cost of failure of individuals and institutions.

7. John Paul Lederach, *Building Peace: Sustainable Reconciliation in Divided Societies* (Washington, D.C.: United States Institute of Peace, 1997); Cynthia Sampson and John Paul Lederach, *From the Ground Up: Mennonite Contributions to International Peacebuilding*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2000).

Is there anything more startling than the way help comes?

HOW FOUND ART FOUND ME

By Marylee Mitcham

THIS WHOLE “MAKING THING” GREW OUT OF OUR youngest daughter’s miscarriage. She was suffering, and within that suffering came her idea that I would make a memorial that said, “Lynch, November 11, 1997.” How could I say no to her trusting request?

I was both flattered and terrified. Seriously, I’m not exaggerating. The thought of making a worthy memorial for her and her husband terrified me. Of course I can’t do it, but yes I will. How? God only knows.

Never have I been able to make things with my hands. I can’t even draw, which disturbs me because my husband and all four of our children do it well. No one has ever called me handy. True, in my forties, I worked as a registered nurse using my hands. Now as an acupuncturist, I depend on my hands energetically as I touch meridians to locate a particular point, or as I assess the qualities of Qi within twelve separate pulse positions. So I have finally developed a certain trust of my hands. But not to make things.

One afternoon, while I was an acupuncture student almost ten years ago, we sketched a live nude. The idea was to have no idea, to simply do a lot of charcoals quickly. I sweated through the exercise, knowing I had zero talent and would probably die of shame when submitting one sketch for general viewing. School being school, I did it, displayed my work, hunkered down, put up with the uncomfortable feelings.

The next day, a stray visitor to the school saw twenty-five nudes on a wall and asked if he could take two of them for framing—mine and a very good one. I simply could not believe it. I still can’t. Mine was so primitive that it had some of the virtues of that genre, like artlessness. So that experience was my entryway to found art. Not that I knew it. To me it was just an aberration which, happily, allowed me to float on air for some time.

Four years later, I had my conceived grandchild’s memorial to make. I started by picking things up off the ground.



MARYLEE MITCHAM descends from a long line of Mormon pioneers, but she converted from Catholicism only during her mid-forties. She is the author of a small paperback, *An Accidental Monk*, which details her domestic search for God, and is at work on a book of personal essays titled, *Which to Prefer*. She is a wife, mother, grandmother, retired psychiatric R.N., and licensed acupuncturist who now lives on old mining camp lands in Alamo, Colorado.

Mysteriously, the right things found their way into my hands—buttons, rocks, glass, a tiny porcelain doll leg. Design rose to the surface in me. As I arranged my collected debris in wet concrete, the image was half ruined because some things sank deeper than I expected. But then what felt like a calamity, when seen fresh, wasn’t so bad after all.

I liked what I’d done because when I looked at it, I got it. This rough 10” x 10” block of concrete stirred me beyond my conscious intention. I saw domestic sorrow but hope as well. I saw the smallness of this lost child, but also a hint of where this person-to-be had returned. A place of promise. Our destiny.

And, thank God, my daughter was comforted by this offering. Little did either of us know what she had started.

I NEVER THOUGHT I would have any desire to try another memorial. The making of the first one was a skill I had not acquired! The way I saw it, God wouldn’t allow me to let my daughter down, so he had magnified my ability in that instance. To count on ever doing it again was sheer hubris. And I sincerely hoped no one would ask me something like that again. Making scared me.

Well, no one did ask me, but neighbors within walking distance went through such a nightmare of sorrow that I was driven to dig deeper than customary condolences. What better way than to make a memorial?

It’s a long story, not all mine to tell. Here are the bones of it. Their beautiful, tough, witty daughter Keri had a husband who was terminally ill with bone cancer. He had fought it for years—even before she’d married him—and they had always felt and been told it was the beatable kind. Each operation was supposed to be the last one. But the cancer would not stay in remission. So her thirty-eight-year-old husband Randy was now faced with death in two or three months.

My neighbor Jan, Keri’s mother, had told me she was worried about Keri, who was taking the news worse than Randy himself was. She wished Keri would lean on them more, but her daughter was an independent person, good at helping other people, not vice versa. All her parents knew to do was give assurance that they were there for her. They didn’t want their desire to help to be an extra burden for Keri at a time when she was also heavily engaged with Randy’s grieving family.

The details are as sad as any writer of fiction could make them. Even for me, devastating. Keri’s life unraveled rapidly

when, on top of all this, her dog died in her arms. She shortly thereafter put a noose around her neck. Randy, in a wheelchair, found her and summoned help, which ended up being only the life-support kind. It was futile.

Lying in a hospital bed surrounded by Randy and her parents, she passed away a second time. Her dad said, "Never in my life do I expect to see a more agonizing scene than Randy's last goodbye to her." Afterward, Randy was rushed into ICU for an emergency blood transfusion. Lots of blood barely saved him.

I certainly expected to hear of his death in short order. Weakened as he was, how could he survive this blow? Yet out of a tremendous strength of character, he lived for nine months more, fulfilling his promise to Keri to fight like the winning athlete he was. At his funeral, Vince Lombardi was quoted: "You didn't lose; time just ran out."

One of our daughters, Keri's age, was ill at this time too. She felt the strongest desire and impulse to commit suicide. It went on month after month, in spite of good medical care and love from us. All the dread I felt, all the faith I had, went into making this memorial for my neighbor's daughter Keri.

The process was actually easy. I arranged six special rocks in concrete. The middle one was smooth, black, and shaped like a heart. It had been given to me by someone who loved me, and I had kept it for twenty-five years. The outer rocks embodied different seasonal energies and colors based on acupuncture theory, symbolizing the wheel of life. I only hoped it might matter a little to her parents.

To my surprise, they made it the center of a hidden-in-the-woods meditation garden. They placed a bench alongside, and Keri's father Al told me that Randy had spent quite a lot of time sitting there before he died. The pain in my own heart shifted so that the ache was less like desperation and more like worship.

I had met Randy only occasionally at outdoor events and had never met his parents. My connection to him was slight compared to the way I felt about Keri. We had hardly known each other, but her vivacity and sense of humor when we stopped our cars in the middle of the county road to talk had made me a fan of hers. So the big dream I had one night about Randy, not her, was unexpected. It came between his death and funeral.

In the night, I was instructed to make him a memorial. Whereas Keri's was square, his should be a triangle. It should

have this, and this, and this in it. I rose well before dawn and began searching for the shards of glass and marble I'd found and brought home the day before.

The funeral was in Denver, and, like Keri's, it was going to be a large one. I'd missed hers but decided to attend his, although Jan and Al would be the only people I knew there. I expected to be entirely hidden, but that's not quite what happened.

When I pulled up to the funeral home and church, I walked inside to see what stage of the ceremony was in process. Jan, with her other daughter and grandchildren, was receiving visitors in the main room. "Hurry, Marylee," she said, taking me by the arm to a long corridor. "They're closing the casket."

I was prepared to see Randy. I wasn't prepared, however, to find myself alone in a small room with his

parents, who didn't have the least idea who I was. His mother was distraught, weeping, not ready to close the coffin now that the moment had come. Such an intimate moment, and so few social skills to bring to it!

My anxiety was acute. What could I possibly say at a moment like this? First, after giving my name, I identified myself as one of the many people who had been somehow "with" them. They didn't take offense, but one could tell I'd said nothing.

I tried again. "You may have heard that one of Jan and Al's neighbors made a memorial marker for Keri? I'm that neighbor." Randy's mother stopped crying. She looked at me. She smiled! She told me she loved that marker. She continued to smile on me as though I hadn't interrupted her last earthly moment with her son.

So I ventured even more. "I had a dream to make one for Randy, too, so . . . I have."

"Will it be beside Keri's?" she asked. I told her that was what I was thinking, and she began to thank me in the most sincere way. Suddenly I felt very insecure because Randy's marker had "junk" in it, not lovely rocks. What if it seemed like trash to her? Would it be any comfort to her when she actually saw it? I felt terribly out of my depth.

Then it was time to go to church. And in the service, a synchronicity happened. The two main themes of the eulogy were mirrored exactly in two shards of glass on the marker. There was a clear piece of glass lightly embossed with the word "WIN"—as in his doomed but heroic, winning effort. The other shard was the back of a broken plate. It was stamped with the



Memorials for Keri and Randy

The funeral's healing brought back to my mind how the last time he saw him, Al had told Randy, "Tell Keri I'm not as mad at her as I used to be."

word “Union.” Obviously that corresponded to the second theme, which was also pretty obvious: Randy and his wife were now reunited.

I, myself, hadn’t even noticed the word WIN until I saw it already in the concrete. I had just been following instructions to put it there because my dream had said to use it.

At that funeral, it felt like the communion of saints was whole. This world, the other world—it almost made no difference. The living and the dead both spoke, because Randy’s brother read Randy’s funeral letter to the congregation. It was a spiritually mature letter, funny and wise, repentant and faithful. Everything about that whole service “testified the gospel of the grace of God” (as Paul explains his mission in Acts 20:24).

My own route to the funeral had begun with a dream giving me instruction to make something; it ended with repentance on my part for a bias against that denomination due to a slight I’d received years before in a different church. This odd circuitry pleased my sense of what God can do to help purify my heart.

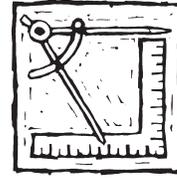
The funeral’s healing brought back to my mind how the last time he saw him, Al had told Randy, “Tell Keri I’m not as mad at her as I used to be.” So simple. So deep. Such a teaching to me, whose mother smoked herself to death.

I STILL FEEL Keri’s presence. The next year, near the anniversary of her death, I could not help but speak to her as I was walking up a hill behind Al and Jan’s home. I asked Keri—please, if she could—to watch over that daughter of mine who was once so ill. Now she was better, and steadily regaining her well-being. I also asked if there was some way I could help Al and Jan. The holidays were approaching, and I knew they must be remembering the excruciating events of the year before. Was there anything I could do?

Prayer was richly answered. That very weekend, Jan knocked on my door with homemade bread. We talked, and she kindly shared an experience that had happened very recently. She had been awakened by Keri’s presence in the dark. She had felt Keri’s arms around her in a palpable way, with other accompanying signs. And Keri had somehow told her it had been a mistake, a crazy accident. “Oh, Mom,” Jan heard, “I didn’t mean it.”

It was a blessing to hear this account. What I had to offer in return was an employment ad I’d cut out of a newspaper after coming home from my walk on the hill. It advertised a managerial opening exactly like the one Jan had been hoping to find. As things turned out, she got the job. This brought normalizing factors into play and reinforced my sense that the dead are very near.

