

**MORMON
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OF IMMANUEL:**

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Mormon Fringe**

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Duffy** (p.34)

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WHY WE STAY FIVE PERSPECTIVES

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MaryAnne Hunter, Bill Bradshaw,
Grethe Peterson, & Thomas F. Rogers*

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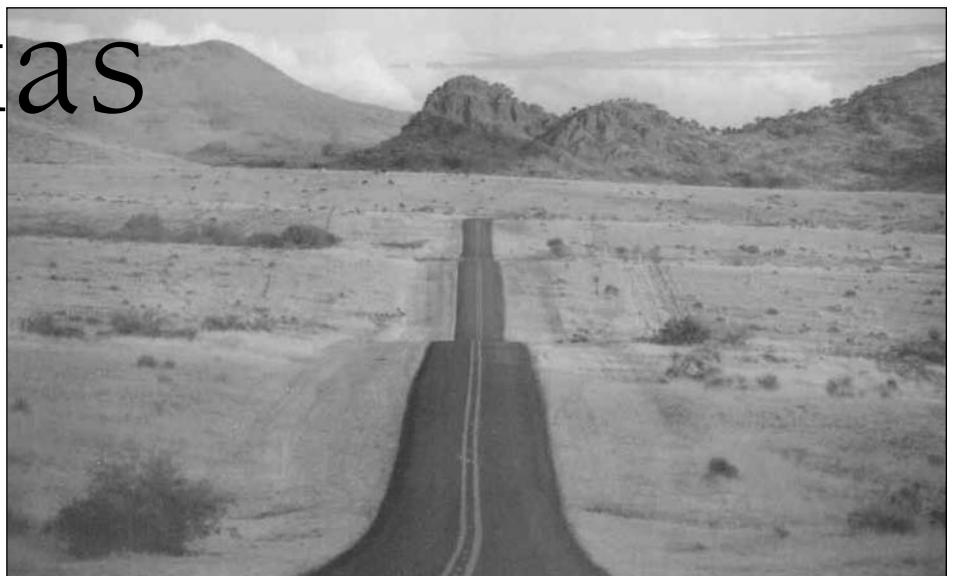
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KNOW WHEN TO SHUT UP

THE PRACTICAL LOGIC OF ARMAND L. MAUSS'S response in the July 2003 issue of SUNSTONE is more compelling than Lavina Fielding Anderson's defiant and ardent diatribe about "ecclesiastical abuse."

Confidence in the efficacy of Church governance is based on members' fundamental faith that the First Presidency and the Quorum of the Twelve, though human, act in accordance with their collective divine inspiration. Anderson's criticism of the leaders' motives and their policy decisions belies her professed faith and claim that she remains a "loyal Latter-day Saint." She gives six examples of leadership decisions with which she disagrees and pejoratively concludes, "Since 1992, the level of authoritarianism in the Church has increased dramatically." Her "follow the prophet drumroll" paragraph is particularly vituperative and arrogant, making quite hypocritical her challenge, "We must seek humility as a prerequisite for a more loving . . . community." And Anderson's seven-point battle strategy for dissidents in the Church shows that she holds little or no respect for priesthood authority at any level when leaders oppose or fail to adopt critics' agendas.

The Church has never professed to be a democratic institution, though most Church leaders are put to a semi-annual sustaining vote. It is not subject to a constitution that guarantees individual due process or the right of public dissent. As in any large organization, leaders make policy decisions and act to optimize the welfare of the whole and to perpetuate the institution, sometimes to the sub-optimization of minority interests. Some disagreement will remain on most issues whether the ultimate arbiter is a Supreme Court, a Board of Directors, or a Quorum of the Twelve. Live with it!

The "victims of ecclesiastical abuse" Anderson describes all seem to possess a common attribute: courage in trying to effect change that is not balanced with the serenity to accept what they could not change, nor with the wisdom to know the difference. As a result, they suffered reasonably predictable consequences. For example, suspension of a temple recommend (or something worse) should not be surprising to those who are guilty of "evil speaking of the Lord's anointed" to the degree that their comments and actions attract the attention of the Twelve. A person who repeatedly badmouths

the Church and its leadership should not be astonished that his or her progeny become "children of the purge" and cease to affiliate with the Church. That agency and individual choice are basic gospel principles does not nullify that certain choices risk negative consequences.

"So-called intellectuals" and academicians sometimes seem to mistakenly think they are the only smart (or the smartest) people in the Church and the only ones who think for themselves. Likewise, many LDS feminists wrongly tend to profess that their agenda and priorities represent the views and objectives of all female Church members. Both intellectuals and feminists have valid and important views to contribute. But at times, both groups need to learn when to shut up, or at least to quit whining publicly when their agendas stall or fail.

STEVEN HANSON
Vancouver, Washington

NO RATIONALE FOR ABUSE

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING THE perspectives from Lavina Fielding Anderson and Armand L. Mauss (SUNSTONE, July 2003). Anderson's essay is a touching remembrance of a painful period and its discouraging outcome. Her seven proposals are befitting articles of faith for the Sunstone community.

Unfortunately, Mauss's response seriously disappointed me. Every time I hear someone defend the Church's imperfections by stating that it "makes no claim to being a democratic institution," I ask what democracy has to do with the problem. If anything, an organization run by democratic processes is more likely to alienate some of its members in the ways Anderson describes. Regardless of how we define the Church's organizational classification—a theocracy, corporation, or voluntary organization—there cannot be any rationale for abusing authority. As a corporate CEO, I am under even more obligation to avoid abusing power and to keep every employee's welfare in my stewardship. Mauss's suggestion that compares dissidents to employees who should be called to "get with the program" can only be applied to members who are unproductive, dishonest, or disruptive. If an employee reveals that corporate management is practicing illegal, inappropriate, or counter-productive behavior, the management should be called to task, not the employee. It is exactly this kind of communi-

cation that has put Enron's executives in prison. A leadership that professes inspiration and revelation as its guiding principle ought to be the quickest to recognize its mistakes and rectify them, rather than ostracize those who blow the whistle.

Mauss's second defense is equally disappointing. It is basically an apology that the Church is a bureaucracy occasionally beset with "the law of unintended consequences" and that we should follow our leaders out of appreciation for the gravity of their responsibilities and complexities of running such a big institution. This point has some merit, but clearly only stands up when the mistakes are unintended and the consequences are analyzed and remedied. It is more appropriate to maintain channels and procedures that will minimize the adverse impact of unintended consequences. The worst thing is to alienate or excommunicate the sources of good feedback.

Mauss's final point seems to suggest that we should excuse the Church's weaknesses because its leaders have adopted cultural trends and influences from American society. Of course the Church is a product of its American origins. But as it becomes more of a worldwide organization, we hope there will be more cosmopolitan influences. One of the stark images that gives me great concern is that the trend toward increasingly centralized control will make matters significantly worse as the Church's reach expands and its membership continues to grow. But regardless of the origins of the programs implemented to carry out the missions of the Church, it is still crucial to remain vigilant of the consequences, intended or unintended, and to be ever more responsible for correcting the failures.

RICHARD RANDS
Mountain View, California

BOOSTER SHOTS

THANKS FOR THE JULY 2003 ISSUE. Some of us best keep our balance by our conscious efforts to maintain high hopes for the good our Church does while holding lower expectations for the thought and behavior of our leaders. For us, articles such as the exchange between Lavina Fielding Anderson and Armand Mauss sometimes act as "booster shots" for our immunization "against disillusionment by adopting very low expectations." When my immunization is not waning, I am rarely disap-

pointed and more often grateful for the many times my low expectations are exceeded.

All in all, I expect Mauss's gentle criticism of Anderson's approach is correct. Besides other problems, the public sharing of one-sided stories of ecclesiastical abuse may influence sympathetic readers to see abuse where none exists. Mauss might have specifically commented on Anderson's "sweeping generalizations . . . about the handling of [accusations of] child sexual abuse." Anderson's generalizations remind me of the great toll on individuals and families caused by false memories of abuse. If she has not already done so, Anderson might do well to study false memory syndrome as well as Elizabeth Loftus's work on memory and consider how many of the stories she publishes might be not only one-sided, but inaccurate even from that one side. False or distorted memories and perceptions are likely present in both sides of an alleged ecclesiastical abuse, just as in many, though far from all, accusations of sexual abuse. Publishing such stories may be more effective in encouraging people to feel abused than they are in motivating change by the institutional Church or its leaders. If so, publicly airing such accounts functions in the same way, though not to the same degree of culpability, as a therapist whose comments and actions instill false memories.

But of everything in the July issue, I most appreciate Neil Andersen's letter telling Hartman Rector Jr.'s story about "unconditional love." That story is a much more help-

ful comment on Elder Nelson's article than an analytic approach. I like to think God does better at loving his children than do those of us (whatever our ecclesiastical position or membership) who love best those who do what we tell them.

JIM RASMUSSEN
Albuquerque, New Mexico

LOOKING FORWARD

IN OUR TIGHTLY KNIT SUNSTONE community, we sometimes tend to focus inwardly, writing and dialoguing frequently about ourselves. As a community member, I have certainly been involved in my share of such parochial discussions. While I am usually able to shake these off and focus on aspects of Sunstone which enrich my life, the most recent issue presented a portrait that is more inward looking than expansive, more insipid than provocative.

The priority given in the July 2003 SUNSTONE to re-hashing tired issues, a defensive editorial diatribe discussing the organization's internal management challenges, and a detailed, yet selective history of conflict between the staff and board of trustees made for frustrating and wearisome reading.

Having been personally involved in some of the events written about, I initially worried that my negative reaction was tainted by closeness. When I asked other readers for their reactions to the recent SUNSTONE issue, I heard things such as, "Does anybody really



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care about the minutia of internal organizational politics at Sunstone?" and "Sunstone needs to escape the mirror it seems to be tethered to." Such statements confirmed rather than allayed my concerns.

The intellectual milieu surrounding Mormonism is rich, and Sunstone forums provide unique places for many of us to expand our faith and accelerate our pursuit of truth. There is a wide-ranging body of Mormon material to help provoke this quest, and Sunstone has historically been a great access point to, and creator of, such material.

That the magazine seems to be stuck in a rut of insular dialogue not only damages the organization but also stifles the creative force that has driven Sunstone to great heights in the past. I'm much more interested in Sunstone's promising future than in navel gazing about its past.

As such, I appreciate Dan Wotherspoon's assurances in his editorial that he is also pleased the Sunstone serial history series has finally been completed and is actively trying to encourage more forward-looking articles and essays. Along with him, I eagerly anticipate Sunstone's next chapter.

STAN CHRISTENSEN
Palo Alto, California

STRATEGY ADVICE

SUNSTONE HAS REPEATEDLY CALLED for feedback and comments about its mission and how best to accomplish it. In that spirit, I offer two random thoughts:

Thought No. 1. "Divide and conquer" is a time-honored adage of warfare. We sometimes gloss over the permutations of that bit of wisdom, but we shouldn't.

Suppose, for argument's sake, that the Church is very unhappy with Sunstone, with its undisciplined symposiums and other efforts to provide forums for free expression. Suppose again that the Church has determined to rid itself of Sunstone and is aware of Sunstone's always-precarious finances. (Probably none of these suppositions are too much of a stretch.)

Now, if the Church were to conclude that it could intimidate Sunstone's more moderate leaders into taking the organization and magazine in a more conservative or moderate direction, marginalizing the dissenters and doubters who value its forums, that would serve two purposes for the Church. First, it would temper Sunstone's published criticisms of the Church, which its leaders would consider a good thing. Second, it might just dishearten the liberals (who may view Sunstone as their only outlet for expres-

sion and who also provide the bulk of its funding). Now, if disheartened liberals no longer see Sunstone as a voice for their concerns, might they possibly withdraw or slacken their intellectual and financial support? And were that to happen, would all the conservative and moderate Mormons whose leaders have warned them away from Sunstone rush to fill the void? "No!" That would lead to even more dire financial prospects for Sunstone, and possibly its demise. Do you think the Church would shed a tear?

Thought No. 2. There is another time-honored adage: "Play to your strengths." When push comes to shove, go for support to your strengths, not your weaknesses. Military commanders rely on this principle; as do football coaches, CEOs, even artists.

If Sunstone is in a bind, might it not be a good idea to emphasize its strengths: diversity, free expression, open discussion, the pursuit of truth? Wouldn't it be a bad idea to ease back on its strengths and instead attempt to buttress what could be perceived as its "weaknesses": restraint, moderation, ability to maintain mainstream diplomacy with the Church?

It is my opinion that if Sunstone makes nice to the Church by marginalizing dissenters and becoming more moderate, the Church will interpret its actions as weakness, smile benevolently, and grind it into the dust.

MICHAEL J. BARRETT
Sterling, Virginia

NO NEED TO WAIT

I ENJOYED THUMBING THROUGH your symposium's preliminary program in the July SUNSTONE. I applaud the statements about its purposes: "Hear words that inspire Christian living. . ." and "Learn new strategies for intelligent discipleship in today's world."

In that same spirit, I also enjoyed Kathleen Petty's reflections about teaching Gospel Doctrine class. She understands the big picture. Three cheers for her desire to teach that human intelligence about truth and fact will evolve, but we don't have to wait for proofs and answers in order to live an inspired Christian life.

R. B. DAINES
San Francisco, California

TRULY CONNECTING

THANK YOU FOR PUBLISHING DALE C. LeCheminant's article (SUNSTONE, March 2003) detailing methods of bridge-

building by members of dominant racial and ethnic groups towards disenfranchised groups. It is captivating, and, if put into practice by most people, his ideals would go far in improving the world.

However, might I suggest one additional tactic? It is not enough for majority group members to reach out to the disenfranchised by gently correcting them of the “prejudices of their fathers.” Rather, it is incumbent upon us to inquire *why* those prejudices evolved in the first place. Could they have any rational basis at all? Could their existence be due in some measure to the actions or inactions of *our fathers*?

LeCheminant suggests that the generations-long hatred of the Lamanites toward the Nephites originated in distorted perspectives of the Lamanite fathers. But were Laman and Lemuel’s anger toward their younger brother Nephi wholly unjustified—based only on distortions—especially at a time and in a culture where the oldest son typically held a position above the other siblings? And given Jacob’s obvious favoritism of his youngest son, was the jealousy exhibited by Joseph’s older brothers really based on distorted perceptions? I think not. To be sure, the failure of the older brothers in both examples in no small part results from their inability or unwillingness to seek their own spiritual confirmation of the Lord’s will. Nevertheless, to dismiss the angry ones as being irrationally “bad” or “unholy” oversimplifies complex relationships and prevents us from truly connecting with those who feel wronged.

In this vein, I am trying to achieve a better understanding of the Middle East and of the anger against the West felt by many Arabs. It is not enough to read only the analyses that decry or explain away their anger. I also need to ferret out the underpinnings of this hostility. For example, historic and modern European and American intervention in the Middle East most often has taken place to control trade routes and natural resources and to enrich the intervening country instead of for any altruistic or self-defense purposes. Such interventions have very often resulted in great detriment to the citizens of those countries.

To my surprise, I also have found myself appreciating the accusations many Arabs make that Western culture is decadent, immoral, and corrupting of their core values. Indeed, there is much in Western culture that I find decadent, immoral, and corrupting of my own core values. Consequently, I empathize with the Arab parents who resist allowing their children to beam HBO into

their bedrooms.

To the extent we can be honest about the reasons for grievances expressed by people who disagree with us, not just the reasons that they alone are blameworthy, we will be better able to heal wounds and to move forward.

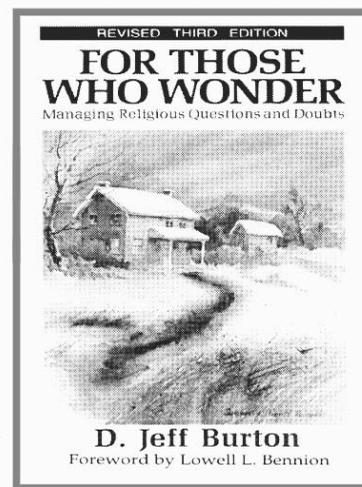
KATHLEEN A. McDONALD
Vacaville, California

EMBRACING AN “EVIL”

JUST A REMINDER THAT FOR ALL THE dastardly racism extant among those (oft-quoted) publications and sources mentioned in the several pertinent, well-written articles SUNSTONE has published recently in reference to the twenty-fifth anniversary of the priesthood revelation, we must recall that early Mormonism in Missouri was extirpated from that (then legally slave) state for one reason: that Mormons *accepted* blacks with equality into their church and society, contrary to most local Missouri settlements. The Saints’ pro-black sympathy was always mentioned as an “evil” which rendered LDS society unwanted in Missouri.

GERRY L. ENSLEY
Los Alamitos, California

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DEAN LOWE MAY

Judith Dushku and Colleen McDannell

Dean Lowe May was born in Worland, Wyoming, 6 April 1938, and died unexpectedly of a heart attack in Salt Lake City on 6 May 2003. He taught history at the University of Utah for twenty-five years, authored several books and many articles, and served as president of the Mormon History Association the year preceding his passing. He and his wife, Cheryll Lynn, had been married for thirty-five years and have three children, Caroline, Timothy, and Thaddeus.

I MET DEAN IN my junior year at BYU (1962) and have been close to him ever since. It says in the title of this memorial session that Dean was “born friendly.” As I considered what I might say today, I decided one of the things I could say (not to be contentious, of course), is that it was my experience with Dean that this notion of being “born friendly” is too simplistic.

My experience with people in general is that the most important qualities they possess often involve some pain and work in developing them. Not that I believe that Dean was ever unfriendly. But as one who knew him well, I think it is helpful to understand that as a child and in high school, and even during his BYU college days, Dean struggled to feel that he had a circle of friends. It was partly his struggling and reaching out to others that taught him the value of friendliness and also taught him to be a more diligent and universally friendly person. He thought seriously about the task and worked at it, and became someone skilled at being a friend.

We’ve all had the experience of talking to someone in a roomful of people while the person we’re talking with is only partly paying attention, always looking over our shoulder to see if there is a more important person, someone who’s a bit more of a celebrity, standing behind us that they might rather spend their few moments with. One of the wonderful and magnificent things about Dean May was that whenever you were with him and talking with him, you felt that he

was entirely engaged in you. He made you feel that you were the center of his universe at that moment. Never did you feel like he was looking around for someone better to occupy his time.

An aspect of Dean’s funeral came as a bit of a surprise to me. There was no question in my mind that I was his beloved friend, but at his funeral, I came to understand that there are hundreds of people who felt like they were Dean’s best friend and one of his beloved people. In that moment of realization, I had to ask, “Am I willing to share this distinctive position in the world with all of these other people?” Before the funeral was half over, I realized that one of Dean’s sweetest and most lovable qualities was his ability to make each person in his life feel immensely important. He had many “best friends.”

Dean would always notice the unnoticed people in the corners and make them feel they were a part of things. But again, I think this concern and ability to connect with others came in part from the fact that there were times in Dean’s life when he felt dismissed or overlooked. From our college days, I know that he often felt that other people, who had the confident bravado that BYU celebrates and rewards, were getting all the attention and that he never would. But what those experiences did was encourage him to develop his beautiful quality of friendliness to people. His friendliness was not born to him. It was developed and fine-tuned so he would never be a person who

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would neglect anyone who would enter his life and treat that person as he had once been treated.

I ‘D LIKE TO mention one other quality, but I want to be very careful while I discuss it because it is such a wonderful quality, and I don’t want to turn it on his head. This is Dean’s ability, by force of will, to change some aspect of his personality. I am referring here to times when Dean was at BYU, and also when he went to Harvard, that he experienced some personal and professional betrayals. There were people who treated Dean less than respectfully. It hurt him—I knew it hurt; Cheryll knew it hurt. Dean went on to Brown, where he completed his Ph.D., and then returned to Utah, which he thought would be like coming home to Zion. But in those first years, he experienced several more disappointments over how he was received in this community. As a friend who watched him carefully, there were times when I worried Dean might focus on some of



Dean flashes his trademark smile while on the top sail of the Christian Radich during the 2001 Sea Trek.

the things in his life that didn't work out as well as he had wished. I worried that he would become a cup-is-half-empty person more than a cup-is-half-full person.

But more than ten years ago, Dean, who loved Cheryll so deeply and adored his children and wanted to enjoy life more fully, decided to completely throw out and ignore any kind of question about how he was regarded. He made a conscious decision to forget those times when he had been disrespected. He chose to be a happier and more joyful person, and to focus on all the good ways that he was treated. His whole family shared in this sense of abundance and richness that this shift of perspective brought him and them. By choice, Dean chose to acknowledge and experience the abundant life; consequently, he lived the abundant life, commented on it and was grateful for it, and shared that appreciation of abundance with others around him. Because of this choice, when we came together at that sad time at his funeral, nobody thought, "What a shame that he wasn't better appreciated or more famous for this and this." People wept, and cried, and rejoiced that this was a man who died with a cup that was full and running over.

THE FINAL QUALITY I want to mention is Dean's sense of always being in a state of anticipation about doing something new, something dramatic and uniquely exciting. There are many occasions when I would come to visit Salt Lake—and I only visit Salt Lake about once a year—and Dean and Cheryll would make me feel as if they'd been long anticipating my arrival and

rejoiced that I'd finally come home. We would often talk a little about our lives, our kids, and people we knew and loved. And then we would begin to talk about what's on the horizon. Dean would always lean back and say, "Well, I've been thinking about doing such and such, and wouldn't it be great if we could do this?" After one such discussion, I remember calling my husband and saying, "Jim, I've just been sitting with Dean, and we're thinking, wouldn't it be cool for the Montana centennial to find someone to write a special symphony to celebrate Montana's one hundred years? And then we can all go to Montana and rent horses and do this and that and all these wonderful Montana things together!" And by the time I left Dean's living room, I was calling Jim to ask him what we'd be doing next year in June so we might begin to make arrangements to go to Montana with Dean and Cheryll to celebrate the Montana centennial. I mean, Montana? It was just unheard of! But Dean had that ability to come up with an idea, turn it into a plan, and then turn that plan into an event and a celebration—a time of joy and of people coming together and celebrating some wonderful occasion. I will miss that about Dean—the chance to plan events that did happen, and some that never did but which were so fun while they were being hatched. I have a long list of things I would have never done had it not been for Dean.

I loved Dean May. I was his close personal friend. I know what it was like to be greeted by those beautiful eyes and be told, "Welcome to my home. I've waited for you, and I've so looked forward to this chance for us to be together." I'll miss that terribly.

JUDITH DUSHKU is a professor of political science at Suffolk University in Boston, Massachusetts, where, long ago, Dean and Cheryll each taught for a short time. Judy is married to Jim Coleman, who met Dean only ten years ago but regarded him as a close personal friend. She has four grown children who all treasure their friendships with Dean.

DEAN'S CHAIR

MY OFFICE HAS been down the hall from Dean May's for almost fourteen years. Historians inhabit their offices in ways different from doctors, lawyers, or other professionals. Since our work is so close to our lives, our offices reflect our personalities. Our offices are filled with books and punctuated with prints and postcards, and our opinions on the world spill out even onto the surrounding doors and walls. Yellowed newspaper cartoons and long-since-past conference announcements speak of our politics and profession—if not our house-keeping habits.

Dean May had a marvelous armchair in his office that I frequently plopped into. He was always in his office—meeting with students, staring at his computer, drinking his strange, creamy "diet drinks." Sometimes I had to postpone my visits because a television crew was interviewing him on the habits of the local natives. As the "Utah historian," Dean May represented our state with awareness and sensitivity, noting our foibles but also our cultural contributions. Chatting with him while lounging in his armchair was therapeutic. I would sweep in with some seemingly overwhelming problem or even a trivial question, and he smiled and set life in perspective. We talked about his travels to Egypt or his adventures crossing the seas in a sailing ship, and I marveled at how anyone could survive weeks without a good movie. Dean and I shared an affection for new people and places, but he had a deep kindness that allowed him to engage the world in a wise and loving way. If memory can alter behavior, I hope that remembering those armchair conversations will cultivate that same kindness in my own worldly interactions.

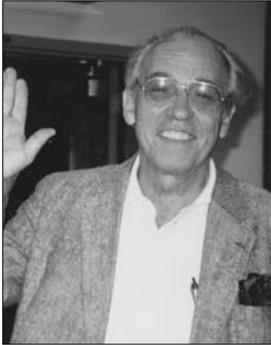
I learned of Dean May's death while I was stranded at Boston's airport. I missed the rituals of grief that demonstrate to the living the fragility of their very existence. Now the door to Dean's office is closed, and there will be no more conversations about sailing ships and Mormon customs. From my perspective in Carlson Hall, a saint of our latter days has died. I'm not sure there are many left.

COLLEEN MCDANNELL is Sterling McMurrin Professor of Religious Studies and Professor of History at the University of Utah.

I N M E M O R I A M

STANLEY B. KIMBALL

Maurine Carr Ward and Douglas R. Bowen



Stanley B. Kimball was born in Farmington, Utah, 25 November 1926, and died in St. George, Utah, 15 May 2003. He had a distinguished teaching career, which included forty-four years as a history professor at Southern Illinois University, in Edwardsville, Illinois. He served as president of the Mormon History Association in 1984. He and his wife Violet Tew Kimball had been married for just six weeks less than fifty years, and they have four children, Chase, Hope, Kay, and April.

KNOWING THAT STAN Kimball had retired from Southern Illinois University and had moved to St. George, Utah, and knowing his health was deteriorating, I decided to interview him for the *Mormon Historical Studies* magazine. These reflections are condensed from that 2001 interview and from a telephone interview I had conducted with him about five years before.

STAN WAS GRACIOUS. He welcomed me with open arms, as if we were the best of friends. We sat on his sun porch overlooking St. George and drank grape juice. We joined Violet at the kitchen table for a bowl of ice cream. Before the interview, Stan had asked me for the questions I planned to ask so he could type up some notes and not forget things he wanted to say. When I sent him the final draft of the interview, he sent it back with a few additions and corrections. He then told me that he had some good days and some bad days, and the day I had been there was “not one of his good days.” Yet not once during our three hours together had he said to me, “I really don’t feel good today.” Nor did he look at the clock, hoping to signal me that it was time to wrap things up.

I called Stan a maverick. With a twinkle in his eye, he replied, “What the hell did you expect from someone who’s descended from J. Golden Kimball?” He also claimed direct descent from Heber C. Kimball and Alpheus Cutler. I further believe that he was a maverick because he had been raised an only child by a single mother whose work took

her away from home. He grew up with doting grandparents who loved him dearly, but he learned his values the hard way as he lived his turbulent teen years in Farmington, Utah.

Stan enlisted in the Air Force and later served a mission in Czechoslovakia. He was among the last missionaries to serve there before being pulled out in February 1950. The missionaries were told to report to the president of the British Mission in London in one month. So, for thirty days, those young men toured Switzerland, Italy, France, Holland, and Belgium and had a grand old time. Stan loved the Czech people. He wrote his dissertation on the history of the Czech National Theater and got a Rockefeller Grant to study Slavs in Utah; both of these studies were later published.

STAN WAS A PERFORMER. He believed that teaching was performing, that lecturing or speaking in church was performing. “My whole life is performance, and it’s paid off pretty well,” he said. “If I can help people understand themselves or history, that’s what I enjoy doing.” A couple of times during our interview, Stan asked me to turn off the tape recorder, and we just sat and visited. We talked about our children and other things. He ceased to be the performer during these moments. Then he would straighten up, motion to the tape recorder and say, “Next question.” He was ready for his audience again. We who knew him well all have an image indelibly etched in our memory of Stan behind a podium with his red shirt, Indian vest, large turquoise bolo tie, and a

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smile on his face as he taught us what he knew so well.

STAN WAS A MOVER AND A DOER. In 1959, Stan was hired to teach East European History at Southern Illinois University in Edwardsville, Illinois. He convinced the director of graduate studies that Southern Illinois University would be the perfect facility for a repository of original documents pertaining to the history of the LDS Church in Illinois. He received a grant from the Graduate Studies office and began to write letters to historical societies, libraries, and individuals. As the material poured in, Stan was given more grant money for student researchers, a room in the library for his collection, and a paid staff to catalog it. The collection he created is found on 105 reels of microfilm and in 28 manila folders, comprising about 84,000 pages of material. In 1984, Stan became president of Mormon History Association. And in 1992, he was awarded the Grace Arrington Award for Mormon History Excellence.



Violet and Stan Kimball, Christmas, 1995

STAN WAS AN EXPLORER. He traveled and researched Mormon Trails and worked for many years with the Bureau of Land Management on all western trails. He was never more alive than when out wandering

you can look farther and see less than in most other places. The hand of man just vanishes in some of the promontories out there.”

STAN WAS AN AUTHOR. Besides writing several books on the western trails, he wrote

on a trail. He coined several phrases that explained his feelings such as, “The trail was like a linear temple,” or “The power of place and the spirit of locale. . . .” “When you are in an area where something important happened, there’s a special feeling that you don’t get anywhere else, and it’s almost palpable,” Stan said. “You can almost reach up and touch it. And it’s a glorious feeling. There are parts along the Mormon Trail where

a biography of Heber C. Kimball which won the 1981 Mormon History Association’s Best Book Award. Stan also edited Heber C. Kimball’s diaries as well as many other books and articles.

THE one true love of Stan’s life was his wife, Violet. He said that the best thing that happened to him when he took his first job in Winston-Salem, North Carolina, was meeting Violet. He was proud of her accomplishments as an author, and he made sure I knew about everything she had written. One of his favorite pastimes was playing the piano while Violet sang. Stan loved being a husband, a father, and a grandfather.

I have been richly blessed by knowing, learning from, and listening to Stanley B. Kimball. We will miss him, but he has moved on to discover new, uncharted trails.

MAURINE CARR WARD is the editor of *Mormon Historical Studies* (formerly *The Nauvoo Journal*). She lives in Hyrum, Utah.

