

THE LONG-PROMISED DAY?

BLACK AFRICAN JEWS, THE MORMON DENIAL OF PRIESTHOOD TO BLACKS, AND TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

By Robert A. Rees

HERE HAS BEEN much publicity recently about DNA studies of native peoples of the Americas and the traditional claim of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints that many, if not most, inhabitants of North and South America are direct descendants of Lehi, the Book of Mormon prophet who left Jerusalem around 600 BC and came to the New World. To date, no DNA study has established a link between New World and Semitic peoples.¹ How this study affects our understanding of the Book of Mormon has yet to be determined, but it is a clear example of science challenging a long-standing religious belief.

DNA studies, although a relatively new area of scientific exploration, have proven effective elsewhere, including establishing proof of paternity, guilt or innocence of convicts, and genetic links for certain diseases. Had DNA analysis been available before 1978, presumably it could have been employed to establish black ancestry and therefore priesthood denial. And in that case, good science would have been used to enforce questionable theology.

But what if DNA investigation had uncovered a black African line in the genealogy of Joseph Smith or a later prophet? What if it had identified descendents of ancient Israelite priesthood holders among black African tribes, thus making them, even though black, legitimate inheritors of the right to the priesthood?

BLACK AFRICAN JEWS

DNA studies are now being used to establish links between living peoples in various parts of the world

and ancient peoples, including the proverbial lost tribes of Israel. Since the dispersal of the house of Israel beginning with the Babylonian captivity, people have been fascinated with the fate of the lost tribes. The concept has persisted that they exist hidden somewhere in the earth today or that they were transplanted to some other planet to await the time the Lord will bring them back.

Most modern scholars believe that the tribes were scattered and intermingled with various Middle Eastern, African, and Asian populations. In *Across the Sabbath River: In Search of a Lost Tribe of Israel*, Hillel Halkin explores evidence of the lost tribes in China, Thailand, and northeast India. And in *The Quest for the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel to the Ends of the Earth*, Rivka Gonen examines claims that remnants of the lost tribes can be found in China, Africa, and many other nations.²

Among the most intriguing claims to Israelite ancestry is that of the Lemba, a Bantu-speaking people who live in various parts of southern Africa, primarily Zimbabwe. For thousands of years, the Lemba have claimed Jewish heritage and priesthood lineage. Their religious practice has included, among other things, monotheistic worship, circumcision of male children, ritual slaughter of animals, and dietary codes closely related to those prescribed in the Old Testament, including eschewing pork. Although some scholars have dismissed these Jewish ancestral claims, new DNA evidence, including a particular genetic marker among the Lemba's priestly group, has confirmed the descent of these tribes from the house of Israel. Among Jews today, males with the name Cohen or one of its derivatives are paternal line descendents of priesthood

holders from the time of Aaron and Moses. Members of this tribe or class have a specific genetic signature, a Y-chromosome termed the "Cohen modal haplotype."³

The Lemba claim of direct Israelite lineage was confirmed through DNA studies conducted by Professor Tudor Parfitt and his associates at the University of London's Center for Genetic Anthropology.⁴ These so-called "Black Jews" believe "they descended from the ancient tribes that lived in the land of Israel 3,000 years ago."⁵ They have believed for centuries that their ancestors left an ancient city called Sena, sailed along the eastern coast of Africa, and landed near their present homeland. Parfitt was able to establish the existence of a contemporary city called Sena in the Hadramaut Valley of present-day Yemen. Many Lemba clan names echo, and some are identical to, tribal names among the present inhabitants of Sena.⁶

Parfitt compared DNA samples from the Lemba, including their priestly class, with samples from Yemeni Arabs and from Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews, including Cohanim or members of the Jewish priestly class. They discovered an astonishing correspondence. In an interview with NOVA for a PBS special called "Lost Tribes of Israel," Dr. David Goldstein of the University of London states,

The first striking thing about the Y chromosomes of the Lemba is that you find this particular chromosomal type [Cohen modal haplotype] that is similar to what you see in major Jewish populations. Something just under one out of every ten Lemba that we looked at had this particular Y chromosomal type that appears to be a signature of Jewish ancestry. Perhaps even more striking is the fact that this Cohen genetic signature is strongly associated with a particular clan in the Lemba.⁷

Some geneticists believe the Cohen modal haplotype can be traced back 3,000 years to the time of Moses. What Parfitt and his associates established, therefore, is that the Lemba are literal descendents of ancient Israelites and that some of them are legitimate heirs of the priestly line.