Is there anything more startling than the way help is sometimes known to come? Dreams. Debris left on the ground. Rocks. Classified ads. Prayer. It leaves me very alert, but stunned. Usually I just go for a walk and pick up something. This time it’s a pen. My heart lurches, but no longer in fear. What can I make? ☞



STANDING BELOW THE WATCHTOWER

There is a ripping of my will,
purposely, it seems, from my mind,
a fissure of direction from intuition . . .
it is injected by this tolling
of the bell, the bell,
the sound that at first
made us so proud
of our small city,
the bell, the bell.

I often fail to explain
how my peace
has been so disrupted
by my endeavors
to eat by the bell,
to meet my peers
by the bell,
to at last sleep by the bell.

It tolls me awake,
where once I was awakened
by Nature, by sun and cock . . .
just as I once ate only when my belly hungered . . .

How can we humans, our flesh
such a part of Nature,
find a way to live
with this tolling, tolling?

How can flesh
adapt to cast metal?

—WARD KELLEY

ARTIST’S NOTE: Prior to the fourteenth century, hours of the day were measured by “canonical” hours, elastic hours based on the movement of the sun and its relation to daily church services. Around 1330, the hour was measured by the first mechanical clocks and cast into twenty-four equal hours per day. Some historians say this movement from seasonal hours to fixed, equal hours is one of the most dramatic revolutions in the human experience. By the end of the fourteenth century, large turret clocks were placed throughout Europe in church towers to sound equal hours for all.

2000 Brookie & D. K. Brown Fiction Contest Moonstone Winner

CROSSING THE BRIDGE

By Alex Peterson

“Uh, dude, did you know that this is the longest bridge in the world?” Parsons mumbles loudly.

Through the industrial haze, I can see the end of the rusty metal beams, and I know we will be off the bridge after two hundred more wingtipped steps. The shining skyscrapers are distorted in the mirage of a blazing, mid-July sun. The air is heavy—not the pleasantly dry heat of the desert back home. The humidity hits hard, like a liquid linebacker, keeping the entire city on edge.

It is Friday, but no TGIF is involved. We work on weekends, too. On days like today, we sometimes change shirts at lunch, due to a strange brown film that forms when large amounts of road dirt and pollution stick to our necks and our white, pressed shirts, like Shake-n-Bake sticks to slick chicken.

“What about the Golden Gate, Parsons?” I reply.

Parsons moans back, “No way, dude, this fetchin’ bridge is longer.”

“Give me a break, man.”

“But this bridge starts in America . . . and ends in Africa.” Parsons then proceeds to chortle heartily at his own joke, first slowly, then building to a modest idle, like an old trolling motor. The ability to laugh at and entertain himself for hours on end is one of the more admirable character traits of my large companion.

Elder Parsons (the redundancy of his name is not a subliminal clue to an extra pious personality) is from Idaho. He was bred on Jesus, roast beef, and potatoes. He can tell me the exact firepower and “military effectiveness” of nearly every post-World War II weapon invented. Parsons told me once that he was going to name his first child Remington and the next Winchester. I told him that was fine, but he had better stop having kids before he named one Glock.

Wayne Parsons hates Cleveland. He hates everything about it—even the *Indians*, who have rallied from something like forty years of baseball misery to become the new American League contender in the World Series. Normally, disliking Cleveland would seem a perfectly acceptable and even common outlook, but we both know we will spend the next twenty months living as Mormon missionaries in what we term “the armpit of the nation.” Parsons simply cannot come to terms with the fact that he is stuck here.

He cannot wait until he gets home so he can join the police



ALEX PETERSON enjoys traveling, making music, surfing, and his wife Monica. He currently teaches and resides in Ojai, California.

academy. “I want to be a cop to shoot people, mostly,” he admitted to me one night while we talked after our routinely elegant Kraft dinner of macaroni and cheese, a.k.a. mac and yak, a.k.a. yellow death.

Wayne (though I very rarely call him by his first name) always wears his overcoat and sunglasses, no matter how sunny, cloudy, muggy, or cold the weather is. He looks like he’s with the FBI, and he undoubtedly relishes the opportunity to envision himself an agent and not an elder. He cuts his own hair every ten days with a Kmart home barber kit on the quarter-inch setting, which seems useless to me because his hair is invisibly thin and Scandinavian blonde anyway.

Wayne was once tall enough to dunk a basketball. Now, forty pounds worth of peanut butter and jelly later, you can’t fit a quarter-pound hamburger patty under his gym shoes when he jumps up in the air. He jokes about having bulked up, but with his newly acquired hips, we also joke about him having more of a girlish figure.

Parsons lifts up his recently purchased, five-dollar, 7-Eleven sunglasses and stares at me with iceberg blue eyes, as if he reads my mind, then bursts out, “Dude, d’ya get it?”

“Uh, yeah.” I reply with sarcastic slowness.

We keep on walking. We walk past Jacobs Field, the new *Indians* stadium, and continue our trek, my strides three quarters the length of my companion’s.

The joke Parsons told me was actually pretty funny—well not *funny*, but true. We are on the east side of town now. Supposedly Ice-T filmed a few videos here. Arsenio Hall was raised in one of these neighborhoods. We walk by rows of government-subsidized housing projects. By the road, there is a huge billboard for Soul Glow hair products, and suddenly all of the other familiar advertisements are filled with differently pigmented individuals. Parsons, forever a *Star Wars* junkie, always calls this part of town the “dark side.”

Kentucky Fried Chicken. Colt .45. Sprite. Salem. Not only are all of the people in the ads black, but everyone on the street has changed color too.

We kick our way through broken malt liquor bottles and McDonald’s wrappers to East 12th Street.

“Hey faggots!” yells a kid from a passing low-rider Monte Carlo. The rattling trunk is attempting to cover some fourteen-inch woofers that buzz to a smooth rapper’s rhythm. With a chuckle, the kid pulls his Afro-with-pick-stuck-in hairdo back into the rusty car. Parsons and I both pretend we didn’t hear anything.

“Jeez, dude, it never feels this hot in Idaho. It is hotter than



JEANNETTE ATWOOD

“Well, sugar, that’s the way I like to think of him. Everybody’s got their own ideas. I got mine.”

heck. Let’s hurry and get outta here,” Parsons murmurs in Boisean protest.

OUR JOB FOR the afternoon is to deliver a video on how to make “better families” to a woman who is apparently interested in improving her own. Or, of course, she might just want a free, re-recordable video tape that is coincidentally the exact same length as an episode of *The Simpsons*. The address of the house we are looking for is less than a block away now, so I offer to buy Parsons a Coke on the way home if he’ll stop whining. (Not that I am the macho martyr type who loves pain and suffering, but we are nine-tenths of the way finished with an easy delivery.)

Then I notice something—two sketchy looking characters exiting a bar across the street and staggering over to the sidewalk directly in front of us. One guy is short, wiry, and greasy-looking, with nickel-sized gaps between his front teeth. His partner is about Parsons’s height, wearing sunglasses and a leather biker vest. The motorcycle guy looks meaner; the smaller fellow simply looks drunker. Neither one looks very good. They are getting closer.

I also observe something Parsons must be checking out as well. The small guy is wearing a few rings on his right hand. This wouldn’t be a big deal, but my companion had just removed the butterfly bandage from his cheek, and his eye just recently un-blackened from when, a few weeks ago, he and another missionary were jumped by four guys who wanted

their mountain bikes. The other Elder ran away, but Parsons “took a lickin’ for the Lord,” as he so eloquently put it.

It amazes me that Parsons was beaten up. My companion has fists the size of milk jugs, and he was raised fighting every other weekend night at a dance or rodeo. He could have thumped the guys that tried to steal his bike, but he just stood there and endured the beating until some karate teacher ran out of his house and chased the hoodlums away.

Parsons told me he had humbled himself like a biblical Paul, but the next time he was going to unload—or cut off some arms, which was more his style, like a Mormoniactal Ammon.

The two drunks are mumbling to each other in Jack Danielese about twenty feet in front of us when I notice that we are only two houses away from the safety of our appointment. We aren’t quite close enough to run.

“Hey you f—— rich boys,” yells Greasy Guy.

Ironically, neither of us is very wealthy. In fact we aren’t planning on getting a paycheck for two years. But our standard summer uniform of slacks, pressed white shirt, tie, and black name tag doesn’t exactly blend well in these inner city areas.

“Them’s some nice clothes you got,” crows Biker Man.

“What in the hell you doing down here by the projects?” chimes in Grease Guy.

We are all wondering that exact same thing.

“We’re missionaries,” Parsons speaks “And we’re coming to visit a lady in this house.”

“Oh, they is f—— missionaries. Ya’ll look like cops or f——

FBI to me,” Grease Guy loquaciously announces.

If Parsons hits this guy, then I better jump on Biker and try to hold him until the police come, I think to myself—that is, if the police even patrol this area. I know that my friend isn’t going down without some action with his milk jugs. The drunks seem to be getting meaner.

“Well then, missionaries, we need a f—— ride to East 98th,” grunts Biker Man.

“We don’t have a car. We’re walking,” Parsons comments.

“Rich f—— like you, who got ties, ain’t set up with wheels? F—— that,” screams Grease with bloodshot eyes bulging and getting more hostile.

“Sorry, but we don’t have a car,” I cough.

Biker Man reaches in his pants and pulls out a .38 pistol and points it between my eyes (I know this number only because Parsons tells me later). He laughs and waves the gun around to show everyone that he is the boss.

“Give us a f—— ride man.”

I don’t know what to do. Who does in a situation like this? Maybe Bruce Lee or Chuck Norris, but not me. I wonder if Parson feels the same way. Then time actually does seem to be moving in a super kung fu theater slow motion, and for no explainable reason, I just sidestepp the two guys and the gun, and I walk past them. Parsons is right next to me, and we are both squinting our eyes and waiting to feel the bullets. We keep walking right up to the house of our appointment, where we knock on our way *into* the house. Somehow we make it in alive, with our prayer-filled hearts bullet-free.

Immediately we ask for a phone to call 9-1-1. The woman laughs and says, “Good luck. The police won’t come down here unless you got an emergency, and even then it takes ’em two hours. Or two days.” We peer out the window and see the two men walking down the street, two blocks away—obviously they must be having a hearty chuckle at our naïve expense.

We sit down. The house smells like cornbread, smoked neck bone, and collard greens. I can hear some soothing gospel music seeping in from a back room. We sit in silence, fidgeting with our shoelaces and trying to get a grip on what has just happened. The lady is very polite and offers us some of her “soul food.”

“This cornbread’s so good, it’s going to make your tongue slap your brain,” she creaks in a gravelly voice. She laughs freely, moaning “Hallelujah” every other word, and praising God in between. “It’s so good to see young’uns doin’ the Lord’s errand.”