THE “HAPPY HERETICS”

AFTER HE RETIRED from forty-three years of teaching at Southern Illinois University, Stan and Violet Kimball moved from Glen Carbon, Illinois, to St. George, Utah, on 9 September 2001. Their furniture arrived on 10 September. On 11 September, their television wasn’t yet set up, and they couldn’t find a radio. The only connection they had to the disasters at the World Trade Center, the Pentagon, and in Pennsylvania was by telephone and the Internet. It was a tragic beginning to what would become an eighteen-month journey of pain and pleasure for the Kimbals.

Soon after arriving, they started attending musical events at Dixie College, and at a Christmas concert, Violet found herself sitting next to Dawn Sandberg, whom she and Stan had met, along with Dawn’s husband, Karl, at a Sunstone Symposium in Chicago. Violet asked, “Do you remember me?” Dawn soon called to invite Stan to speak at our study group, and in March, Stan gave a wonderful presentation on “Kolob Time” (see *SUNSTONE*, May 2003) and “Civilization from A Penny.” A large crowd came that night, and a lot of animated conversation followed Stan’s remarks. These lighthearted but thought-provoking essays were my introduction to Stan Kimball, whom I came to know as an intelligent, independent thinker, who remained intellectually active even in retirement. Over the next ten months, Stan and Violet were contributing members of our study group, hosting us three times in their beautiful new home, giving several presentations, and actively participating in all discussions. Stan tried to make sure everyone participated, even the quiet ones.

Stan told us of his childhood, growing up without a father, and how Spencer W. Kimball had served as a surrogate father, always making time for his young cousin whenever Stan visited Salt Lake City. He also told us how he regularly took advantage of their relationship by sending his apostle-cousin dozens of unsolicited letters with suggestions about how to improve the Church.

Stan and Violet became active in their new St. George Ward, but

Stan’s quorum members didn’t quite know how to react to this man, who soon gained a reputation as an unpredictable maverick. Stan was not easily intimidated, and was always himself, even in high priests group meetings. He often expressed sentiments which could have gotten others into trouble or labeled apostate, but because of his age, his health, and pedigree, Stan was tolerated. And once people got to know him, they realized Stan wasn’t out to attack and destroy, but to improve. He further gained respect by stepping in to play the piano in priesthood meetings when no one else was available. He ended up playing almost every week for more than a year. He also taught the high priest lesson once a month until he became too ill to continue.

Stan’s last appearance at our group was 8 December 2002, at our annual Christmas potluck. Violet came a time or two after that, then felt she needed to stay home to care for Stan, who was hospitalized for two weeks in February, then moved to a rehab center for three weeks. He was switched to hospice care in late April, and passed away on 15 May. While with us, Stan added a layer of academic respectability to our group. Unfortunately, like his friend Karl Sandberg, he was with us too short a time. Several of us wanted to visit Stan towards the end, but Violet seemed hesitant for people to see him in his deteriorated condition. We were able to make our farewell at Stan’s 17 May funeral, held at Metcalf Mortuary, as the family wanted to retain full control over the music and program.

Stan greatly enjoyed his time in our little St. George group, which he jokingly called the “Happy Heretics” or “Sunstoners,” for short. He told Violet he was glad he had found some “like-minded individuals.”

I like to imagine that Stan is now involved with a study group on the other side and is even now eagerly exploring new ideas and directions with Karl Sandberg, Leonard Arrington, Dean May, Sterling McMurrin, Lowell Bennion, Parley A. Christensen, Richard Poll, my dad, and other like-minded thinkers.

DOUGLAS R. BOWEN is retired, living in St. George, Utah.

DEVOTIONAL

MEMORY IS OUR TEACHER

By Frances Lee Menlove

"This do in remembrance of me."

LUKE 22:19

*"Let me see again."*MARK 10:46–52¹

I BEGIN WITH a haunting encounter I had with a prison inmate in California. My friend Evelyn serves as a prison chaplain, and she had invited me to help lead a non-denominational communion service in the men's prison. As I entered the prison, I was given a large identification card to wear on a chain around my neck. The huge numbers on it were readable from the guard towers.

The Sunday service was held in a plain room with a metal table up front and about a hundred chairs. We set up the communion table, and soon the men began arriving. By eleven, the room was full and the service began. After a trustee with an awesomely deep voice led us in some hymns, I read a scripture from Psalms. The chaplain delivered an animated sermon. There was another hymn and then the Lord's supper.

Evelyn had briefed me about what she wanted done. "The men will line up in the center aisle to come forward for communion," she said. "You will stand beside the communion table and be ready to pray individually with any of the prisoners who choose to come over to you after receiving communion. Ask each man his name and what he would like to pray for. But," she cautioned, "use your head. No praying for escapes."

She explained the prison rule of no physical contact with the men, but then added, laughing, "The young know the rules, but the old know the exceptions! So when I pray with them, I hold my hands out, palms up, and the men put their hands on top of mine, palms down." She believes this bit of human contact makes the prayers more immediate

and real, "And," she added, "I know where their hands are when my eyes are closed!"

So communion began. The men filed up, one by one, to the front where the chaplain broke off a piece of bread from a large loaf and placed it in the inmate's hand. She then held out a pottery chalice of grape juice. He dipped his bread in, ate it, and then either returned to his seat or went to the side toward me for individual prayer. I prayed with about ten men that day, holding my hands open, palms up, and closing my eyes.

After the service, as Evelyn said goodbye to the men as they shuffled out the back door, I stayed up front alone and began to clear off the sacrament table. I looked up to see Jake, one of the men I had prayed with, walking up the aisle toward me. He was a tall, slight man in his thirties, with sad eyes. He came forward and stood in front of the table. He hesitated a moment and then said to me "Can I have another one?" I'm sure I looked puzzled. "Another communion," he said. "I am going to have a hard week. I need another one. I need to remember."

"Of course," I replied. I broke off a piece of bread and gave it to him. I held up the chalice, and he slowly dipped the bread in the juice, ate it, smiled slightly, and left.

I haven't a clue what worried Jake about the coming week. A court hearing? A run-in with another inmate? A doctor's visit? But he knew the coming week would challenge him. His decision to take two trips to the communion table was a tad unorthodox. But Jake's belief that what he needed to do was "remember" is bedrock gospel.

TO remember is a central message, maybe the central message, of the Bible. Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel says: "Much of what the Bible demands can be comprised in one word,

'Remember.'² However, remembering is more than simply looking back at past events. As Henri Nouwen states,

More importantly, it is to bring these events into the present and celebrate them here and now. For Israel, remembrance means participation. . . . Through memory, love transcends the limits of time and offers hope at any moment of our lives.³

The prophets of Israel led by reminding. Moses tells the people to remember how God led them out of Egypt. "Don't mistreat strangers," the prophets exhort, "for remember, you were once a stranger." "Do not forget the misery of slavery, and do not forget the liberating love of God." "Be sure and always remember" echoes through the Hebrew Bible.

The message "to remember" is also core to the New Testament. Jesus tells the disciples about God's love as well as the difficult times ahead and then says, "I have said these things to you so when this hour comes, you may remember" (John 16:4). And, of course, we have the oft-repeated instruction for the Lord's supper: "This do in remembrance of me" (John 22:19). Jesus urges his followers to remember God, and then later his followers use the memory of Jesus to guide them and offer them hope and confidence as they face a dark world.

Remembering has an honored place in Christianity's two-thousand-year history. The great Christian reformers were often rememberers. They took us back to the original vision of Jesus and taught us how to live. St. Francis recaptured the idea of poverty and reminded us of our radical obligation to the poor. Martin Luther recaptured the idea of undeserved grace and every person's unmediated access to God.

And, of course, Joseph Smith. Joseph Smith reminds us that God's revelation is not finished. He reminds us what Paul had learned while working to bring the message of Easter to the Gentiles. Paul insists that God is bigger than the Jews and that God's work is organic, evolving, and changing. With Paul, Joseph Smith reminds us that God is still speaking. A statement I've heard attributed to Gracie Allen captures this message: "Never," she says, "never place a period where God has placed a comma."

PERHAPS those of us gathered here today at the Sunstone symposium might find some comfort and illumination by remembering. Some of us are be-



FRANCES LEE MENLOVE, one of the founders of *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, holds a Ph.D. in psychology from the University of Michigan and a Master's of Divinity from Pacific School of Religion in Berkeley, California. She has four children, six grandchildren, and lives in Oregon. This sermon was delivered as a devotional address at the 2003 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (tape SL03-301).

Remembering teaches us we needn't be afraid of controversy, that we shouldn't be surprised by tensions. Jesus was surrounded by it. Paul dealt with it. In fact, the two-millennia-long history of Christianity is chock full of it. A church which is human will always have tensions—and controversy, and a need for prophetic voices to speak truth to power.

lievers, some non-believers, and some oscillators. Some are active; some are inactive. Many of us have scholarly or intellectual interests in history or theology or sociology or Mormon culture. Some take issue with the perceived authoritarianism and chauvinism of the Church. Others find comfort in the stability of a strong, clearly defined hierarchy. Some believe patriarchy is not ordained by God, that patriarchy has defined reality incorrectly, and that it is based on a false theology of women. Some deplore the condemnation of homosexuality. Some rejoice in the assertion of being the “one true church” while others find this assertion idolatrous. Some chafe at the Church's recent mixing of conservative politics with faith, and others appreciate the secular guidance. Some deplore the secretiveness of Church finances while others rejoice in the Church's solvency and ability to use its resources to make a positive difference in the world. The list goes on.

But remembering teaches us we needn't be afraid of controversy, that we shouldn't be surprised by tensions. Jesus was surrounded by it. Paul dealt with it. In fact the two-millennia-long history of Christianity is chock full of it. A church which is human will always have tensions—and controversy, and a need for prophetic voices to speak truth to power.

As we remember our history, we will remember the controversies. We know that historical facts are always interpreted facts. Cleaning up our history, smoothing over the tensions, is akin to turning our most intimate teacher against us. Memory is our teacher.

Remember how Jesus used controversy to teach. Jesus often criticized his own religion. Further, Jesus made heroes out of the Jew's traditional enemies. He treated heathen Gentiles and ostracized Samaritans as though they were as good as his own Jewish people.

Remember the story of the Good Samaritan, the example of love of one's

neighbor? To Jews, Samaritans were a heretical and schismatic group of spurious worshippers of the God of Israel, detested even more than pagans were. And the Samaritan woman at the well! This Samaritan woman, who had been through five husbands, Jesus tapped to lead a spiritual revival. This audacious, strong, Samaritan woman has been called the first missionary to the Gentiles. Yes, Jesus wasn't afraid of controversy.

And remember how Elder Bruce R. McConkie came to accept change in the face of howling controversy. Before 1978, Elder McConkie was a rather strident defender of the Negroes-will-never-receive-the-priesthood-in-mortality view. He's been described as a man who was “sometimes wrong, but never in doubt.” A stranger to uncertainty.

Yet this same apostle forcefully acknowledged that he too had to be a rememberer. He had to remember the bedrock principle of the Mormon story: “God is still speaking.” The revelation opening the priesthood to blacks was given in June of 1978. In August of that year, Elder McConkie said this to a BYU audience:

There are statements in our literature by the early brethren which we have interpreted to mean that the Negroes would not receive the priesthood in mortality. I have said the same things, and people write me letters and say, “You said such and such, and how is it now that we do such and such?” And all I can say to that is: [We] spoke with a limited understanding and without the light and knowledge that now has come into the world.⁴

At that moment, Elder McConkie understood that we must not put a period where God has placed a comma. An important lesson in remembering. Perhaps even a lesson of hope to our lesbian and gay sisters and brothers, and to those of us who anguish with them.

Remembering can also be joyful, even inspiring. And we have our own people to remember. Remember with me, for a moment, the life of Lowell Bennion. Sterling McMurrin said, “Every church needs a saint, and Lowell Bennion is Mormonism's saint.”⁵ He is known for his thoughtful, reasoned faith, his many acts of kindness and generosity, and for being deeply involved in organized charities. Years before the 1978 revelation, his firm position in favor of blacks holding the priesthood put him in hot water and contributed to his being forced out of his position as Institute director. One of his sons was excommunicated for homosexuality, and Lowell appeared at the court to plead for understanding. I remember Lowell Bennion as a principled, loving man, who spoke truth to power, helped shape the faith, and cared deeply for the common good.

And remember my personal favorite for canonization, Gene England. Gene always challenged us. He had a politically engaged spirituality. Gene had a passion for right action and a passion for justice. He reminded us of Jesus's original vision and pushed against our constant temptation to replace the radical vision found in the gospels with a comfortable, watered-down interpretation of that vision. Gene nourished the communities he was part of.

And his courage! Gene was so courageous he said publicly—I heard it myself—that it was possible, even theologically okay, to be both a Mormon and a Democrat! Especially now, in these times of preemptive wars and empires, I would dearly like to talk, once again, with Gene. Let us remember Gene.

Parker Palmer tells a story about another kind of remembering. Millie was a three-year-old girl, an only child, until one day her mom and dad brought home a new little brother. About three days later, she asked to go into the nursery where baby brother was sleeping. “I want to go in alone,” she insisted. Not only alone, but she also wanted the door shut.

Now mom and dad had no reason to be worried about their little girl; she was gentle and charming and lovable. But, they were still a tad uneasy. “We’ll just leave the door ajar,” Mom said. That didn’t fly with Millie. Millie wanted the door shut. Remembering the new baby intercom system, her parents stealthily turned it on, and the little girl went into the nursery and shut the door. The parents hovered, listening by the intercom. They heard her footsteps as she walked over to the bassinet, and then silence. Then, Millie said softly, “I need you to tell me about God. I can’t remember so good anymore.”⁶

TO remember is more than simply looking back at past events. It is, as Nouwen stated, bringing those events into the present to celebrate them here and now.

I close by reminding us of another story—the story of Bartimaeus in Mark 10:46–52. Emulating Jake, who took the sacrament twice, I present this story twice. Bartimaeus, who wanted to see again:

As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried out even more loudly, “Son of David, have mercy on me!” Jesus stood still and said, “Call him here.” And they called the blind man, saying to him, “Take heart; get up, he is calling you.” So, throwing off his cloak, he sprang up and came to Jesus. Then Jesus said to him, “What do you want me to do for you?” The blind man said to him, “My teacher, let me see again.” Jesus said to him, “Go; your faith has made you well.” Immediately he regained his sight and followed him on the way.

Who among us doesn’t wish to have our blindness removed? Read it again. *Can you find yourself anywhere in this story?*

As Jesus and his disciples and a large crowd were leaving Jericho, Bartimaeus, son of Timaeus, a blind beggar, was sitting by the roadside. When he heard that it was Jesus of Nazareth, he began to shout out and say, “Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!” Many sternly ordered him to be quiet, but he cried

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In the prison that Sunday, Jake took the sacrament twice because he was going to have a hard week and needed to remember. Millie shut the door to be with her new baby brother because she wanted to remember.

Perhaps our real task, yours and mine, is to remember what we know. Maybe to remember is to be like Bartimaeus and to see again.

IN this time of war and violence, the Peace Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi will serve as a fitting benediction.

Lord, make us instruments of your peace;
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that we may not
So much seek to be consoled as to console;
To be understood as to understand;
To be loved, as to love;
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born to
Eternal Life.

Amen. 

NOTES

1. All Biblical references are from the New Revised Standard Version.
2. Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Man is Not Alone* (New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 1951), 161.
3. Henri J. M. Nouwen, *The Living Reminder* (New York: Seabury Press, 1977), 38.
4. Bruce R. McConkie, “All Are Alike Unto God,” Book of Mormon Symposium for Seminary and Institute Personnel, Brigham Young University, 18 Aug. 1978.
5. Mary L. Bradford, *Lowell L. Bennion: Teacher, Counselor, Humanitarian* (Salt Lake City: Dialogue Foundation, 1995), quoted on dust jacket.
6. Marcus Borg tells this story orally and is going to cite it in his forthcoming book, attributing it to Parker Palmer.



P. P. REUBEN’S “DANIEL IN THE LION’S DEN”

These beasts are malevolent.

They appear to have road rage,
as touchy as a brother or sister
in the backseat for endless hours,
a don’t-even-think-about-it edge
boiling up through those coiled muscles
tensed under golden pelts.

Daniel does not notice. Some
might think he pleads with heaven.

His fingers are knit together
as if for prayer. But the flesh glows,
ecstatic down to the toe which touches
the one placid beast. He draws down
light, illuminates the anger
bristling there. The artist, too,
must seize this strength,
forget the hubbub, the chaos,
must step over hot coals
with never an instant’s glance down.

Daniel sees that same point
in the distance that Dürer’s Knight
spies beyond Death and the Devil.
From that place, all too invisible,
they couple with power.

Then how the distant city sings.

How we raise our voices.

How we see our home.

—CAROL HAMILTON

FROM THE EDITOR

IN A ROOM DOWN THE HALL
FROM THE BISHOP'S OFFICE

By Dan Wotherspoon

MY SON, ALEX, has just turned sixteen, and I'll soon be privileged to ordain him a priest. I'm looking forward to performing this ordinance. Only four short years ago, our ward's bishop called to tell me he felt he could not allow me to confer the Aaronic priesthood on my son and ordain him a deacon.

I disagreed with the bishop's decision, which had come the morning of the ordination and after a week in which the bishop and I had met once and had had a phone conversation about my follow-up letter to our meeting. Even today, I think he made the wrong decision, but our impasse has a back story and, ultimately, a bright ending.

My family and I moved to Tooele, Utah, exactly five years ago. Our move came a year-and-a-half past my having earned a Ph.D. in religion and as I was still licking my wounds from a second year of disappointments in the academic job market. I was teaching several courses as an adjunct instructor and working as a manager at the overflow homeless shelter Salt Lake sets up every year for the extra men, women, and families who need housing and services during Utah's cold winters. We were leaving a ward in Bountiful that we had enjoyed, having made several good friends and finding a few faithful thinkers (including Tom Rogers, whose short reflection on his spiritual path is included in this issue, page 30) who had helped me remain positive about the Church. Yet, at the same time, most Sunday mornings I headed off to attend Salt Lake's First Unitarian Church. Their services boosted my spirit and usually presented me with a few ideas to chew on during our ward's afternoon meetings.

Given my work at the shelter and this dalliance with a more liberal faith tradition, at the time of our move I was, in many ways, a Mormon transitioning into a spirituality I thought was broader. I was keeping my feet in Mormonism, but my head and heart were playing with bigger themes than I felt I were being discussed in LDS meetings.

The house we purchased was in a new

housing development, where seven to ten families moved in each month. Given this rate of growth, it isn't surprising that by tithing settlement time in December, we still hadn't officially met with our bishop nor received callings. Because I worked swing shift at the shelter, I couldn't attend the tithing settlement, but my wife, Lorri, did. As she and I talked the next day about how it had gone, she mentioned she had been the last appointment of the evening and after talking about tithing, because no one had been hurrying them, "we talked some about you."

She briefly rehearsed to me how, after filling in the bishop about my current work and frustrating search for a full-time university position, she told him a little about my conflicted feelings toward the Church. After hearing Lorri's summary of what she had said to the bishop, I felt okay about being a subject of discussion, even if I hadn't been there to explain myself. Lorri's comments sounded fair and accurate enough. "Good that he knows," I thought.

A few days later, the bishop dropped by to call me to serve in the Sunday School presidency. I would have enjoyed that calling, but because it came so closely on the heels of Lorri's meeting with him, I was taken a bit aback by the offer. "That calling sounds like a nice fit for me. I'm just surprised, given your discussion with Lorri the other night."

He looked a bit confused. "What do you mean?"

"Well, I thought Lorri had told you that I was struggling with a lot of Mormon beliefs and wasn't sure how well I still fit in the Church. So your asking me about a calling has caught me a bit off guard."

"Oh, yes. She *did* say something about that. What is it you're having doubts about?"

I wish I could take back the half hour that followed. Not only because it began the chain of events that ultimately kept me from ordaining my son nine months later, but also because I *now* know so much better how to talk positively about my beliefs and the reasons I value and want to maintain a solid

connection with the Church. But I wasn't as settled then. And he *had* asked about my doubts, not my faith."

"Hmmm, where do you want me to start?" And then, idiot that I was, I couldn't shut up, and as his eyes grew wider, I began to take a sort of perverse pride in my ability to shock him with my heresies. I walked him through them all.

As I would finish one point, he'd pick up on something I had said that made him wonder about something else, and before we stopped, we'd gone through all the specifically Mormon stuff and on to my wider doubts about the character and power of God, the existence of a devil, and especially my struggle to believe in Jesus as the Christ and the need for a universal Atonement. All along, I mentioned what I felt were strengths in the various positions I was sharing, but the cumulative force of my direct rehearsal of doubts was overwhelming. Seemingly shell-shocked, he got up to leave, asking my permission to allow him to pray again about the intended calling. I understood. We shook hands, and he left.

I don't remember if he ever told me he'd decided against my becoming a member of the Sunday School presidency, but I never received that or any other calling while he was bishop. In the months that followed our meeting, I'm sure the bishop and I smiled and said hello whenever we saw each other at church or around town, but we didn't speak again about my feelings or theology—until Alex was about to become deacon age and I surprised the bishop by expressing an interest in performing the ordination.

IKNEW Alex's birthday was coming up and had wrestled for several months about whether I wanted to perform this ordinance. By then, my shelter job had ended, and I had decided that even as much as I had enjoyed working there, I was more infatuated with the *idea of* being a social worker than actually *being* one. So I rejoined the gang at Benchmark Books (where I had worked for several years previously), continued to teach philosophy and ethics courses, and began another cycle of applications in the hope of landing a full-time faculty position.

Although my theology hadn't really changed much, sometime during this same period, I had begun to feel more *Mormon* in the tribal sense. I had begun to worry a bit less about how boring Church meetings were and was starting to feel more comfortable just being among *my* people. Much as Bill Bradshaw shares in his wonderful reflection

in this issue (beginning on page 27), I can't say I was immune from launching into a few rants and raves when I'd return home after hearing some particularly inane comment at church; but overall, I had begun enjoying my Church associations again.

Living in this greater optimism, I convinced myself that I did want to be the one to ordain Alex. I wasn't sure what I believed about the priesthood. (Is it really a power that was restored exclusively to Latter-day Saints and genuinely passed on through ordination? Or is it a power available to all who will claim it, meaning the ordination rite is more of a formal invitation for that person to reach for it so they might better serve and bless others?) Still, I felt fine about performing the ordinance. I was active in the ward and wasn't guilty of any sins that might preclude my participation. Further, I was hoping that the intimacy of placing my hands on my son's head might make a memory that would strengthen our bond with each other, and that my participating might also help him feel more connected with his great-grandfather (whom he'd never met but who'd ordained me an elder) and all the other good men in my priesthood line of authority.

I shared these feelings with the bishop, along with far more careful and much more

positively worded statements about my beliefs, not just my doubts. I really didn't expect he'd say no.

But he did. In his call that Sunday morning, he told me that after prayerful consideration, he felt he couldn't allow someone who didn't have a strong conviction of "Jesus as the Christ" or of the Atonement to confer the priesthood. I expressed my disagreement and disappointment but told him I wouldn't stand in the way of Alex's ordination. Lorri's parents were on a mission in Australia, which prevented Alex's grandfather from being available to perform the ordinance. And because we hadn't really thought ahead to ask someone to step in for me in case I wouldn't be allowed to do it, the bishop volunteered to ordain Alex.

I was, of course, upset by the way things were turning out. And so was Lorri. She had served in several Primary presidencies and knew firsthand of many instances when bishops had practically dragged inactive fathers out of the bars and had them clean up a bit and attend church for a week or two so they could baptize their child. In most cases, following the baptism, neither he nor the child would be seen at church again. She wondered how it is that some bishops would go to such great lengths to allow those fathers to be part of these sacred events, yet ours

would not allow me—someone genuinely *trying* to stay positive about the Church—to be part of this special event in our son's life.

I appreciate Lorri's support more than I can say. But we agreed this was Alex's day, and he didn't need to know how much we were hurting. And so, following that day's meetings, we gathered in a room near the bishop's office for the ordination.

IF there's one thing about my son with which no one can disagree, it is that Alex has a lot of personality. And he'd apparently been telling people about his ordination that afternoon, so quite a few people attended. Along with all of the bishopric, standing in the ordination circle were Alex's scoutmaster, our home teachers, and several other men who'd been captured by our son's crazy likability.

The ordinance went fine, and as smiles were flashed and hands shook and people turned to leave, I found myself standing up, trembling, asking if everyone could stay for a few more seconds. My heart had been pounding during the ordination as just a glimmer of the idea about what I was now starting to do had begun to form. I'm sure both Lorri's and the bishop's heart skipped a few beats as I asked if I could say a few words.

And, blessedly, good ones came tumbling

2003 Sunstone Christmas Party
Thursday 4 December, 6–8 pm

Featuring a special reading at 7:00 by
Carol Lynn Pearson
from her book, *A Stranger for Christmas*

At the Sunstone office
343 N. 300 W., Salt Lake City

Please bring an unwrapped toy
for a homeless child

out. I thanked everyone for coming and helping make this occasion special for Alex. I thanked the men who had participated in the ordinance and let them know that I appreciated their role in my son's life, their good examples of mature men who are striving to be good and helpful and live the way God wants us to live. And then I spoke to Alex, telling him how much I loved him and how I had wanted to be the one to ordain him that day. I explained that he didn't need to worry that I was doing anything wrong that kept me from performing the ordinance, but that because of my schooling and reading and experiences, I had a pretty complicated understanding of a lot of things in the Gospel. But I assured him that I was actively trying to figure these things out. "I want you to know that I really *am* wrestling with Heavenly Father about these things, and I promise I won't let go until I get my blessing. And you know, we only struggle with things we really care about. And I care a lot about the Church and trying to know what Heavenly Father wants for me."

I DON'T know exactly what a twelve-year-old can comprehend and if, through his embarrassment about being told publicly that I loved him, Alex heard or understood what I said. And that's okay. Two years later, our new bishop allowed me to ordain Alex a teacher and today feels fine about my ordaining him a priest. I'm not really bothered that until I am given the chance to confer the Melchizedek priesthood and ordain him an elder, Alex's priesthood line of authority is not the same as mine. His begins with the name of a good bishop who prayerfully made a decision that to me still feels like the wrong one. What I think about instead is how God still had some leftover grace for me, his complicating son. And I will forever be grateful for the words and feelings that came that day, in a room down the hall from the bishop's office. ☺

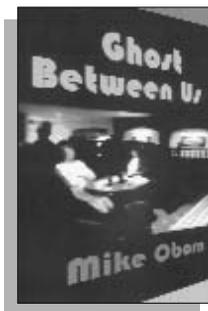
WELCOME MATTHEW WILLIAM HATCH!

Born 20 August 2003
to John and Emily Hatch

Just a few days after his dad had finished his work organizing and making things run smoothly at the Sunstone symposium, Matthew entered the world—nine weeks early and weighing just 4 lbs, 15 oz. Thanks to great care at the University of Utah hospital, Matthew came home four weeks later and is doing wonderfully!



Ghost Between Us



HIS FIRST BOOK, HIS FIRST REVIEW

EIGHTY-EIGHT YEARS OLD, FILLED WITH THE LOVE FOR A HUSBAND SHE BURIED THIS YEAR AND THE MISERY OF A LIFE LABORING UNDER THE YOLK OF AN UNYIELDING PATRIARCHY, RHODA THURSTON IS MY FIRST REVIEWER. HOW MUCH GOOD FORTUNE CAN ONE MAN ASK FOR?

*Dear Friend Mike Oborn,
I just love to keep reading your book and making notes of the ideas that help me.*

I was just thinking, your book is a blessing to wake up people's curiosity to find out what else Joseph Smith gave us, along with a whole new set of nuts and bolts.

The scenario you give about how the love of a father and son can override the boundaries of cultural dogmas, even if for one moment and if only in their hearts, is wonderfully shown in Matt's rescue from Stephen Burgess.

And Matt's love for his father's honesty and courage, and why he would rather be known as the grocer's boy than anyone's apostle, reveals your integrity.

A SOLDIER'S LAMENT (final verse)

*And yet there is a hatred that purifies the heart
The anger of the better against the baser part
Against the false, the wicked
Against the tyrant's sword
Against the enemies of love
And all that hate the Lord.*

I am grateful Matt found Kate after each had suffered a disappointing first marriage. What a miracle she is as the love of Matt's life, to be all they can be together.

Best Wishes,
Rhoda Thurston

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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>

Righteous Dominion

TOLE PAINTING AND SWEET POTATO PIE

COLUMN EDITOR'S NOTE: We are honoring the request of the writer of the following story to remain anonymous. Please continue to send in your stories of leaders who are true exemplars of the love of Christ. Email your stories to: <StewartSLC@aol.com>

—ALAN AND VICKIE EASTMAN

I BELIEVE I HAD THE FIRST FEMINIST RELIEF SOCIETY president in the Church. By day, she worked in a not-for-profit agency for victims of spousal abuse. By night, she looked after the women of our ward. A liberal and sensitive bishop was her ally. They made quite a team.

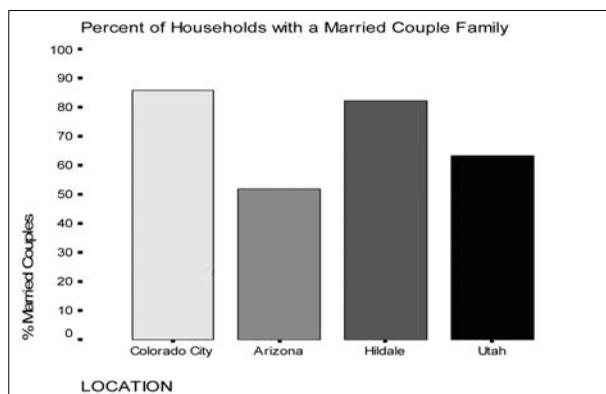
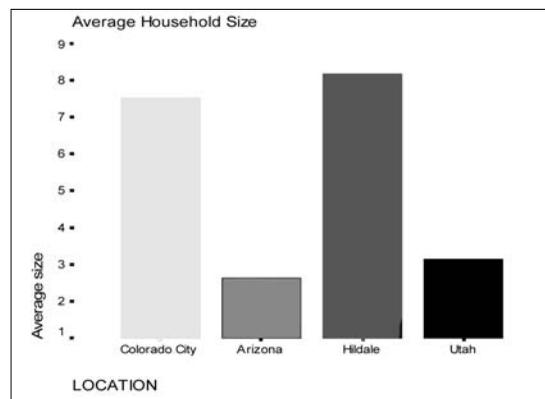
This president spoke up consistently on behalf of women and corrected many thoughtless comments. Once in Ward Council meeting, a member of the bishopric noted that on a recent ward clean-up day, many “non-men” had come to help. The Relief Society president picked right up on that. “Do you mean women and children?” she asked the chastened counselor.