THE MORMON PRIESTHOOD BAN

WHAT does such a finding imply for Latter-day Saints? For one thing, it suggests that had Lembas been converted to the LDS Church while priesthood ordination was being de-



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nied to African blacks, they would have been entitled to hold the priesthood. It also suggests that priesthood denial was not only without scriptural or revelatory basis but without genetic foundation, unless one accepts the pernicious idea that one drop of black blood is enough to warrant the curse.⁸

What do we know for certain regarding the Church's doctrine or practice of denying priesthood ordination to blacks? We know that Joseph Smith ordained or at least approved the ordination of some blacks to the priesthood⁹ and that the descendants of at least one black priesthood holder, Elijah Abel, continued to be ordained after the exodus to the Great Basin.¹⁰ We also know that under Brigham Young's leadership, blacks were not only denied the priesthood (with the exception noted above) but were seen as a fallen race, cursed for ambivalence or lack of valiancy in the preexistence and destined to come into mortality through the cursed lineage of Cain and Ham. The teachings of nineteenth-century prophets on this subject, while consistent with the prevailing cultural views of the time, are abhorrent to contemporary hearts and minds. But many such sentiments, although milder in tone and expression, are found in the statements of Church leaders well past the mid-twentieth century and thus long after the liberating influence of the civil rights movement.

Due primarily to the groundbreaking research of such scholars as Lester Bush, Newell Bringham, and Armand Mauss, as well as the more popular writings of Darius Gray, Margaret Blair Young, and Darron Smith,¹¹ among others, it now seems clear that the Church's denial of priesthood ordination to blacks was based not on scripture or revelation but on deeply entrenched racist traditions that flourished in Europe after the fifteenth century and came to the New World beginning in the seventeenth century. Two new scholarly studies, David M. Goldenberg's *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* and Stephen R. Haynes's "Noah's Curse": *The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* explore, respectively, the evolution of the tradition of the curse of Cain or Ham and the justification for American enslavement of black Africans.¹² Both offer convincing evidence that all ideas relating to the placement of blacks in an inferior or cursed position are based on misinterpretation of language, misreadings of scripture, and misanthropic impulses towards blacks. Ideas for which Mormons and others have claimed to have a basis in antiquity are in fact rather modern inventions.¹³

In his seminal study, "Mormonism's Negro

Doctrine: An Historical Overview,"¹⁴ Lester Bush challenged the doctrinal foundation on which the denial of priesthood ordination to blacks was based. A consensus that has been building since Bush's article appeared is that the teaching was based not on revelation but rather on myth and tradition. As Armand Mauss explains, "The full-fledged racialist framework of modern Mormonism . . . was a product not of any particular revelation but of a social and intellectual movement among some of Mormonism's most powerful and articulate leaders."¹⁵ Mauss argues that the twin influences of "British Israelism and Anglo-Saxon triumphalism" prohibited the full and equal embrace of all God's children for more than a century. So influential were these beliefs that they overpowered the egalitarianism of the New Testament and the Book of Mormon, as summarized in the scripture: the Lord "inviteth . . . all to come unto him and partake of his goodness; and he denieth none that come unto him, black and white, bond and free, male and female" (2 Nephi 26:33).

While many ideas about blacks and the priesthood are no longer part of official Mormon teaching, most have never been officially renounced or repudiated. Darron Smith observes that the change in policy "did very little to disrupt the multiple discourses that had fostered the policy in the first place."¹⁶ The fact that racist statements supporting the idea of black curse and priesthood denial continue to appear in books by General Authorities indicates that the Church itself has unfinished business in these matters. As Mauss argues, "As long as these doctrines continue to appear in successive reprintings of authoritative books and are freely circulated at the Mormon grassroots, they will continue to rankle many of the black Saints,"¹⁷ and, I add, many white Saints as well.