Her dark eyes look wise, nearly hidden behind seventy-five years’ worth of wrinkles. Behind her on the wall, is a portrait of a black Jesus. He is handsome, even nailed to a cross, with hair like lamb’s wool. I have seen the same picture a few times before—in fact, I’ve seen the same picture with a white Christ, too. Parsons apparently sees the drawing at the same time as I do.

“Do you really believe the Son of God is black?” says Parsons.

“Well, sugar, that’s the way I like to think of him. Everybody’s got their own ideas. I got mine. But I don’t really think he’s black, though.”

“You’re right. . . .” starts Parsons.

The lady interrupts, “But I believe he ain’t like ya’ll, either.

Ya’ll is pink, like an uncooked chicken leg. He is pure white, like the sun at noon.”

Parsons doesn’t have much else to say. He has had a long day. I have too. We talk a little bit more about a few gospel things and hand over the video. It seems a weak exchange for the safety of her home—an insincere video of smiling actors pretending to be brothers, sisters, and mothers, with no idea of how to keep a family together next to the projects on the East Side. I feel grateful. I feel out of place. I feel awkward and unsure, as I have during most of my time in Cleveland. I learn more lessons on these streets than I teach—and teaching is supposedly the reason that I am here.

As we leave, the lady gives us each a cold 7-Up for the long walk home, and she thanks us for the visit. As we close her door, she says something I’ll never forget and probably never completely comprehend, “Remember boys, it don’t matter much about your color—you be who you be.”

The drunks are long gone by now, to another seedy bar, praise the Lord. In silence, we walk back home through the broken bottles and the car exhaust, across the longest bridge in the world. ☹



DIA DE LOS MUERTES

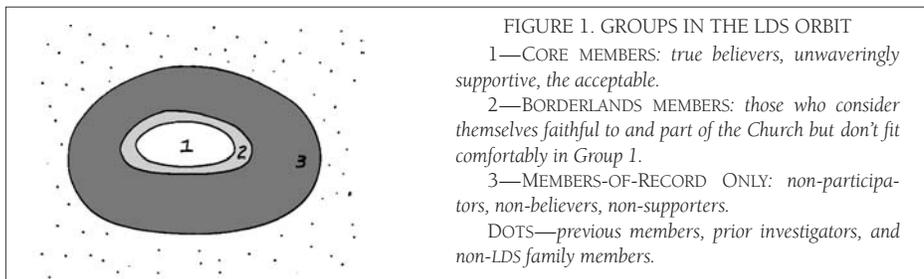
The mariachi trumpets double-tongue.
The sound is crisp,
but I can’t hear you, *mi cancion*.
You could not make the trip,
could not return, even for a day.
Volvera, volvera.
What would I have done,
what would I have given,
I say, and cry, while others jump to dance.
Don’t come back, I think, not for a day.
Get over it, I think and
sop my tears on softened denim sleeve.
Get a tamale, leave your alien corn.
The mariachi trumpets, silver, *los dos*,
double-tongue.
This is a festive occasion.
Ya llego.”

—SUSAN MAURER

BRAVING THE BORDERLANDS . . .

DEALING WITH TRADITIONS
AND POLICIES

By D. Jeff Burton



IN GENERAL, THIS column explores what it is like to be in the borderlands of the church with the various programs, policies, and traditions unique to our religion.¹ I hope the column also helps borderlanders cope with the stresses of church life on the edges of the core group and encourages them to stay connected and even to move towards the core.

Those of us in the borderlands accept and enjoy the best parts of the core church—Christ's gospel and teachings, our LDS history and culture, the good people at all levels of leadership, and our associations with our neighbors and ward members. We also generally accept and support the interesting policies and traditions we encounter. But frankly, it is sometimes Church traditions and policies that cause us to migrate to the borderlands.

Sometimes it is hard to know which is which. Is the practice we encounter a policy or a tradition? Traditions often graduate into policies, and sometimes policies become our traditions. For example, stake baptisms in Utah traditionally are held on Saturday. Is this a written policy? Is it a former policy that become a tradition? Or vice versa?

In the area I live, it is the tradition—or is it a policy?—for members to go home immediately following the meeting block. When I lived in Michigan, our ward in Ann Arbor had a wonderful tradition of staying after for an hour or two, talking with friends and munching a few veggies. It was fun and brought us together. But did it go against

some policy here in Utah? (A former bishop in Bountiful told me we couldn't do that here.)

It used to be the tradition that non-priesthood holders, sometimes even women, could stand in the circle as babies were blessed. Now a policy no longer allows it.

I could easily continue naming similar examples of church-related policies and traditions. And it is fun wondering about them, how to deal with them, what might happen if they were changed in various ways, and how they could be changed. Unfortunately, I believe some current policies and traditions keep us from being better members, push us away from the center, and also probably scare away some very fine folks who otherwise might be more involved. It is with this in mind that I have chosen to use this column to explore a few troublesome policies and traditions and to suggest how we, as borderlanders, might deal with them.

I begin with two general suggestions, followed by others related to specific policies and traditions:

SUGGESTION NO. 1. *It helps to recognize that current traditions and policies aren't black and white, right or wrong, nor fixed in concrete. They can often be modified to meet the needs of individuals at the local level. And they can and do change over time.*

SUGGESTION NO. 2. *We should also recognize that long-standing policies and traditions are not usually the creation of today's leaders. Policies and traditions often involve complicated issues. They have a "life of their own" which*

makes change difficult, and we can't expect our general leaders to go willy-nilly altering policies with every mood change. But at the local level, we can talk about them and influence how they are applied today.



Volunteering for Church positions. Most members feel hesitant about volunteering or expressing interest in particular callings. Whether the idea that we shouldn't volunteer is tradition or policy, I'm not sure, but when a calling is made, it rarely includes asking for volunteers. Callings are usually first announced to an unaware congregation in sacrament meeting. Sometimes noting the surprised faces associated with these announcements is the most interesting thing that happens during the meeting block.

Seriously, we all know of members who have suffered, struggled, and even failed at callings that just weren't right for them. When this happens, the member or the leader will often suggest it has been some sort of "growth experience," or "refiner's fire."

I recognize that this is a complicated issue. Certainly, in some circumstances, callings are best left strictly to the bishopric and their efforts to seek inspiration. Sometimes issues related to callings and releases mandate confidentiality, and we all likely know of cases where members grew and blossomed in a calling they probably would never have sought out on their own.

SUGGESTION NO. 3. *Explore your callings with your local leaders. If you like teaching, for example, I think you can safely go to your bishop—without sneaking around so nobody will notice, or having to find creative ways to drop hints or enlist the help of others in letting the bishop know—and say, "I really love teaching, and I'd like to teach a class. Could you ask the Lord if it might be possible sometime?" Conversely, if you don't like teaching, or can't do it, or if even the thought of it gives you hives, that also ought to be legitimate information to pass along, "All things considered, I'd rather not be called as a teacher."*

A little thought experiment, just for fun: Suppose we had a policy or tradition that allows or encourages the bishop to announce (if he chooses), "The scoutmaster position will be opening up next month; anyone interested in exploring that opportunity to serve can contact me." Or, "We're looking for a good couple to serve as LDS Social Service representatives; if you think you might be interested, let's talk.")

D. JEFF BURTON is an author and a member of the Sunstone Board of Directors.

“Well, I try to be kind. . . . I think I’m a good parent, but you know my feelings about giving the kids too much structure. . . . Yeah, I guess it’s okay...”



Excluding non-recommend holders from temple marriage ceremonies. I married a BYU graduate whose parents were non-LDS, and neither of my Mormon parents held a temple recommend, even though they are among the finest people one could ever meet. My bishop, who I suspect had refreshingly little faith in traditions that hurt people, gave my parents a one-day recommend and used special pull downtown to arrange for us to be married twice on the same day—once outside the temple for all those who loved us, and once in front of those who carried a temple recommend. Frankly, our civil ceremony remains my strongest memory because all of those who cared about us were there sharing in our happiest moment.

Now, not everyone has a special bishop who can or will circumvent tradition and policy in the way my bishop did thirty-five years ago. Most members in circumstances similar to ours have to endure seeing their non-LDS or less-active parents miss the most important event in their lives and be allowed to participate only in those noisy receptions that, frankly, could be dispensed with.

Yes, we know the arguments for current marriage policies and traditions—everything from worry about family members who might not respect the sacredness we attribute to temple clothing and sealing covenants, to hope that the current policy may motivate parents or other family members to become more active, pay tithing, and so forth. But it seems to go against other Church traditions and policies such as family togetherness and being welcoming to non-Mormons and wavering Mormons.

SUGGESTIONS NO. 4. *It never hurts to explore your unique situation with your bishop and/or stake president to see what accommodations can be made to make your marriage ceremony the best experience possible for all concerned. Again, general policies can often be tailored to the needs of the local situation. When discussing the problem with your local leaders, invite them to join you in trying to imagine how Christ might decide*

the issue. Have them think about a table in a high council meeting room, with Jesus sitting at the head and his early and recent apostles sitting along the sides. The issue of who can attend your temple marriage comes up for discussion in the meeting. Invite your leaders to imagine the discussion and the eventual outcome.

Another thought experiment: Suppose there were a separate corridor to the sealing rooms that non-member, non-temple recommend-holder parents could use to attend the most important event in their children’s lives. If there are worries about non-members not understanding the sacred nature of the temple and what they’ll encounter, perhaps a short tutorial about the meaning of temple clothing and the sealing ceremony could be given.



Temple recommend questions. Because of the wording of current interview questions, some borderlanders don’t believe they qualify for a temple recommend.

I think most of you know how the interview typically goes for most of us in the borderlands:

BISHOP: “Is there anything in your conduct relating to members of your family that is not in harmony with the teachings of the Church?”

BORDERLANDER: *(Pausing, shifting in the seat, wondering what the bishop wants to hear, what he will accept, how much we want to say about things, what “anything” means, how to be completely honest, and so forth.)* “Well, I try to be kind. . . . I think

I’m a good parent, but you know my feelings about giving the kids too much structure. . . . Yeah, I guess it’s okay...”

BISHOP: “I know you’re doing fine.”

One question that many borderlanders may feel uncomfortable about is the one that asks if we have a “testimony” of the restoration of the gospel. If they are like me, borderlanders are faithful members who are uncomfortable claiming absolute knowledge but have a lot of curiosity and see the paradoxes inherent in all religion. So they will again try to explain that they live by faith, that curiosity and skepticism are a legitimate part of the search for truth, that they accept that the gospel certainly *could* be true, and so forth. Whew!

The bishop then says (and this is almost a verbatim rendering of what I’ve been told over the years), “It’s okay. You have a stronger testimony than you know.” Or, “Don’t worry; we’re all on the same path.” Or, “Well, you’re not alone. . . . If you only knew.”