She also had lots of interesting ideas for building bridges between women. For instance, she expanded our horizons by forming an unofficial partnership with the Relief Society of a black, inner-city branch in our stake. We went to their building one day for a joint Relief Society birthday celebration—they sang gospel, and we responded with honky white Primary songs. We liked their music better, so they sent their choir to sing for one of our sacrament meetings. Their gospel rendition of “I’ve Come This Far by Faith” really rocked the ward! Even my husband stayed awake! They came to our homemaking meeting one night. We taught them tole painting, and they taught us how to make sweet potato pie. We helped some of their families at Christmas and served at the funeral of a child from their branch who had burned to

Peculiar People

DEMOGRAPHY OF POLYGAMY

ACCORDING TO THE 2000 CENSUS, THE POLYGAMIST communities of Colorado City and Hildale, situated on the Arizona-Utah border have unusual demographic characteristics. A substantially higher percentage of households include a married couple family—this is Census Bureau terminology, and the term “couple may not be accurate.” Household sizes are much larger than in the surrounding areas. Sex ratios (males per 100 females) indicate a substantial shortage of men.



Peculiar People

WE KNOW ABOUT ENGRAVED PLATES—BUT PUMPKINS?



WANT TO HELP WARD OFF ANY DEMONS THAT MIGHT accompany your conflicted feelings about participating in traditional but pagan-tainted Halloween fun? Perhaps a Joseph Smith O'Lantern will do the trick!

<Pumpkinglow.com> is a Logan, Utah-based company committed to helping anyone become, in its words, a "Pumpkin Picasso," selling books with tips about how to turn your own photographs or designs into great pumpkin or melon carvings, or allowing you to download Pumpkinglow's own patterns.

Patterns are available in several categories, such as "patriotic," "animals," "cartoons," "sports," and "famous people." But our favorites are the "Christian" section—with its depictions of the Savior, Noah's ark, Gethsemane, the Last Supper, and Christ raising the daughter of Jairus—and the LDS patterns (pictured left).

The website's "Frequently Asked Questions" section contains company owner Jay Ball's answer to the query, "Is it appropriate to display an image of Christ on a pumpkin?" In his response, Ball refers to the great feedback and many "missionary moments" that have accompanied the display of his carvings of the Savior as well as of his LDS-themed works. Ball continues, "It is my hope that the patterns are used in a way that would uplift and inspire those who view them."

In its LDS section, the website acknowledges that "Pumpkinglow is not owned, controlled by or affiliated with The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. All opinions provided on this site . . . should not be interpreted as official statements of LDS doctrine, belief or practice."

death in a tenement fire. Their Relief Society president was a single mom who had been a drug dealer before her conversion. She used to joke that she had given up a lucrative career to join the Church! It was a rare and splendid partnership of women, engineered by two forward-thinking Relief Society presidents.

Our president's finest moment, in my opinion, came one Sunday when we had had a talk in sacrament meeting by a man whose daughter had just been accepted at (then) Ricks College. He told us he had advised his daughter that it didn't really matter what classes she took because her task in college was to find a good priesthood holder to take her to the temple. Later in Relief Society, the president "rose up in her wrath" to say that she needed to officially correct something said in sacrament meeting. She firmly stated that it makes a great deal of difference what classes a young woman chooses in college and that women should be educated and capable in society, regardless of whether or not they marry.

This president raised Relief Society to new levels. Would that there were more like her.

"The Rest of the Story . . ."

DUELING AUTHORITIES

Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.

—PAUL (Rom. 3:28)

Ye see then how that by works a man is justified, and not by faith only.

—JAMES (James 2:24)

AS WE READ THE LETTERS OF PAUL DURING OUR Sunday School studies of the New Testament this year, we perceive Paul's concern that his congregations of believers were in danger of falling away from the Gospel (1 Cor. 11:8, Gal. 1:6, 2 Tim. 3:5). What we seldom address is what Paul believed to be a major source of this apostasy: the missionary efforts of Peter and James, leaders of the Jerusalem Church.

Paul saw his converts, mainly Gentiles, being proselytized by missionaries from Jerusalem who believed in a different "gospel" than Paul preached (2 Cor. 11:4). What gospel did he

see leading his converts astray? A gospel based on obedience to the laws and ordinances of Judaism.

It is difficult for us today to understand the tension that existed between Paul and the Jerusalem apostles, the “pillars” of the church. We glimpse it in Paul’s account of the Jerusalem council in 48 AD (Gal. 2:1–10). At that conference of church leaders, Paul sought to convince the others that the gospel of Christ fulfilled the law of Moses, and that such tenets as circumcision, cleanliness, dietary proscriptions, were therefore done away with.

Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law; for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified (Gal. 2:16).

The council closed with promises to Paul that his congregations would be left alone—effectively stating that “you do your thing; we’ll do ours” (Gal. 2:9)—but the truce was short-lived. For the rest of Paul’s ministry, he would contend with those who believed that the gospel of Jesus was an extension of the Law of Moses, and that obedience to that law was necessary for salvation. In Paul’s letters, we see a missionary who grows increasingly more impatient and angry. For example, as he witnesses the fragmentation of his congregation in Corinth, he urges them to not “be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ” and those who preach “another Jesus” he calls “false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ” (2 Cor. 11:3–4, 13).

Today’s Christianity is essentially Pauline: we don’t practice circumcision as a religious ordinance; we don’t eat food according to the precepts of the Mosaic law; we don’t observe the feasts and festivals of the Old Testament. As in the case of the conflicting beliefs of Brigham Young and Orson Pratt, the winning “gospel” is the one preached by the individual who survived the longest. In the case of the early church, the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 AD destroyed the power center of the Jerusalem church, allowing the center of Christianity to move to Rome, where the Gentile converts, who held to Paul’s teachings, survived.

Our earliest Gospel, Mark, is demonstrably Pauline in its doctrines. Mark treats Jesus’s family (including Jesus’s brother James) very harshly (Mark 3:21), substituting the believing Gentile as the Savior’s real family (Mark 3:31–35). Mark describes Jesus being confronted seven times by the Pharisees, and each of the points of disputation mirrors a contention between Paul and the later Judaizers. In each case, Jesus sides with Paul.

In Mark 2:15–17, the Pharisees accuse Jesus of eating with publicans and sinners, contrary to the cleanliness proscriptions of the Mosaic Law. He is eating in a sinner’s house, so the food is not kosher. This was the primary conflict between Paul and the Jerusalem followers of James and Peter: a member of Christ’s Church must observe the laws of dietary cleanliness. Peter’s vision of the clean and unclean aside (Acts 10:9–17), he at times abstained from eating with those outside the Jewish faith, something that infuriated Paul (Gal. 2:11–15). Mark has

Jesus vindicating the Pauline position when he refutes the Pharisees (read Judaizers) by stating, “I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance” (Mark 2:17; also Mark 7:14–23).

Mark 2:18–20 concerns the disciples of Jesus not fasting in accordance with the festivals of the Law of Moses. The vast majority of Jewish fasts evolved around calendar observances, which Paul expressly negates (Gal. 4:10, Col. 2:16). Again Mark’s Jesus supports Paul by saying that after he returns, “then shall they fast” (Mark 2:20).

The other five conflicts Mark presents Jesus with concern Sabbath observance (Mark 2:23–3:6), hand-washing (Mark 7:1–23), sign-seeking (Mark 8:11), divorce (Mark 10:2–12), and allegiance to earthly powers (Mark 12:13–17). In each case, Mark describes a Jesus who validates Paul’s beliefs on these subjects.

The tension between Paul and the Jerusalem leaders continued on long after the death of all the primary players. One example is the way Matthew drew on Mark’s gospel but changed many of the overtly Pauline passages in favor of a more Jewish-sounding message. A follower of James, writing in the name of his spiritual mentor, directly attacked Paul’s doctrines on grace and works (James 2).

BRIAN H. STUY
Lehi, Utah

SUGGESTED READING:

S. G. F. Brandon, *The Fall of Jerusalem and the Christian Church* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951).

Michael Goulder, *St. Paul versus St. Peter: A Tale of Two Missions*, (Louisville: Westminster John Knox Press, 1995).

Gerd Luedemann, *Opposition to Paul in Early Christianity*, (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1989).

Blessed are the Peacemakers

STATEMENT OF REPENTANCE

The following is excerpted from a letter that has been circulating on Mormon websites beginning December 2002. Our thanks to Gerald Jones for bringing it to our attention.

MY NAME IS DAVID CHRISTOPHER WARNICK, and I serve as a pastor in an evangelical church in Grandview, Missouri. Now, if I’d been living 170 years ago, I probably would have been part of a very sorry chapter in our state’s history. Let me [begin] with some family history.

I’m originally from the West, and when I first moved to Missouri, I didn’t know about a significant family event that had happened here. One day, as I was reading my family history, I discovered that my Swedish forbear Anders Peter Warnick had entered Missouri in August 1866. He and his family had been riding in cattle cars, since that’s all Latter-day

All-seeing Eye

A FINAL TESTIMONY



End view

THANKS TO THE GREAT FOLKS AT <FuneralDepot.com>, Latter-day Saints will now be able to make certain they're noticed on the morning of the first resurrection. Imagine the extra-joyous trump from the angel's horn as someone is greeted emerging from the "Salt Lake Temple" casket, which, according to the website, "honors the center of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints."

The painted casket, depicting the temple and other Salt Lake landmarks, the Angel Moroni, and gold plates is just one of many "personalized theme" caskets available through FuneralDepot.com. Art enthusiasts can be buried in caskets showcasing Monet's famous *Water Lillies* or da Vinci's *The Last Supper*. Black spirituality is honored with the "Thanks and Praises" casket; special interests can be immortalized, for example, with artistic depictions of breast cancer- and AIDS-awareness ribbons; alums of the University of Kentucky can be buried in an "Art Casket® [that] captures the tradition of the Wildcat fan. 'Blue the sky that o'er us bends; white Kentucky's stainless page.'" If the deceased had been an avid golfer, he or she might be buried in the "Fairway to Heaven" or "The Last Hole" casket. And don't forget the option of being entombed in the "Return to Sender" model, which is painted to look just like a packing crate: "Packed for the trip home. This 'Express Delivery' parcel is well suited to become a fitting epilogue for one who has demonstrated the virtues of living life with a sense of humor."

Saint emigrants from Europe could find to hire on their journey to Utah. . . . But my great-great grandfather never left Missouri because he and a daughter were put off the train in St. Joseph, dying of cholera. Our family history goes on to say, "Residents of Missouri at that time were so hateful they seemed actually to thirst for the blood of the saints. . . ." This was in 1866, but . . . the hostility went back into the 1830s . . . when Latter-day Saints first started settling in Jackson County, the county I now live and pastor in.

As you probably know, the Latter-day Saints were soon driven from that county to Clay County, north of the Missouri River. There were still conflicts with the other settlers . . . , and in 1838, they were driven from Missouri entirely. . . . "From twelve to fifteen thousand Latter-day Saints were involved in the expulsion [from Missouri], and according to one report, more than \$300,000 worth of property was abandoned" (Leonard J. Arrington, *Great Basin Kingdom: Economic History of the Latter-day Saints 1830-1900* [Lincoln, Neb: University of Nebraska Press], 1958).

Now in one sense, we can see good things eventually came out of this persecution: the settlement of Utah and the Great Basin. But I want to recognize today that it was wrong, and to apologize for a key source of the problem: the unholy attitude

of evangelical preachers to the Latter-day Saints, . . . [for] the pulpit is critical in forming a community's moral tone. . . .

Now you may wonder why I'm bringing this up—why not let "bygones be bygones?" I'm convinced that past wrongs still have an impact today. They can affect our view of ourselves. I can think: "Oh, I'm not like *them*, or I'm not letting *that* affect us." And yet the seeds of rejection or hostility can be in our own hearts.

I believe this rejection does continue today. Many times, instead of discussing our differences at a heart level, leaders like me put up a barrier. . . . Instead of talking about how a relationship with Jesus has changed me, I have used terms like "cult" to describe our differences in belief and practice. The popular understanding of this term implies controlling and malicious leadership and mindless followers—it implies a moral judgment rather than a statement that we have different beliefs. The term can be insulting and communicates rejection rather than simply a difference in faith and understanding.

I now see it's wrong to speak or think or act that way, and I am deeply sorry. Will you forgive me—and other evangelical church leaders—for what we've said and done, then and now?

DAVID WARNICK
Grandview, Missouri

Of Good Report

CRUMB THEOLOGY

The homily below was given by Susan Murphy, a member of St. James Catholic Church in Bartlesville, Oklahoma. Our thanks to Murphy for allowing us to publish this excerpt and to Vickie Stewart Eastman for bringing this wonderful message to our attention.

IN OUR SCRIPTURES, THE STORY of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes has a place of honor. It is told six times in the New Testament, more than any other biblical event. There are also several multiplication stories in the Old Testament. Someone must really want us to pay attention to this miracle. So as we give it our attention, let's remind ourselves that the Bible is not just a history lesson, it is a living document. So it is important for us to examine how the story continues to be true in the twenty-first century and how the miracle is still happening.

In order to do that, we have to bring ourselves into the story. I will start on a personal level. Several years ago when I first thought I was experiencing a call to the ministry, I felt very confused. I thought that God only called really holy individuals to minister to his people. Despite my misgivings, I sought to remain true to my relationship with God, and I eventually found a Catholic seminary willing to take me as a student. When I realized that my being a ministry student was really going to happen, I figured I'd better set the record straight with the seminary. "Wait a minute," I said, "there are some things you need to know about me before this goes any further. I'm not holy; I'm not pure and virtuous; I don't know that much about God; I don't believe everything the Church teaches, and I'm not all that obedient."

They just smiled and nodded their heads because they knew what I was yet to discover—that all I brought to the ministry of God's people was a mere five loaves and two fishes. It's all any of us bring. None of us is worthy. It is Christ who does the blessing, the multiplying, and the feeding. All he asks is that we be willing to share our scant ration of loaves and fishes and he will miraculously feed the multitude.

Now here's a discussion question: Would Jesus have fed the multitude if no one had stepped forth with the original offering of food? Notice I didn't say "could" Jesus have fed the multitude; I said "would" Jesus have fed the multitude if no one had made the original offering of food?

THERE IS ANOTHER part of this story that I think we need to examine to see how it is significant in today's world. The gospel says that after everyone had their fill, Jesus told his apostles to gather the leftover fragments of bread into baskets and there were enough crumbs to fill twelve baskets. This leads me into a theology I did not learn in seminary; it is something I made up myself. You may have heard of moral theology, liberation theology, remnant theology, or even feminist theology, but this one I call a theology of crumbs. Crumb theology will not make me famous, but I do have a good biblical basis for it. If you recall, there is only one person who ever bested Jesus in an argument. She was the Syrophenician woman, and she used crumb theology on Jesus to change his mind. You recall that she asked Jesus to cure her daughter; when he refused saying that he was sent to minister to the house of Israel, she argued, "Even the dogs eat the crumbs that fall from the master's table." Jesus was so taken by her faith that he praised her and cured her daughter. So I stand in good company.

Crumb theology says that nothing in God's economy is ever wasted, that everything has value. We see it reflected in the story of the Good Shepherd who leaves the ninety-nine to look for the one lost sheep. Probably the greatest practitioner of a crumb theology was Mother Theresa who gathered the fragmented, marginalized, and dying from the streets of Calcutta into her care. She recognized

the value of the forgotten, wasted ones in her society. A crumb theology would say that the unborn, the dying, the imprisoned, the homeless, all those cast aside by culture and society have so much worth that they are, in fact, the chosen where God makes his miracles known.

We are all just a bunch of crumb gatherers, you and I, but it is a noble calling and a biblical directive. God makes a miracle from what we gather and what we give—enough to care for a multitude. This story is about the little things that we can do and the big things that God can do with them.

And let us not forget that a crumb theology is not only about physical things. We also practice it spiritually. If we are to be disciples of Christ, we gather the fragmented parts of our personalities and psyches that have been cast-off or denied. It might be our anger, an addiction, or an amends that needs to be made. Maybe we are who others need us to be instead of what we were created to be. Maybe we have denied ourselves a passion or talent that needs to be acknowledged or embraced. If we are to be all that God created us to be, then we collect the fragments of our inner selves, those broken-off places that need to be reclaimed. No part of ourselves is unimportant; every thought, wish, deed, person, and situation is grist for the mill; everything is an ingredient for the bread of life. All of life, then, is about gathering and giving so that God can bless and multiply.

As you approach the banquet table during Communion this morning, bring with you your humble, symbolic offering of five loaves and two fishes, your naive gift of time and talent; bring with you the fragmented, broken-off parts of yourself that Christ may bless you and work through you to feed his people, and the miracle will continue to happen.

Choose the Right Stone

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A RECENT INTERNET SEARCH HAS UNCOVERED A LONG LIST OF SUNSTONE benefits we've never thought to promise our supporters. (In presenting them here, we'll pretend to ignore that these are gifts associated with the sunstone gem, not with our foundation.)

Sunstones, a type of yellow-to-reddish feldspar (and Oregon's state gem), are connected with many healing forces, being used to help overcome depression, stimulate sexual arousal and increase sexual energy, reduce stomach acid and aid digestion, repair cartilage, and strengthen the liver and kidneys.

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Dawning of a Brighter Day

WATER AND COMPREHENDING
THE WORD—A PARABLE

The following is a paraphrase done by Edward L. Kimball from Helen Keller: The Story of My Life (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1903), 22–24.

I WAS ALMOST SEVEN, DEAF AND BLIND SINCE infancy. I had once known a few words, but illness had deprived me of all language. One day, Anne Sullivan came into my life, someone to love me and to teach me. She gave me a doll and spelled into my hand the letters, d-o-l-l. I was intrigued by the finger play and imitated it. Finally I could make the letters and ran to mother to make the letters for her, but I did not comprehend the connection. There were other words, p-i-n and h-a-t and c-u-p and w-a-t-e-r, all similarly meaningless.

Several days later, Anne gave me a different doll and spelled d-o-l-l in my hand, trying to get me to see the connection, but I was impatient and seized the new porcelain doll and threw it on the floor, where it shattered. But I felt no regret, for I had not loved the doll. In the still, dark world in which I lived, there was no tenderness.

Then Anne brought my hat, and we went out into the sunshine. We walked to the pump-house where someone was

drawing water, and my teacher placed my hand under the spout. She spelled into the other hand w-a-t-e-r, first slowly, then rapidly.

I stood still, my whole attention riveted on her fingers. Suddenly I felt a misty consciousness as of something forgotten—a thrill of returning thought; and somehow the mystery of language was revealed to me. I knew then that w-a-t-e-r meant the cool something flowing over my hand. And that living word awakened my soul, set it free. I left the pump-house eager to learn. Everything had a name, and each name gave birth to a new thought.

That night as I lay in my crib, for the first time, I longed for a new day to come.



Karen Kasteler, B.S., L.M.T., M.C.H.T.
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“Learning to love and accept yourself in a culture that seems to expect perfection.”

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Five lifelong Church members share why the Church is important to them and why they choose to remain active and faithful despite difficult issues and sometimes troubling experiences.

WHY WE STAY

By J. Frederick “Toby” Pingree, MaryAnne Hunter, Bill Bradshaw,
Grethe Peterson, and Thomas F. Rogers

The following reflections were delivered 14 August 2003 at the Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium (tape SL03–171).

J. FREDERICK “TOBY” PINGREE



J. FREDERICK “TOBY” PINGREE is a semi-retired CPA who lives in Salt Lake City. He has been married to his wife, Phyllis Burbidge for forty-five years, and they have six grown children. Together they presided over the Ecuador Quito mission from 1982–85. Toby has been a chair of the Sunstone board of directors since 2000.

MY STORY WILL NOT BE SURPRISING NOR unusual to questioning Latter-day Saints. The challenges I have dealt with in my life are common. By telling my tale, however, I hope to show that my experience as a Mormon who struggled with the balance between faith and reason did not destroy my desire to be involved.

My early years did not portend a particularly troubled relationship with the Church. I am a third- or fifth-generation Mormon, depending on the genealogical line followed. I grew up in Salt Lake City. The prophet at the time, Heber J. Grant, lived in my ward. My seminary and institute classes were taught by some of the most able and enlightened teachers the Church Education System ever produced—Lowell Bennion, Marion Hanks, and others. I was an Eagle Scout and a Master M-Man; I served a full-time mission and married in the temple. As one friend once noted, half-joking and half-serious, “Toby, your parts were punched out and assembled at the Mormon factory.”

Yet despite my conformist, establishment background, I have struggled with certain aspects of the faith of my fathers. The three I list below have been and continue to be troublesome for my faith.

1. THE UNEQUAL TREATMENT OF GOD’S CHILDREN WITHIN THE CHURCH. The concept that God loves all his children

equally has great appeal to me, as well as significant scriptural support. “All are alike unto God, black and white, bond and free, male and female,” wrote Nephi (2 Ne. 26:33); and Paul told the Galatians that “there is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3:28).

In the practices of the Restored Church, however, some of God’s children are treated as less equal than others. Women are denied participation in the Church’s governing bodies, cannot hold the priesthood, and study materials and lessons dictated and controlled by the male hierarchy.

Non-white Church members, mostly from Third World countries, comprise approximately half the Church membership worldwide, yet only a small fraction of General Authorities come from this group, and no person of color has ever been called into the highest echelon.

For more than a century, persons of black African descent were not admitted to temples nor given the priesthood, thereby, according to Mormon doctrine, being secondary in this life and the next. Fortunately, we now celebrate the twenty-fifth anniversary of the reversal of this segregationism, but vestiges of its racist implications persist today in unofficial writings and publications sold through Church-related outlets.

2. POLYGAMY. Plural marriage was omnipresent during my growing-up years. Three of my great-grandfathers and one grandfather were polygamists, having seventeen wives among them. In family circles, the commitment and devotion these folks demonstrated in living “the Principle” is considered heroic.

To this day, I have great admiration and respect for those who diligently practiced it. But as an eternal principle, polygamy doesn’t make theological or common sense to me. If to attain the highest exaltation, we’re required to live a polygamous relationship in the next life, only a minority of males will qualify. Otherwise there won’t be enough righteous women to go around, to be multiple spouses for righteous husbands. Polygamy also implies that men are less worthy or righteous than women—that there will be fewer of them who will need multiple spouses.

But more important is my conviction that the highest and loftiest relationship that can exist in this world or any other

created by our heavenly parents is between two loving spouses, united in their total commitment to make each other happy and to rear a family. Additional family units appended to the equation reduce the level of sharing between the spouses because there are others involved who demand a share of the emotional, financial, and social pies.

While the current-day Church goes to great lengths to distance itself from polygamy and assure the world that there is no such thing as Mormon polygamists, our leaders have yet to renounce it as a principle to be practiced in the eternities.

3. REPRESSION OF INDEPENDENT THINKING AND STUDY.

In earlier times, it seemed that Church members were encouraged to seek knowledge and understanding wherever truth could be found. They were told to “study and learn, and become acquainted with all good books, and with languages, tongues, and people” (D&C 90:15). If an important subject needed to be taught and talent was not available in the community, teachers were brought in from the outside.¹

Differences in belief among early Church leaders were well-known, so serious gospel students had to study issues in their own minds and reflect on them spiritually to determine which were applicable in their own lives. Errors in doctrine were tolerated, if expressed in good faith. Joseph Smith wanted the liberty of thinking and believing as he pleased and was willing to extend the privilege to others.²

More recently, Hugh B. Brown expressed his desire that young people should “preserve, then, the freedom of your mind in education and in religion, and be unafraid to express your thoughts and to insist upon your right to examine every proposition.”³

We now live in an era of correlated learning, where the only acceptable teaching materials are in simplified lesson manuals whose content is much the same year after year. Those materials reference only scriptures and Church leaders, with quotations carefully selected to espouse only those doctrines currently in favor.

The Church’s education establishment carefully culls those who apply to teach within its institutions and accepts only those who will teach the current orthodox doctrine. Only historians whose interest is a *faithful* history rather than an honest, complete one, need apply.



Toby Pingree after speaking in the June 1949 MIA Conference held in the historic Tabernacle.

I am buoyed up whenever I gather with the saints, be it in a high priests group meeting in the Andes, a testimony meeting in my home ward, or an open discussion group like Sunstone, where I learn from others and my voice is respectfully heard.

Group study and discussion of Mormon matters outside of official Church venues under priesthood leadership is strongly discouraged, and even prohibited at times. Few in positions of authority will consider the possibility that forums dedicated to open, balanced discussion of Mormon issues can be salutary.

THESE ARE SOME of the sources of my intellectual and spiritual frustration within the Church. So why do I continue to walk the walk of a Latter-day Saint—paying my tithes and offerings, sorting clothes at Welfare Square, attending weekly ward and monthly temple activities, cleaning the chapel, and completing my home teaching? Although there are others, I list four reasons below:

- *I believe that Joseph Smith was a unique, American prophet, qualified to speak to and for God.* My view of Joseph Smith has changed in many ways since I first began thinking seriously about him, but I still adhere to the position that, by the gift and power of God, he was the agent of translating the Book of Mormon, whatever its origins. I believe Joseph could not have produced it without being directed by God. The restoration movement he started has grown to where it is poised to become a world religion, attesting to the presence of the Divine in its basic doctrines and belief system. My belief in these truths converted from a foundation of sand to one of bedrock during the early months of the mission of my youth. Sick with dysentery and jaundice, I nevertheless explored the simple truths of the gospel with the folks of Guatemala and had several convincing, personal experiences. On many occasions during the years I spent with Guatemalan city-dwellers and

Indians, I felt the powerful force of the Spirit confirming to me that I was on the Lord's errand.

•*I am continually sustained in my life by the basic conviction that there is a God in heaven who is literally my Father.* I believe he loves me unconditionally and has shown that love by sending his Only Begotten to die for me. Christ suffers with me through earthly trials and comprehends my circumstances because he has been here and done this. I don't understand why and how he accomplishes this, but I am confident that some day I will.

•*I am a Mormon to my bones.* My ties to the Restored Church must be intertwined with my DNA. I am buoyed up whenever I gather with the saints, be it in a high priests group meeting in the Andes, a testimony meeting in my home ward, or an open discussion group like Sunstone, where I learn from others and my voice is respectfully heard. The Church provides me the opportunity to serve and to be served. Its repressive aspects are burdens I bear because I'm confident that those who run the institution are doing the best they can. I can best help the Church I love by staying involved and letting my light be seen.

•*I am comforted by Mormonism's promises that the ties that matter most on earth will continue when we move to another sphere of existence.* Commitments made in the temple assure me that the love affair I have had with my wife, Phyllis, will continue indefinitely and I will somehow also be involved with other members of my family forever. My endearing friendships with others should also be there for my eternal fulfillment

So I stay, serving when called, hopefully learning a few lessons along the way, and trying to be an influence for good when opportunities present themselves. ☞

NOTES

1. One example of this is the bringing in of Joshua Seixas so Hebrew could be studied in the School of the Prophets.
2. B.H. Roberts, ed. *History of the Church*, vol. 5 (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1950): 340.
3. "An Eternal Quest," talk delivered at Brigham Young University, 13 May 1969.

MARYANNE HUNTER



MARYANNE HUNTER has worked with and as an advocate for children with special needs for many years. She has been married to M. Reed Hunter for thirty-five years, and together they have four grown children. MaryAnne has served in leadership positions in all the Church auxiliaries,

and has taught both early morning seminary and Gospel Doctrine. The Hunters currently live in Salt Lake City.

FOREMOST AMONG THE influences that have contributed to my remaining fully active in the Church is my having been raised in a household of faith by exceptional parents who taught by precept and example how to live gospel principles, and who, in their early nineties, con-

tinued to bless my life. My pioneer ancestry includes polygamy on both sides of the family. Great-grandfather Shumway's father-in-law was also his bishop, and this bishop instructed his son-in-law to take a second wife—his wife's sixteen-year-old sister. Grandfather Shumway said his mother never complained and that the families blended beautifully. But he still clearly remembers hearing as a child his mother crying when her husband spent the night with Aunt Agnes.

I am saddened by the heartache that she and countless other women endured and find the practice of polygamy distasteful. But thanks largely to the journals kept by these remarkable women, I believe it was divinely inspired. They received spiritual confirmations of it. Vilate Kimball, concerned about her husband Heber's despondency over something he could not tell her about, prayed to know what was causing his anxiety. According to Vilate's daughter, the plan of celestial marriage was made known to her in a vision. She told Heber she knew about his dilemma and that he should obey. Although convinced that this practice was the Lord's will then, I do not believe polygamy will be required of us in this life or the next.

In addition to instilling strong moral and spiritual values, my parents stressed the importance of higher education, which resulted in my four wonderful years studying English and history at the University of Utah. But an even greater benefit was attending the Institute of Religion during the Lowell Bennion and T. Edgar Lyon years. I regret that I didn't become involved in the social life at the Institute, as I was active in my sorority. But I did take classes from these brilliant men and loved them dearly. They taught us that living the gospel means giving selfless service and demonstrated that principle by being deeply involved in serving the poor and needy. I still have Brother Bennion's Sunday School manuals which I treasure along with his books and essays that were later published.