Perhaps there is no more striking example than the teachings of Apostle Bruce R. McConkie, who echoed and reinforced the teachings of previous Church leaders, including especially his father-in-law, Joseph Fielding Smith. In an exhaustive study of the background for the references to race, slavery, priesthood denial, and a divine curse on blacks in McConkie's *Mormon Doctrine* and other books, Stirling Adams demonstrates persuasively that Elder McConkie's teachings were based on a faulty reading of scripture, a perpetuation of misconceptions by earlier Church leaders, and folkloric traditions that emerged as European and American justifications for slavery.¹⁸

Following the rescinding of the practice of

priesthood denial, Elder McConkie stated, "Forget everything that I have said, or what President Brigham Young or President George Q. Cannon or whosoever has said in days past that is contrary to the present revelation. *We spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world*" (emphasis in original).¹⁹ In the same address, speaking about the affirmation in the Book of Mormon, "all are alike unto God" (2 Nephi 26:33), Elder McConkie added:

These words have now taken on a new meaning. We have caught a new vision of their true significance. This also applies to a great number of other passages in the revelations. Since the Lord gave this revelation on the priesthood, our understanding of many passages has expanded. Many of us never imagined or supposed that they had the extensive and broad meaning that they do have.

A general authority friend told me that when he heard Elder McConkie repeat this statement in his presence, he replied, "Bruce, I have been telling you what these words really mean for years."

Although McConkie revised and toned down some of the racist language in *Mormon Doctrine* following the 1978 policy change, much continues to appear in subsequent reprintings. In a synoptic table comparing the 1958, 1966, and 1979 editions of *Mormon Doctrine*, Stirling Adams reveals that McConkie retained the essence of many teachings from his earlier editions, including the relationship of preexistence to race, the curse of Cain/Ham/Canaan, the association of a black skin with being cursed, and the correctness of denying priesthood ordination to blacks before 1978.

Perhaps the most pernicious idea about the unworthiness of blacks to hold the priesthood was the belief that only one drop of black African blood was sufficient to cancel thousands of drops of Caucasian or other blood, including supposedly royal Israelite blood. If one found any trace of black African lineage in one's genealogy, one was disqualified from holding the priesthood or receiving temple endowments and sealings. That is, so powerful was the curse or the taint of African lineage that not even an overwhelming preponderance of supposedly superior white blood could overturn the case. Latter-day Saint prophets, beginning with Brigham Young, taught this concept for more than a century. Among other practices, this concept forbade interracial marriage during pioneer

times and strongly discouraged it in modern times. According to Apostle Mark E. Peterson, who was particularly passionate about interracial marriage:

If I were to marry a Negro woman and have children by her, my children would be cursed as to the Priesthood. Do I want my children cursed as to the Priesthood? If there is one drop of Negro blood in my children, as I have read to you, they receive the curse. There isn't any argument, therefore, as to intermarriage with the Negro, is there?²⁰

There is no way to calculate the extent of personal suffering black Latter-day Saints endured from the Mormons' entry into the Great Basin until the change in policy in 1978. Nor is it possible to calculate the advantages black membership might have meant to the Church had there been no exclusion. It is also impossible to calculate how the denial of priesthood to blacks affected the Church's missionary effort, and, worse, kept many blacks from enjoying the blessings of the gospel. As Armand Mauss argues, the effect of the denial "was to delay for generations the extension of the powerful Mormon missionary program to a segment of humanity that it might have benefited greatly."²¹ As a young missionary, I had this thought as I unknowingly knocked on the door of a black family in Kankakee, Illinois. Our instructions at the time were to be friendly but not to teach them. It saddened me that I was unable to share the liberating teachings of the restored gospel with this family.

Unfortunately, the effects of our practice are still being felt. As Mauss argues, the residue of that "contradictory and confusing legacy of racist religious folklore hangs like a cloud over LDS relationships with American blacks, even those who have joined the church."²² Currently, baptism and retention rates of African-Americans are among the lowest for any minority population proselytized by the Church.

TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

THE Truth and Reconciliation Commission established by the South African government to resolve issues related to racial conflict in that country has produced remarkable results, especially in healing the wounds caused by apartheid in all its official and unofficial manifestations. And what has happened in South Africa has spread its healing influence to other parts of the world where ethnic, racial, and religious conflict have destroyed communities and divided nations.