SUGGESTION NO. 5. *As you listen to the detailed interview questions, it might help to recognize that the interviewer is mostly interested in sensing positive affirmations in the following general areas:*

- a. *That you are trying to be a faithful follower of Christ and his teachings;*
- b. *That there are no grievous sins or problems that need to be cleared up before you go to the temple;*
- c. *That you are trying to meet your responsibilities to your spouse, your family, and to the Church; and*
- d. *That you want to have a recommend and go to the temple.*

Pontius’ Puddle



JOEL KAUFFMANN

Some years ago, one very fine woman, a friend of our family who had recently been married in a civil ceremony, told me that her husband wanted their marriage to be sealed in the temple, that he was uncomfortable not being married in the temple. But, like many borderlanders, she had reservations, questions about some aspects of her Mormonism, and didn't think she should go through with it. She felt somehow that she wouldn't be going to the temple for the "right reasons," and she questioned her worthiness as reflected in the specific questions of the interview. She wondered what to do.

I told her that I couldn't think of a better reason to be sealed to her husband than to strengthen their spiritual bonds and to help him calm his anxieties about eternal togetherness, family unity, and salvation. She went ahead, they received their temple sealing, and she has never regretted her decision.



Designating tithing. The current policy and tradition is to not divulge how our tithing is spent. Many of us in the borderlands might be more happy as full tithe payers if we could simply designate part of it to certain broad categories such as welfare, aid to disaster victims, or education.

SUGGESTION NO. 6. *Since we know tithing dollars are already being spent in these areas, perhaps it would be helpful to simply envision that your particular donation is being spent in the area of your greatest interest or concern. If you like missionary work, for example, envision (in some detail) that your tithing has gone directly toward supporting "two missionaries in Bolivia."*



Selecting local leaders. Many borderlanders would like the opportunity to be involved in the selection of their local leaders. I might be wrong, but I think the selection policy for bishops and other ward callings is not established in holy scripture. More likely, today's policies evolved from traditions established many years ago. There is no prohibition that I know of that would preclude someone from influencing such decisions.

SUGGESTION NO. 7. *Where you recognize a fine person whom you believe would make a great leader, drop a confidential note to your bishop or stake president. They are always open to receiving positive and uplifting input from any legitimate source.*

I COULD go on with more examples, but I think these illustrate the point I'm trying to make: we can take responsibility for influencing how policies and traditions are applied at our local level. We can examine how policies and traditions affect us and then decide how best to respond. In some cases, we might even be prompted to ask our general Church leaders to examine current traditions and policies that we believe may need change. This is usually best handled by working through appropriate channels and by writing thoughtful letters.

In closing, I re-emphasize my strong sense that most borderlanders support the Church, its traditions, and policies. Most of us are happy and proud to be considered part of the group, even though we sometimes feel as if we're on the edges. Again, this column is not meant to be critical, but simply to voice and explore issues about policies and traditions that sometimes make our Mormonism feel less welcoming both to us and to those we hope to influence for good.

In the next column, I'll share comments I've received and excerpts from correspondence related to "Jessica's" borderlands experience described in the March 2004 column. ☺

NOTE

1. In the first column, we introduced the borderland member as one who may have an unusual but LDS-compatible outlook on life, a distinctive way of thinking about faith, belief and testimony, a different view of LDS history, some open questions about a particular aspect of the Church, reduced or modified activity, or feelings of not meeting Group 1 acceptability criteria.

Please send me
any of your thoughts,
experiences,
or tales from life in
the Borderlands.

D. Jeff Burton
2974 So. Oakwood Dr.
Bountiful, Utah 84010
or email:
jeffburton@digitalpla.net



DROUGHT

Long before we touched the
stillborn stalks,
before the rains
stopped falling,
days of plenty
turned toward
signs of the times
strewn like blueprints
across the clouds,
where even the birds hid
their colors in briarwood,
sagebrush and tanglefoot.

Desiccation signaled a grace
we struggle to make sense of,
picking at the ravished land,
all things ocular blinded
by foresight.

Or how the scarecrow still
stands, arms wide open,
smile stitched across his
potato sack skin, landmarkers
of our fathers not too easily
dissolved into night.

Sometimes, in those fields,
the hissing wind sounds
of moisture, bubbling up like
faith, ready to burst the seams.

—FRANK S. PALMISANO III

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Elise Eggett

MOVING ON

I'M SITTING NEXT to a life-size statue of Joseph Smith in a building at BYU named after him. I'm in a small atrium that creates the feeling of a grove of trees. It is early in the morning; most students are still sleeping, and I find myself enjoying the solitude and isolation that are rare on this usually bustling campus. Joseph is kneeling in prayer. I am sitting on a concrete bench behind him, an inconspicuous spectator. Joseph is gazing heavenward, and as my eyes follow his, I see nothing but the leaves and branches that create a green ceiling above. The heavenly visitors who are implied by the statue's awestruck face are not represented physically in the atrium. Their absence seems ironic, and I smile a little at the realization: whether they actually visited Joseph those many years ago no longer consumes my mind as it did the first time I entered this atrium as a freshman battling religious doubt and inconsistency. Today, I choose to spend my last hour as a BYU student silently acknowledging this man who has influenced my family, my circumstances, and my character so profoundly.

I FEEL A strange kinship to Joseph—strange because I have never met him and do not believe everything he taught. But I like to think that I understand his lot in life better than some of his most unfaltering, devout followers do. Like Joseph, God gave me a questioning mind and blessed me with a strong spirit that doesn't follow crowds or traditions just for the sake of following. As I take in the grand, confident stance of Joseph's statue in front of me, magnificent and poised, as though he were devoid of doubt and fear, I am a little disappointed. Where are the signs of the internal turmoil that surely he would have felt from not knowing? As a fellow religious skeptic from a young age, I can't help but wonder if his approach was a little more



"THE VISION" BY AVARD T. FAIRBANKS
Joseph Smith Building, Brigham Young University

timid and meek than the one depicted in this scene. But regardless of modern portrayals, I admire Joseph's willingness to ask questions and his desire to find answers.

CURRENTLY, I FEEL connected to Joseph's search for spiritual liberty. I hold personal and idiosyncratic views about his bold spiritual proclamations but firmly believe that the example he set—of asking questions and then spending his life searching for the answers—is more important than the exactness or accuracy of the answers themselves. Freedom to practice, preach, and lead religious followers is a right that should be granted to all. Joseph's willingness to sacrifice comfort and safety for his personal convictions—right, wrong, or anywhere in between—is a character trait I value. My quest to explore my own spirituality with no restraints is what has led me to this final hour at BYU. After completing my last final this morning, I will transfer to a state-owned university where my eligibility to be a student is not dependent on my bishop's endorsement. Students at BYU must

commit to do their duty to the Church in order to maintain that endorsement. I can no longer make that commitment because I feel my duty to God and myself leads me to a different path than the one offered here at BYU. I have been torn between complying with an honor code and actually living with honor. I don't always find the two to be compatible. The latter won in the end, and now I won't feel inhibited if I want to visit a Protestant revival sermon, attend a Catholic mass, or have a personal meditation and reflection morning in the seclusion of Provo Canyon instead of going to Relief Society. Geographically, transferring to another school is a small move. Emotionally and spiritually, I empathize with the hardship Joseph must have faced in leaving the known for the unknown. It would have been easier for him to quietly conform to his society's expectations and live a longer, less painful life.

LOOKING BACK INTO the past, I see that Joseph is responsible for my sitting here today. Although he never saw BYU nor the state of Utah, his ambition is what drove others to establish them. He is the initial reason that my ancestors joined the group of people who eventually settled this area, and the reason my extended and immediate family lives here now. Despite his weaknesses and fallibility as a human being, his recorded story of seeking answers—whether that story is viewed as factual or fairy tale or somewhere in the middle—is a legacy that has provided me with small amounts of courage as I seek my own answers. Joseph is a link in many of my relationships: I have grown closer to friends and family who have loved me even when they don't like the questions I am asking and some of the answers I receive. I have found new friends in other students at BYU who are religious questioners and skeptics; and as I have studied Joseph's story in depth, I have developed greater tolerance and love for the human race in general, with all of its beliefs, traditions, ceremonies, histories, and faith.

I'M LEAVING BYU and venturing into the unknown, but I don't regret coming. I'm not sorry for the way it has impacted my life; not in the least. I haven't earned an academic diploma, but I've graduated in ways that are far more important. It is here that I have grown from a girl concerned with hierarchy, conformity, and obedience to a young woman seeking answers and a personal relationship with God. Thank you, BYU, and thank you, Joseph, for your help in making that possibility real. ☺



ELISE EGGETT is majoring in accounting and plans to receive a bachelor's degree next summer. She lives in Provo, Utah, and hopes that as an accountant, she will be able to find a niche as an entrepreneur, become an expert investor, and someday attend graduate school to study one or more of her many other interests: theology, sociology, literature, psychology, linguistics, and business.

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

WRITING THE HISTORY OF PETS AND OTHER ANIMALS IN MORMONDOM

By Edgar C. Snow Jr.

PECULIAR AMONG CHRISTIANS, Mormons believe that animals have spirits and will rise in the resurrection. Because of this doctrine, I find it strange that no one has yet written a history of pets and other animals as a part of the Mormon experience. This essay is my attempt to break ground into this new area of Mormon studies. I have collected the following Mormon animal anecdotes with the hope that future Mormon animal historians will have a foundation from which to write more comprehensive studies in the field I call “Mormanimal history.”

One of my more important Mormanimal experiences was in the mission field. Sitting on a park bench, we were teaching a gentleman the first discussion. As we discussed ancient prophets, my companion turned our flipchart to the picture of Isaiah writing on a scroll as two witnesses looked over his shoulder. In accordance with missionary policy, I nodded at appropriate times, and directed my attention to the picture. Suddenly, without any warning, Isaiah’s head and my companion’s hand were splattered with something that looked like globs of squirted chalky white paint with a little black and green sprinkled on top. Suspecting sabotage by Jehovah’s Witnesses, I glanced around only to discover our assailant, a pigeon, landing a couple of yards away on the ground. As I looked back again, my companion had changed hands and flipped to the next page without missing a beat in his presentation. Worried, I looked at our investigator, who, much to my relief, was asleep. Then it was my turn, so I took the flipchart and banged it against the bench, stirring the gentleman, and proceeded to finish our presentation.