Outstanding bishops at the University Ward which I continued to attend after graduating and becoming an English teacher also played a significant role in my spiritual journey. Shortly after I began teaching, it became clear that this was not the career for me. Uncertain as to which course to pursue, I sought the advice of my bishop—Neal Maxwell. I well remember his listing on a blackboard the options I was considering with their pros and cons. Together we concluded that graduate school or a mission were equally attractive courses, and he advised me to seek the Lord's direction.

Though by then, I had a strong, faith-based testimony, I had never been able to receive revelatory answers to my prayers—no burning bosom or other manifestations. I did receive answers, but often after a significant delay. Hopeful that fasting and prayer would help me receive the guidance I needed, I launched into a program of fasting one day a week, a regimen that lasted ten months. During this time, I volunteered at the Juvenile Detention Center which confirmed my interest and aptitude for working with troubled children, and so I decided to get a graduate degree in social work. Had a mission call come, I would have accepted it, but I was relieved and excited

to be accepted at the University of California at Berkeley, and I began my graduate studies in the fall of 1964. Classes and fieldwork with the California Youth Authority, coupled with attending the University Ward and institute made for a rich and satisfying life. Once again, an outstanding bishop, Dilworth Jensen, a professor of entomology, presided over my university ward, although this one included married as well as single students. As I finished my two-year program, I learned of a Mormon journal about to be published. So I subscribed to *Dialogue* and eagerly read each issue.



MaryAnne Hunter in 1968

After receiving my master's degree, I became a social worker in the nearby Richmond School District. Since I had the summer off, I returned to Utah to visit my family and date a man I'd met the previous fall. I found Reed Hunter fascinating but elusive. After a second year of long-distance courtship, I feared that this thirty-five-year-old bachelor might never make a commitment. So I decided to get on with my life in California, which included receiving my temple endowments and serving as Relief Society president. Working closely with an outstanding bishopric, which included Duane Jeffery, was a choice experience. They were effective priesthood leaders who valued women's contributions. I also enjoyed being more personally involved with the outstanding women in the ward. My four years as a single person in the University Ward were intellectually, spiritually, and socially satisfying.

Three years after we had met, Reed landed a job in Berkeley and then proposed. We were married five weeks later and became members of the Berkeley Ward. Reed and I had much in common. We'd both been students of Lowell Bennion and T. Edgar Lyon, and we were devoted readers of *Dialogue*. We belonged to a study group of like-minded friends and enjoyed discussing the latest Church issues with them.

Reed's being the son of a General Authority has also been helpful in my learning to cope with Church challenges. Milton R. Hunter was a very bright scholar who had received a Ph.D. in history from Berkeley and had then been invited to remain as a faculty member. He turned down the offer in order to teach seminary, and he later joined the institute faculty at Utah State University. Reed had been twelve when the family moved

I remain active in the Church in spite of its flaws because it is unthinkable to do otherwise. Full participation makes me happy. I enjoy going to Church and to the temple. And as I try to live according to principles of the gospel and exercise faith, I experience peace and joy.

from Logan to Salt Lake following his father's call to the First Quorum of Seventy. Reed became personally acquainted with many of the brethren, whom he very much admired. He also knew they weren't perfect and therefore didn't have the unrealistic expectations of the leaders that many Church members have.

Although I continue to deplore the behavior of some leaders and agonize over sensitive issues, I am determined that these concerns will not affect how I live my life. I have no difficulty with temple recommend interviews because I do support the brethren in their callings and believe that even those with whom I disagree sincerely believe that they are right and act out of good intentions. So I may grumble and cringe when I hear about ecclesiastical abuse, but I am not surprised. J. Bonner Ritchie's insights have been helpful in understanding that all organizations are immoral—it is in the very nature of the system.¹ Rules will always hurt someone. He reminds us that good leaders really believe Doctrine and Covenants, section 121—that it is the nature and disposition of almost all men, as soon as they get a little authority, immediately begin to exercise unrighteous dominion. I would never allow another person's behavior to drive me out of the Church.

A VERY TROUBLING issue to me was the Church's long-time denial of the priesthood to black members. Helen, one of our dearest friends, was the only black member in Berkeley Ward. She had not learned about the ban until after her baptism, and though troubled, she had a strong testimony and remained active. Reed's counsel helped her cope with the

misconceptions regarding the reasons for this policy. He was able to help her because, after his mission, he had served as a guide on Temple Square. Apostle Richard L. Evans had taught the guides that when asked about the priesthood restriction, they were not to give *any* explanations, as none were valid. They were to state that no one knew why blacks were not allowed to hold the priesthood but that we did believe that one day the policy would be changed. This counsel was comforting and consistent with what Brother Bennion had taught. Reed and I felt that, troublesome as it was, we could put this issue on the shelf and focus on the many positive aspects of Church membership.

On 9 June 1978, when Reed called me with the wonderful news that President Spencer W. Kimball had received a revelation extending priesthood and temple blessings to all worthy male members, I rejoiced with him, then called Helen and wept with her. I'm grateful to Leonard Arrington for the detailed description of what transpired that wondrous day as recorded in his autobiography, *Adventures of a Church Historian*. It was also heartwarming to have Bruce R. McConkie admit that he and other General Authorities had been wrong, and that we should forget everything they had said that was contrary to the present revelation. I wish he had made these comments in general conference and hope that one day a General Authority will from the conference podium officially renounce the racist folklore used to justify the past practice.

In 1972, Reed was called to serve in the University Ward bishopric. During our five-years in this calling, *Exponent II* was published, then SUNSTONE magazine, with which we were somewhat involved as Reed was then Peggy Fletcher's home teacher. In 1980, we moved to Piedmont, California, joining many friends who had settled in this small community near the Oakland Temple. Oakland First Ward was as intellectually and spiritually satisfying as Berkeley Ward had been. We attended the "liberal" Sunday School class, noted for its encouragement of open, candid class discussion. When we were about to begin the study of the Book of Mormon, the teacher suggested that we use as a supplement B. H. Roberts's correspondence with Church leaders about Book of Mormon difficulties. Our class agreed that examining the problems Roberts described would be interesting and likely to strengthen our testimonies, so he ordered copies for all of us, which were available at that time only through Gerald and Sandra Tanner's bookstore.

When Reed joined a Santa Monica law firm, I was concerned about moving to a more conservative Church environment. We purchased a home in Pacific Palisades in a very small ward which included a remarkable woman who became my lifeline—Irene Bates. Many of you know her, for she has spoken at Sunstone symposiums and has co-authored, with Gary Smith, *Lost Legacy*, a history of the office of Church patriarch. Irene is one of my dearest friends, and I'm indebted to her not only for our personal relationship, which I cherish, but because she invited me to join a group of wonderful Mormon women who hold an annual retreat in Salt Lake. We

laugh and sometimes cry together in an atmosphere of unconditional love and trust. Irene also introduced us to the Miller-Eccles Study group which draws members from all parts of the greater Los Angeles area and brings in speakers, largely from Utah, many of whom are well-known Sunstone presenters. We also attended the Sunstone West Symposium which alternates between northern and southern California. So we enjoyed the association of liberal Mormons during our seventeen-year stay in southern California, much as we had in northern California.

SOME ISSUES CONTINUE to concern me, such as the disciplinary action against the "September Six" ten years ago, and the Church's views on homosexuality, which it claims has a strong scriptural base. Other passages in the scriptures also trouble me—those which portray God as wrathful, jealous, or capricious, and prophets whose attitudes and practices contradict the Savior's teachings. I share Lowell Bennion's view: "I do not accept any interpretation of scripture that denies the impartiality or love of God or the free agency and brotherhood of man."³ I hope and pray for the day we can love and respect *all* of our brothers and sisters as our Savior directed when He said, "As I have loved you, love one another." I believe Christ's love is unconditional and that he would have us love unconditionally, too.

I remain active in the Church in spite of its flaws because it is unthinkable to do otherwise. Full participation makes me happy. I enjoy going to Church and to the temple. And as I try to live according to principles of the gospel and exercise faith, I experience peace and joy. I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God and my Redeemer. I have a deep love for him and an overwhelming appreciation for his atoning sacrifice. I have a testimony of Joseph Smith and the Book of Mormon. A visit to Palmyra three months ago confirmed these strong convictions. At this point in my life, I believe I am making progress in my attempts to love as the Savior directed. This may relate in part to my professional training but even more to people like Lowell Bennion, Gene England, and Irene Bates who so well exemplify the Christlike character and inspire me to strive to be like them. I'm convinced the Lord directed me to Berkeley thirty-eight years ago, not only to find my husband, but to be exposed to Mormon intellectuals, their publications, and the symposiums which have enriched my life. Being a Sunstone Mormon is an important part of my identity and contributes to my being a faithful Latter-day-Saint. ☪

NOTES

1. J. Bonner Ritchie, "The Institutional Church and the Individual: How Strait the Gate, How Narrow the Way?", *SUNSTONE* (May-June 1981): 28-35.
2. Leonard Arrington, *Adventures of a Church Historian* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1998), 175-79.
3. Lowell L. Bennion, *Understanding the Scriptures* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1981), 34.



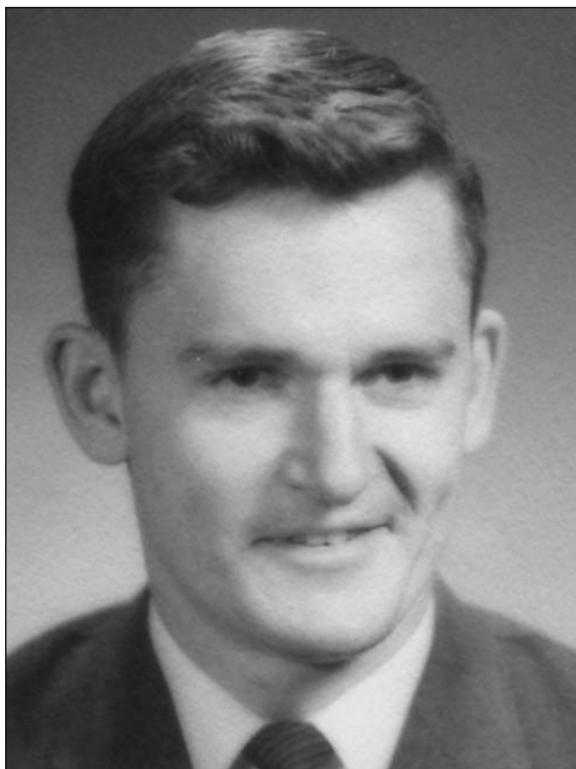
BILL BRADSHAW



BILL BRADSHAW is a professor of molecular biology and microbiology at Brigham Young University. He has been married to Marjorie Gardner for forty-two years, and they are the parents of five grown children. Together they presided over the Hong Kong Mission from 1971–74. Bill has been a bishop of a married student ward and a member of a BYU stake presidency. He has served as a member of the Sunstone board of directors since 2002.

I STAY BECAUSE I want to. Want to what? I want to keep singing the songs, especially some of the Primary songs whose lyrics ring true and meaningful even in my grandfatherhood. I want to remember the feeling in the room as Brian, my son-in-law, held Kevin, his autistic son in his arms, and with tears running down his face, lowered the apprehensive child gently into the baptismal font. I want to retain some of the insights that came, for example, during the year-and-a-half period when I timed what people in my ward said in fast and testimony meeting. The data are clear: The average length of an adult testimony is 4.5 minutes, and 2 percent of the congregation (the six regulars) occupy 45 percent of the time. Little people average 22 seconds, including transit time. With important exceptions, I am moved most often by the 2-minute expressions of people aged fourteen through twenty. They tend to be unrehearsed, unpolished, delivered haltingly, with repetitions of phrases such as “like . . . you know,” an honest “I’m not sure it’s true,” and the heartfelt “I hope it is.”

I stay because of a certain group of people whose company I want to retain. I stay because of Duff Hanks, who before he came to prominence in Church leadership was my teachers quorum adviser. I could not recall for you many specifics of the words spoken during those hours with him, though I do know there were stories of people whose lives were commendable, and how they behaved in times of war and otherwise. I came to believe that what Duff was telling me was true; he has a way of talking that makes me pay at-



Bill Bradshaw, circa 1962

attention. I don’t believe afterward that I ever fell asleep during his conference addresses.

Years later, I sat listening as a troubled young Mormon soldier poured out his heart. The place was Tan Son Nhut airbase, Saigon. They had been on patrol in the jungle, and his best friend, on the point, had taken an AK-47 round to his head and lay dying in the hospital as we spoke. I was quiet, attentive, as his words tumbled out. He had no shirt, his hair was long, beads and peace symbols hung from his neck—and he was hanging on to the Church by his fingertips. Two older brothers had left the service dishonorably. His slender conduit to sanity was a girl friend in St George, Utah. She had recently sent the *Ensign* with the conference reports. He had read and responded to Duff’s talk whose message was inclusion and acceptance of those at our margins. I fumbled to express that Duff was right, and that he should keep hanging on.

Just days ago, I sat at a table with Duff and was elevated once again by the person, by the importance of the issues about which we exchanged ideas, and by love. You don’t need me to remind you that goodness is not at all exclusive with us, but of those with whom I am at home and want to be around, a significant number are Latter-day Saints.

I stay because of some important things that have happened to me. I’ll share two. The bedroom where I spent my college freshman year was on the ground floor. The back wall was only feet from where people emerged from the subway into the square. It was small, and as I was the last of the four roommates to arrive, got the default position on the top of the bunk bed. Down below was Al—Al Grossman. He was from New York City. Jewish. Extremely bright. Wry smile. Alternated be-

I now find myself in the very paradoxical state of being less sure about a whole lot of things but having greater faith. I used to view the statement “Have faith in Christ,” as the first rule, an injunction: *You’d better have faith, or else.* Now I see it as a simpler description of the way things are, the way this life works.

tween a pipe and cigarettes. I stayed up late studying a lot that year. One early Sunday morning was particularly memorable. I was in the outer room where the desks were. It was between 2:00 and 3:00 a.m., and my paper still wasn't finished when Al returned, suspended unsteadily between two friends. He waved cheerily, was carried to our room, and dropped into oblivion on his mattress.

Of course, as the kid from Utah, I was appalled. I finished a couple of hours later and decided I could get three or four hours sleep before walking to priesthood meeting. I opened the bedroom door only to become disgusted. Al had recycled everything from his earlier revelry. It was everywhere, vile and putrid. I closed the door, and my righteous indignation soared. *How dare he?* Didn't he know that if you have the courage to turn down a drink with your teammates the night before the race, you'll win the next day? He should be keeping the Word of Wisdom—like me. He should be honorable and good—like me. I'm not sure what produced the change in me, but after awhile, I went back in the room and, armed with every towel from the bathroom, cleaned it all up. The floor, the sheets, and Al—still dead to the world and grinning as I wiped off his face. A few hours later, I had a sobering, less-judgmental, fifteen-minute walk to the chapel. The meetings that day were somehow different, and so was I. Parents send their children to the school where I teach hoping they'll never have to experience a night quite like that. But I am deeply, profoundly grateful that it happened to me.

Another night on the top bunk in that same bedroom, I started, by choice, to read the Book of Mormon. Feeling, from previous efforts, that I was an expert in the goodliness of Nephi's parentage, I forged ahead to verse two, then beyond to Nephi on the death of his father in the second book. I am unable to adequately convey the impact of his words on me. How did he know that those were *my* feelings too? What is the source of the power in those words? That dorm will always be a very important place for me—now, as then, I believe that it is the Savior to whom I am indebted for what happened there.

I stay in spite of listening to a brother giving the lesson about humility in our high priests group who says, "Why, even in our Republican Party, we occasionally make a mistake." "Mistake, thy name is legion," I mutter under my breath. I stay in spite of hearing from the pulpit, again, condemnations of working mothers unable to greet their children returning from school with plates of still-warm, home-baked cookies. Or the recitation of the canonical explanation that the only reason BYU professors teach about evolution (they don't know they're talking about me) is that they are forced into it by the threat of the withdrawal of accreditation.

You may believe that I'm made of such stern stuff that on returning home after such experiences, I never rant nor rave. You would be wrong. And you would not be aware of the serious internal turmoil I nearly always feel when I notice the Proclamation on the Family mounted on the wall of a home I'm visiting and remember how often in a Church setting that

document is used to justify erroneous statements, insensitivity, and unChristian remarks or behavior toward my homosexual brothers and sisters.

So how do I deal with those practices and policies in the Church with which I take issue?

I stay because of what I have come to believe about revelation. The example I cite is the decision-making process for assigning missionaries to their companions. It was common for missionaries to arrive in Hong Kong in groups of ten or more. As the mission president, I had the chance to conduct a get-acquainted interview with each one and to see them interact with each other and with their new surroundings during their first day or so. I firmly believe there are fewer decisions more important than getting each one started off on the right foot, so the choice of first companion is critical. I always, and very earnestly, sought divine help. In the beginning of the process, there were dozens of options, and I could consider all sorts of permutations of possible moves and assignments. Heavenly Father was free to make all sorts of recommendations. I quickly realized, however, that when all but the last two or three are assigned, the choices become severely restricted. "You can't do that: Elder X has already served in that branch for six months." "You can't do that: that would put Sisters Y and Z together and they've already been companions, and not too happy ones at that." For the last several companion assignments there was, of necessity, more of expedience than revelation at work.

I could, of course, be completely wrong. But I believe that the mechanics of the revelatory process are the same for all of us at any level of Church membership, and that our decisions, both relatively trivial or of the utmost gravity, will reflect in some measure our unperfected humanity, weaknesses, and ignorance—and will fall short of a divine ideal. We will all be wrong about some issues, and none of us can be relieved of the obligation to be tolerant and patient as we peer darkly through the glasses of our individual perspectives.

I stay because I've promised that I would. Looking back, I'm pretty sure there was a time in my life as a Latter-day Saint when, though I didn't know everything, I was confident that I could handle the great (and not so great) questions, the important faith-related issues. Moreover, I probably unconsciously assumed that whatever uncertainties I had would diminish with age and experience. Wrong again. So I now find myself in the very paradoxical state of being less sure about a whole lot of things but having greater faith. I'm not sure why that's true. I used to view the statement "Have faith in Christ," as the first rule, an injunction: *You'd better have faith, or else.* Now I see it as a simpler description of the way things are, the way this life works. There is no alternative: *Bill, you're not going to be relieved anytime soon of the need to live by faith, especially in Him.* So I feel even more strongly than ever before that I'm going to keep the commitments I've made to a fairly large number of people, beginning with those I love the most—Marge and our children—and extending to a lot of young people who have entrusted something of their minds and hearts to me over the years. 

GRETHE PETERSON



GRETHE PETERSON has had a long and distinguished career as a community leader and advocate for families, abuse victims, better housing, and all things lovely and of good report. She served as a member of the general board for the Young Women from 1979–83. She and her husband Chase Peterson have been married for forty-seven years and are the parents of three grown children. They currently live in Park City, Utah.

band Chase Peterson have been married for forty-seven years and are the parents of three grown children. They currently live in Park City, Utah.

WHAT I BELIEVE and why I stay in the Church has a lot to do with how I was raised and what my spiritual path has been as an adult.

My earliest memories include endless discussions about religion around our dinner table. My parents raised questions, expected us to think critically, and often discussed their own conflicts around institutional loyalty and free agency. Even though my parents were committed to the values of the Church and the sense of community it created (“a good way to raise a child”), I was aware of the tension these questions created. My parents stressed the importance of education and expected my brother and sisters and me to think critically, be concerned about the well-being of others, work in the community—in other words, be good, committed Democrats. All this took place in Utah County in the mid-1900s.

If I hadn’t married Chase Peterson, my spiritual path might have been very different. We married in the temple, which decision for me prompted the commitment to begin my search for testimony. I worked to come to my own understanding of questions as fundamental as a belief in the presence of God in my life, the essentiality of Christ’s mission, whether Joseph Smith was a prophet, and the centrality and goodness of the institution of the Church.

This was a time when I asked fewer questions and became more involved in the Church. I appreciated more and criticized less. I was open to the Holy Spirit, I studied the scriptures and found strength from members of the wards in which we lived. Our early years were in New Haven, Connecticut, in a tiny branch that needed us and we enjoyed. I was asked to teach Relief Society and, as is always the

case, I learned more than those I taught. I thrived in the preparation and presentation of those lessons.

Whether we were in branches or wards in Frankfurt, Germany, Salt Lake City, Utah, or Cambridge, Massachusetts, we associated with good people from varied backgrounds who were generous and loving in their callings. We were fortunate to have strong bishops who accepted us where we were, encouraged us to serve, and embraced our questions.

There was one rather humorous and startling exception to someone tolerating our questions. In a Gospel Doctrine class soon after our first move to Salt Lake City in the ‘60s, the teacher took us aside after one class and, as gently as he could, requested we not ask questions during class because it interrupted his lesson plan. We smiled, and for other reasons, soon moved out of that ward. I have often wondered what we would have done if that kind of insensitivity had been our permanent fare?

My spiritual path has not always been clear or easy going. I have studied the gospel. I have been exposed to other faiths. I have been blessed with guides and teachers who have entertained my questions and given me confidence to keep moving and growing. These guides and teachers have come from a variety of settings. At times, it has been my husband or our children. There have also been women I’ve worked with in the Church who have taught me a lot about devotion and loyalty and have strengthened my testimony.

Many of my guides and teachers are outside of our Church. Their wisdom and goodness have deeply touched my soul, changing me forever. Much of my growth has been the result of turning inward, of getting to know my soul and heart connections, separating ego from true belief. Knowing that God the



Grethe and Chase Peterson

My life experiences have taught me the beauty and value of diversity. We may not look or think alike, but we are all God’s children. We are all equal before our Lord, so our ability to reach out to one another brings us closer to heaven.

Eternal Father, Divine Mother, and Jesus Christ are my line of command, my mentors, my strength, has kept me hopeful and moving forward. My life experiences have taught me the beauty and value of diversity. We may not look or think alike, but we are all God's children. We are all equal before our Lord, so our ability to reach out to one another brings us closer to heaven.

SO, HAS MY spiritual awareness and broader education made me certain about the canon of the Church? No. That is not how my spiritual growth works. I have learned there is a place for faith and reason working together moving me in the right direction. I find the framework of the Church essentially right and regularly inspired. This is the context of my religious beliefs.

So what have been my burning issues along this path? The issue of withholding the priesthood and temple blessings from worthy black members was troubling for many years. I could understand social and political challenges confronting the early Church, but I could not accept the ecclesiastical rationale many members gave. Our stake president in Cambridge knew of our concerns and supported us. When Chase was made Dean of Admissions at Harvard College and the *Boston Globe* wrote an article asking the question, "Since Dr. Peterson's church does not admit black men to their priesthood, would he admit black students to Harvard College?" the issue grew even larger.

Given these concerns, 9 June 1978 was a remarkable day in our home in Cambridge. We made a lot of phone calls and heard from friends and colleagues all over the world. We thanked the Lord for this new revelation, acknowledging the inspiration and courage of President Kimball and the Council of the Twelve to seek a resolution.

The issue of women and the priesthood is still unresolved for me. I certainly understand (and have experienced) the many ways we women serve and grow from service in the institutional church. But it seems to me the Church could greatly benefit by the unity of male and female priesthood service on every level of leadership. I believe in the power of prayer in our private deliberations with the Lord on this issue. Perhaps the time will come when the Lord feels we are ready for this to change, but probably not in my lifetime. I'm okay with that.

The Church's position on homosexuality raises fundamental questions for me about how some define God's love, and about Christ's admonition "to love your neighbor as yourself"—not just your straight neighbor. Sexuality is a private issue, but when sexual orientation results in citizens being discriminated against, something is very wrong. With the question of gay marriage, this issue is taking on more complicated dimensions. But in looking for a resolution, I return to Christ's model. He nourished the outcast and found ways to love all whom he met. Can't we do the same? More important, can't *I* do the same?

My relationship with my Mother in Heaven is strong, constant, and sacred. For me it is not a public issue. I accept and understand President Hinckley's request to pray to her only in private.

This is my story. I now know that there is a loving God and Divine Mother who care deeply about their children. I know Christ is the Son of God who prepared the way for us. I know Joseph Smith was indeed a prophet who restored the Gospel of Jesus Christ upon the earth at a critical time. The core beliefs of free agency, eternal progression, and continuous revelation are essential for my spiritual growth.

These are all reasons why I stay. These are reasons why I have never thought of leaving. Through all of this, I hope I am a better person. ☪

THOMAS F. ROGERS



THOMAS F. ROGERS is an emeritus professor of Russian literature at Brigham Young University. He and his wife Merriam Dickson have been married for forty-five years and have seven grown children. Together they presided over the Russia St. Petersburg Mission from

1993–96. Tom is the author of more than twenty plays, and most recently, a memoir titled, A Call to Russia: Glimpses of Missionary Life.

ERIK ERIKSON CHARACTERIZED older people like me as less "dogmatic" than in their earlier years. But that is apparently not true of us all. A senior associate from my mission days in 1950s Germany recently contacted me. He is nine years my senior, and back then, was my file leader. During our conversation, he said he'd recently read that at any time now, more violently shifting tectonic plates and global warming could bring on a catastrophic annihilation of most—60 to 80 percent—human beings, a literal "burning," which he then related to familiar predictions of the Apocalypse, Christ's Second Coming, and the horrific punishment of the wicked. But, he quickly added, we have "life insurance" for that sort of thing—"tithing." I won't dispute the literal language in Doctrine and Covenants 64:23, though I hope that is not the principal reason we pay tithing. Just minutes later, we were discussing the sad fate of a certain Brother H., who had been the Church's spokesperson in a small former Soviet republic, whom I had met a decade ago at a leadership conference in St. Petersburg, Russia. He had later tragically burned to death while attempting to light a faulty heater in his apartment. At this point in our conversation, I was sorely tempted to interject that Brother H. must have no longer been paying his tithing. If life and judgment were only that simple!

I frequently encounter such literal-mindedness in the reactionary comments of fellow ward members. I'm told that recently, one of our otherwise informative and stimulating Gospel Doctrine teachers, while denigrating the fledgling organization, Mormons for Equality and Social Justice, suggested for its motto, "Choose the Wrong!" I'm glad I wasn't there then because I might not have restrained myself from retorting, "So you'd rather choose inequality and social injus-

tice?” For some time, nothing has so excited me as the announcement about this group of young and devout members whose aim is to publicly agitate for a badly needed—at least in Utah—alternate point of view on social issues.

Another fellow high priest—who had once served as my counselor in our group leadership—also recently asserted in one of our priesthood meetings that what annoyed him more than anything else were “liberals.” I found occasion then to take him aside and let him know that how he feels about the views of liberals exactly mirrors my equally strong feelings about those of political conservatives and therefore we had better leave such comments out of our discourse in Church settings. Incidentally, I like to confront ultra-conservatives these days—whom you can count on being both anti-abortion and anti-gun control—with the conundrum: “Which then is your preferred form of murder?” They don’t smile back. They don’t even seem to get it.

More recently, I gave a fellow ordinance worker with an interest in Mormon fiction a copy of *Irreantum’s* interview with Jana Riess, *Publisher’s Weekly’s* religion books editor, who also happens to be LDS. “What do you think of her grasp of Mormon letters? Pretty impressive, wouldn’t you say?” “Yes,” came the reply, “*but she’s an intellectual!*” (No comment.)

DESPITE SUCH RECURRING dissonance, I have never seriously contemplated leaving the Church—although I have imaginatively identified with those who do, among them a few lifelong friends. And I have even written plays about two excommunicants, Helmuth Huebener and John D. Lee, who, though they did not choose to be disenfranchised, were at the end of their lives equally alienated. I sometimes too much resonate to Yeats’s profound lines: “The best lack all conviction, while the worst are full of passionate intensity.”¹ But that response is too arrogant and simplistic to apply in blanket fashion to one’s fellow Saints, many of them such good, devoted, and likeable friends and neighbors.

Why haven’t I considered leaving the Church? Possibly because, unlike some others, I’ve so far been blessedly spared the difficult test of faith and humility with which, in whatever form, serious ecclesiastical censure confronts those subjected to it. In this context, one thinks of the sixth Lecture on Faith and Joseph Smith’s stern warning that unless we are willing to



Tom Rogers in his BYU office, circa 1972

The restored gospel’s explanation of life and human destiny satisfies my contemplative mind. It appeals to me much like Joseph Smith described certain truths as “tasting good,” and many of its practical emphases strike me as truly remarkable.

sacrifice “all earthly things,” we will not have the faith to help us know of God’s approval and see us through ultimate trials. What greater test can there be than to believe, right or wrong, that you have been unfairly dealt with by those in authority over you? What one must then sacrifice is one’s concept not only of fair treatment and equal status but also one’s very autonomy in relation to others. Avraham Gileadi, among others, strikes me as one who has withstood such testing, and I would like to ask him about that sometime.

Last year, I shared the podium at the Sunstone symposium with Gary Bergera, who, while still a student at BYU, had published queries about theology and Church history. Gary recounted for us instances in which he was thereafter subjected to a series of ecclesiastical interviews whose prompting from a higher level was evasively denied and in which his loyalty was stringently challenged. Later, I told Gary how grateful I was to have been spared such an ordeal and that I cannot be sure how it might have affected me.

One reason I’ve been spared, I think, is my essentially deferent personality (read ‘cowardly’ or ‘obsequious’ if you wish to). Along with the “sanity” and “moderation” advocated by a former Jordanian ambassador, Muhammad Kamal, and the cardinal Christian virtues “charity” and “humility” stressed by Reinhold Niebuhr—there’s indeed that practical need to defer, to *accommodate*, to fit in—for which the closest equivalent I can find in scripture is “temperance.” If you’ve never gotten to know the remarkable Orem poetess and sybil Magdalene Young Hanson Warren, you’ve missed out on a rare and

unique acquaintance: it was Magdalene who first called my attention to the propriety of Noah's two righteous sons in their response to his drunken nakedness—they turned their heads and made nothing more of it.² In various ecclesiastical roles, I have myself sensed the power of other members' sustaining support, which, when it is withheld or not manifest, truly diminishes our inspiration and ability to function in their behalf. But these alone do not insure infallibility, and those called to minister need at all times to be conscious of the fine gray line between overconfident assertiveness and honest uncertainty.