In his *No Future without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, chair of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, talks about the courage and love that were necessary for the Commission to do its work. He says, "There is a movement, not easily discernable, at the heart of things to reverse the awful centrifugal force of alienation, brokenness, division, hostility, and disharmony."²³ That movement, Tutu argues, requires both the seeking of forgiveness from those responsible for the wrong and the willingness to forgive on behalf of those who have been wronged. This movement worked in South Africa because, as Tutu says,

Our leaders were ready . . . to say they were willing to walk the path of confession, forgiveness, and reconciliation with all the hazards that lay along the way . . . It is crucial, when a relationship has been damaged or when a potential relationship has been made impossible, that the perpetrator should acknowledge the truth and be ready and willing to apologize.²⁴

Tutu argues against what he calls "cheap reconciliation" which, like cheap grace, has no lasting influence: "True reconciliation is not cheap. It cost God the death of His only begotten Son. Forgiving and being reconciled are not pretending that things are other than they are." Obviously, reconciliation is more complicated when those needing to ask for forgiveness may not have been guilty of the transgressions themselves but may be the present representatives of those persons, policies, and institutions responsible for the wrongs. Nevertheless, if true healing is ever to take place, the representatives must take the risk. As Tutu argues,

True reconciliation exposes the awfulness, the abuse, the pain, the degradation, the truth. It could even sometimes make things worse. It is a risky undertaking, but in the end, it is worthwhile, because in the end, dealing with the real situation helps to bring real healing. Spurious reconciliation can only bring spurious healing.²⁵

In *All Abraham's Children*, Mauss suggests that within the past few years, the Church considered but then backed away from making a formal institutional repudiation of past racist teachings and practices.²⁶ If true, this is most unfortunate since such repudiation would seem necessary to begin the process of healing the spiritual and emotional wounds suffered by black Latter-day Saint victims of those teachings and prac-

tices. But the Church might also consider seeking forgiveness of those white saints who suffered institutional censure or disapproval for championing the cause of their black brothers and sisters. For many, black and white, those wounds remain more than twenty-five years after the lifting of the priesthood ban.

Each time I renew my temple recommend, I am asked if there has been any past sin or misdeed that has not been resolved with an appropriate priesthood authority. Personally, I have benefited from such an introspective review of my behavior. As a bishop, I also found this review a constructive step in helping members of my congregation complete the process of repentance since it gave them an opportunity to relieve themselves of burdens they had carried, often for years. It is a sensible way to wipe the slate clean and begin anew.

If such a practice is constructive and healing for individual members, wouldn't it also be constructive and healing for the Church itself? It seems even more compelling for Church leaders to resolve matters surrounding this issue, especially since the failure to repudiate past teachings and practices that have harmed both individuals and the Church continues to harm individual saints, especially our black brothers and sisters, and to have a negative impact on the Church's mission.

As a bishop, I counseled at times with people who not only had not resolved past sins and mistakes but who also believed that if enough time passed, they would not need to seek formal forgiveness nor make formal restitution for their actions. Sometimes they felt that if they just began acting in ways opposite to their old pattern, this would be sufficient to resolve the matter. But it didn't work that way. And I don't think it works that way for institutions either.

Since 1978, the Church has taken a number of steps to distance itself from past teachings and practices relating to blacks. One recent example is the Church's ambitious cataloging of the records of nearly half a million black depositors to the Freedman's Savings & Trust Co., a banking firm into which many blacks deposited their savings after the Civil War. This database provides a treasure trove of genealogical information on American blacks. As the *Deseret News* reports, this is "the largest searchable database of genealogical information available on African-Americans."²⁷

During a recent celebration of Black History month in Utah, the Church took the additional step of providing free workshops

on the use of the database and free copies of the database CD-ROM. In February 2004, the Church, along with two black genealogical societies, co-sponsored the African-American Family History Conference in Los Angeles. Marvin Perkins, director of African-American relations for the Church's Los Angeles Public Affairs Council, stated, "In order for families to be together forever, you need to know who they are."²⁸ Ironically, the same Church whose previous policies had prevented black families from being together in the eternities, and whose teachings meant serious consequences for those with black ancestors, is now assisting blacks in tracing their roots to those same ancestors.