In companionship study the next day, we

discussed this incident. I pointed out that a dove, which looks like a pigeon, is, of course, a holy symbol. We read a few scriptures referencing doves. My companion then turned to that handy reference that has launched a thousand two-and-a-half-minute talks—not *Mormon Doctrine*, but *Webster’s Dictionary*. “Dove” is defined as something like: “a kind of bird with short legs, a small head, and a thick body, which makes a cooing noise.” We were satisfied with that definition. “Pigeon” is defined as something like: “a bird of the dove family.” Now this concerned us. We puzzled and pondered why a member of the dove family might poop upon our presentation. I have never admitted this before, but for the first time in my life, this incident caused me to entertain the idea that maybe, just maybe, some of that anti-Mormon literature was right, and we were a satanic cult, and this pigeon had sent us a message from God. But my companion cleared my stupor of thought by suggesting that if a pure white dove in Palestine symbolized the Holy Ghost, it only made sense a mangy gray dove in Basel, Switzerland, symbolized the anti-Holy Ghost. Although it’s not found expressly in the scriptures, we were satisfied with this interpretation and replaced the afflicted page in our flipchart. We took to calling pigeons “birds of perdition” thereafter.

Of course, not all birds in Mormon history have been anti-Mormanimals. The seagull, rightfully so, is permanently nested as a hero because of its act of binging and purging time and again, on crickets to save the Mormon pioneer crops. These gulls are the Danites of the bird family, literally chewing up and spitting out the enemies of the Kingdom. Yet, I think there’s a side to this story which has not been properly appreciated (and pardon me for being slightly re-

sionist), but I’m convinced that if this miracle happened today, LDS Social Services would be available to assist these birds in overcoming their eating disorders and focusing on less personally destructive ways to eliminate crickets.

NOW I’m sure many of you are wondering how it is I can claim there’s any such thing as a history of Mormon animals when in fact, there are no Church records of any baptized animals? I figured there’d be some cranks like you out there, and I’m prepared for your objections.

I think we’re all ready to accept the fact, nowadays, that Mormonism is more than just a denomination; it is a subculture, too. And our subculture has room enough for animals, even if they aren’t official members of the Mormon Church. In fact, let me demonstrate with a chicken anecdote why baptizing animals as members of the Church may not be appropriate at this time in our history anyway.

Hyrum Plaas, president of my old student branch at the University of Tennessee, told this story to us one Sunday, and it made a lasting impression on me. As a child, Brother Plaas had learned one day in Sunday School that everyone must be baptized to enter the celestial kingdom. Now as he pondered this new doctrine, it occurred to him that his seven or eight chickens cooped up at home had not been baptized. So after Church that day, he went straight home and, like Saint Francis of Assisi, preached the gospel to these birds. Being more literally minded than St. Francis, he then commenced baptizing them. *Unsuccessfully*. In his adult years, I believe he came to realize animals are like children who haven’t reached the age of accountability and therefore don’t need baptism. I trust this incident should quiet my critics.

DOGS play a significant role in Mormon history and experience. It’s fairly well known, for instance, that Joseph Smith had a dog accompany him during the trek of Zion’s Camp. Apparently, the dog was not possessed of the gift of discernment—he couldn’t tell friend from foe—which caused feelings of hostility among some of the men on the expedition. I suspect this dog received his calling to be Joseph’s pet—how did J. Golden used to say it?—not to inspire the people, but to test them.

Now, growing up, I had pet dogs, though none of them so disagreeable as Joseph’s. And like Brother Plaas, as a child I also had diffi-



EDGAR C. SNOW JR. is a partner with an Atlanta law firm where he practices banking and finance law. He is the author of a book of humorous essays, *Of Curious Workmanship: Musings on Things Mormon* (Signature Books). An early version of this musing was delivered at the 2001 Washington D.C. Sunstone Symposium. Ed is married and has three children. His children have eleven animals.

Maybe it was her way of getting attention—perhaps a cry for help.
But you can imagine how embarrassed I was. Me, the Mormon
whose dog was supposed to be setting an example!

cult experiences trying to teach my pets to be good Mormons. My driveway was a favorite basketball court in our neighborhood. My friends would often bring their basketballs and dogs over to my house to shoot hoops. My dog Honey played football and basketball with us, but she was a lot better at football. Before long, Honey came to understand that she wasn't very good at basketball, and she stopped trying to play with us and just hung out with the other dogs at the edge of the court watching us play. Anyway, on one occasion, the dogs got bored with our game, and one of them instigated some, well, "promiscuous activities" with Honey. There she was engaging in dog fornication right in front of our eyes! Maybe it was her way of getting attention now that she no longer played basketball with us, perhaps a cry for help. But you can imagine how embarrassed I was. Me, the Mormon whose dog was supposed to be setting an example! Well, I have to confess, at first, I tried to ignore it, pretend it wasn't happening. But it got so bad, I had to do something. Finally, I ran over to the garage, grabbed the waterhose, and let the two dogs have it! We had to use the waterhose only a couple of times after that, and the problem corrected itself.

Now I know other pet owners would have tried different methods of handling this delicate doggy situation, but this one worked, and no dog was worse for the wear. Chastity is a difficult principle to teach and sometimes requires extraordinary measures. Think about it. If every time you walk into the room your frisky dog grabs hold of your leg in an attempt to vent some frustrations, are you going to calmly sit it down in front of you, correct its behavior in reassuring tones, remove spicy foods from its diet, and suggest that it sleep on its stomach? No, heck no. You'll want to go for the waterhose. Now, when my own children reach dating age someday and I catch them smooching and hugging on the back porch or in the car at the end of the driveway, I'm not going to commit to it right now, but at that future time, I just might

have to bring this disciplinary technique out of retirement.

As a missionary, I had additional dog encounters that deserve notice in the annals of Mormon history. On one occasion while going door to door, we hiked up a set of about thirty stairs after nonchalantly passing one of those "Beware of Dog" signs. As we knocked on the door, we heard barking which sounded like a train in the distance that kept getting closer. When the door opened, we watched in amazement as a very large barking dog ran across the foyer of the house, out the door, and then lunged at my arm, its open, snarling mouth ready to rip my limb from its socket. As I recall, I quickly yanked my arm out of my pocket (in order to cast the demon out of the dog) just in time for it to miss my arm, tumble head-over-paws down the stairs, and slide on its chin across the driveway at the bottom. The remarkable thing I can still recall is the Doppler effect made by the dog as it barked its way past us down the stairs. Not one to waste exorcisms unnecessarily, I put my arm back into my coat pocket. My companion and I then pretended nothing had happened and told the lady at the door that we had a

message . . . for families. She said she didn't have a family, unless you counted her dog. The dog, by this time, had whimpered off behind the bushes somewhere. We said we weren't particular and could tailor our message to her needs. It seems to me she and her dog broke our next appointment.

With these anecdotes, I'm not suggesting that all dogs are either Jack Mormons, like Joseph's dog, or anti-Mormons, like this dog I met on my mission, or Mormons needing to be called to repentance, like Honey. We all, of course, know many dogs who are active, respectable Mormons. Take the dog owned by the Normans, a family I used to home teach. This was one orthodox dog, an Iron-Rodder if there ever was one. On my first visit to the Normans, I gave the closing prayer. As I folded my arms, the dog woke up from sleep, rolled over onto its belly, and lay attentively, its front legs folded. At the end of the prayer, as we all said "Amen," the dog looked up to the ceiling and barked once, and with the rest of the family, followed me to the door. The dog repeated that performance at every visit thereafter. I only wish my own kids could perform that religiously.

Dogs are also a part of the Missouri



"I don't care if it is the millennium. I miss zebra!"

Mormon experience, as I'm sure you are aware. J. Golden Kimball claimed that Brigham Young once said: "The western boundaries of the State of Missouri will be swept so clean of its inhabitants that . . . when we return to that place there will not be as much as a yellow dog to wag his tail" (*Conference Reports*, October 1930, p. 59). Now, according to some of my confidential Salt Lake City sources, an elderly couple recently went on a hush-hush mission back to Missouri (called "The Yellow Dog Mission") to monitor the Jackson County yellow dog population and report quarterly to somebody in Salt Lake. This confidential source reports an additional rumor that the Mormon

Alliance has founded a sister association called the "Mormon Animal Alliance," kind of a Mormon animal rights activist group, to monitor the monitoring of yellow dogs by the Yellow Dog Mission. As I understand it, the Mormon Animal Alliance suspects the Yellow Dog Mission is really attempting to either deport yellow dogs from Missouri in order to hasten the coming of the millennium or perhaps excommunicate Mormons owning yellow dogs. In turn, the Yellow Dog Mission suspects the Mormon Animal Alliance of *importing* yellow dogs into the State of Missouri in order to postpone millennial activity and of collecting case reports of individuals excommunicated for breeding yellow dogs.

SPACE limitations will not let me discuss other animals in Mormondom—Jonah's whale, Balaam's ass, Sidney Rigdon's snake, Deseret (which, being interpreted, means "polyandrous bees"), the Bear Lake Monster, Bigfoot/Cain, salamanders, Nauvoo's pigs, or John Taylor's singing mouse (a proto-Stuart Little). No, I must leave these Mormanimals for others to study and their stories to tell, hoping that someday—after lions have rested next to lambs in the millenium, serpents have gotten their legs back in the resurrection, and all cats have been redeemed from hell—we'll better understand their place and role, both historically and theologically. ☺

THE
2004
BROOKIE
&
D.K.
BROWN
FICTION
CONTEST

THE SUNSTONE EDUCATION FOUNDATION invites writers to enter its annual fiction contest, which is made possible by a grant from the Brookie and D. K. Brown family. All entries must relate to adult Latter-day Saint experience, theology, or worldview. All varieties of form are welcome. Stories, sans author identification, will be judged by noted Mormon authors and professors of literature. Winners will be announced in *SUNSTONE* and on the foundation's website, <www.sunstoneonline.com>; winners only will be notified by mail. After the announcement, all other entrants will be free to submit their stories elsewhere. Winning stories will be published in *SUNSTONE* magazine.

PRIZES will be awarded in two categories: **SHORT-SHORT STORY**—fewer than 1,500 words; **SHORT STORY**—fewer than 6,000 words. Prize money varies (up to \$400 each) depending on the number of winners announced.

RULES: 1. Up to *three entries* may be submitted by any one author. *Four copies of each entry* must be delivered (or postmarked) to Sunstone by 30 June 2004. Entries will not be returned. A \$5 fee must accompany each entry. No email submissions will be permitted.