I am also the product of the favored “know nothing, do nothing” generation that came of age after World War II, our involvement in which none of us had cause to question, and which coincided with the ecclesiastical helmsmanship of the ever so compassionate and genteel David O. McKay. President McKay, who frequently cited the Scottish essayist Carlyle, was amicably disposed to the life of the mind and was, in hindsight, legendary in his toleration. Sterling McMurrin once recounted to me the cases of various LDS institute teachers and others who had come under fire and for whom he had intervened with President McKay. That McMurrin even had entree with the president speaks volumes about this leader's large-souled openness.

In this regard, I think of the four BYU professors of Russian who have served as mission presidents in the former Soviet Union. Each of my former colleagues has remarkable administrative skills but these were less evident in Salt Lake at the time of their calls than is the case with the professional executives more routinely called to such positions. For instance, Gary Browning's role in the early days of the Church in Russia was groundbreaking and highly effective. Even so, no one was more surprised by his call than Gary, who had earlier headed up the small BYU chapter of scholars opposed to the nuclear arms race and had, he felt, incurred considerable displeasure from various ultra-orthodox conservatives. There is no question that we four were seen as especially useful because of our language background and that this helped prompt the extension of such privileged trust, but I like to think that despite our less-than-already-proven reputations and our, in some cases, dubious political correctness, surprisingly fruitful outcomes resulted from that wider sharing of such a weighty stewardship.

ALLOW ME NOW to suggest at least six reasons for my having chosen to remain actively engaged in Church life, despite my occasional cringing over rampant dogmatism or my longing for more interesting or stimulating fare in our bookstores and in our meetings:

1. *I am locked in by extensive ancestral and familial ties.* As a father of seven and grandfather of thirty-two, I sufficiently appreciate the Church's blessing to my progeny, and I do not want to discourage their attachment to it by any negative example of repudiation. (I realize that, by itself, this is a strictly pragmatic, subjective, and ultimately inadequate criterion.)

2. *In my view, there is nothing better “out there.”* Few if any other religions are nearly so comprehensive in addressing the

individual and group needs of their adherents. (A non-believing, former-member friend still considers the Church “the world's most comprehensive social benefit program.”) What difference has the Word of Wisdom alone made to my personal well being? And would I have nearly so much extended myself toward others without the Church's impetus and mechanism? Without its influence, wouldn't I be far more selfish and self-absorbed? Would I be nearly so disposed to fellowship those with whom on many points I disagree, and with whom I would otherwise have very little if anything in common? Would my saintly wife have even settled for me as a non-member? Would our children—the beneficiaries of her gospel-motivated, warm and wise nurturing—be as decent, caring, and, in turn, accountable to their own or have found like-minded spouses without that same influence? (This may still not be a good enough reason for my decision to stay.)

3. *I have a testimony of the restored gospel and the inspiration behind its sponsoring institution.* Testimony is a gift—in the pragmatic Mormon view, an earned one. But it is also a choice.³ It's not a bad choice either. As Mother Teresa has said, “If you pray, you will have faith. And if you have faith, you will love. And if you love, you will serve. And if you serve, you will have peace.”⁴ Surely, this is equally valid for what Mormons are urged to have faith in. The words of a great-great grandfather doubly charge me and his, by now vast, progeny. Having nearly perished while with the Mormon Battalion, just a few years later, Thomas Karren was called to leave his wife and five children to serve with the first LDS missionaries to the Sandwich Islands. Hawaii wasn't a tourist mecca then, and a number of those first missionaries did not hold out. One sentence leaps out at me from his missionary journal, dated 17 February 1854: “There is nothing but a realizing sense of the duty I owe to my Priesthood and Calling as a minister of Christ that would induce me for one moment to stop here and live in the manner I have.” (We don't enough use the term “testimony” or explore its implications at Sunstone.)

4. *The restored gospel's explanation of life and human destiny satisfies my contemplative mind.* It appeals to me much like Joseph Smith described certain truths as “tasting good,” and many of its practical emphases strike me as truly remarkable. I will briefly mention four:

- *The concept of family continuity and “eternal lives.”* Many critics deride as non-Christian this idea and its corollary of divine heirship, but I find them existentially right and highly edifying.
- *The needful balance that latter-day scriptures constantly reiterate between faith and reason, obedience and personal revelation.* I respond with a resounding yes to the wonderful image of a faith-traveler's firm holding to an “iron rod” while also responding to the far-less-tangible illumination of an individual “Liahona.” While studying a range of belief systems and interacting in Russia with many other denominations, I've been made aware of how rare such balance really is. In some of the great traditions, one worships by completely turning off one's critical faculties and hypnoti-

cally chanting, fingering beads, or repeating set prayers. At the other end of the spectrum are those who relish speculation at the expense of doctrine and structure—anything goes. I value how, at least in theory, Mormonism tries to accommodate both approaches.

- *The Church keeps pace with life's constant fluctuations, fulling taking into account the mutual interdependence of individuals at all stages of the life cycle.* In its daily operations and wide focus, the Church manages to respond not only to our constantly mutating individual lives but also—through its great attention to those of a younger age—to the inevitable displacement and succession by one generation of the next. While many other worshipful settings practice a far narrower focus on the single relationship between the individual and her God or priest, Latter-day Saints worship together as families, and in a number of other ways and settings interact with other members of all ages and at various stages of spiritual development.⁵

- *Mormons attest to the reality of actual historical events as the source of the Church's legitimacy and our gospel understanding.* We share this valuing of the historical with pristine Christianity and perhaps the inception of Islam, quite in contrast to most other groups in the Christian tradition. This attestation is extremely concrete and earthbound and also, as Harold Bloom would say, "audacious." It invites incredulity but also forcefully persuades. It poses for everyone who encounters its claims a hard but simple challenge: Did it really happen? Or didn't it?

5. *In Paul's words from Ephesians, we are, in our congregations, truly "fellow citizens" in the "household of God," one of whose principal purposes is the mutual edification that only a universal lay priesthood and total member involvement can accomplish (Eph. 2:19; 4:12).* This edification occurs every Sunday when we gather together and, by reminding each other through exhortation and partaking of the sacrament, reinforces our common commitment to Christ and his purposes. We may at times largely participate only from a sense of duty, while begrudging the frequent redundancy and long-windedness of our meetings together—but it also does us good.

My final reason takes precedence over all the others, though it is tied again to what we call testimony:

6. *In all religion, the principle of obedience to God's will, not our own, is fundamental.* Surely a certain sense of the significance and validity of the restored gospel has brought us to this Sunstone gathering in the first place. If, as the restored gospel tells us, we are potentially glorious, we are also infinitesimal in the scheme of our Creator's grand universe. This paradox requires that, should we sufficiently believe it, we no longer have a choice—we at least *choose not to choose* any more. As the Muslims so devoutly (and sometimes recklessly) say, "*In sha' All'a!*"—"God wills it!" Or in language with which you and I are more familiar, "Be still and know that I am God" (D&C 101:16). ☞

NOTES

1. William Butler Yeats, "The Second Coming."

2. I subsequently used this image in a poem, "Limbs," that was published in *Dialogue* 14, no. 2 (Summer, 1981), 132. Some people have also called heroic my deference and that of others at the time of the much publicized "Huebener Affair" in 1976 at Brigham Young University, while others took particular umbrage. In my mind, my quiet acquiescence reflected nothing so much as my strong preservation instinct while in the Church's employ.

3. Further, during those two and a half years of my first mission—now 43 years distant—I began to discern that whenever investigators argued against our message, or members of record talked themselves out of the Church, their real reason for doing so was often a rationalization, some even unconscious personal reservation underlying their words. I have since then continued to sense the same disparity on the part of many who attack the Church. Recently, for instance, I had separate conversations with two men in their early forties. The first is a former student and returned missionary for whom my wife and I have immense fondness. As we talked, he informed me that he is now an 'emancipated' atheist, while in the same breath betraying a deep-seated resentment toward his father, who for a long time has been a highly important ecclesiastical leader. The son's resentment has, I believe, clearly tilted and colored his present insistence that there is no god. The other young man, a lifelong Salt Laker but never a Mormon, was rejected during high school by his till-then-close Mormon peers at the behest of a seminary teacher who told them that association with non-members might lead them astray. This young man consequently came to detest the Church. However, ten years ago, he converted to Islam and now avers that he no longer dislikes Mormonism. Instead, he highly respects it because of all it has in common with his new-found religion. We should, I believe, heed the example of the Muslim, who if treated differently back then, might by now well be a fellow Latter-day Saint.

4. Inscribed on the pedestal of a statue of Mother Teresa in a New Orleans cemetery.

5. These ideas were stimulated through a wonderful, recent conversation with a former student, Sterling Van Wagenen.



GREEN CUTTHROAT TROUT

speckled and hidden by rocks
in water from glaciers compressed 1500 years
trout thrive

open mouthed they float to the surface
their tails and fins wave
as slowly as angel wings

when they leap they fly into a new world
the aspen trees and starlight
and we watch them marveling as their gills burn
breathing fresh air

then they swerve and fall
deep on their way home
like an emerald in colorado water

—VICTOR W. PEARN

The worldview laid out in the writings of Elizabeth Smart's alleged abductor is entirely derivative. Every one of his views that is likely to strike mainstream Latter-day Saints as bizarre has a precedent in beliefs that thrive on the margins of the LDS community itself.

THE MAKING OF IMMANUEL

BRIAN DAVID MITCHELL AND THE MORMON FRINGE

By John-Charles Duffy

ON THE DAY FOLLOWING BRIAN DAVID MITCHELL'S arrest on suspicion of kidnapping Elizabeth Smart, LDS Public Affairs emphatically denied that Mitchell was Mormon: "Neither Brian David Mitchell nor his wife, Wanda Eileen Mitchell, are members of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints or are affiliated with it in any way." The official statement conceded that Mitchell and his wife "are former Church members" but hastened to add that they had been "excommunicated for activity promoting bizarre teachings and lifestyle far afield from the principles and doctrines of the Church."¹

Church officials admitted to the *New York Times* that media coverage surrounding Mitchell's arrest had put them "on the defensive."² News stories around the globe linked Mitchell to LDS teachings about polygamy and personal revelation. The media commonly suggested that Mormonism's emphasis on obedience to male authority, or affinities between Mitchell's religious ideas and mainstream LDS beliefs, might explain why Smart had been so susceptible to Mitchell's control. There was the suggestion—at times the outright assertion—that this horrible incident was a product of Mormonism. "Like it or not," one online commentator wrote, "the truth of the matter is that within the Mormon doctrines lie evil seeds waiting to germinate in . . . deluded specimens like Brian David Mitchell."³

In the wake of Mitchell's arrest, Latter-day Saints responded in various ways to what they perceived as negative publicity for their religion.⁴ LDS Public Affairs continued to chastise journalists who called Mitchell or other polygamists



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"Mormon" and dismissed as "nonsense" the suggestion that Mormon teachings were at the core of the Smart story.⁵ Some Saints minimized the connection between their faith and Mitchell's by insisting that Mitchell had "twisted" or "misconstrued" LDS teachings, taken them "out of context," or gone "off on a tangent."⁶ Mitchell has been dismissed as delusional, deranged, mentally ill, perhaps even a conscious fraud.⁷

Mitchell may be mentally ill; he may have acted with conscious intent to deceive. But Mitchell is also devoutly, all-too-devoutly, religious; and the religious worldview to which he subscribes is rooted in Mormonism. Mitchell believes he is the divinely appointed prophetic successor to Joseph Smith. Mitchell's revelations, which have frequently been described as "rambling," actually reflect a coherent worldview synthesized from statements by nineteenth-century LDS leaders, teachings of former Mormon apostle and Church president Ezra Taft Benson, and beliefs endemic to entire subcultures within the LDS community. Mitchell's beliefs may be "far afield" of what the majority of today's Saints profess, but there are possibly thousands of members and former members of the Church who would find that in many ways, Mitchell's beliefs coincide with their own.

"I NAME THEE IMMANUEL"

Who is Brian David Mitchell? What does he believe?

MITCHELL WAS BORN into a family largely alienated from the Church but with roots going back to the Mormon pioneer era.⁸ Although he attended church as a child, Mitchell professed to be an atheist until he was nearly thirty, when an LSD-induced vision convinced him that God wanted him to return to the Church. Twice-divorced, Mitchell has been accused of physical and sexual abuse, but he had served as a high councilor and a temple worker and was unusually strict in applying Church standards—the kind of Mormon who eats only whole wheat bread and walks out of movies containing profanity. Media interviews with relatives

and friends paint contrasting pictures of Mitchell, but together, they suggest a disturbed man struggling to find stability through strict obedience to the gospel.⁹

Beginning in the late 1980s or early '90s, Mitchell and his third wife, Wanda Barzee, observed rigorous home devotions, praying for hours at a stretch. Angelic visitations and revelations followed. They insisted that relatives call them by new names: David (pronounced as in Hebrew, DAH-vid) and Eladah. In 1995, Mitchell and Barzee sold their possessions and spent the next two years hitchhiking around the country, returning to Salt Lake in 1997 with intentions to preach to the homeless. In his white robes and unkempt beard, Mitchell—now calling himself Immanuel—became a familiar sight in downtown Salt Lake, where he and Barzee panhandled. On 6 April 2002, Barzee finished transcribing a twenty-seven-page collection of Mitchell's revelations titled *The Book of Immanuel David Isaiah*, which the couple distributed to relatives. Local Church leaders obtained a copy as well, leading to the couple's excommunication in absentia at the beginning of June 2003—the same week that Elizabeth Smart disappeared.¹⁰

The Book of Immanuel is a collection of eight documents, numbered one through seven, with an additional section bearing the odd title "Plus One." All but one of the documents are oracular revelations in the voice of the Lord, akin to those found in the Doctrine and Covenants. Section One of *The Book of Immanuel* begins:

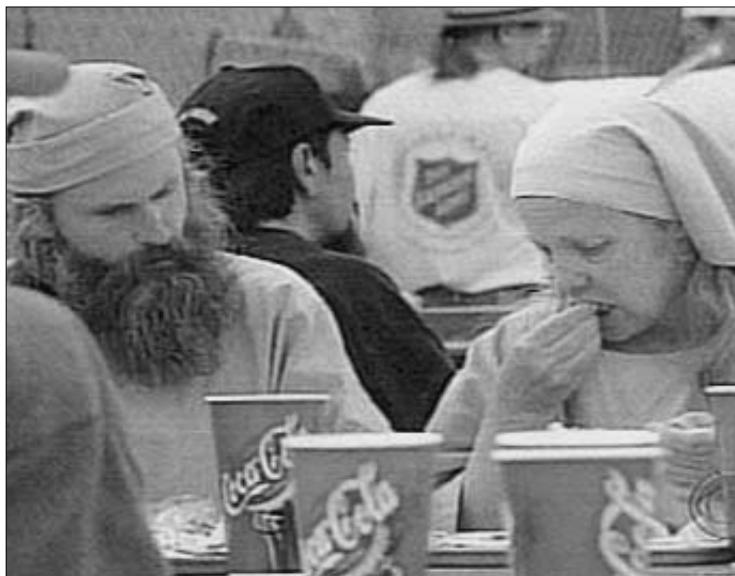
Hearken! Oh ye inhabitants of the earth. Listen together and open your ears, for it is I, the Lord God of all the earth, the creator of all things that speaketh unto you. Yea, even Jesus Christ speaking by the voice of my servant whom I have called and chosen to be a light and a covenant to the world in these last days. I have called him and given him a name to be had in remembrance before me, even the name Immanuel David Isaiah. . . .¹¹

In Mitchell's revelations, the Lord chastises the Saints for rejecting the Book of Mormon and the words of the prophets, especially the words of Ezra Taft Benson; for loving money and

seeking the praise of the world; for ignoring the poor and needy; for failing to testify against secret combinations; for turning to doctors to cure illness instead of relying on faith, herbs, and fruits. The revelation titled "Plus One" speaks to Barzee rather than Mitchell, commanding her to welcome into her home seven times seven plural wives. Though Barzee had a hysterectomy after divorcing her first husband,¹² the revelation promises her that if she is obedient, "thine own womb shall be opened, and thou shalt bring forth a son to sit upon the throne of his father David."¹³ Mitchell is told that he will be

a king and a lawgiver but also that he will suffer in similitude of Christ. There are quotations from Isaiah (but not from the King James Version) prophesying that Mitchell will be "marred beyond human likeness" and "numbered with criminals."¹⁴

Besides the oracular revelations, *The Book of Immanuel* includes a "Statement of Intent and Purpose," dated 1997, for an organization called The Seven Diamonds Plus One—Testaments of Jesus Christ—Study and Fellowship Society. This society is dedicated to examining "the covenants between God and man as contained in the Testaments of Jesus Christ that are herein set forth; and to . . . consider how we . . . may fulfill the solemn and binding agreements that we have entered into with our God."¹⁵ There then follows a list of seven



Brian David Mitchell and Wanda Barzee

Mitchell and Barzee claim to have received angelic visitations and revelations.

documents, plus one, which Mitchell and Barzee regard as testaments of Christ:

1. The Holy Bible—King James Version
2. The Book of Mormon—translated by Joseph Smith
3. The inspired words of prophets of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints
4. *The Golden Seven Plus One* by Dr. C. Samuel West
5. *Embraced by the Light* by Betty J. Eadie
6. *The Literary Message of Isaiah* by Avraham Gileadi
7. *The Final Quest* by Rick Joyner

Plus One

1. Inspired sacred music and song and the testimonies of all the humble followers of Jesus Christ by the power of the Holy Ghost¹⁶

LIKE SON, LIKE FATHER

BRIAN DAVID MITCHELL'S father, Shirl, has prophetic aspirations of his own. As a child, Shirl heard a voice tell him, "You are Christ." He eventually came to understand this as a sign that he is the "mortal messenger of Deity," called to reveal the truth about human evolutionary potential. Beginning in his early twenties, Shirl spent half a century developing what would eventually be a 900-page manuscript titled *Spokesman for the Infant God or Goddess* (completed in 1997, the same year that Brian launched his own prophetic ministry).



Shirl teaches that human beings collectively constitute the body of an infant deity, just as cells constitute our own bodies. The infant deity—the offspring of the sun, who is a goddess, and a male companion star—has been gestating over the last several million years of human evolution and is now ready to be born. This birth will occasion a radical transformation in society. In the new age following the birth of the infant deity, people will follow an all-natural vegetarian diet. Children will engage in erotic play without repression; teenagers will freely copulate for the purpose of procreation; and adults, having sexually satiated themselves during childhood and adolescence, will live in celibate ecstasy. Marriage, an inherently dysfunctional institution, will be done away.

Idiosyncratic though they are, Shirl's prophetic teachings have certain affinities to Mormon tradition—themes of apostasy, revelation, millennium, and divine nature—which Shirl himself attributes to his Mormon background. Shirl writes at some length about Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, the Word of Wisdom, and Mormon polygamy.

Like his son, Shirl comes across as disturbed—particularly, in Shirl's case, as regards the body and sexuality. He abhors elimination, by which he means menstrual blood and bowel movements; in the new age, these will be minimized if not altogether cease. Shirl writes of the "addictive voyeurism" that had him fondling young girls as a child and peeping into women's windows as an adult. He complains that every woman is a manipulative nymphomaniac whom no husband could possibly satisfy; he fears that his penis could be "strangled" during sex; he is fascinated by a recurring dream in which a shaft of light penetrates his anal chakra. Accused by his former wife of rape, Shirl defends himself by insisting that when rape occurs in marriage, it's because wives withhold sex from their husbands and that there can be no "illegal rape" in marriage anyway. Abuse of wives by husbands is inevitable, Shirl maintains, and will end only when the institution of marriage is abolished. Shirl Mitchell, like Brian, appears to struggle with personal demons—and that struggle manifests itself in his prophetic teachings.

Where is all this coming from? Why does Mitchell accuse Latter-day Saints of rejecting the Book of Mormon and the latter-day prophets? Whence his opposition to doctors? Why does he apply to himself Isaiah's "suffering servant" prophecies, which, like other Christians, Latter-day Saints traditionally understand as referring to Jesus? Avraham Gileadi and Betty Eadie will likely be familiar names to Latter-day Saints; but who are C. Samuel West and Rick Joyner?

Little wonder that mainstream Saints have concluded that Mitchell's beliefs are "bizarre," even delusional. Yet the worldview laid out in *The Book of Immanuel* is not the product of lunatic imaginings on Mitchell's part. Mitchell's worldview is entirely derivative. Everything about *The Book of Immanuel* that is likely to strike mainstream Saints as bizarre has a precedent in beliefs that thrive on the margins of the LDS community itself.

FOLK ON THE FRINGE

Mitchell emerged from subcultures on the margins of Mormonism

DURING THE TWENTIETH century, Mormonism transformed itself from a separatist movement with radical beliefs and practices into a more mainstream religion—still distinctive but accommodationist, more in line with conservative American values and bearing greater resemblance to what the public would recognize as a Christian church.¹⁷ "Not weird," as President Gordon B. Hinckley has famously said.¹⁸

Accommodation has required that certain nineteenth-century Mormon traits or tendencies be deemphasized, attenuated, or altogether suppressed. Older ways of thinking have not disappeared, however, especially in the Mormon corridor (Utah, Idaho, Arizona), where they are passed from generation to generation in families and communities whose roots go back to nineteenth-century Mormonism. Accommodation has shifted people who subscribe to these older ways of thinking to the margins of the LDS community. But such people are likely to have a strong awareness of their connection to past Mormon tradition and therefore a strong sense of their own legitimacy. People at the margins may eventually become so out of step with the mainstream that they leave the Church altogether, either by choice or as a result of Church discipline. Many others, however, will spend their entire lives in the Church. Such individuals will strike accommodationist Saints as unusually conservative, maybe even "weird"; but if they live in certain parts of Utah, they may not stand out at all.

The key to understanding Mitchell's Mormon connection is to get a sense of the accommodation-resistant subcultures on the margins of Mormonism. Mitchell emerges from this Mormon fringe. His "bizarre" beliefs are descended from attitudes once mainstream in Mormonism but later pushed to the margins. Mitchell demonstrates four tendencies current among accommodation-resistant Latter-day Saints: (1) nostalgia for everyday access to the supernatural, (2) allegiance to alternative teachings about health, (3) ultraconservative politics, and (4) a strong impulse to separate from the world.

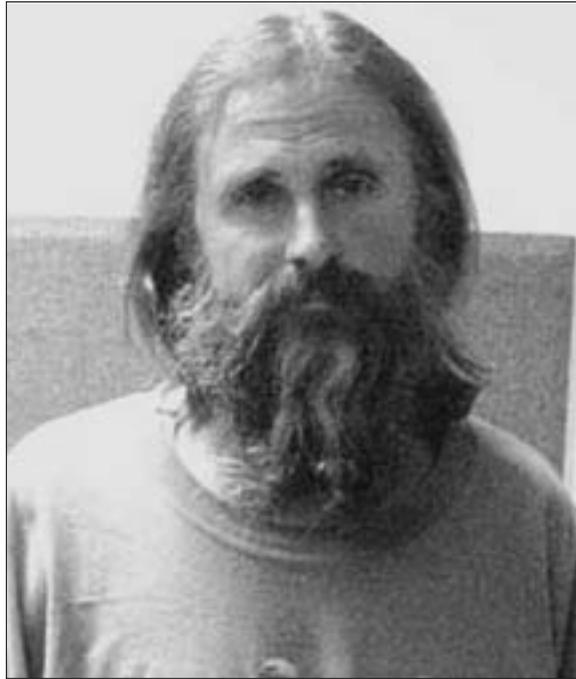
1. NOSTALGIA FOR THE SUPERNATURAL

NINETEENTH-CENTURY MORMONS inhabited a conceptual world where supernatural phenomena were unsurprising. They expected, and witnessed, miraculous healings, outpourings of spiritual gifts such as speaking in tongues or prophesying, and visitations by angelic or demonic beings. Such events were held up as a sign that the LDS movement was indeed the Lord's work; the absence of miracles in other faith communities was regarded as a sign of apostasy (Moroni 10:24–25).

Certainly accounts of the miraculous and the supernatural survive into contemporary Mormonism, but they are less prominent—less expected—than they once were. The LDS hierarchy has undergone a routinization of charisma such that apostles no longer profess to have had personal visitations by Jesus Christ, and prophets no longer produce oracular revelations in the style “Thus saith the Lord.”¹⁹ Members are cautioned not to expect dramatic spiritual manifestations, and those who do have them are advised that these experiences are sacred and therefore should not be spoken of.²⁰ As a result, LDS discourse is now dominated by what might be called a “routinized spirituality” in which encounters with the spiritual realm take the form of peaceful feelings or general impressions rather than audible voices or visitations from the spirit world. At the same time, among the Saints, there remains an undercurrent of nostalgia for the days when the supernatural seemed closer at hand.²¹

The popularity of Betty Eadie's *Embraced by the Light*²² demonstrates the fascination that many Saints continue to have for accounts of the supernatural, despite their marginalization in official discourse. Eadie's account of her visit to the spirit world, published in 1992 by independent LDS press Aspen Books, sold out its first print run within days, thanks largely to enthusiastic LDS readers (some of whom had already heard Eadie share her experience in firesides). In 1993, the *Salt Lake Tribune* reported that “large numbers” of Latter-day Saints were buying the book and discussing it in “study groups.”²³ When

Eadie came to Salt Lake for a speaking engagement, thousands turned out to hear her. Eadie was also criticized by Latter-day Saints, who accused her of teaching false doctrine, while the Church remained officially silent about the book.²⁴ But the success of *Embraced by the Light* spawned a series of additional books on near-death experiences published by small independent LDS presses.²⁵ Clearly, Eadie had struck a nerve, at least within a segment of the LDS community.



Brian David Mitchell

Mitchell pushes nostalgia for the supernatural to the next level, holding up the LDS mainstream's routinized spirituality as a sign of apostasy.

Mitchell shares the nostalgia for the supernatural that drew so many other Saints to Eadie's book at a time when experiences like hers had virtually dropped out of official discourse. Mitchell ranked Eadie's account of her near-death experience among his “seven diamonds plus one,” regarding it as a true testament of Christ akin to the dramatic spiritual manifestations he himself had experienced following hours of prayer.²⁶ Following a long-established precedent among LDS dissidents,²⁷ Mitchell pushes nostalgia for the supernatural to the next level, holding up the LDS mainstream's routinized spirituality as a sign of apostasy. In *The Book of Immanuel*, the Lord laments that visions, prophecy, and miracles are no longer common among the Saints. How can the Saints fulfill their mission in the unprecedented wickedness of the last days, the Lord asks, unless they walk in even greater power than Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, or the mortal Christ himself? Where are the visitations and miracles that marked the work of the Lord's servants in ages past?²⁸ Ironically, this is the same question that early Mormonism had posed to sectarian Christianity.

2. ALTERNATIVE TEACHINGS ABOUT HEALTH

MORMONISM HAS A history of antipathy to conventional medicine. Throughout the nineteenth century, Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, and other Church leaders promoted faith, herbs, and mild food as the appropriate response to disease; consulting a doctor was regarded as a sign of weak faith. Around the turn of the century, the Church attenuated and fi-

nally reversed its opposition to conventional medicine.²⁹ Still, the older anti-medical tradition endured. As a result, by the 1970s and '80s, the Saints had a reputation for being susceptible to medical and nutritional quackery.³⁰ Alarmed medical professionals have pointed to a thriving LDS subculture that regards faith in alternative medicine as synonymous with faith in the restored gospel.³¹

One representative of this subculture is LDS naturopath C. Samuel West, author of a book titled *The Golden Seven Plus One*.³² West regards his book as a product of divine inspiration: he dictated it to a scribe in a process recalling the coming forth of the Book of Mormon.³³ West's book holds that the root cause of all pain, disease, and death is proteins trapped in the bloodstream, which can be removed through various techniques, including adopting a vegetarian diet, bouncing on a trampoline, and learning to redirect the body's bio-electric field. West's book contains pages of testimonials from people who have achieved quasi-miraculous cures by using West's techniques. West touts his science as the key to achieving the promises associated with the Word of Wisdom, and he alleges that the federal government, the American Medical Association, and pharmaceutical companies are involved in a secret combination to keep West's science from the knowledge of the public.³⁴ "Health missionaries" devoted to West's teachings take a "vow of poverty" and an "oath of obedience," surrendering all their property to an Orem-based organization called the International Academy of Lymphology, which assumes responsibility for meeting their financial needs as they promote West's ideas and related products.³⁵

Mitchell encountered West in 1993, when his wife's stepfather went to the neuropath hoping to be cured of cancer. West's ideas coincided with convictions Mitchell already held about the virtues of vegetarianism and the existence of secret combinations in the government.³⁶ It appears that Mitchell tried to make a living for a time by selling *The Golden Seven Plus One*, and he and Barzee lived briefly with West on two occasions after they had become homeless. As Immanuel, Mitchell tried unsuccessfully to proselytize West, who in turn urged Mitchell to return to the LDS Church.³⁷ Notwithstanding, *The Book of Immanuel* praises West as an Elias raised up to "shed far greater light and truth upon my

Word of Wisdom and my laws of health." Mitchell's revelations anticipate that the Lord will "raise up a people to live on this earth in peace, without pain or disease," a catchphrase from *The Golden Seven Plus One* expressing West's vision of the millennial age that will be ushered in by adherence to his teachings.³⁸

In *The Book of Immanuel*, the Lord says that Ezra Taft Benson "testified unto many that Samuel [West] was my servant and that the book, *The Golden Seven Plus One* was inspired of God."³⁹ While I have not been able to confirm that Benson endorsed West's book, it is not implausible that he did so: Benson was a well-known advocate of alternative medicine.⁴⁰ Mitchell, West, and Benson all form part of a larger LDS subculture that views alternative medicine as integral to the fabric of the restored gospel.