One result of the Church's not taking steps toward truth and reconciliation is that many members continue to harbor racist folklore and tradition. The effect of this lack of resolution is that these teachings continue to influence Mormon cultural attitudes and behavior. For example, the Church recently gave its employees, including BYU and CES faculty, a special edition of John Taylor's *The Gospel Kingdom*, which contains the following quotation: "And after the flood we are told that the curse that had been pronounced upon Cain was continued through Ham's wife, as he had married a wife of that seed. And why did it pass through the flood? Because it was necessary that the Devil should have a representation upon the earth as well as God . . ." ²⁹

This egregiously racist statement is also found in the 1998 CES Supplement distributed to CES faculty attending a Church history seminar at BYU.³⁰ I suspect that such an incident is the result of thoughtlessness and insensitivity rather than intent; nevertheless, imagine how such an offensive expression might sound to the ears of our black brothers and sisters! It seems positively alien to the generous-hearted pluralism expressed during the past decade by President Gordon B. Hinckley.

A knowledgeable BYU faculty member reports that such ideas as blacks lacking valiancy in the preexistence, dark skin being the mark of Cain, and cursed lineage continue to be taught in some religion courses at BYU as well as in institute and seminary classes and in Sunday School and other classes in various parts of the Church. In addition, black Latter-day Saints continue to be

subject to humiliating racist treatment. Recent reliable reports of two black sisters serving in temples in the Salt Lake area include one overhearing in reference to her presence, "What's that N ___ doing here?" Another overheard a comment, "I can't believe they have a N___ woman working in the temple."

What is particularly puzzling about the Church's failure to resolve this issue is that the Church itself has been the beneficiary of generous apologies or requests for forgiveness from others. For example, in the spirit of reconciliation, the Illinois state legislature

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recently issued a formal resolution apologizing to the Church for acts committed against the Saints by its citizens more than a hundred and fifty years ago. President James E. Faust praised the resolution as a "message of respect and reconciliation" that will "long live in the hearts of this people."³¹ That such an apology was unexpected made it even more significant.

In an article in the *University of Utah Chronicle* (3 Aug 2004) entitled, "The Value of the Illinois Apology: History Has Shown that Compassion and Forgiveness Work Wonders," William Pingree states, "The great

value of the Illinois apology comes from the fact that the state itself recognized the wounds caused by its own actions and now seeks to reconcile itself with the church. This is an act of great courage on Illinois' part, and the effect of such an act will also undoubtedly provide a point of healing for generations to come." Pingree adds,

The LDS Church itself has gained a vision of the value of the role of forgiveness. Some years ago, President Gordon Hinckley met with the descendants of the Mountain Meadows Massacre on the very site and acknowledged the role of members of the church in that tragic event. He apologized for that role, returned artifacts to the families and thus started a trend for reconciliation that continues today.

Pingree concludes, "Perhaps we can take a lesson from all this. The attempts at reconciliation and healing will boldly affect the events of our future. Clearly compassion and forgiveness are some of the highest forms of human conduct."³²

While realistic about the scope of the Illinois apology, an article in the *Washington Post* provides a powerful argument for resolving the issues relating to blacks and the priesthood: "The apology does not remove psychic scars, heal old wounds, end pain, or pay for lost lives and property. But it does recognize the humanity of those wronged and the humanity of those seeking forgiveness, and that's a significant step away from ignorance, hate and prejudice toward tolerance and peace."³³ One wonders, if the Church could issue a formal apology for what a small group of its followers did at Mountain Meadows on one particular September day in 1857, might it not also consider doing so for a policy and practice that not only involved large numbers of Latter-day Saints and their leaders, but that also has negatively impacted a much larger group of people for more than 150 years?

Another recent example of how asking forgiveness for past offenses can be healing is an initiative of the Rock Canyon Assembly of God congregation in Provo. Under the direction of their pastor, Dean Jackson, the church issued a formal declaration of apology to

members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints for un-Christlike attitudes and behavior. The declaration, which was signed by 160 members of the congregation, reported that this group had first sought forgiveness from the Lord. It stated, "Having received forgiveness from God, we now ask for forgiveness from the members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."³⁴ A special Day of Confession held at the church was attended by several Latter-day Saints, including area and general authority Carl Bacon and author Stephen Covey. BYU religion professor Stephen Robinson said, "Dean Jackson and his congregation have shamed us. All this time we Mormons have been complaining about our treatment in America, and they . . . came with a confession of their wrongdoing. I am embarrassed that they had to make the first move."³⁵

In *No Future without Forgiveness*, Archbishop Tutu says,

In the act of forgiveness we are declaring our faith in the future of a relationship and in the capacity of the wrongdoer to make a new beginning on a course that will be different from the one that caused us the wrong. We are saying here is a chance to make a new beginning. It is an act of faith that the wrongdoer can change.³⁶

I firmly believe that the future of the Church's relationship with not only its black members but with all victims of institutional abuse or wrongs will be brighter and more in keeping with the Lord's vision of his kingdom's ultimate possibilities if forgiveness—both seeking and giving it with generous hearts—is central to our church life.