2. Each story must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of white paper and be stapled in the upper left corner. The author's name may not appear on any page of the manuscript.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by a cover letter that states the story's title and the author's name, address, telephone number, and email (if available). This cover letter must be signed by the author and attest that the entry is her or his own work, that it has not been previously published, that it is not being considered for publication elsewhere and will not be submitted to other publishers until after the contest, and that, if the entry wins, *SUNSTONE* magazine has one-time, first-publication rights. Cover letters must also grant permission for the manuscript to be filed in the Sunstone Collection at the Marriott Library of the University of Utah in Salt Lake City. The author retains all literary rights. Sunstone discourages the use of pseudonyms; if used, the author must identify the real and pen names and the reasons for writing under the pseudonym. *Failure to comply with rules will result in disqualification.*

Submit entries to: Sunstone, Brown Fiction Contest, 343 N. 300 W., Salt Lake City, UT 84103

UPDATE

ILLINOIS REGRETS PERSECUTION

NEARLY 160 YEARS after the violent persecution that led to the killing of the Prophet Joseph Smith and the expulsion of the Saints from Nauvoo, the Illinois House of Representatives issued an apology—of sorts.

“We acknowledge the disparity of those past actions and suspicions,” reads House Resolution 793, “regretting the [1844] expulsion of the community of Latter-day Saints.”

According to a story in the *Chicago Sun-Times*, President Gordon B. Hinckley was so touched by the resolution that “he was moved to tears.” “It was amazing to see how personally he took the state’s gesture,” said Anne Burke, one of the Illinois citizens who promoted the idea of drafting a resolution. “Three generations have come and gone since the Mormon expulsion, but to them, it’s like it happened yesterday.”

The original version of the resolution, HR 627, asked for “pardon and forgiveness,” but the chief sponsor, Rep. Jack Evans, (D–Woodstock), opined that wording was “a little bit over the top.”

In remarks during the Saturday morning session of general conference, President Hinckley acknowledged the action: “We are pleased to note that on April 1 of this year, the Illinois House of Representatives unanimously passed a resolution of regret for the forced expulsion of our people from Nauvoo in 1846. This magnanimous gesture may be coupled with action



Church leaders receive copy of resolution from Illinois state official

taken by then Governor Christopher S. Bond of Missouri, who in 1976 revoked the cruel and unconstitutional extermination order issued against our people by Governor Lilburn W. Boggs in 1838.”

LDS Spokesperson Dale Bills has called the latest resolution “a thoughtful gesture.” The Illinois State Senate is not considering a similar measure.

The full text of the resolution can be found at: <http://www.legis.state.il.us/>.

HOLOCAUST BAPTISMS CONTROVERSY
FAR FROM RESOLVED

WHEN U.S. SENATORS Hillary Clinton and Orrin Hatch met in early March, both lawmakers called it a “private matter.” But according to an Associated Press story, Ernest Michel, chairperson of the New York-based World Gathering of Jewish Holocaust Survivors had asked Clinton to demand that the LDS Church stop performing proxy baptisms for Jews killed in the Holocaust—a matter that remains unresolved years after it was first reported by the media.

Despite a 1995 agreement between LDS leaders and the Jewish community, and a 2002 reaffirmation of the agreement, the Church has been unable to fully halt temple work being carried out for some deceased Holocaust victims, a practice that the Jewish community finds offensive.

“We are very hopeful that we will be able to convince the Church to stop,” said Michel, who found out that his parents had been baptized vicariously.

Michel says he’s considering legal action. “That would be the last resort,” Michel said. “We’d like to avoid it.”

SNAPSHOTS—APRIL 2004 GENERAL CONFERENCE

General Conference Scalping? According to a *Salt Lake Tribune* story, several visitors, some with signs, were asking conference-goers for extra tickets, and some were willing to pay for them. “My girlfriend’s kind of bummed,” said a man who was trying to buy two tickets. “She wants to go, so I’m trying to please her.” Another hopeful informed passersby he was “spiritually starving.” When asked how his ticket quest was going, he replied, “So far we’ve got a few [tickets]. We’re just trying to get closer.” While LDS spokesperson Dale Bills did not condemn the scalping, he said, “We encouraged people to take advantage of the standby and overflow areas.”

Brazilian Idol. The Sunday morning session of the conference featured the singing of Brazilian vocalist Liriel Domiciano, who was in the U.S. on tour. The 22-year-old LDS convert became a major star in her homeland three years ago after auditioning in the “Raul Gil Amateur Show,” the Brazilian equivalent of *American Idol*. During general conference, the pop star sang the first verse of “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” in

Portuguese. Domiciano converted to Mormonism in 1996.

Send in the Clowns. Even though no arrests were made, several preachers demonstrated around Temple Square during general conference weekend. Street preacher Ruben Israel put temple ceremonial clothes on a plastic mannequin while yelling, “You alone can drink the Kool-Aid of this Church. You alone can eat the Jell-O of this Church.” Two men dressed in clown suits spent several hours heckling the protesters.

And Speaking of Protesters . . . U.S. District Judge Dale A. Kimball dismissed the latest lawsuit regarding the controversial LDS Plaza, in which the ACLU had claimed that the Church purchased the section of Main Street upon which the Plaza is built through religious conspiracy. The ACLU had further argued against the deal on the grounds that the Plaza involves a street that was a historic public forum and maintains that the land swap with the City of Salt Lake was a sham. Undeterred by this latest ruling, the ACLU has initiated an appeal.

HOMOSEXUALITY LECTURE GENERATES DEBATE

WHEN BYU MICROBIOLOGY professor William Bradshaw felt he had some important things to say about the biological basis of homosexuality, he didn't wait for an invitation to present his views. He scheduled the room and posted the flyers on his own. His lecture generated one of the most lively debates in recent BYU history, with a dozen letters being posted to campus



William Bradshaw lectures on the biological basis of homosexuality

media outlets and some hundred emails and phone calls exchanged between Bradshaw and interested people. In an interview with SUNSTONE, Bradshaw says the feedback has been overwhelmingly positive.

"Biology absolutely has a role in causing homosexuality," said Bradshaw in his 25 March lecture, in which he reported on studies that show correlations between homosexuality and other factors such as left-handedness, early onset of puberty, and the number of older brothers a person has. Bradshaw also shared research indicating that counseling and "reparative therapy" very infrequently succeed in changing sexual orientation, and he concluded that homosexuality is not a chosen lifestyle. Because the data he presented is at odds with what Latter-day Saints commonly believe, Bradshaw finished his lecture with a personal, even passionate, plea for greater understanding and sensitivity. "In our LDS community, there is not much discourse on this issue, [and when there is, it is] not usually civil and it's not always informed," he said.

Following the initial story and reaction, BYU's NewsNet took the unusual step of changing the headline of the story that describes the lecture. Originally entitled, "Professor gives scientific evidence of homosexuality," the story soon after was retitled "Professor claims scientific evidence of homosexuality." It is unclear whether this change came in response to a directive aimed at "spinning" the story differently.

Bradshaw not only took issue with the notion that homosexuality is a chosen lifestyle but also with how an idea presented by A. Dean Byrd in the September 1999 *Ensign*—"There is no struggle for which the Atonement is not sufficient"—might affect homosexuals who have pleaded with the Lord for years to help them become straight. In a letter to the *Daily Universe* responding to some who, from reading the coverage, may have misunderstood his intent, Bradshaw wrote: "The magnificent doctrine of the Atonement helps us to find ways to cope, to deal with our challenges, but is not an assurance that a condition will change. . . . I included [this matter] in the talk to make my listeners aware of how frequently [our homosexual children] despair of life and faith and spirituality and hope—believing tragically that the Atonement may not apply to them. I don't want that to happen."

In a September 1995 *Ensign* article, President James E. Faust said that "no scientific evidence demonstrates absolutely [that homosexuality is inherited]" (p. 5).

REMARKS GIVE RARE INSIDE LOOK AT THE QUORUM OF THE TWELVE

PRAISED BY SOME as refreshingly candid and criticized by others as embarrassingly bizarre, recent remarks made by LDS Apostle L. Tom Perry have received wide attention in many LDS Internet forums. In what appear to be unscripted remarks delivered to the Kuna Idaho Stake on 21 March, Elder Perry briefly described each member of the Quorum of the Twelve (accidentally omitting Elder Joseph B. Wirthlin) offering a brief glimpse into aspects of the apostles' personalities, as well as some of the rules that govern the workings of the Quorum.



Members of the Kuna stake confirm that the email version of the message justly summarizes Elder Perry's remarks. However, on 23 April, the Administrators' Council of the Church Education System sent a memorandum to all area directors in the U.S. and Canada, warning them that the email does "not accurately reflect [Perry's] comments" and directing CES personnel to delete or destroy copies of the message.

Much of the online discussion of the remarks focuses on Elder Perry's description of the strict order of seniority that quorum members follow in activities as mundane as entering and exiting rooms or eating chocolates. In a 1996 BYU fireside, President Boyd K. Packer of the Quorum of the Twelve addressed the "unwritten order" that regulates many of the things Mormons do in church—even the positioning of the bishop's counselors on the stand (see SUNSTONE, April 1997, 72). Perhaps too controversial for publication, President Packer's talk was not included in BYU's 1996–97 *Speeches of the Year*.

When asked by SUNSTONE to comment on the stir caused by Elder Perry's remarks, J. Bonner Ritchie, professor emeritus in organizational behavior at BYU, remarked that he believes "We have here a classic case of a two-group phenomenon, in which one group of Latter-day Saints wants to humanize their leaders while another group wants to sanitize them." The two reactions remind Ritchie of the publication of the 1977 biography of President Spencer W. Kimball which some saw as refreshingly human, and others, as "too human."

"In Elder Perry's remarks, we have a few lighthearted reflections on the characteristics of an impressive and very diverse group of men who constitute a leading quorum of the Church," says Ritchie. "I find the descriptions to be honest and refreshing. Many of us yearn for the human side of leadership. We wonder, 'Where are our J. Golden Kimballs these days?'"

ELDER PERRY'S REMARKS AS
CIRCULATED ELECTRONICALLY

IN OUR PRESENT Council of the 12 Apostles, there has been no change in nine years. This is the longest in the history of the Church that the same 12 apostles have served together. We asked President Hinckley why this is so and he said our wisdom is needed to stand up against the great changes in the world.

President Packer is the most inspirational spiritual man I've ever had the opportunity to work with. He also can get very irate and it is my job to kick him in the shins if he gets too irate. Next time you see him, ask him to lift his pant legs so you can see my kick marks on his shins!

Elder Haight is stronger today than he has been in a long time. We fully expected him to die last July. His daughter called us and told us the doctors gave him just days to live. But he rallied and he now has a physical therapist that comes to his house every day and works with him. I visited him in his apartment and he showed me that he walks around his table 12 times, then he walks around his couch 12 times, then he walks a circuit in his apartment. He said, "Anything the physical therapist asks me to do, I do twice!" He comes to our council meetings and contributes to each one. We even plan on him speaking for General Conference for 5 minutes—we hope! He can't see well and he doesn't see the teleprompter so we don't know what he will say or how long he will go.

Elder Maxwell's life has been preserved in a most remarkable way. He has been preserved to bless us with that brilliant mind of his. Oh the jewels that come out of Elder Maxwell!