3. ULTRACONSERVATIVE POLITICS

WHEN THE CHURCH was persecuted for polygamy, it defended itself by professing devotion to the Constitution and decrying federal tyranny.⁴¹ Since then, most Saints have assimilated in the American political mainstream; but the older, hardline tradition of constitutionalism, coupled with accusations of government tyranny, has survived in an LDS subculture devoted to ultraconservative politics. During the Cold War, the subculture's most prominent representatives were Ezra Taft Benson, Verlan H. Anderson, and W. Cleon Skousen.⁴²

With the collapse of Communism at the end of the 1980s, ultraconservatives transferred their fear of conspiracy from Communism to what the John Birch Society calls the "New World Order." After the Gulf War, when President George Bush gave a speech

pledging America's commitment to building a "new world order," ultraconservatives became convinced the U.S. government was now part of the conspiracy.⁴³ Fears about the global political situation and the specter of federal tyranny produced an apocalyptic climate, no doubt intensified by the opening of the final decade of the millennium. Survivalists, "superpatriots," and citizens' militias became national news.

LDS traditions about emergency preparedness and the horrors of the last days helped legitimize ultraconservative apocalypticism in the eyes of many Saints. So did Ezra Taft Benson's position as Church president, which allowed devotees to ele-



President Ezra Taft Benson

Ezra Taft Benson's position as Church president allowed devotees to elevate his ultraconservative politics to the status of prophecy.

RADICALIZED PROPHETS OF THE FAR, FAR RIGHT

MITCHELL'S TRANSFORMATION INTO Immanuel has analogues in the radicalization of other ultra-conservative Saints prominent during the early 1990s. Note how in each of the following cases, alienation from the Church led to increasingly extreme—increasingly Mitchell-like—behavior, including claims to prophetic or quasi-prophetic authority.



BO GRITZ joined the Church in 1984, in response to a visionary experience in the jungles of Southeast Asia, where he had been searching for missing American POWs. Around the same time, Gritz achieved national notoriety for alleging that the federal government was involved in the drug trade. Seven years later, Gritz published

Called to Serve, which warned that the Constitution was “hanging by a thread” due to a “secret combination” within the U.S. government. In 1992, Gritz ran as presidential candidate for the far-right Populist Party on a platform that included abolishing the income tax and the federal reserve (which LDS constitutionalist Cleon Skousen had long criticized as well).

When the Church began to crack down on ultraconservatives, Gritz proclaimed his allegiance to President Benson and hinted that other Church leaders were now in league with the New World Order. Gritz resigned from the Church after his stake president refused to renew his recommend until Gritz proved he had paid his income taxes. Thereafter, Gritz moved increasingly to the political and theological right. In 2000, he founded the Fellowship of Eternal Warriors (the FEW), a religious fraternity led by twelve “warrior-priests” who have been “Set-Apart, Anointed, and Ordained” to combat the Satanic New World Order. The Fellowship appears to subscribe to a white supremacist ideology that regards Northern Europeans as the house of Israel—an extreme version of a belief once prevalent among Latter-day Saints and also espoused by Mitchell.

Like Mitchell, Gritz was once arrested on kidnapping charges, after he had tried to help a woman forcibly regain custody of her 12-year-old son. This arrest occurred a few months before he founded the FEW.

STERLING ALLAN, a lifelong Latter-day Saint, was only twenty-six years old when he founded the popular but ill-fated American Study Group. Inspired by President Benson's call to study the Book of Mormon, Allan had earlier produced a book-length manuscript that used Book of Mormon history as a pattern for predicting events of the last days. The year after Church intervention led to the col-



lapse of his study group, Allan tried to approach the podium during General Conference to deliver a talk warning the Church that it was moving towards apostasy. In November 1992, the same month as the Church's “housecleaning” campaign, Allan fled to a remote location in California, convinced that nuclear holocaust was imminent.

Upon his return home to Manti in January 1993, Allan was excommunicated for his allegiance to teachings of Avraham Gileadi. At first, Allan, like Gileadi, attempted to regain his membership, having received personal revelation that God wanted him to submit to Church authority. Eventually, however, Allan accepted his excommunication as liberating. He now maintains several web sites and electronic lists catering to ultraconservative Saints in and out of the Church. These include GreaterThings.com, PatriotSaints.com, RemnantSaints.com, and the Yahoo group David's Outcasts.

Allan has said that, like Mitchell, he once considered running off with a 14-year-old girl. This was during a period of life when, also like Mitchell, Allan believed himself to be “the one mighty and strong.” Most recently, Allan has announced on his website that a recently discovered Bible code implores him to run for president in 2004 and predicts that he will win.

JAMES HARMSTON and his wife Elaine, in response to President Benson's exhortations, had been studying the Book of Mormon when they became troubled by departures from revealed teachings and practices by the contemporary Church. They sought answers directly from the Lord by performing in their home the rituals associated with the true order of prayer. Spiritual manifestations followed.



By 1989, Harmston had quit his job, trusting that the Lord would provide. A year later, the Harmstons moved to Manti, where they discovered that they were part of an apparently spontaneous gathering of ultraconservative Saints alarmed by such things as the Church's support of the New World Order and changes in Church doctrine and ritual. The Harmstons began holding meetings in their home where like-minded Saints could study and discuss their concerns. In October 1992, the Harmstons were excommunicated as part of the mounting Church campaign against ultraconservatives. Denouncing the LDS Church as apostate, Harmston founded the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days in 1994.

Like Mitchell, Harmston claims to have received the keys of the kingdom by direct revelation—in Harmston's case, a visitation by Enoch, Noah, Abraham, and Moses. Also like Mitchell, Harmston has embraced plural marriage and has been accused of preying on teenaged girls.

vate his ultraconservative politics to the status of prophecy. Though they perceived themselves as followers of the Prophet, ultraconservatives realized that the majority of Saints did not share their outlook. This produced a tendency for ultraconservatives to view themselves as a vanguard within the Church who discerned the present dangers more clearly than most because they paid closer attention to prophetic counsel than most. In 1986, Benson had preached that the Church was “under condemnation” for ignoring the Book of Mormon, with its warnings against secret combinations and apostasy;⁴⁴ as ultraconservatives became increasingly alienated from the LDS mainstream, they came to understand Benson’s speech as a warning against apostasy within the Church itself. Benson’s incapacitation in the early ’90s sparked rumors among ultraconservatives that he was being muzzled by false leaders who wanted to squelch his prophetic warnings.⁴⁵

In the early ’90s, Church leaders moved to check the ultraconservative surge. The American Study Group, a popular gathering for Saints interested in prophecies of the last days, survivalism, and the far-right politics of Bo Gritz, folded in 1991 after Church leaders cautioned members not to participate in the group.⁴⁶ Popular ultraconservative scriptorian Avraham Gileadi saw his book *The Last Days* pulled from the shelves of Deseret Book, was instructed by Church leaders to stop writing and teaching, and was eventually excommunicated.⁴⁷ Shortly after the November 1992 presidential election, when ultraconservative LDS candidate Bo Gritz won nearly 50,000 votes in the Mormon corridor,⁴⁷ the Church launched a “housecleaning” campaign. Local leaders were warned to be on the lookout for members who fit a profile that included sympathies with the John Birch Society, meeting in study groups, “inordinate” preoccupation with food storage or prophecies of the last days, a conviction that Church leaders were muzzling President Benson, and interest in the teachings of Gileadi or Gritz.⁴⁹

Though the Church denied reports that this “housecleaning” yielded hundreds of excommunications,⁵⁰ the campaign certainly produced a crisis within the ultraconservative subculture. Some, like Gileadi, submitted to Church authority. Others went underground, quietly awaiting the day when God would cleanse his apostate Church. Others became even more radicalized, as in the case of the Manti Saints who broke away in 1994 to form the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days.⁵¹ [See sidebar page 39]

Mitchell took part in the ultraconservative surge of the early 90s. I submit, in fact, that his transformation into Immanuel needs to be understood as his own radicalized response to the Church’s rejection of ultraconservatism. *The Book of Immanuel* is saturated with the apocalyptic outlook typical of Latter-day Saints with these leanings, including a fear of the New World Order.⁵² Relatives have told reporters that in the early 1990s, Mitchell became involved with anti-government radicals who professed to know how to apply for exemption from federal taxes. We know that Mitchell was one of the more than 28,000 Utahns who voted for Bo Gritz in 1992; as part of their transition into homelessness, Mitchell and Barzee lived for a time in one of the “constitutional covenant communities” Gritz founded in Idaho, where patriots could gather to defend themselves against the New World Order.⁵³ Mitchell is believed to have attended meetings of the American Study Group.⁵⁴ He plainly admired Avraham Gileadi, whose 1994 book, *The Literary Message of Isaiah*, ranks among Mitchell’s “seven diamonds plus one” and provides the non-King James translations of Isaiah quoted in *The Book of Immanuel*.⁵⁵

Like other ultraconservatives, Mitchell regards Ezra Taft Benson as the last of the true prophets. *The Book of Immanuel* recounts how sometime in the year before Benson’s death in 1994, Mitchell had a revelation in the Salt Lake Temple in which the

Lord condemned the Saints for rejecting Benson’s testimony and denounced Church leaders as wolves who merely “pretended to uphold my prophet Ezra” while seeking “to take the kingdom by force.” In response to the Church’s apostasy, the Lord transferred “the keys of priesthood . . . authority that Ezra held into [the] hands” of Mitchell, who would henceforth be known as Immanuel David Isaiah.⁵⁶ The study fellowship Mitchell founded in 1997 is, in fact, nothing less than the “true and living Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in its purified and exalted state.”⁵⁷ This organization had exactly two members: Mitchell and his wife Barzee, though Mitchell apparently expected to make additional converts.⁵⁸

Mitchell’s understanding of his role in God’s plan is derived from Avraham Gileadi’s teachings about a Davidic servant—a temporal Messiah who will restore the kingdom of Israel before the Second Coming. In *The Last Days*, Gileadi claims that the Davidic servant will suffer in the similitude of Christ at the hands of the wicked in a kind of temporal redemptive sacrifice on Israel’s behalf.⁵⁹ The prophecies from Isaiah that Gileadi be-

Ultraconservative Saints remain preoccupied with separating themselves from worldly influences and are strongly nostalgic for the days when people sacrificed everything for the kingdom

OTHER HOMELESS WANDERERS

IT IS RARE for ultraconservative Saints to opt for homelessness: they are more likely to express extreme separatism by becoming survivalists or trying to live the law of consecration. Yet besides Mitchell and Barzee, I have encountered two other examples of individuals who either considered or embraced homelessness as a lifestyle: one an LDS ultraconservative, the other a non-Mormon admired by LDS ultraconservatives.

FOLLOWING his excommunication in 1993, STERLING ALLAN (see photo, page 39), founder of the American Study Group, moved from Manti to Tucson to pursue a graduate degree. He felt isolated and torn by conflicting impulses: to submit to Church leaders in order to be rebaptized or to embrace his conviction that the Lord was calling him to a mighty work. Eventually the emotional turmoil became so great that he walked away from everything:

I packed one little duffel bag with a sleeping bag, a change of clothes, my scriptures; and I walked out of my apartment with the intention of never returning; leaving a note regarding how to dispose of . . . my possessions. For two days I hitchhiked [n]orth an inch at a time, pouring over the scriptures and pleading in my trembling heart to the Lord for understanding and guidance. . . . The scriptures say that a man must leave “all” for the kingdom of God’s sake. Was he calling me out now, or was I taking things into my own hands. . . . Were I to return out of fear of leaving the world behind, then my chances of ever being a truly effective instrument in God’s hands would be annihilated. I believed that leaving Babylon was a true principle, but I had serious doubts about the timing and the manner in which I was doing it.

Allan finally concluded that the Lord did not want him to leave Babylon at that time, and he returned to conventional life in society.

THE second individual refuses to disclose his legal name, though he has hinted that his first name is Fred. Fred, who was raised Baptist, now goes by the name JESUS ELIJAH MOSES as a result of a 1993 vision in which he ascended into heaven and became one with those three beings. Fred refuses to use his legal name, social security number, or signature because he believes that these are the name, number, and mark of the beast foretold in the Book of Revelation. Fred has thus cut himself off from society. Like Mitchell, Fred wears white robes and a beard, has spent time as a homeless wanderer, and believes he is the bearer of a prophetic message.

In 2000, Fred somehow encountered Sterling Allan online. Allan was fascinated by Fred and forwarded their correspondence to his ultraconservative LDS Yahoo group, David’s Outcasts. Allan and other subscribers to David’s Outcasts admire Fred (whom they call JEM) for his uncompromising anti-materialism, self-sacrifice, and integrity; subscribers have welcomed Fred into their homes as he has wandered the country. Allan opines that Fred has a bona fide “mission” to “interface with the downtrodden of society.” Curiously, no one on David’s Outcasts has noted the strong parallels between Jesus Elijah Moses and Immanuel David Isaiah.



believes refer to this suffering Davidic servant are applied to Mitchell himself in *The Book of Immanuel*—including the prophecy that Mitchell will be “numbered with criminals.”⁶⁰ While Mitchell has failed to convince anyone except Barzee that he has indeed been called to play the role he claims, there are possibly thousands of Latter-day Saints who believe that the role needs to be filled.⁶¹

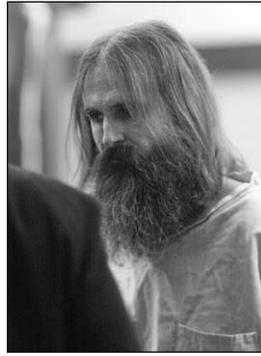
4. SEPARATION FROM THE WORLD

MITCHELL’S DECISION TO embrace homelessness as a lifestyle may at first seem to be “far afield” of Mormon tradition. But in fact, Mitchell’s homelessness is an extension of nineteenth-century Mormon traditions about separating from the world and preaching without purse or scrip.⁶² Post-accommodation Mormonism no longer calls the Saints to gather into communities literally separated from the world and is more practical about providing for its traveling ministers. But ultraconservative Saints remain preoccupied with separating themselves from worldly influences (rock music, R-rated movies) and are strongly nostalgic for the days when people sacrificed everything for the kingdom.

While many mainstream Church members also seek to be separate from the world, ultraconservatives take things to a level mainstream Saints find extreme. Mitchell, for instance, would walk out of movies that contained profanity, and he reportedly padlocked the television, presumably to keep his stepchildren from watching it unsupervised. In the early 90s, Mitchell’s desire to separate himself from worldly influences developed into a desire to separate himself from society altogether. Eventually, he and Barzee would sell all their possessions and become homeless hitchhikers—their way of fulfilling the command to depart from Babylon.⁶³ As Immanuel, Mitchell panhandled for a living (or survived on the largess of family and friends), thus literally fulfilling the scriptural injunction that the Lord’s messengers be without purse or scrip.⁶⁴ [See sidebar this page.]

It’s not clear exactly when Mitchell became convinced that God wanted him to be a prophet to the homeless. But he was no doubt inspired by Rick Joyner’s *The Final Quest*, which ranks among *The Book of Immanuel*’s seven diamonds plus one.⁶⁵ Joyner is a prominent charismatic Christian who teaches that the outpouring of revelation which marked the apostolic age must be restored in the last days.⁶⁶ *The Final Quest* is one of Joyner’s revelations, an allegorical dream-vision

depicting the apocalyptic battle between good and evil. At one point in *The Final Quest*, Joyner is clothed in a “mantle of humility”—a dirty, ragged cloak, which Joyner says “made me look . . . like a homeless person.” Joyner is told, however, that this mantle is “the highest rank in the kingdom” and that “the Lord is closer to the homeless than to kings.”⁶⁷ Later in the vision, standing before God’s throne, Joyner meets a man named Angelo, who in life had been a homeless street preacher. Joyner is guilt-stricken to realize that he had once seen Angelo preaching and had dismissed him as “a religious nut.” Angelo then asks Joyner to “remember my friends, the homeless. Many will love our Savior if someone will go to them.”⁶⁸ It’s not clear how Joyner, who makes a living selling Christian products through his North Carolina-based MorningStar Ministries, has embraced that call, but Mitchell took Angelo’s plea to heart.⁶⁹



The appearance of Immanuel David Isaiah is a dramatic sign of unresolved tension between Mormonism’s past and present. The man in white robes who preached to the homeless just blocks from Temple Square is a product partly, it may well be, of mental illness, but also of an ongoing tug-of-war between what Mormonism once was and what it is trying to become.

CONCLUSION

Not so bizarre or delusional after all

THOUGH ACCOMMODATION HAS moved contemporary Mormonism towards the mainstream, many Saints continue to subscribe to nineteenth-century beliefs and attitudes. This has yielded subcultures within the LDS community composed of people nostalgic for supernatural manifestations, devoted to alternative medicine and ultraconservative politics, and with unusually strong impulses to separate themselves from the world. This is the kind of Mormonism Mitchell embraced when he gave up drugs and returned to the Church, hoping to bring order to his life. By the standards of accommodation-driven Mormonism, Mitchell’s brand is indeed “bizarre” and “far afield” of contemporary Church teaching, but that fact is an indication of how far Mormonism has shifted from some of the impulses that first shaped it.

Mitchell is not a random “nut” who just happened to have come out of the woodwork when he did. At the same time that Mitchell was turning into Immanuel, other LDS ultraconserva-

tives were becoming similarly radicalized in response to upheavals in global politics and increasing alienation from their church. Unlike other radicalized ultraconservatives, though, Mitchell seems to have been driving a car with no brakes: his behavior became steadily more extreme until it surpassed anything his analogues had done. Still, Mitchell needs to be understood as part of a larger trend: an unforeseen consequence of the conflict between the LDS Church and its ultraconservatives during the early 1990s.

Ironically, convicting Mitchell of Smart’s abduction may require recognition of the affinity between Mitchell’s beliefs and LDS tradition. When Ron and Dan Lafferty were tried for murdering their sister-in-law and her baby in response to what they believed was a revelation from God, Utahns witnessed an ironic spectacle: prosecutors producing witnesses to show that what the

Laffertys believed was not so unlike what most Latter-day Saints believe. Prosecutors had to make this move in order to rebut the contention that the Laffertys were insane and therefore incompetent to stand trial.⁷⁰ If Mitchell’s defense lawyers enter a plea of not guilty by means of insanity, Latter-day Saints, thus far keen to distance themselves from Mitchell, may have to testify that Mitchell’s beliefs aren’t so unlike their own—aren’t so bizarre or delusional—after all.

Mitchell now sits in jail, silent, his father reports, like “Christ, standing mute before Pilate.”⁷¹ Mitchell probably understands his incarceration in light of Gileadi’s teachings about the suffering Davidic servant, which means he probably anticipates that God will eventually intervene spectacularly on his behalf. At the time I write this, the courts have not yet ruled whether Mitchell is competent to stand trial, nor have experts released an official diagnosis of Mitchell’s psychological condition. But for me, this much is clear: the appearance of Immanuel David Isaiah is a dramatic sign of unresolved tension between Mormonism’s past and present. The man in white robes who preached to the homeless just blocks from Temple Square is a product partly, it may well be, of mental illness, but also of an ongoing tug-of-war between what Mormonism once was and what it is trying to become. ☒

NOTES

1. "Official Statement About Brian and Wanda Mitchell," 13 Mar. 2003 <<http://www.lds.org/newsroom/showrelease/0,15503,4044-1-15957,00.html>>.

2. Michael Janofsky, "Kidnapping Case Puts Mormons on Defensive," *New York Times*, 24 Mar. 2003, A10.

3. John R. Llewellyn, "Abduction Case of Elizabeth Smart," 16 Mar. 2003 <www.polygamybooks.net/lawsmart.htm>.

4. Perhaps the most unusual effort to counter negative press about Mormonism appeared in a *Deseret News* article titled "From Faith to Fanatic Delusion". Quoting Rodney Stark, the article suggested that LDS readers should actually be flattered their faith has produced such a long list of high-profile fanatics (Bruce Longo, the Laffertys, the Singer/Swapp clan, the LeBarons). All faiths produce extremists, the article proposed, but because LDS communities are so well organized, Mormon extremists are more likely to be apprehended, and thus gain media attention. Carrie A. Moore, "From Faith to Fanatic Delusion," *Deseret News*, 16 Mar. 2003, A1+.

5. "Erroneous Reporting of Elizabeth Smart Case," 24 Mar. 2003 <<http://www.lds.org/newsroom/mistakes>>. The charge of "nonsense" was directed specifically at an article in an Australian paper which had asserted that Mormon beliefs "renounced [by the Church] but still practiced by a fundamentalist minority . . . are at the core of this story" (Gerard Wright, "Kidnapped in the Name of God," *Sydney Morning Herald*, 24 Mar. 2003 <<http://www.smh.com.au/articles/2003/03/23/1048354476047.html>>). It's hard to see how that is not a fair description of the Church's relationship to plural marriage, nor of the role Mitchell's beliefs about plural marriage were alleged to have played in the Smart kidnapping.

6. Maggie Haberman and Jeane MacIntosh, *Held Captive: The Kidnapping and Rescue of Elizabeth Smart* (New York: Avon, 2003), 65; Moore, A15; Janofsky, A10.

7. Vicki Cottrell, a long-time friend of Barzee's and executive director for the Utah chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill, has opined that Barzee is "bipolar with delusional features" and that Mitchell is schizophrenic (Elaine Jarvik and James Thalman, "Complex Picture of Pair Emerges," *Deseret News*, 14 Mar. 2003, A5). Mitchell's second ex-wife, Debbie Kravitz, has told reporters she believes Mitchell's claim to revelation is "a fraud, a mask that would let him abuse young girls" (Haberman and MacIntosh, 77); Kravitz has accused Mitchell of molesting her daughter during their marriage. Mitchell's father has also expressed skepticism about the sincerity of his son's religious convictions, opining that the real reason Mitchell changed his name and became homeless was to evade the IRS and state authorities looking to collect back child support payments (Haberman and MacIntosh, 66).

8. Mitchell's family history can be found in a manuscript by Brian's father: Shirl V. Mitchell, "Spokesman for the Infant God or Goddess," unpublished typescript, 2 vols., 1997 (available at the Special Collections of the Marriott Library, University of Utah). Shirl reports that he is descended from Benjamin T. Mitchell, one of the first settlers in the Salt Lake Valley, a stonecutter for the Salt Lake Temple, and a polygamist with six wives. Benjamin Mitchell's descendants became alienated from the Church, passing on the story that Benjamin had been cheated by Church leaders out of most of his substance.

9. Biographical information for Mitchell is taken from *Held Captive*, by Haberman and MacIntosh, who synthesized information published in various news outlets with additional interviews they themselves conducted with relatives of Mitchell and Barzee (Christy Karras, "First Smart Book in Stores," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 2 July 2003, B5).

10. My source for the excommunications having occurred in the same week as Smart's disappearance is Brandon Griggs, "Mitchell's Journey to 'Immanuel,'" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 30 Mar. 2003, A1. However, *Newsweek* is under the impression that the excommunication occurred "long ago," and from an interview with Church historian Richard Turley, the *New York Times* seems to have come away under the impression that the excommunication happened "several years ago." (See Dirk Johnson, "Finding Elizabeth," *Newsweek*, 24 Mar. 2003, 37; Michael Janofsky, "Kidnapping Case Puts Mormons on Defensive," *New York Times*, 24 Mar. 2003, A10.) The Church has not issued a public clarification.

11. "The Book of Immanuel David Isaiah," unpublished manuscript, 6 Apr. 2002, 1. A pdf copy of the handwritten manuscript, with original page numbers, can be downloaded from <<http://www.sltrib.com/2003/Mar/03142003/Manifesto/book.pdf>>. However, the pdf copy is missing pages 16-17, evidently due to a scanning error. A complete html transcript, without page numbers, is available at <<http://deseretnews.com/dn/view/0,1249,465033465,00.html>>.

Contrary to the common report that Mitchell's revelations are "rambling," *The Book of Immanuel* is no more "rambling" than Joseph Smith's revelations in the

Doctrine and Covenants; indeed, Mitchell's revelations are less prone to tangents or long, snarled sentences than Smith's. Also *The Book of Immanuel* is more tightly structured than the Doctrine and Covenants. Where the Doctrine and Covenants is simply a collection of unconnected revelations in mostly chronological order, *The Book of Immanuel* was apparently conceived as a whole, unified by the recurring seven-plus-one pattern (which Mitchell derives from C. Samuel West's *The Golden Seven Plus One*). There are seven-plus-one items in the canon Mitchell draws up for his study and fellowship society; and Sections Four, Five, Six, and Seven of *The Book of Immanuel* refer, respectively, to the books that appear as items 4 through 7 in Mitchell's canon.

12. Haberman and MacIntosh, 48.

13. *Book of Immanuel*, 23.

14. *Ibid.*, 19.

15. *Ibid.*, 4.

16. *Ibid.*, 5.

17. Two of the most commonly cited histories of accommodation are Jan Shippo, *Mormonism: The Story of a New Religious Tradition* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1985) and Armand L. Mauss, *The Angel and the Beehive: The Mormon Struggle with Assimilation* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1994).

18. During an interview with Mike Wallace aired on CBS's *60 Minutes*, 7 Apr. 1996, Hinkley declared "We're not a weird people." This was subsequently paraphrased as, "We are not weird" (see, for example, Kenneth L. Woodward, "A Mormon Moment," *Newsweek*, 10 Sept. 2001, 48).

19. The routinization of charisma is a widely deployed concept derived from Max Weber; see "The Nature of Charismatic Authority and its Routinization," *Weber on Charisma and Institution*, ed. Samuel N. Eisenstadt (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 48-65. On the routinization of apostolic charisma in the LDS Church, see D. Michael Quinn, *The Mormon Hierarchy: Extensions of Power* (Salt Lake: Signature, 1997), 1-6.

20. "Too often people feel that answers to their prayers and their pleading for guidance and direction will be given in dramatic manifestations or through a direct voice giving specific directions from a heavenly host" (Robert D. Hales, "Gifts of the Spirit," *Ensign* [Feb. 2002]: 18-19). Dallin H. Oaks has enjoined the Saints to "be cautious in sharing spiritual experiences" and not to "mention miracles in bearing their testimonies" (quoted in John L. Hart, "Teaching, Learning 'by the Spirit,'" *LDS Church News*, 2 Jan. 1993, 11; *The Lord's Way* [Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1991], 96). In his well-known address, "Our Strengths Can Become Our Downfall," Oaks cautions against several tendencies typical of the LDS subcultures from which Mitchell emerges: self-promoting faith healers, charismatic teachers, excessive patriotism, delving into the mysteries, seeking to sacrifice more than the Church requires, and citing the teachings of President Benson to justify not paying taxes (*Ensign* [Oct. 1994]: 11-20).

21. One manifestation of this undercurrent is a subculture within the Church fascinated by such things as folklore about the Three Nephites or—as noted later in this article—accounts of near-death experiences, which serve to reinforce traditional LDS beliefs about the world beyond and about the access to supernatural powers that the restored gospel provides. However, materials on these subjects are rarely produced by the Church-owned press, Deseret Book, indicating the marginal status that such experiences now occupy in LDS discourse.

22. Betty J. Eadie (with Curtis Taylor), *Embraced by the Light* (New York: Bantam, 1992). The book was originally published by Gold Leaf Press, a division of Aspen Books.

23. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "Mormon's Book on Afterlife Gains National Response," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 23 Oct. 1993, D2.

24. Despite the Church's official silence, Boyd K. Packer told a meeting of local priesthood leaders that the book was "bunk." (See Stack, "Mormon's Book.") An excellent review of the appearance of Eadie's book and LDS reactions to it is Massimo Introvigne, "Embraced by the Church?: Betty Eadie, Near-Death Experiences, and Mormonism," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 29, no. 3 (Fall 1996): 99-119.

25. Arvin S. Gibson, *Glimpses of Eternity* (Bountiful, Utah: Horizon, 1992); Arvin S. Gibson, *Echoes from Eternity* (Bountiful: Horizon: 1993); Brent L. and Wendy C. Top, *Beyond Death's Door* (Salt Lake City: Bookcraft, 1993); Arvin S. Gibson, *Journeys Beyond Life* (Bountiful: Horizon, 1994); Lawrence E. Tooley, *I Saw Heaven!* (Bountiful: Horizon, 1997); Elaine Durham, *I Stand All Amazed* (Orem, Utah: Granite, 1998).

26. Mitchell subscribes to the traditional LDS belief that there can be but one true church, sustained by priesthood authority, so it is perhaps surprising that *The Book of Immanuel* endorses *Embraced by the Light*, which denies that there is one true church (one of the chief complaints lodged against the book by orthodox Latter-day Saints). The section of *The Book of Immanuel* that discusses Eadie's book

is unusual, too, in that it is the least apocalyptic of Mitchell's revelations: the Lord's voice is uncharacteristically tender (*Book of Immanuel*, 14).

27. When individuals or groups break away from the Church to form new LDS sects, they often produce oracular revelations, translations of lost scripture, or accounts of visitations by divine beings in the manner of Joseph Smith. They thus implicitly (if not explicitly) fault the LDS Church for having lost the charisma that, for these breakaway groups, is indispensable to the Restoration. Two recent examples of this phenomenon would be the True and Living Church of Jesus Christ of Saints of the Last Days, founded on the revelations of James D. Harmston <http://www.helpingmormons.org/TLC_Manti/index.html>, and the Brotherhood of Christ Church (a breakaway movement from the Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, whose prophet, Goker Harim III, has used a Urim and Thummim to translate two volumes of a sealed record by the brother of Jared <<http://www.sealedportion.com>>).

28. *Book of Immanuel*, 25–26.

29. For a history of the Church's changing attitudes towards medicine, see N. Lee Smith, "Herbal Remedies: God's Medicine?," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12, no. 3 (Fall 1979), 37–60.