CONCLUSION

WHEN I was editor of *Dialogue* and decided to publish Lester Bush's article on blacks and the priesthood, I invited three responses. In one, Hugh Nibley, who testified that he had received a revelation that the priesthood ban was from God, stated that acceptance of this teaching "provides the best possible test for our faith, our hope, and above all our charity."³⁷ I don't know what Nibley would say about our current understanding of the issues surrounding this matter, and I am certainly in no position to argue with his or any other person's spiritual conviction that the previous policy was truly God's will; but I would agree that because there seems to have been no revelatory or scriptural foundation for denying priesthood ordination to blacks,

the teaching and practice of its denial do indeed provide "the best possible test for our faith, our hope, and above all our charity." It has been a test of my faith in the unassailability of the doctrinal teachings of the Church; it is a test of my hope that we can avoid such problems in the future; and it is a test of my charity for the prophets and apostles of the Church who defended a teaching that harmed so many people, black and white, for so many years and who have yet to formally repudiate those teachings and seek forgiveness from those whom these teachings and practices offended.

Although mindful of the challenges, I am on the way toward passing these tests. While I am more skeptical about claims of doctrinal purity, I continue to have faith that my leaders seek to do right and are motivated by the teachings of Christ. While I am aware that Church leaders might promulgate teachings that could affect people negatively, I remain hopeful about the future of the Church and its pivotal place in the unfolding of the Lord's plan for all of his children. And I continue to love, sustain, and support the leaders of the Church even though I believe they were in error on this matter. My relationship to the Church, like that of others, will continue to involve grappling "with the uneasy balance and uncomfortable mixture of the divine, the practical, the corporate, the temporal, and the humanness of the Church."³⁸

I fully realize that it is not my role to call the Church nor its leaders to repentance, and that is not my intention here. Nevertheless, the Church belongs to all members, not just to General Authorities, and all of us, perhaps especially those endowed in the temple, have a special covenantal stewardship for the welfare of the Church—a responsibility, as Eugene England put it, to "speak the truth with love."³⁹ Until the Church makes a clear, clean break from its racist teachings and practices instead of ambiguously distancing itself from them, racism will continue its ugly and corrosive effect on the social and spiritual fabric of the Church.

Many years ago, Karl Keller published an essay in *Dialogue* titled, "Every Soul Has Its South." In speaking of his decision as a branch president to go to the South and participate in the civil rights movement, Karl wrote, "Involvement is after all the only dialogue a man has with God, action the only angel, risk the only kingdom."⁴⁰ Years later in an essay I wrote on apartheid in South Africa entitled "Every Soul Has Its South Africa," I quoted a passage from Alan Paton's moving novel, *Cry, the Beloved Country*, on the love

and courage required for true reconciliation and healing between the races: "Cry, the beloved country, these things are not yet at an end."⁴¹ Nor these many years after the lift of the priesthood ban are "these things" yet at an end for us. But I have faith, hope, and charity that as individual followers of Christ and as his Church, we can make them so.

NOTES

1. For a full discussion of this subject, see the articles in *The Journal of Book of Mormon Studies* 12, no. 1 (2003); SUNSTONE, March 2004; *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 36, no. 4 (Winter 2003); and the website for FAIR which lists presentations on this subject at various FAIR conferences and links to other papers (www.fairlds.org/apol/bom/bom01.html). The most complete treatment of the issue from a scientific angle is Simon G. Southerton, *Losing a Lost Tribe: Native Americans, DNA, and the Mormon Church* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 2004). See also www.jef-flindsay.com/LDSFAQ/DNA.shtml.

2. Hillel Halkin, *Across the Sabbath River* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 2002); Rivka Gonen, *To the Ends of the Earth: The Quest for the Ten Lost Tribes of Israel* (Northvale, NJ: Jason Aronson, 2002).