Elder Nelson is the physician to the First Presidency and to the Twelve. If we have an ailment we can talk to him about it. He is our doctor. He still makes hospital rounds. He is the greatest ambassador we have because he has a reputation all over the world. He can go anywhere in the world and people know and respect him because of his great pioneering work in heart surgery.

Elder Ballard is our used car salesman! He is our enthusiastic leader of the missionary department. He is telling our missionaries, "Stop being robots! Learn how to teach by the Spirit!" He has convinced President Hinckley to raise the bar. Now you have to qualify for a mission. We should raise the bar in our own activities.

Elder Scott is our nuclear scientist. He is a computer genius. He helps us all keep our computers working right. He has the talent of looking to the future.

Elder Hales is our international businessman. He was in charge of the international sales of all the men's shaving products and the like for a large international area (I think in the Orient). He has a great financial talent. He sits on committees with our First Presidency.

Oh, I forgot Elder Oaks! Well, he's away! No wonder I should forget. He is our judge. He is very detailed like an

attorney. Nothing escapes his mind. I send him a message and [he] replies back correcting my voice-mail! He understands the law and principles. He is our great public relations man. He understands the needs of the Church.

Elder Holland is our great student. President of a university or two. He is an excellent writer. Whenever there is a difficult assignment in that way, he gets the assignment to do the writing for it.

Elder Eyring . . . I wish someone could explain him to me! He gives me a headache with that brilliant mind of his! When we travel together he sits up front next to the driver and pops questions, trying to understand everyone and everything around him.

Each of us is wonderfully different but as a combination as a whole we make a wonderful high council. We are certain to follow the order of the Church in our meetings and in all we do. This has been clearly established. For example, I would never think of going through a door before Elder Packer. He is the President of our Council. It is the President of the Council who selects the President of the Church. Is there any other way the Lord controls who he selects as a prophet? If He doesn't want an apostle to preside, He who controls life and death calls him home.

Every week the Cummings Chocolate people send us a 3 lb. box of chocolates. In our meeting, we follow our order and President Packer picks first, then I choose, and so on. Poor Elder Eyring has never had a light chocolate yet! Perhaps if he lives long enough!!!

CES MEMORANDUM REGARDING THE REMARKS

To: Area Directors (U.S. and Canada)

From: CES Administrators' Council

Date: 23 April 2004

Subject: Remarks Inaccurately Attributed to Elder L. Tom Perry

Please forward the following message to all CES teachers and administrators in your area:

On 21 March 2004, Elder L. Tom Perry, of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, spoke at the Kuna Idaho Stake Conference. Since that time an e-mail has been circulating throughout the Church purporting to be notes from his speech. Please be aware that they do not accurately reflect his comments. If you have or receive copies of these notes by e-mail or in some other way, please:

- Delete or destroy them.
- Inform the person who sent them to you that the remarks are not an accurate recollection of Elder Perry's remarks.
- Do not use or refer to them in class.
- Do not spread or refer to them in any way except to discourage their use when someone else brings them up in conversation.

It is essential that CES personnel remain vigilant in seeing that legitimate sources be used in the CES classroom and in preventing the spread of inaccurate information. The safest sources are those found in official Church publications.

MARJORIE PAY HINCKLEY DIES



Marjorie Pay Hinckley

MARJORIE PAY HINCKLEY, wife of Church President Gordon B. Hinckley, passed away 6 April 2004 at the age of 92. The couple had been married 67 years. In a moment of personal reflection at the close of general conference two days prior to her passing, President Hinckley mentioned that Sister Hinckley was not in attendance due to struggles with

her health which had begun in January. The couple had been returning from a trip to Africa when Marjorie Hinckley collapsed from exhaustion.

Mourners waited in long lines and braved wet weather to pay their last respects at a viewing in the Relief Society building on Temple Square. Sister Hinckley's funeral, held in the Tabernacle, was broadcast on BYU-TV and local Utah television and radio stations. Many political, civic, and religious leaders paid their respects and attended the services.

Dignitaries in attendance included Utah Governor Olene Walker, Massachusetts Governor Mitt Romney, Utah's two senators Robert Bennett and Orrin Hatch, and the heads of Salt Lake City's Catholic, Episcopal, and Islamic communities. Following the funeral, a procession traveled to the Salt Lake City Cemetery, where Sister Hinckley was buried near relatives and ancestors.

Marjorie Hinckley will be remembered by Church members for her folksy, down to earth style and quick sense of humor. She often traveled with her husband throughout the world as he presided over conferences and other gatherings of Latter-day Saints. She was author of two books, and her daughter Virginia Pearce edited her writings in *Glimpses into the Life and Heart of Marjorie Pay Hinckley*. Last year, BYU created the Marjorie Pay Hinckley Chair in Social Work and Social Sciences, which "supports research and education at BYU and community collaboration on family issues."

Hinckley is survived by her husband, five children, 25 grandchildren, and 41 great-grandchildren.

LDS EXCLUDED FROM PRAYER DAY

LDS MEMBERS IN Utah were banned from leading prayers during services for the National Day of Prayer held on 6 May—leading some non-Mormons to boycott the event. Linda Walton, the Seventh-Day Adventist chaplain at Utah Valley State College, told the Associated Press that she had been directed by Utah's coordinator for prayer day events to

be "more selective about who was leading out," a veiled reference to Mormons, who are not considered traditional Christians.

"That sort of exclusion is the thing I hate the very worst," said Walton. "Bigotry. That's what I call it."

According to spokesperson Mark Fried, the National Day of Prayer Task Force objects to LDS participation on doctrinal grounds. "Our services reflect our beliefs under the Lausanne Covenant," he said, "and the volunteers who host our events agree with that."

Headed by Rev. Billy Graham, the 1974 International Congress on World Evangelization at Lausanne stated its belief in the Holy Trinity as one God and declared the Bible "the only written word of God."

Scott Daniel, who is LDS and president of the Utah Valley Interfaith Association, told the *Salt Lake Tribune* that people of all faiths should be included in the services. "We felt ostracized," Daniel said, "and we are definitely going to do something akin to the National Day of Prayer, but it just won't be on the same date."

LDS Church spokesperson Dale Bills declined to comment on the controversy.

The event's national chairperson, Shirley Dobson, is the wife of Focus on the Family founder James Dobson. Dobson's show can be heard daily in Utah on LDS-owned KSL NewsRadio 1160.



President Gordon B. Hinckley and family mourn the loss of wife and mother.

SOUTHERN UTAH CITY SCRAPS LEE STATUE

TWO YEARS AFTER commissioning a statue of one of Southern Utah's most controversial figures, the city council of Washington, Utah, reversed its decision to erect a bronze statue of John D. Lee in a public plaza.

John D. Lee was the only person ever convicted in the 1857 Mountain Meadows Massacre—the darkest episode of Utah's history, in which 120 members of an Arkansas wagon train were murdered as they traveled near Cedar City, Utah.

According to Mayor Terrill Clove, the city received a letter from the office of President Gordon B. Hinckley stating that the Church had no opinion on the

matter. But on 28 April, the city council reversed itself, on a 3-2 vote, scrapping plans to display the statue.

The \$35,000, 7-foot bronze statue is one of five monuments commissioned to celebrate Washington's founders. The other four statues are already on display in the city's museum.



Descendants of John D. Lee surround the controversial statue.

People



Deceased. JAMES NOBLE KIMBALL, great-grand nephew of colorful LDS General Authority J. Golden Kimball, died at 69 of a brain tumor on 16 May. Born in LaVerkin, Utah, he had earned political science and history degrees and served both military and LDS missions.

Jim had also been a travel consultant, university instructor, businessman, actor, real estate developer, public relations director, and former *Deseret News* columnist. At the time of his passing, he had been working on three books, one a serious biography of his beloved, irreverent, plain-speaking, and sometimes profane uncle.

He was well-known for donning the wire-rimmed glasses and dark vest of J. Golden and assuming the never-quite-reformed cowboy's high-pitched voice to present the sometimes delightfully naughty and oft-quoted stories.

With KUED, Jim had made two videos—*Remembering Uncle Golden* and *On the Road with J. Golden Kimball*. With cartoonist Pat Bagley, he had issued the sell-out *J. Golden Kimball Stories* and *More J. Golden Stories* and had planned *Still More J. Golden Kimball Stories*.

Latter-day Saints will remember him for his own kind and light heart besides the good heart and gentlemanly manner characteristic of the uncle he loved and preserved for us all.

Deceased. Osmond family matriarch OLIVE OSMOND, 79, at her Provo home, of complications from a stroke. Olive Osmond raised a family of nine children and saw seven of them garner dozens of platinum and gold albums. She is survived by her husband George, nine children, 55 grandchildren and 22 great-grandchildren.



Launched. A nationally-syndicated radio show, “Marie & Friends,” by MARIE OSMOND, 44. The legendary TV star is

now the host of a five-hour afternoon program that so far is airing on stations in Salt Lake City; Boise, Idaho; Yakima, Wash.; Santa Monica, Calif.; and Santa Maria, Calif. To share your story with Marie, go to www.radiomarie.com or dial 1-888-MARIE94.



Inducted. THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR, into the Broadcasting Hall of Fame of the National Association of Broadcasters, in tribute for 75 years of continuous radio broadcasting. During the acceptance event held in Las Vegas, the choir sang several classics, including

“Battle Hymn of the Republic.”

Appointed. THOMAS LEE, to the U.S. Department of Justice's civil division, representing the Bush administration. Lee follows the steps of his father, the late Rex E. Lee, who served in the same division in the 1970s. Thomas Lee has been a BYU law professor since 1997.

Nominated. Top BYU lawyer THOMAS B. GRIFFITH, 49, for a seat on the U.S. Court of Appeals for the District of Columbia. Griffith is BYU's general counsel and special assistant to the school's president, as well as the president of BYU's 9th Stake. A moderate Republican, Griffith is expected to have less difficulty being confirmed than have others, whose nominations have been blocked by the Democrats.



Appointed. MICHAEL K. YOUNG, 54, as University of Utah's 14th president. A Brigham Young University graduate, Young currently is dean of the George Washington University Law School in Washington. Young would not say where he stands on the U.'s efforts to ban concealed weapons from campus, but noted that it's a “very volatile issue in Utah.”

WORD BAZAAR

KEEP TABS ON MORMON LITERATURE

For those interested in Mormon fiction, film, drama, memoir, and poetry, IRREANTUM magazine publishes original creative works, literary news, reviews, interviews, essays, and more.

For a sample copy, send \$6 to:

The Association for Mormon Letters (AML)
P.O. Box 51364,
Provo, UT 84605.

For more information about the AML, visit www.aml-online.org
or contact us at irreantum2@cs.com.