30. Norm Lee Smith, "Why Are Mormons So Susceptible to Medical and Nutritional Quackery?," *Journal of Collegium Aesculapium* 1 (1983): 29–44; Nancy Bringham, "Medical Magic! A Cure for All That Ails," *BYU Today* 39, no. 1 (Jan./Feb. 1985): 32–36. Several factors combine to produce the Saints' susceptibility to quackery: continued trust in statements by nineteenth-century leaders who endorsed herbalism and denounced medicine; belief in the accessibility of the supernatural and therefore a readiness to believe in quasi-miraculous cures; a conviction that God can reveal keys of health that surpass the merely mortal knowledge of medical professionals ("the arm of flesh"); a corollary mistrust of medical experts, coupled with faith in testimonials; devotion to free agency, translated into resentment of government attempts to regulate alternative health practices or products; and a desire to control one's own health, growing out of the principle of self-reliance. The Saints' continuing faith in natural remedies has given Utah a reputation as the "Silicon Valley" of herbal and vitamin supplements (Steven Oberbeck, "National Suppliers of Herb Products Are Native to Utah," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 8 Nov. 1992, C1; Glen Warchol, "Feds Urge Ephedra Warnings," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 1 Mar. 2003, A1).

31. Partly in response to requests by health professionals, the Church has issued statements warning the Saints against quackery: "Which Temple Ye Are," *Church News*, 19 Feb. 1977, 16 (note the vignette about a nineteenth-century faith healing that ironically—intentionally?—accompanies this editorial); "Health Fads May Hurt," *Church News*, 18 June 1977, 16; *Missionary Health Manual* (Salt Lake: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1988), 17. Specifically, the Church has cautioned against practitioners who use testimonials to support their claims, who argue against established practices, or who claim to be persecuted by medical associations. These statements demonstrate the Church's commitment to accommodation—to promoting a rational worldview that respects the expertise of science and equates what is credible with what is mainstream.

32. C. Samuel West, *The Golden Seven Plus One: Conquer Disease with Eight Keys to Health, Beauty, and Peace* (Orem, Utah: Samuel Publishing, 1981). The "seven golden plus one" refers to seven principles of health which God directed West to identify and synthesize from the work of other researchers, plus a formula West was inspired to write expressing the principles in a kind of symbolic shorthand.

33. *Ibid.*, 234–44.

34. Though West aims to reach a broad audience and therefore does not explicitly cite LDS scripture in his book, catchphrases or concepts from LDS scripture are readily identifiable. See pages 22, 84–90, 95–97, 113, 136.

35. This information about the workings of the IAL emerged during a series of meetings with the Utah County Board of Equalization, which wondered whether the IAL was a multi-marketing scheme masquerading as a tax-exempt religious organization. Representatives for the IAL protested that because theirs was a religious organization, local government had no right to even question them regarding their tax-exempt status. Curiously, the leader of the IAL, a man styling himself Reverend Kerry R. Smith, told the Board of Equalization that West is an "emeritus person" in the IAL and therefore "not authorized" to act in its name; this appears to be partly an effort to distance the IAL from a website West had created to promote his products in a plainly secular, for-profit fashion. "Board of Equalization Minutes," 23 Feb. 1999, 23 Mar. 1999, and 27 Apr. 1999 (available online at <<http://www.utahcountyonline.org/Dept/COMMISH/BrdEqualMins/index.asp>>).

Connected to the IAL is an organization called the World-Wide Blood Protein Research Society, which claims to fall under the IAL's religious tax exemption <<http://www.ial.org>>. A non-religious corporation called the Healing Arc promotes West's products through what is explicitly a kind of multi-level marketing

scheme <<http://www.thehealingarc.net>>. Also, West sits on the board of directors of HydraLife, a natural health products company headquartered in Draper, Utah <<http://www.hydralife.com/html/team.html>>.

36. From the time of his first marriage, Mitchell insisted on eating whole wheat bread—something Bruce R. McConkie cited as a sign of fanaticism ("Fanaticism," *Mormon Doctrine*, 2nd ed. [Salt Lake: Bookcraft, 1966], 275). During his marriage to Barzee, Mitchell is said to have followed a "regimen of eating mostly organic herbs and vegetables" (Haberman and MacIntosh, 26, 30, 58). Mitchell's enthusiasm for vegetarianism, like his far-right-wing politics, is probably the result of his upbringing: Mitchell's father, Shirl, pushed what he calls a "frugivorous and herbivorous" diet on his family and has evinced a hatred of coercive government (i.e., government efforts to ensure minorities' rights) that sounds either archconservative or libertarian ("Spokesman," 2:18, 434–35).

37. Haberman and MacIntosh, 63–65, 71–72. The last time Mitchell worked for West was in 1998, just one year before the IAL's troubles with the Utah County Board of Equalization. It's not clear if Mitchell was ever, either in 1993–94 or 1998, a "health missionary" for the IAL; but the IAL's consecration-like system of providing for its "missionaries" would likely have appealed to Mitchell at a time when he was trying to cut himself free from material entanglements.

38. *Book of Immanuel*, 9–10. To West's catchphrase about raising up a people to "live upon the earth in peace, without pain or disease," Mitchell adds the phrase "with no poor among them," reflecting his particular interest in a Zion where poverty is done away.

39. *Ibid.*, 10.

40. LDS medical professionals decrying quackery among the Saints were circumspect about Benson's support for alternative medicine, no doubt because of his status in the LDS hierarchy. When *Dialogue* published an interview with an alternative health practitioner who claimed endorsement from one of the Twelve, the name of the apostle in question was censored. Kay Gillespie's commentary on this same interview referred elliptically to the Church's concern that "the names of some church leaders are being associated with nonmedical treatments and practices" ("Quackery and Mormons: A Latter-Day Dilemma," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 12, no. 4 [winter 1979]: 78–79). By contrast, an outraged letter in response to a special *Dialogue* issue on quackery and other health issues boasted Benson's support for alternative medicine (Scott S. Smith, "Hypocritical Oath," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 13, no. 3 [fall 1980]: 5). Benson's grandson, Steve Benson, does not remember ever hearing his grandfather speak of C. Samuel West, but he has confirmed Benson's enthusiasm for an alternative therapy called chelation (Steve Benson, email correspondence, April 2003).

41. One example is John Taylor's fervent appeal: "Will they please tell us wherein we have violated the laws or the Constitution of the United States? Will any of the savants at Washington, or anywhere else, tell us what we have done? . . . They passed a law which we consider unconstitutional, and which interferes with our religious rights. . . . They are seeking to deprive you and me and thousands of people in this Territory of religious liberty, without trial, without investigation. They have proceeded on the principle of tyranny and coercion, if not on the principle of blood, just as Cain did" (*Journal of Discourses* 24:352).

42. For a political insider's view of the rise of LDS ultraconservatism in the 1950s and '60s, see David S. King, "The Principle of the Good Samaritan Considered in a Mormon Political Context," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 5, no. 4 (winter 1970): 11–22. For a history of the tension between ultraconservatives and the LDS mainstream, see D. Michael Quinn, "Ezra Taft Benson and Mormon Political Conflicts," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 2 (summer 1993): 1–87.

43. JoAnn Jacobsen-Wells, "'John Bircher' Recruits Join Fight against New World Order," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 21 June 1992, B1; Christopher Smith, "John Birch Director Calls Utah Fertile Ground for His Society," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 14 May 1993, D1.

44. Ezra Taft Benson, "The Book of Mormon—Keystone of Our Religion," *Ensign* (Nov. 1986): 4–7.

45. President Gordon B. Hinckley's October 1992 General Conference address about the Church's "backup system" was a response to these rumors. Gordon B. Hinckley, "The Church Is on Course," *Ensign* (Nov. 1992): 53–59. See also the sources listed in footnote 49.

46. Shortly before it folded, the group was reported to have "more than 5,000 participants" and 35–40 chapters. Peggy Fletcher Stack and Chris Jorgensen, "World Events Prove End Is Near, Group Says," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 3 Sept. 1991, A1; Dawn House, "Group Studying Apocalypse Calls It Quits," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 Oct. 1991, B1; Sterling D. Allan, "The American Study Group," 9 Aug. 2002 <http://www.greaterthings.com/Constitution/American_Study_Group>.

47. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Scholar's Book Pulled, Sparks 'Davidic'

Debate," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 11 July 1991, C1; Lavina Fielding Anderson, "The LDS Intellectual Community and Church Leadership: A Contemporary Chronology," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 26, no. 1 (spring 1993): 35, 52; "Six Intellectuals Disciplined for Apostasy," *SUNSTONE* (Nov. 1993): 65-66.

48. Christopher Smart, "Populist Party Candidate Bo Gritz Visits the State Where 28,391 Voters Declared: 'He's Our Beau,'" *Salt Lake Tribune*, 6 Nov. 1992, A1.

49. Chris Jorgensen and Peggy Fletcher Stack, "It's Judgment Day for Far Right: LDS Church Purges Survivalists," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 29 Nov. 1992, A1; "LDS Church Disciplines Ultra-conservative Survivalists," *SUNSTONE* (Mar. 1993): 67-68; Anderson, 56.

50. Peggy Fletcher Stack, "LDS Church Says Survivalist Ouster Overblown," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 4 Dec. 1992, B1.

51. For a history of the rise of the True and Living Church (TLC), see Becky Johns, "The Manti Mormons: The Rise of the Latest Mormon Church," *SUNSTONE* (June 1996): 30-36.

52. For an implicit reference to U.S. participation in the New World Order, see *Book of Immanuel*, 11, where the Lord denounces the United States for seeking "in concert" with all other nations (probably referring to the United Nations) "to bring the whole earth into complete subjection."

53. Haberman and MacIntosh, 61-63, 68. Regarding Gritz's Idaho communities, see Mark Pitcavage, "Patriot Purgatory: Bo Gritz and Almost Heaven," *Anti-Defamation League Online*, 26 Mar. 1996 <<http://www.adl.org/mwd/gritz.asp>>; Nicholas K. Geranios (AP), "'Almost Heaven' and Other Bo Gritz Communities Seem Almost Normal in Their Setting," *Salt Lake Tribune*, 7 Nov. 1999, J6.

54. Sterling D. Allan, "Mitchell and Me: What Role Did I Play in Fostering Elizabeth Smart's Abductor?," 16 Mar. 2003 <http://www.greaterthings.com/Davidic_Servant/Mitchell_and_me.htm>.

55. Avraham Gileadi, *The Literary Message of Isaiah* (New York: Hebraeus, 1994). Aimed at a broad (i.e., not primarily LDS) audience, this book contains Gileadi's own complete translation of the Book of Isaiah, prefaced by essays providing analysis and commentary. Gileadi's Isaiah translation had already been published for an LDS audience as *The Book of Isaiah: A New Translation with Interpretive Keys from the Book of Mormon* (Salt Lake: Deseret Book, 1988).

56. *Book of Immanuel*, 17-18.

57. *Ibid.*, 8.

58. In *Book of Immanuel*, 17, the Lord promises to provide Mitchell with "one hundred and forty and four thousand spokesmen to declare all my words which I shall give unto thy mouth."

59. Avraham Gileadi, *The Last Days: Types and Shadows from the Bible and the Book of Mormon*, 3rd ed. (Orem, Utah: Book of Mormon Research Foundation, 1998). On the suffering Davidic servant, see especially ch. 4.

60. *Book of Immanuel*, 18-19; cf. Gileadi's translation of Isaiah 52:13-15 and 53:1, 11-12 in *The Literary Message of Isaiah*.

61. Sterling Allan "guesses" (his word) that the number of Latter-day Saints who believe in a Davidic servant is 300,000. I suspect this is a gross exaggeration; however, we are clearly dealing with a widespread phenomenon. Allan's survey of attitudes among Davidic servant believers, although "completely unscientific" (again his words), is nevertheless instructive as one insider's description of the ultraconservative fringe. "Inside Mitchell's Head: General Anatomy of 'One Mighty and Strong' Fanaticism," 18 Mar. 2003 <http://www.greaterthings.com/Davidic_Servant/Mitchell_Survey/index.html>.

62. The scriptural basis for LDS separatism includes D&C 38:28-32; 78:13-14; 133:14-15. Preachers are enjoined to travel without purse or scrip in D&C 84:78-84.

63. Haberman and MacIntosh, 52, 56, 66-67. That LDS convictions about leaving Babylon motivated Mitchell and Barzee can be seen from a letter Barzee sent her family shortly after the couple began their transition to homelessness in 1995; in the letter, Barzee denounces her family for affiliating with "Babylon."

64. *Book of Immanuel*, 22.

65. Rick Joyner, *The Final Quest* (New Kensington, Penn.: Whitaker House, 1996). *The Book of Immanuel* calls Joyner a true prophet raised up to minister to the Lost Ten Tribes of Israel, which Mitchell understands as referring especially to people of Northern European descent (*Book of Immanuel*, 25-26). Joyner's book appeared while Mitchell and Barzee were hitchhiking around the country, and the book is not well-known among LDS ultraconservatives, so how Mitchell came across it is unknown. Sterling Allan theorizes that Mitchell encountered the book after Allan introduced it to people in ultraconservative networks along the Wasatch Front. (Allan had learned of the book from a friend in Colorado.) Allan, "Mitchell and Me."

66. A hostile but informative introduction to Joyner's teachings is G. Richard

Fisher, "The Higher Life of Rick Joyner: Chasing the Delusion of Power and Dominion," *The Quarterly Journal* 20, no. 4; available online at <<http://www.pfo.org/r-joyner.htm>>.

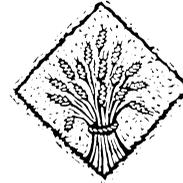
67. Joyner, 55-56.

68. *Ibid.*, 150-156.

69. According to homelessness activist Pamela Atkinson, Mitchell became known as "the preacher man" within Salt Lake's homeless community. He was unpopular because of his aggressive preaching, and people generally avoided him. "Utah Cops Admit Mistakes in Smart Case," *CBSNews.com*, 14 Mar. 2003 <<http://www.cbsnews.com/stories/2003/03/14/national/main544115.shtml>>.

70. Jon Krakauer, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* (New York: Doubleday, 2003); see chap. 23.

71. "Mitchell and Barzee behind Bars," *KUTV.com*, 8 May 2003 <http://kutv.com/related/local_story_128194358.html>.



SELF-PORTRAIT BEFORE TIME

*For a child will be born to us, a son will be given to us;
And the government will rest on His shoulders; To establish it and to
uphold it with justice and righteousness from then on and
forevermore. —FROM ISAIAH 9:6-7*

My mother has us both in white, she in a night gown, I wrapped in a blanket. Her hair is still naturally red. The bottom of her dress curls, as if colossal waves of wind are beating in through the window in front of us. She looks into it, like a farmer staring down an approaching cyclone, or peacefully watching one depart, already resigned to the damages. She holds me so that I too face out the window, into the dry air, away from her squinting eyes, her stern pursed lips. This is how she loved me at times, devoutly, she brandished me as the pious clenched God before them in battle. Because fear is selfish, I will cast it out of me. Because lies are unjust, I will tell *the truth*. Because I was sent, because her hand flows over the bruises on my head like a fast moving creek, I will ransom her world or become it.

—MICHAEL COLLINS

2003 Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest, Third Place Winner

NEBULA: AN ARTIST'S JOURNEY

By Mari Jorgensen

Late January

I AM LYING IN BED READING ISAAC BESHEVIS SINGER'S *Sosha*, when suddenly, unbidden, a memory flies to me. It is of my father, the eccentric. The chemical engineer, the mad scientist, the absent-minded professor. He was the kind of man who brought reading material—the newspaper, his alumni magazine, Stephen Hawking's *A Brief History of Time*—to the dinner table. Much to my mother's dismay. She made a rule: no reading at the table. When she had to remind him of her rule, as she often did, my father's head would jerk involuntarily, as if he'd just wakened from a coma, and he'd lay his book splayed open on the floor beside his chair. It was as if we, his seven children, were a brief interruption, a mere blip on the radar screen of his intellectual life.

My mother's classic Sunday dinners—baked potatoes, cooked carrots, pot roast so tough we ate it slathered with ketchup—are what I remember most from my childhood. I've realized as an adult that my mother is a marginal cook at best, but back then, back when I was a scrawny kid with six brothers and sisters, one of many in a sprawling, ungainly Mormon family, I considered her meals nothing less than ambrosia. And especially Sunday dinner, with its *pièce de résistance*: green Jell-O salad whipped with cream cheese and crushed pineapple and served in perfectly sliced squares on the “good” china atop leaves of iceberg lettuce and with a single maraschino cherry half placed smack-dab in the center of each. It was that garnish—the maraschino cherry half—that really dressed up my mother's Jell-O. The way it bled a faint red smear from the center of each frothy green square? Pure bliss.

I remember my mother's Sunday dinners, and I remember



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my father's talking. He was a great talker, still is, has the superb memory for trivia that springs from an unwavering dedication to good books. Although at times his stories tend to wax incomprehensible. It wasn't until I became a composition instructor that I was able to at last nail down the problem with my father's narratives. “Dad,” I once said, “you need to use more nouns when you tell stories. Your pronouns don't have clear antecedents. It's confusing.”

My father was in the midst of a story—a recounting of how President Hinckley had been able to acquire the property for the Hong Kong temple, I believe—when I interjected this editorial. He stopped mid-sentence, blinked twice, and continued with his story.

So much for the dissemination of my newfound knowledge.

During one Sunday dinner in particular, I remember my father was ruminating on William Clayton, one of the great names in Mormonism. William Clayton the hymn writer. William Clayton the polygamist, the scribe, the journalist, the inventor. My great-grandmother on my mother's side, Erma Summers, who died when I was nineteen and whom I remember well, was his great-granddaughter. The fact that I am related to this auspicious man, however—this pioneer among men who, at Brigham Young's behest, meticulously recorded each mile during one of the first Mormon treks West—never prevented my friends and me from snickering behind our hands as we changed the words from the first line of “Come, Come Ye Saints” from “No toil nor labor fear” to “No toilet paper here.”

But here was my father, lauding the merits of William Clayton as he spooned green Jell-O salad into his mouth. We sat, his seven children, three to a bench on either side of the nicked and varnished table my mother had bought second-hand from a ward member, and one of us buckled into the highchair. We were his prisoners. “Everyone in this room,” my father said, “is related by blood to William Clayton.” His eyes scanned his posterity. “Everyone, that is, except me.”

How strange, I think now, that my father would point this out. Why did he do it? Was it that he felt, somehow, left out in the cold?

Early February

FOR CHRISTMAS THIS year I bought myself a book called *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity*, by Julia Cameron. One of my students turned me onto it. It is, in essence, a self-taught course in which one learns to become unblocked as an artist. Cameron says creativity is a gift from divinity, and I should recognize it as such. She basically equates the Censor—that voice inside my head that sneaks and creeps and whispers that I am worthless and so is my art—with the devil. It makes sense. If our true nature is inherently creative, and if our creativity is a good gift from God, then it stands to reason that Satan would want to rob us of it. Still, I find Cameron's insights unsettling. She says:

Many of us find that we have squandered our own creative energies by investing disproportionately in the lives, hopes, dreams, and plans of others. Their lives have obscured and detoured our own. As we consolidate a

core through our withdrawal process, we become more able to articulate our own boundaries, dreams, and authentic goals. Our personal flexibility increases while our malleability to the whims of others decreases.¹

It is the verb “squandered” with which I take issue. We have *squandered* our creative energies on others? It makes me squirm inside my skin. Much in the same way I squirm when I read essays, books, church talks, scriptures—whatever—that seem to celebrate the self-effacing mother. It makes me feel jangly and unhinged. The dictionary defines efface as to “rub out” or “obliterate”—a soul-chilling image. But aren't we members of the church exhorted to lose ourselves in service to others? And how can a mother not be, to a certain extent, self-effacing?

Hannah wants to be around me all the time. I mean *all* the time. On Sundays, when Steve is in bishopric meetings and Max is napping, I'll sometimes stick in a video for Hannah and sneak up to my room, lock the door, and try to read or write in solitude for an hour or two. Inevitably, Hannah won't stand for it. First she rattles the handle; then she bangs on the door. When I don't answer—“Mommy's not here right now!” I want

to call out in a falsetto voice. “Can I take a message?”—she patters away and, after a few minutes, patters back again. Then from underneath the door shoot several sheets of paper, colored all over and decorated with hearts and stick figures. Secret messages from the outer world. Once came a picture of a closed door and, right next to it, a picture of a door that had been swung open. Her message was clear.

Only a few minutes ago, after I'd finally relented and let her in, Hannah began climbing onto my bed. She stopped midway and, with her belly high-centered at the foot of the mattress, gazed at me. Something had occurred to her. “I have to go potty,” she announced. “Okay?”

In tune-out mode, I grunted a response. I was reading

I squinted into the eyepiece.
“Nebula?” I said. “Where?”
“See that dark patch in the sky? It's a called a nebula. It's either a distant galaxy or a cloud of dust or gas. Could be a galaxy, could be a cloud of dust. Looks the same. Cool, huh?”



MELANIE WARNER

Sosha again, horrified at the pre-Hitler Poland that Singer conjures and even more horrified that one of his Jewish characters professes to believe that “Mussolini and Hitler will bring order” to a world gone wrong. At that moment, I'm sure Hannah felt herself to be merely a blip on the radar screen of my life.

“Okay?” she repeated. “And then,” she tapped my arm, “I will come back and tell you all about it.”

April

SPRING IS MY favorite season. How could it not be? The trees are budding; the air smells scrubbed clean. I wish with an artist's eye that I could somehow drink up these views, immortalize them. I know nature is indifferent—seasons change, blossoms form, moisture gathers and dissipates in the stratosphere, and, depending on the temperature of the soil and the bark, sap travels up the trunks of trees and down again. But it doesn't feel like indifference to me. It feels like a gift. Cameron says,

Looking at God's creation, it is pretty clear that the creator itself didn't know when to stop. There is not one pink flower, or even fifty pink flowers, but hun-

dreds. Snowflakes, of course, are the ultimate exercise in sheer creative glee. No two alike. This creator looks suspiciously like someone who just might send us support for our creative ventures.²

I'm not sure I believe her. I'm like a puppy whose nose has been smacked with a rolled-up newspaper one too many times. I'm wary. I know God exists. I know he works miracles. I'm not surprised by tales of divine intervention in others' lives. I even sense his hand in my own life, nudging it in good directions. But not when it comes to my art. Because the thing I want most, the thing I harbor closest to my heart, I feel I don't deserve. It is selfish. I do sin in my desire, so why should God help me?

My nephew, who is somewhat of an astronomy nut, owns a fairly powerful telescope. This evening, while I was visiting, he set it up on his parents' front lawn, trained it on the surface of the moon, and motioned for me to take a look. I was stunned. The moon, like an aged and familiar face, was brought into sudden and detailed relief. I was duly impressed. But then Sammy wanted to show me something else. "There," he said, after he'd adjusted his telescope. "That's a nebula."

I squinted into the eyepiece. "Nebula?" I said. "Where? What am I looking at?"

My nephew, eleven years old, master Nintendo player and snowboarder extraordinaire, leaned his head towards mine. "See that dark patch in the sky? It's called a nebula. It's either a distant galaxy or a cloud of dust or gas. Could be a galaxy, could be a cloud of dust. Looks the same. Cool, huh?"

Tonight I cried over Sammy's nebula. It was ridiculous, I realize, completely irrational. But depending on the temperature of the soil and the bark, sap travels up the trunks of trees and down again. Most of us, however, don't want our sap traveling. Most of us would prefer to remain dormant.

Midsummer

MY MOTHER IS an enigma. After thirty-one years, I am still trying to figure her out. She dislikes my analytical nature, grows querulous and annoyed whenever I try to confront her about who I am when I am with her. But I can't help myself. At times I feel I am clanking around inside a suit of armor that wasn't made for me. Hobbling around inside this ill-fitted armor, I tend to snap at people I love and would never want to injure. What is wrong with me?

"I think living in Belgium, the isolation you experienced there, has warped your personality," my mother told me tonight. "You're so full of anger these days."

We were sitting in her gold Honda Accord, the engine idling, outside the cabin my brother had rented for us at a YMCA camp in Winter Park, Colorado. The annual Arnett family reunion: a time of storytelling, game-playing, overeating, and a few subversive spats sprinkled here and there. Only a couple of hours ago, my mother and I had set out for the grocery store in Frazier to buy the ingredients for tonight's meal, Chinese haystacks—another meal that hear-

kens back to my childhood—and already I could feel myself prickling. How is it, I wondered, that I am always, along with my mother, the designated errand-runner and meal-preparer whenever the Arnetts get together? I'm not even the oldest daughter. When did I morph into Martha Stewart? And how did it happen without my consent?

It was late afternoon when we returned. As we pulled up to the cabin, my mother's white hair gleamed in the perpetual twilight that hangs over Winter Park because Steamboat Springs, a resort town a hundred or so miles northwest, is burning. I told Mom I wanted to talk. I said I'd heard she'd criticized me to one of my siblings. What, I wanted to know, would it possibly benefit anyone for her to pour poison into the ears of her children about their siblings? While I talked, my mother's fingers tapped the steering wheel, moved to the door handle, then came back to the steering wheel. Oh, how she wished she could fling open the door and spring from the car and never look back. But she couldn't. I wouldn't let her. Instead she told me her theory about my warped personality.

"I think," she said, "maybe you should go on Prozac to help manage your anger."

"I think," I said, "people should stop doing things that piss me off."

Immediately I repented. Or at least I tried. Thirty-one years old and here I was acting like a snot-nosed kid. Taking swipes at the person who had given me life. It was inexcusable. We talked after that, my mother and I, periodically peering out towards the dark horizon, at the late-afternoon sun struggling to pierce the pink smoke clouds drifting from Steamboat Springs. It was like enduring an unnaturally long and rosy sunset. I don't know how long we sat there. All I know is that when we finally stumbled into the cabin lugging our grocery bags, several heads that had been huddled together over a game of Phase 10 bobbed up. It was clear that my mom and I had been crying. But we smiled wanly and did what Arnetts do best: we played it off.

One thing, however, sticks in my mind about the conversation my mother and I had. It's how I said in a weak, anemic voice, "I don't think anyone gets me. No one gets that I'm not happy unless I'm writing. And, most of all, I don't think anyone sees what a rare gift I possess."

I loathe myself for saying that. I should be *shot* for saying such a thing. It's good that my mother is my mother and is required by all natural laws to love me, despite my idiotic utterings. I'm sure Cameron in *The Artist's Way* would have something to say on this score, but I don't want to think about that right now. I want to wallow in my self-loathing—a feeling that is, after all, as familiar and intimate as a friend.

Steamboat Springs is burning, and yet somehow I feel left out in the cold.

Late Summer

PARADISE. PARADISE IS escaping from your real life for a few days. More than escaping from your day-to-day life, it's escaping from your day-to-day self—the self

that's worried, bored, cranky, stressed. And it doesn't hurt if your husband has racked up 90,000 frequent flyer miles so that your escape can be to Hawaii.

Yesterday, at the Maui Ocean Center, I sat alone in the jellyfish room for several minutes while Steve and Hannah wandered elsewhere. It was a dark, circular room with a ring of benches surrounding a large glass tube filled with jellyfish. The tube held the only light source in the room, and from somewhere was being piped ethereal music, so that as I sat there watching the translucent jellyfish pulsing in their translucent tank, silently pumping their bells, I became mesmerized.

"More than 95 percent water, jellyfish have no brain," the plaque on the wall said, "only a loose net of nerves and muscles." Jellyfish, it said, have only the most primitive understanding that they are alive—some sort of sensors around their bell rim allow them to sense vertical direction and light intensity. As I sat there with my knees pulled to my chest, my chin resting on my arms, I found myself envying those jellyfish. I envied them their simple, mindless existence. "Most jellyfish are poor swimmers," the plaque on the wall continued, "though they can move by 'pumping' their bell. They drift with the ocean's currents and feed in a variety of ways. While some species are completely harmless to us, most can inflict stings. These range from a tingling sensation to excruciating pain. Some are even capable of causing death."

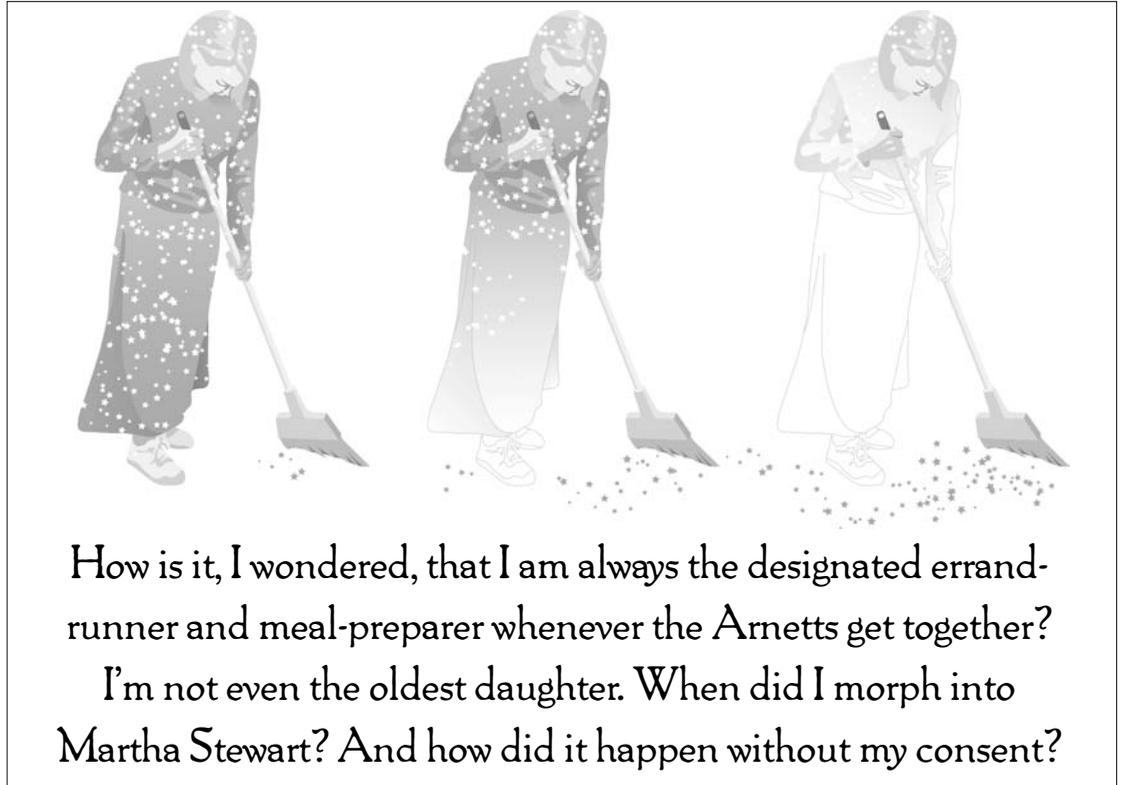
Ah, I thought. To float in a tank or in the ocean, to pump and to pulsate, barely knowing you're alive or which way is up, but all the while holding within yourself the power to eliminate even the hungriest predators? What a life.