3. In "Y Chromosomes Traveling South: The Cohen Modal Haplotype and the Origins of the Lemba—the 'Black Jews of Southern Africa,'" Mark Thomas, Tudor Parfitt, et al., distinguish three groups of Jewish males: "Today, Jewish males can be divided into three castes: Cohanim (the paternally inherited priesthood), Leviim (non-Cohen members of the paternally defined priestly tribe of Levi), and Israelites (all non-Cohen and non-Levite Jews)." *The American Journal of Genetics* 66 (2000):674–86.

4. Tudor Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel: The History of a Myth* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 2002).

5. Typescript of "Lost Tribes of Israel," Nova, PBS airdate of 22 February 2000, page 2. See also Parfitt, *The Lost Tribes of Israel*.

6. Examples include such names as "Sadiki," "Namesi," "Mahdi," and "Salimani." Nova transcript, page 11.

7. Nova transcript, page 4; for a further discussion of DNA among the Lemba, see David Stewart, "DNA and the Book of Mormon," FAIR website, www.fairlds.org.

8. According to Stirling Adams, this belief, called "hypodescent," was common during the early years of the Restoration. See his unpublished "Race-based teachings in *Mormon Doctrine* after 1978," page 10, typescript in my possession.

9. There is some uncertainty about whether the prophet actually ordained Elijah Abel a seventy: but he did sign the ordination certificate. See Eunice Kennedy, *My Testimony of the Latter-day Work*, 1885, unpublished ms, LDS Church Archives, Salt Lake City, Utah. Elijah Abel was ordained an elder on 3 March 1836 and a seventy on 20 December 1836, the latter ordination being renewed on 4 April 1841. Abel was called to serve a mission for the Church in Canada in 1883. He returned home sick the following year and died Christmas day, 1884. Personal correspondence from Darius Gray, 7 September 2004; see also Lester Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8,

no. 1 (Spring 1973): 11–68.

10. Elijah Abel's son, Enoch, was ordained an elder 10 November 1900. Enoch's son, Elijah, was ordained a deacon sometime before 1925, ordained a priest 5 July 1934, and ordained an elder 29 September 1935. Ironically, some of Abel's descendants passed over the color line, and at least one contemporary descendent was unaware of her heritage until recently. See Donna Ables-Smith's online review of Margaret Blair Young and Darius Gray's book series, *Standing on the Promises* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000, 2002, 2003), "Learning about My Black History with Pride and Sorrow":

The first three books are important to my family because we did not know of our black ancestry. To say we were shocked is an understatement, but it is also important to understand the pride we feel. It is an amazing trip through the past. I was raised as a white woman with no real knowledge of the black experience. Reading the books was a personal, painful experience. I had also rejected the church during the seventies because of what I considered a racist doctrine. I have spent that last six months learning about Elijah and the other black pioneers. I am learning more as are other members of my family." (http://deseretbook.com/store/product-comments?product_id=100060420#customer_reviews; accessed 4 October 2004)

11. Newell G. Bringhurst, *Saints, Slaves, and Blacks: The Changing Place of Black People Within Mormonism*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1981); Lester Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine" and "Writing 'Mormonism's Negro Doctrine: An Historical Overview' (1973): Context and Reflections, 1988, *Journal of Mormon History*, 25, no. 1 (Spring 1999): 229–271; Armand L. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children: Changing Mormon Conceptions of Race and Lineage* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2003); Margaret Blair Young and Darius Aidan Gray's fiction trilogy, *Standing on the Promises, Book 1: One More River to Cross; Standing on the Promises, Book 2: Bound for Canaan; Standing on the Promises, Book 3: The Last Mile of the Way* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 2000, 2002, 2003); *Black and Mormon*, Newell G. Bringhurst and Darron T. Smith, eds. (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004); Darron Smith, "The Persistence of Racialized Discourse in Mormonism," *SUNSTONE*, March 2003, 31–33.

12. David M. Goldenberg, *The Curse of Ham: Race and Slavery in Early Judaism, Christianity, and Islam* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2003); Stephen R. Haynes, "Noah's Curse": *The Biblical Justification of American Slavery* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

13. Stirling Adams has written an intelligent, thorough review of both books. Unpublished manuscript in my possession.

14. Bush, "Mormonism's Negro Doctrine."

15. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 4. Some, including General Authorities, continue to believe that the denial of priesthood ordination to blacks was based on revelation. In speaking at a special dedicatory service in honor of Elijah Abel, Elder Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve stated, "We don't know all the reasons why the Lord does what he does. . . . It's difficult to know

why all things happen. I'm perfectly content to believe the Lord is in control." Quoted in Lynn Arave, "Monument in SL Erected in Honor of Black Pioneer," *Deseret News*, 29 September 2002.