WORD BAZAAR AD RATES. \$3 per line; four-line minimum (including headline). Text lines counted at seven words per line; headline counts as one line (unless unreasonably long). Multiple-run discounts are 10% for four times, 15% for six, and 20% for eight. Payment must accompany the ad. Send ad text and check or credit card number to the Sunstone Education Foundation, 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City, UT 84103; phone (801) 355-5926; fax, (801) 355-4043; email <info@sunstoneonline.com>

AN OLIVE LEAF

TO TELL IT ALL

By Richard L. Bushman

RICHARD L. BUSHMAN is one of just a few Latter-day Saint historians whose writings on Mormon history have been well-received among both his professional and religious colleagues. But presenting the Mormon story in a way that makes it understandable to outsiders while still feeling true to insiders' experience of their own faith tradition is a demanding task—and one that has led Bushman on many occasions to pick up his pen to reflect on its challenges.

Seventeen of Bushman's best ruminations on the challenges of writing Mormon history, set in the contexts of his own faith journey and his study of Mormon origins and American culture, have just been gathered and published as *Believing History: Latter-day Saint Essays*, edited by Reid L. Neilson & Jed Woodworth (Columbia University Press, 2004). The following is excerpted from an original essay, "Reflections on *Believing History*," published as the book's afterword.



SOON AFTER PUBLISHING *JOSEPH SMITH AND THE Beginnings of Mormonism*, I was invited to Notre Dame to discuss the book. Questions were coming from all directions, and one person asked why I had not mentioned that Joseph Smith's father sometimes drank to excess. I was caught off balance because I was not sure why this fact had been omitted. Perhaps I had not been aware of the drinking when I wrote those parts; perhaps I had just overlooked it. The questioner took some satisfaction in my embarrassment, because he thought he had caught me off base as well as off balance. My predilection to defend the character of the Smith family had been revealed, and my conscious or unconscious wish to clean up the record was now plainly evident.

All of my efforts to assure my questioner that I had no objections at all to reporting the father's drunkenness were of course in vain. He had exposed the failings of the believing mind in writing about the subjects of its own belief. He had posed the question all nonbelievers ask of believers like myself. How can you avoid crippling bias when writing about your own faith? For nonbelievers, it seems obvious that a believer cannot be self-critical. Consciously or unconsciously, the believer will suppress disconcerting facts and whitewash reality. . . .

There is a tendency for critics to think that believers work in an isolated and naive mental world. They are prisoners of their faith, isolated from the rough-and-tumble realities of the skeptics. Believers simply cannot grasp the objections to their

belief. If they did, the skeptics assume, they would abandon their faith. I have had friendly critics tell me that I must go to the brink with Joseph Smith, that is, break out of my comfortable cocoon and recognize how faulty he was, how incredible his claims, how impossible faith in his revelations really is. In other words, wake up to reality.

But the actual fact is that professional historians today cannot isolate themselves in a cocoon. The questions and doubts of the critics are in the minds of the believers too, right along with their faith. Most modern be-

lieving historians are dialogic. They are engaged in constant internal dialogue. They know how the story looks to the faithful, and they also know how it looks to the skeptics. The debate over credibility is waged in their own minds, not just in scholarly debate.

The problem of writing believing history is not naiveté, but constraint. How can you tell a coherent story while being pulled in two directions at the same time? The result of writing under these conditions is a kind of temerity that may take the life out of the history for the simple reason that you can take fewer chances. Writing for one audience alone—either believers or skeptics—permits you to make claims that simply won't hold water if you write for both. A story that seems plausible to a secular audience falls apart when you tell it to Latter-day Saints. . . .

IN MY OPINION, dialogic thinking is not a fancy name for waffling, nor is it changing your appearance to suit the audience. On the contrary, it requires one to write to all audiences at once. When you write dialogically, all your audiences examine the results simultaneously. You are writing for all your critics and not just the readers before whom you feel most comfortable. You have to discipline yourself to write history you won't back away from under pressure—the opposite of waffling. . . .

Contrary to what the critics might think, belief does compel me to discuss the drunkenness of Joseph Smith's father. I not only know they will be wanting to pounce on such omissions, but their criticisms are within my own mind. Dialogic historians like myself cannot leave out embarrassing facts so long as they are part of the historical record. The strict discipline imposed by living in two worlds compels us to tell it all. To believe the history I write, I have to represent all sides. ☪

**TAPES AND CDs—2004 SUNSTONE WEST SYMPOSIUM
CLAREMONT, CALIFORNIA**

01. **IN SEARCH OF HER: WOMEN AND THE DIVINE FEMININE**
Carol Lynn Pearson, Carol P. Christ
11. **IMAGINING MORMON STUDIES AS PART OF A WIDER
RELIGIOUS STUDIES CURRICULUM**
Peggy Fletcher Stack, Ann Taves
12. **PURSUING THE "PROPHET PUZZLE"—RECENT EFFORTS TO
EXAMINE JOSEPH SMITH**
Newell G. Bringhurst, Devery S. Anderson
15. **FINDING FULFILLMENT ON THE MORMON MARGIN**
Val D. Rust, Tom Kimball
22. **TOWARD A DIALOGUE BETWEEN MORMONISM
AND PROCESS THEOLOGY**
Dan Wotherspoon, James McLachlan
24. **THE OVERLAND JOURNEY FROM UTAH TO CALIFORNIA:
WAGON TRAVEL FROM THE CITY OF THE SAINTS TO
THE CITY OF ANGELS**
Edward Leo Lyman, Russ Frandsen
25. **THE DIFFICULT BALANCING ACT OF A BORN-AGAIN MORMON**
Shawn Aaron McCraney, Janet Brigham Rands
31. **9/11, MORMONS, AND THE WINDS OF WAR: RECENT DIALOGUE
AUTHORS PUBLISHING 21ST CENTURY PEACE**
*Karen Marguerite Moloney, Barney Hadden, Deborah J. Sheridan,
Mary Dickson, Patrick Mason*
32. **THOSE WHO LEAVE AND THOSE WHO STAY: HOW CHOICES
ABOUT CHURCH ACTIVITY IMPACT PERSONAL RELATIONSHIPS**
*Julie Curtis, Carol Lynn Pearson, Jared Christensen, Richard Rands,
Kirsten Wald Stoneley*
33. **THE BOOK OF MORMON QUANDARY**
Leonard Wald, Trent Stephens, Glenn Cornett, Tom Kimball
41. **WHERE HAVE ALL THE MORMON FEMINISTS GONE?**
Peggy Fletcher Stack, Maxine Hanks
51. **100 YEARS OF MORMON NOVELS**
Lael Littke
52. **SIR THOMAS MORE AND WILLIAM TYNDALE
DEBATE "MORMONISM"**
Chris Conkling, Sara Patterson
53. **DEALING WITH FAMILY CRISIS IN 1886: THE DEATH OF
CHARLEY WHITNEY AND THE MARRIAGE OF GEN WHITNEY**
Todd M. Compton, Robert H. Briggs
55. **WHORING, POLYGAMY, OR FRIENDSHIP? MORMONISM AND
THE OTHER RELIGIONS**
James McLachlan, John W. Quiring
61. **SUFFERING, SACRIFICE, OBEDIENCE, AND AUTHORITY:
THE LESSONS OF ABRAHAM FOR THE LDS CHURCH**
Doe Daughtrey, John Remy
63. **STAGES OF FAITH: A MORMON ENCOUNTER**
Tom Kimball, Dan Wotherspoon
64. **THE LATTER-DAY SAINTS AND OTHER MINORITIES IN 19TH
CENTURY AMERICA: A POSTCOLONIAL APPROACH**
Robert H. Briggs, D. Michael Quinn
65. **LATTER-DAY SAINT RESPONSES TO MEL GIBSON'S PASSION**
Robert A. Rees, Wade Major, Miles Romney
71. **FACT OR FICTION? CRACKING THE DA VINCI CODE**
*Maxine M. Hanks, Dennis McDonald, George L. Gorse,
Bradley A. Tepaske, Kristy Coleman*
73. **JON KRAKAUER'S UNDER THE BANNER OF HEAVEN**
*Newell G. Bringhurst, Jana Bouck Remy, Todd Compton,
Richard Rands, John Hatch*
74. **COPING IN THE MORMON BORDERLANDS**
Jared Christensen, D. Jeff Burton
81. **KEEPING THE FAITH**
Wade Major, Todd Compton, Jenny Rees, Lael Littke

REWIND: TAPES AND CDs

2004 Sunstone West Symposium
tapes and CDs are now available!

PRICES: 1–2 sessions \$8.00 each, 3–5 \$7.50 each, 6 or more \$7.00 each
Purchase 7 tapes or CDs for \$49.00 and get an eighth free.

To order, send in form at bottom of page,
fax to (801) 355-4043, or call (801) 355-5926

Please use session numbers when ordering cassette tapes and CDs.
Send orders to Sunstone: 343 N. Third West, Salt Lake City, UT 84103

Thank You!

*As always, Sunstone is indebted to the many volunteers who
contribute enormous amounts of time and energy in
creating and hosting regional symposiums. This year's
Sunstone West committee was exceptional
and the symposium was phenomenal.*

MARY ELLEN ROBERTSON

JULIE CURTIS

MICHELE OLESON

ARMAND MAUSS

JOHN F. BLOOD

LEE POULSEN

LORIE WINDER STROMBERG

JENNY REES

PAUL CLARK

TODD COMPTON

RUTH MAUSS

MATT WORKMAN

KIRSTEN WALD STONELEY

CARTER BURCH

EVE BURCH

ROB BRIGGS

ROBYN CAMP

Tape #: _____

Name: _____

Address _____

City _____

Phone/email _____

Payment (Circle one) Check Visa MasterCard Discover

Card # _____ Exp. Date: _____

Signature _____

(1–2 sessions \$8; 3–5 sessions \$7.50; 6 or more sessions \$7)

Total # of tapes at (circle) \$8.00 \$7.50 \$7.00 _____

Total # of CDs at (circle) \$8.00 \$7.50 \$7.00 _____

Total # of 8-cassette specials at \$49.00 ea. \$ _____

Tape or CD Total = \$ _____

\$2 for vinyl binder (holds 8 cassettes) = \$ _____

Subtotal = \$ _____

Shipping add 10% to total above = \$ _____

Grand Total = \$ _____

SUNSTONE

343 N. Third West
Salt Lake City, UT 84103-1215

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Nonprofit Org.
U.S. Postage

PAID

Salt Lake City, UT
Permit No. 2929



*Notwithstanding
the polemic excesses,
and despite the
paradoxically conservative
nature of their mission
to defend the kingdom,
apologists exercise
a progressive influence
on the way the Saints
understand their faith.*