16. Smith, "The Persistence of Racialized Discourse in Mormonism," 31.

17. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 252.

18. Adams, "Race-based Teachings in *Mormon Doctrine* after 1978."

19. Bruce R. McConkie, Book of Mormon Symposium for Seminary and Institute Personnel, BYU, 18 August 1978, morning general assembly, Second Annual CES Symposium, pages 3–5.

20. "Race Problems—As They Affect the Church," address given by Mark E. Peterson at BYU, 27 August 1954, LDS Church archives.

21. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 212.

22. *Ibid.*

23. Desmond Mpilo Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness* (New York: Doubleday, 1999), 265.

24. *Ibid.*, 269.

25. *Ibid.*, 271–72.

26. Mauss, *All Abraham's Children*, 248–50.

27. Carrie A. Moore, "Genealogy Workshop for Blacks," *Deseret News*, 31 January 2004, deseretnews.com/dn/view/0%2C1249%2C590039823%2C00.html (accessed 20 July 2004).

28. Stephanie Chavez, "Black Genealogists Get Help Tracing Their Roots: Mormons Lend their Expertise to the Difficult Task of Tracing African American Histories," *Los Angeles Times* (29 February 2004), www.religionnewsblog.com/...et_Help_Tracing_Their_Roots.html; (accessed 3 October 2004).

29. *The Gospel Kingdom: Selections from the Writings and Teachings of John Taylor*, 2nd collectors edition, ed. G. Homer Durham (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1990), 103. The original source is *Journal of Discourses* 22 (28 August 1881): 304. For a variation on this statement, see John Taylor, *Journal of Discourses* 23 (29 October 1882): 336.

30. Randy L. Bott, "The Divine Purpose of Trials," CES Symposium Handout, 1998.

31. "Illinois Delegation Apologizes to Mormons for the 1844 Attack," *USA Today*, 7 April 2004,

www.usatoday.com/. . . /2004-04-07-mormons-illinois_x.htm (accessed 15 October 2004). "On behalf of the people of Illinois, I want to express our official regret for the events that occurred in the 1840's. Religious hate crimes perpetrated in the 19th century were wrong, just as they are today in the 21st century. Religious persecution is against the principles upon which our country was founded." See www.lds.org (accessed 15 October 2004).

32. www.dailyutahchronicle.com/news/2004/04/02/Opinion/The-Value.Of.The.Illinois.Apology-649982.shtml. Accessed 2 August 2004.

33. washingtontimes.com/upi-breaking/20B040408-114729-9042r.htm; accessed 3 August 2004.

34. Dean Merrill, "A Peacemaker in Provo: How One Pentecostal Pastor Taught His Congregation to Love Mormons," *Christianity Today*, 4 February 2000, 69, 71.

35. *Ibid.*, 71.

36. Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*, 273.

37. Hugh Nibley, "The Best Possible Test," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 8, no. 1 (Spring 1973): 77. Black attorney and former LDS bishop Keith Hamilton cited Nibley's statement in a panel at the 2004 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium as representing his own position (tape SL04–375). Hamilton is writing a book, tentatively titled *Eleventh-Hour Laborer: Thoughts and Reflections of One Black Member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints*, which defends his belief that the priesthood ban was inspired.

38. Tina Hatch, "Relief Society: 1960 to the Present," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 17, no. 3 (Fall 2004): 97.

39. Eugene England, "Speaking the Truth in Love," in *Dialogues with Myself* (Midvale, UT: Orion Books, 1984), 49–56.

40. Karl Keller, "Every Soul Has Its South," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1, no. 2 (Summer 1966), 74.

41. Robert A. Rees, "Every Soul Has Its South Africa," *SUNSTONE*, November 1988, 18–20. The Paton quote is found in Alan Paton, *Cry, the Beloved Country* (New York: Charles Scribner's Son, 1950), 73–74.



JEANNETTE ATWOOD

"Honey, quick—get the video camera!"