Early September

CAMERON SAYS I should describe my environment. I live on Main Street of a small town. There are no grocery stores here, only a couple of above-average convenience stores with sparse and overpriced produce sections. The sky is often blue. Our town sits in a valley, a bowl carved into the mountains with Timpanogos, the sleeping princess, reigning supreme. When Robyn and Brett were visiting a

couple of weeks ago and we were eating pork chops and rosemary red potatoes in the dining room, Robyn gazed out the window. "Are those mountains really as close as they look?" she asked. "Could you walk to those mountains?"

"Sure," we said. "We do it all the time." (This isn't 100 percent true—we hardly ever do anything of the sort, but we *could* walk to them if we wanted to.)



How is it, I wondered, that I am always the designated errand-runner and meal-preparer whenever the Arnetts get together? I'm not even the oldest daughter. When did I morph into Martha Stewart? And how did it happen without my consent?

MELANIE WARNER

Our neighborhood isn't swank or upscale. It's tumbledown at best. The houses here are old, historic even—they squat proudly on their odd-shaped lots with their chipped and peeling paint and architecturally mismatched add-ons. Dogs roam freely. And I love it. I love it all. Laura, the woman up the street owns a pot-belly pig. A monstrosity of a creature that must weigh three hundred pounds and which she takes for long walks on cool evenings. It takes her a full hour to walk her pet around the block. Often in the evenings, we can hear her calling to it on the other end of its purple braided leash: "Come, Piggy Sue. Come!"

I love the fact that Bill, another neighbor, takes care of his weed problem in the summer by breaking out his kerosene-powered blow torch and blasting the bank in front of his house. I love the fact that in the winter, he uses a Bobcat to shovel the snow from his driveway.

And this—this, I realize, is what Bill and Laura and Piggy Sue and Hannah and my father and my mother tell me about myself. Even though it will probably send me into new spasms of self-loathing, I will say it: This ability to *see*, to recognize so unstintingly the aesthetic value of my tumbledown neighborhood and its tumbledown occupants. This ability to paint with

words my eccentric father who so obviously adored my mother's green Jell-O salad. This unwavering dedication to good books, even if it means sometimes Hannah must shoot me messages beneath my door. This is my gift. My good gift from God.

But what of it? In church, we hear preached the virtue of developing one's talents, but really only if they are *certain* talents and only if the work to develop them doesn't interfere with child rearing or church callings. I love my children in the same way my mother loves me: with a love that is primeval, almost frightening. "I am Mother. Hear me roar." But I also have been given this gift. I can identify with Anne Lamott who, in justifying her need to write, mentions a scene from *Chariots of Fire*. She says:

The Scottish runner, Eric Liddell, who is the hero [of the film], is walking along with his missionary sister on a gorgeous heathery hillside in Scotland. She is nagging him to give up training for the Olympics and to get back to doing his missionary work at their church's mission in China. And he replies that he wants to go to China because he feels it is God's will for him, but that first he is going to train with all his heart, because God also made him very, very fast.³

I identify, too, with the character in Chaim Potok's *My Name is Asher Lev* who, after being expelled from his community for his inability to control his art, says:

I looked at my right hand, the hand with which I painted. There was power in that hand. Power to create and destroy. Power to bring pleasure and pain. Power to amuse and horrify. . . . As a great painter I will cause pain if I must. . . . Master of the Universe, will I live this way all the rest of my life? Yes, came the whisper from the branches of the trees. Now journey with me, my Asher. Paint the anguish of all the world. Let people see the pain. . . . We must give a balance to the universe.

Yes, I said. Yes.⁴

Most of all, however, I identify with Eve, who while in the Garden of Eden heard God's voice forbidding her to eat of the tree of knowledge of good and evil. "Thou shall not eat of it," God told her, "nevertheless, thou mayest choose for thyself, for it is given unto thee; but remember that I forbid it" (Moses 3:17). And with a little unwitting prompting from Satan, Eve recognized this as a direct contradiction with God's other commandment to "multiply and replenish the earth." So why did God do it? Why did He give Eve this moral dilemma—this internal conflict? Why did he say, "choose for thyself?" The answer seems clear: It led to progression. It was a good gift.

Early December

IN HER ESSAY "The Morality of Fat," Pam Houston, award-winning author and one-time Utah resident, says, "In just one year I managed to get a book of short stories published, run seven of the country's most difficult rivers, lead a photographic safari in Africa, and teach a bunch of eighteen-

year-old Mormon students to love poetry. Surely keeping off fifteen pounds can't be harder than all that."⁵ This comment about the eighteen-year-old Mormon students stings. I, after all, was once an eighteen-year-old Mormon student. And now I teach eighteen-year-old Mormon students. Are we really that dense when it comes to art? Or is that simply how others perceive us?

I realize that teaching can be a way for some of us to become what Cameron calls "Shadow Artists." We are afraid of our own art and its possibilities, so we sign up to be underpaid and overworked. We coach others towards their potential, poring over their work and weeping when they get it just right, all the while telling ourselves, "As soon as I get this stack of papers graded, I'll work a little on my novel."

But teaching can also be an avenue to inspiration. Take Friday's class. We were discussing Tom Plummer's "Diagnosing and Treating the Ophelia Syndrome." We were exploring what it means to assume responsibility for one's own education. We went over Plummer's techniques: seeking out the best teachers, regardless of what they teach, fostering idle thinking, and so forth. Near the end of the class, someone in the back of the room on the right-hand side, farthest from my line of vision, raised her hand. It was Carly. Lines of concern creased her forehead. "When I read this last night," she said. "I had a sort of epiphany. I got all excited about trying these things, but then I thought, 'This game he talks about, the one he says we shouldn't play, it's important. Grades are important.' So how can I do what he suggests? It's created in me a sort of . . ."—she struggled to find the words—"internal conflict."

"Good," I said. "Internal conflict is good. Let's go with that."

My students stared mutely at me for several seconds, their faces upturned, waiting for me to offer some sort of further light and knowledge. I had none.

"See you Monday," I said.

CAMERON SAYS WE should write for ourselves our own artist's prayer. Here is mine:

Oh, Great Creator, Father of my soul,
I saw once one of your creations,
a nebula,
and was told it could be a distant galaxy
with entire planets, stars, moons intact—
possibilities without number.
Or it could be a cloud of dust or gas.
Looks the same.
But I, for one, choose to believe in the galaxy. ☞

NOTES

1. Julia Cameron, *The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity* (New York: Putnam, 1992), 6.
2. *Ibid.*, 107.
3. Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird* (New York: Anchor Books, 1994), xxviii.
4. Chaim Potok, *My Name Is Asher Lev* (New York: Fawcett Columbine, 1972), 367–68.
5. Pam Houston, "The Morality of Fat," *A Little More about Me* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1999), 144.



SLOW CLOUDS

A breeze bends the cottonwoods,
 grazes an extravagant denim sky.
 Tonight the late late chores will wait.
 The two of them ease into the cot on the porch,
 watch the cows move through the sand like slow clouds,
 connect the blazing dots of planets.
 Daily dust sticks to the ground.
 She traces the contradictory highways in his hands.

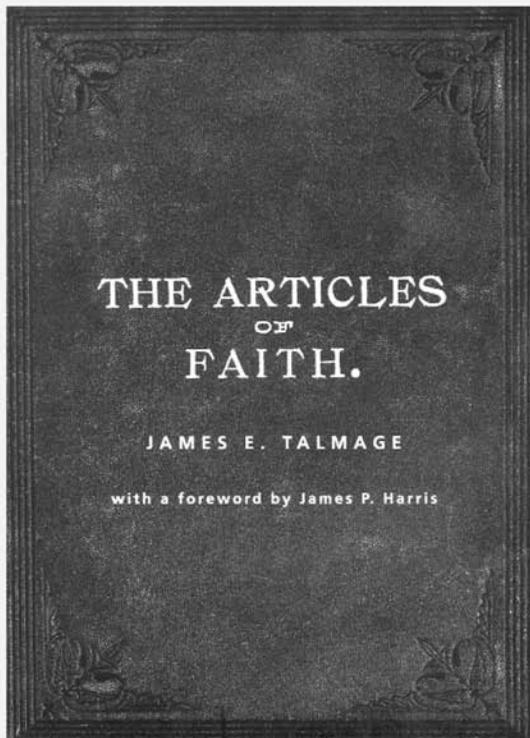
A rolling moon makes them sleepy.
 Tomorrow, maybe gusts to roar and needle,
 sting the raw canyons.
 But the night is smooth,
 and the blue length of his sleeve
 dusts her bare arm.

—MARILYN BUSHMAN-CARLTON

TO KEEP LIGHTNING AWAY

After the storm the girls make their way up the hill
 long grass waving spheres of rain
 and that smell like the air was made of tin
 above the silent mustard acres around the church
 Isabel of Trani finds the boy soprano
 among a cauldron of wrens
 The act of ringing church bells keeps lightning away
 and in the torrent young Biagio rang them wild
 the full sway of them tugged his arms with each ascension
 He knew what it was to be lifted
 believed the sun fell around the Earth
 In his century one hundred fifty believers
 died in towers
 from the flickering amperage of demons
 the rapture of iron tongues.

—LEONARDO DELLAROCCA



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THE ARTICLES OF FAITH

JAMES E. TALMAGE

with a foreword by James P. Harris

In 1891, twenty-nine-year-old Professor James Talmage was asked by the LDS First Presidency to write an explication of Mormon doctrine. Behind the scenes, controversies raged over what the official positions were, and many passages of *The Articles of Faith* were altered or removed after its first printing in 1899.

This new photo reproduction of the original first edition includes context provided by Talmage scholar James Harris and an appendix with Talmage's 1930 revision of the Doctrine and Covenants, *Latter-day Revelation*. This attempt by Talmage to modernize the church, published and distributed by the church in several languages, was later abandoned.

2000 Brookie & D. K. Brown Fiction Contest Moonstone Winner

THE YEAR OF THE CICADA

By Joe Peterson

THE NYMPH CICADAS AT ARIZONA'S MOUNT Trumbull fire station lie dormant until some silent cue says "now" and they emerge. For thirteen years, they lie sucking sap from the fibrous red roots of the Utah juniper, silently dreaming, patiently conserving ardor for several fevered weeks in the distant future. For thirteen years, they grow within an armored exoskeleton, wingless, their hooked legs gathered tightly beneath their thoraxes.

During that thirteenth year, when the June sun bakes the volcanic soil to a uniform temperature, in unison they claw their way upward, moistening the soil with their saliva as they dig, leaving hundreds of crusted holes around the fire station compound. Upon emerging from the soil, the nymphs climb the nearest tree, where, clinging to the bark, they push against the inside walls of their exoskeleton, which shines like burnished umber. A fissure forms across the smooth dome on the back of their thorax and slowly broadens, the cleft rupturing wider. After a half-hour or more of pushing, blunt adult heads emerge, followed by released legs, and finally their glistening abdomens. Their nymph exoskeletons, now dried husks, cling to the bark, with the fresh adult cicadas perched aloft. The cicadas hydraulically inflate their wings, and then climb higher to begin their "song."

I worked this thirteenth year—the year of the cicada. It was the year I worked with the Walapai Indian, Nelson Yellowfat, the year that we firefighters at the Mount Trumbull fire station, accustomed to only the sound of wind in the branches of pine, had to cover our ears to block the undulating waves of the cicadas's rasping love songs.

Nelson taught me to imagine the thirteen years of persevering dormancy, its inactivity and patient deferral, the cicada's pushing against its own confinement, until forbearance ruptures, and a new, fervent self emerges. Nelson and I watched them: With only three-to-six weeks in their adult phase, the cicadas sang their cacophonous song, fended off predators and rivals, mated, laid eggs, and died.

Cradling dried exoskeletal husks in his fingers, Nelson listened deeply. From the low-hanging canopy of juniper trees,

the cicadas's song pierced everywhere. The males screamed, and though presumably deaf, the abdomens of the females—with the same conical shape as the hollow bellies of the males—resonated to the shrill lyric. The males used every means available to make noise: They rubbed two surfaces beneath their thorax; they beat percussion against their tree branch perches, they rattled the crackling membranes of their wings. Finally, partners paired off, tumbled to the ground and mated, and the males then flew off to die somewhere.

After a few days, the females found small branches in the junipers and with scoop-like structures opened the tender bark of the tree and laid their eggs against the exposed sap. After laying all their eggs, the females also flew off and died.

Within another few days, the eggs hatched into very small nymphs, which fell to the ground, burrowed into the soil, attached themselves to roots, and patiently began their thirteen-year wait.

In this maddening racket, this deafening clamor, Nelson Yellowfat, a Walapai shaman, taught me his wisdom. He had been hired just three weeks before. Each morning, he drove his uncle's Pontiac Firebird from the reservation in Pipe Springs, Arizona, where he lived with his Ute girlfriend, Eldora. Eldora, he told me, was married to another man, a Paiute; however, things were not going well between the couple. And while they waited for the divorce, Nelson had taken residence with Eldora in the Paiute man's tribal house. Nelson's uncle and nephew also lived in Pipe Springs, and when Eldora's husband occasionally returned home, Nelson would simply slip out and sleep on his uncle's porch.

A Mormon father of six, I also often slipped away—escaping my family and church obligations (school teacher, ward clerk) and taking pleasure in my summer job as a wildland firefighter. A forty-year-old Boy Scout. Through nine months of the year, my days and hours and minutes were bound by duty: a job, a mortgage, a marriage, children, and (even though a private skeptic) a personal attempt at exaltation. During the school year, I found daily escape in early morning marathon training. But in the summer, I disappeared into wilderness to scan the horizon for signs of smoke—all the while feeling guilty for the sheer animal delight I felt in my solitude.

That summer, Nelson and I persevered through the standard, pre-season, fire training—CPR, first aid, fire suppression



JOE PETERSON lives in St. George, Utah, with his wife Becky. He works at Dixie State College, where he is currently Interim Academic Vice President.

techniques, and back-country driving. One morning, after we had taken a driving test, Nelson smiled at me and whispered, "I shouldn't have taken that test today."

"Why not?"

"Because I'm drunk."

"Drunk?" I asked, looking at him.

"I don't show it, I know. Last night, my nephew said to me,

'I never gave you nothing for Father's Day, did I?' I told him 'No.' He said, 'Come on,' and we drove to the Buckskin Lounge on the Arizona border below Kanab. He bought a lot of stuff: a case of Coors tall boys, a fifth and a pint of vodka, and a fifth of Black Velvet. We went back to Eldora's house and watched a baseball game on TV. By the time I got up this morning, the only thing left was the pint of vodka, and I had to drink most of it just to get me out of bed so I could come to work." Nelson seemed proud of himself.

"You drank all that?"

"Yep, me and my nephew. And when Doctor Bob gave me my driving test, he couldn't tell nothing!"

"Jesus," I said.

AFTER TWO WEEKS of training, Nelson and I went to our duty station, the Mount Trumbull fire compound, perched above the Grand Canyon, three-and-a-half hours south of St. George, Utah, by dirt road. While there, I recognized that Nelson was a holy man.

One afternoon, standing beneath the shade of a juniper in the fire compound, Nelson pulled the dried husks, the cicada exoskeletons, from the juniper bark. He sat cross-legged in the duff and motioned for me to join him. Setting down his Coke can, he turned the shells in his plump hands and examined them closely: "Like snakes, these animals live forever," he said. He crushed the husks between his palms and rolled the debris into small bits which he blew into the air. "A snake is born again when it peels its skin off. This animal also comes out new and never dies." Above us, the cicadas screeched in undulating waves.

He peered at me as though looking for something—I didn't know what—then drained the last of his Coke. He turned to the trunk of the juniper tree and pulled away several strips of bark. He crumbled the bark into a small ball and, turning the empty Coke can onto its top, laid the ball of rolled bark onto the concave bottom of the can. Reaching into his pocket, he produced a Zippo cigarette lighter and put flame to the bark, which issued a thick, yellow plume of smoke. Setting the can

between his legs, he inhaled deeply and pulled the smoke across his face with cupped hands. He sat a moment, contemplating the pulsating noise overhead.

"This is the Creator's blessing," he whispered to me. "Here, let Him bless you, too." He placed the can between my knees, and when I hesitated, he urged, "Pull it into your face like I did. Breathe it deep into your chest."

He pulled away several strips of bark, crumbled them into a small ball and, turning the empty Coke can onto its top, laid the rolled bark onto the concave bottom of the can. Reaching into his pocket, he produced a Zippo cigarette lighter and put flame to the bark, which issued a thick, yellow plume of smoke. Setting the can between his legs, he inhaled deeply and pulled the smoke across his face with cupped hands. "This is the Creator's blessing," he whispered to me. Here, let Him bless you too."

I bathed my face in plumes of smoke. "Like cicadas," Nelson said, "people have an animal spirit deep inside themselves. Mine is a muskrat," he said. "If I honor that spirit, if I talk to it and learn from it, it can be born from within me, like the cicada that comes out of a grub. It can be my guide."

"Do I have one?" I asked.

"I think so. The Creator put an animal spirit in all human beings. My father was a raven."

Nelson told me that his father had died in 1969, while Nelson was in Vietnam. The pickup truck he drove had inexplicably veered off the highway outside of Peach Springs, Arizona, plunged into a ravine, and collided, upside down, with a limestone abutment. "They buried him in a metal box, but I saw him a few times after he died, and he spoke to me after he died."

Again he listened to the frenzied song of cicadas.

"He *did*?" I prodded.

"It was a raven's caw way out over the canyons, you know, but I could understand its meaning. My dad was complaining about his coffin. It boxed him in, packaged him like a canned ham. He wanted to be set loose. He never liked a box—being in a square building. He said the circle is holy and open, but the box is closed. Whenever I hear a raven, I know that my father is not happy in his box."

In the coming weeks, I watched each night as Nelson dragged his narrow cot outside the cabin to sleep under a large, gnarled and lightning-scarred, yellow ponderosa pine in the openness of the compound. "I can't sleep in a box room," he told me. "When I wake at night in a box room, in that time between dreaming and being awake, I actually become my father lying inside his coffin. I can see the dark corners of the room, and they close in on me. The room becomes smaller and smaller until I am in his coffin, lying in Peach Springs cemetery. I have to sleep under a tree."

One morning a few days later, when I went to wake him, I saw the syringes. He tried to push them under his sleeping bag, but it was futile: I had seen, and he knew that I had seen. "Now you know," he said, shrugging his shoulders. "I have di-

abetes. I knew that if the BLM found out, I wouldn't get this job." He adjured me to keep his secret, and I agreed.

June deepened into July, and the song of the cicadas screeched on unabated. Listening to their atonal music, I pondered the animal spirit. It was there in me, I thought. I could feel it early in the morning when I ran. At first, my heavy breath would match the rhythm of my feet, deepening in intensity as I tired. Later, as miles stretched on, involuntarily, my breath would vocalize into grunts. In the late stages of very long runs, these grunts would speak to me in rhythmic, involuntary phrases: "You're alive, you're alive, you're alive."

WHEN I WAS a young boy on the northeast edge of Price, Utah, I was fully an animal, but slowly through years, this animal spirit burrowed deep and lay dormant, nursing itself on desiccated roots. . . .

Sage stretches eternally east from Tenth East in Price—gray fading to blue, to cobalt. In this geography, I ranged, wild. Close to town, just a quarter mile from my back yard, a clay wash lay hidden and dark, just below the surface of sage. In the spring, storms sent chocolate floods down the wash, pushing boulders in their submerged currents. From my porch, I heard the boulders growling to me, low and deep from within the wash's throat.

When I was four, such a storm undercut the clay bank on which a dirt road traversed the wash. When the first earthen fissures appeared, the men on Tenth East called the children to wait beside the roiling water for what we expected to be a violent spectacle—the crash when the clay bank finally gave way and collapsed into the churning waters below.

The bank fell violently, as expected. But unexpectedly, the cleavage exposed a nest of twenty or thirty hibernating snakes, coiled around each other, rigid and immobile after the long winter rest. They clung, still lodged in the clay bank but exposed.

Allen Smith's father took the handle of a shovel, and leaning over the bank, tried to pry the snakes loose. Two or three small ones fell into the water and were swept away.

Putting on a leather glove, Brother Jones reached down and took the largest snake by the tail. He pulled the snake out of the hole and held it at arm's length, shaking it so that it would uncoil itself. The snake remained coiled for a long time, unable to untwist its winter posture. After a few moments, it straightened somewhat, and it reached all the way from Brother Jones's upraised hand at shoulder height, to the ground, nearly five feet. After a few minutes, Brother Jones tossed the snake into the water, and we children ran beside the wash, watching the snake's pallid belly flash as it rolled just below the surface.

My best friend and I looked at each other, sensing the joy of ceremonial killing. Brother Jones had granted us new permission, and from that moment forward, we also began to throw creatures to their deaths—moths into black widow webs; stinkbug beetles into writhing, recently disturbed beds of fire ants; hoppy-toads into buckets of garter snakes. With reverence, we watched the black widow wind the moth into a neat package. We hovered nearby as the frenzied ants dismembered

the stinkbugs. We beheld with wonder as a garter snake unhinged its jaw and massaged the toad, nose-first, into the cotton-pink depths of its throat. Ritualistically, we pulled the kicking legs from grasshoppers and left them to languish in empty beer bottles. We exulted in predation, catching polliwogs until our chapped hands cracked and bled.

I ranged this geography east of Price, imbuing different spaces with storied meaning: Here, this silvered cottonwood log, this is where we beheaded my Easter chick after it had grown. There, that prominent clay ledge, that's where we "marked our territory" by urinating into the wash. Here, this sunken hole, this is where we built the hut that we burned to the ground while smoking cedar-bark cigarettes wrapped in newsprint. There, that circled grove of greasewood bushes, that's where we studied the pages of a stolen *Playboy* magazine.

I was a feral child, and that snake, rolling in the choppy waters of the wash, was my familiar. And twenty-five years later, listening to the cicadas with Nelson at Mount Trumbull, I could almost feel that snake wriggling down my spinal column, pushing against the interior confines of my vertebra, its head driving against the pit of my stomach.

ONE AFTERNOON IN August, Nelson and I worked felling trees and piling slash at a place called Turkey Track. A fire had burned there two years before, and all the yellow pines shorter than sixteen or twenty inches breast height had been scorched so badly that they died. Only the old-growth survived. Amid those blackened pillars, baked ash rose into our nostrils, and the air seemed brittle and scorched. Nelson wiped sweat from his head, licked his lips, and said: "It's too dry . . . I better do something about that."

Later that afternoon, we returned to the fire compound to chart the weather, weigh the fuel sticks, and eat lunch. As we lounged on the cabin's shaded front porch, Nelson announced, "I'll be gone for the afternoon."

"But what if there's a fire?" I asked.

"I have to go," he said, and slowly he walked out of the compound toward the Mount Trumbull trailhead.

"Where will you be?" I yelled to him as he reached a curve in the road. He didn't answer. I knew that fire supervisors were miles away, at least three-hours' drive on four-wheeling roads, and no one but me would know that Nelson had left the compound. Unless, that is, a fire should blow up. . . . And so I waited anxiously in the shade of the porch, listening to the last cicadas singing their diminishing song in the junipers behind the cabin. Nelson did not return until after dark.

The following day, as we felled trees and stacked slash at Turkey Track, we could see the cumulus clouds building into dark towers over the flat bottoms of Whitmore and Andrus Canyons. The clouds advanced northeast, and on reaching Mount Trumbull's western face, they broke into lightning, then rain. A summer monsoon forced us into the cab of our four-wheel-drive pickup truck.

"We better watch that lightning," I said.

Nelson only smiled.

"What you smiling about?" I asked.



KENT MOYLE

Do you want to know what I said?" he asked.
"Yes."

"I asked the Creator to bless you, to give you many children, to help you know always where you are. I asked him to send a spirit to be your guide. A raven. A muskrat. It doesn't matter. A guide."

"I made it rain."

"You what?"

"Yesterday, I made it rain. I went to the top of Mount Trumbull. I found Indian rice and broke off two handfuls. I waved the rice to the sky, asking the clouds to come. I danced a sacred dance. I sang a sacred song. I prayed to the Creator."

"You made it rain?" I asked, incredulously.

"Yes, I did." Nelson crossed his arms and smiled.

The following week, Nelson did not show up for work. The morning lengthened into the afternoon. From the fire dispatch office, I telephoned to Pipe Springs, but couldn't get an answer at either Eldora's house or Nelson's uncle's house. Loren Black, my fire officer, asked me to drive out to Pipe Springs Reservation to see if I could find Nelson. Early the next morning, when I pulled into Eldora's driveway, I could see Nelson and Eldora lying on the concrete floor of the carport, asleep inside two sleeping bags that had been zipped together. Resting nearby was an overturned bottle of Jose Cuervo tequila. Nelson roused when I slammed the door of the truck.

"Good morning, Nelson," I said. "Are you coming to work?"

He rose to one elbow. He paused. "I don't think I'll be

coming back to work." He explained that, during our previous week on Mount Trumbull, his nephew had been murdered. The body had been found in the middle of the highway south of Fredonia. It had been crushed under the wheels of a pickup truck. The tracks indicated that the truck had stopped, reversed itself, and repeatedly run over the body until the corpse was unrecognizable. The body had to be identified with dental records. Nelson suspected that two Navajos with whom the nephew had fought were the culprits. "I don't think I have it in me to go back to work," he said. "I need to just sit and think for a while."

By that time, Eldora had awakened, and she needed to pee. "Nelson!" she blurted, then whispered something in his ear.

"Just a minute," he said; "I'm talking right now."

Soon, however, the matter was urgent: "You better go now," he told me. "I enjoyed working with you."

As I drove to Mount Trumbull, I thought I would never see Nelson again. And thus, the year of the cicada ended: the newly hatched nymphs fell quietly to the ground and burrowed deep into the soil, and the fire compound, littered with

brittle exoskeletal husks that clattered in the night breeze, fell to patient dormancy.

I DID NOT see Nelson for more than a year. However, as I sat one November night at home with my wife and kids, the phone rang. It was Nelson at the St. George bus station. He needed to get out to Pipe Springs. Would I help him out? The kids needed a ride to Mutual, a pile of student essays awaited me, and the ward executive secretary wanted me to cut some checks for the Relief Society, but I agreed to help Nelson anyway.

When I picked him up, he explained he had been in Peach Springs (on the other side of the Grand Canyon) and that, even though Eldora still hadn't divorced the Paiute man, he was going to move in with her on the reservation. He was carrying a small suitcase and a saddle.

Before leaving town, we stopped at a 7-11 so I could buy gas. Nelson bought six one-quart bottles of Coors and rested them between his feet on the floor of my car. He now walked with a terrible limp because some of the toes on his right foot had been amputated. "They just turned blue on me one day," he said. As we drove the hour-and-a-half to Pipe Springs, I

caught up on Nelson's news while he drank beer. By the time we arrived at Eldora's house, it was midnight, and only two of the quarts remained.

"Wait here," he said when I stopped in her driveway. He walked to the rear of the car, relieved himself, and mounted Eldora's doorstep, bathed in the light of my headlights.

A man answered the door. As I watched, the man gestured angrily. Nelson gestured angrily. The man's voice rose, and he spoke something in his native language. The man raised his fist, and Nelson cowered before him and came back to my car.

"Eldora's old man is back," he announced, sliding back into the front seat. "Damn! I guess you're going to have to take me to Fredonia."

As we drove on through the night, Nelson drank one more beer and became more mellow: "I want to thank you," he said, "for helping me. I want to ask the Creator to bless you. Do you mind if I say a prayer?"

"No. Go right ahead."

He spoke in Walapai, the glottal stops and slurred consonants rising and falling in cadence. His chubby hands clutched the neck of the Coors bottle between his legs, and he bowed his head till his chin rested on his chest. The only words I recognized were my own first and last names. After two minutes of prayer, his voice slowed and fell to a whisper, finally ending in a low, quick syllable.

"Do you want to know what I said?" he asked.

"Yes."

"I asked the Creator to bless you, to give you many children, to help you know always where you are. I asked him to send a spirit to be your guide. A raven. A muskrat. It doesn't matter. A guide."

"Thank you," I said. I dropped Nelson at a hotel in Fredonia and helped him get a room. I drove home, feeling somehow constrained from within, a tightness at the back of my throat. A full moon had risen, and Mount Trumbull lay low and dark to the west of the highway. I struggled to stay awake. The sound of the tires on the road undulated like the song of cicadas, and I yearned for the breach of some constraining thorax.

I NEVER SAW Nelson Yellowfat again. However, a year and a half later, I was fighting a fire on Mount Logan, just south of the Mount Trumbull station. The fire had grown to fifteen acres on a heavily wooded hillside. Because fire resources were stretched thin, we couldn't get any local hot shot or hand crews to help us attack the fire, and the closest unit was a twenty-person crew out of Peach Springs, Arizona. I learned that they were all Walapai Indians.

They arrived on the fire and immediately began cutting a fire line and flanking the fire until a cold line completely surrounded it. As dawn broke, the Walapai crew fell back and rested, eating military ration food as they lay in the soft yellow pine needles.

With six or eight of them sitting near, I asked, "Do any of you know Nelson Yellowfat?"

At first, there was a tense silence. Two of them looked at each

other quickly. Then the whole group laughed uproariously.

"What?" I asked, not understanding.

"Yeah, we know Nelson," one of them said. "Everybody in Peach Springs knows Nelson." Again, everyone laughed. They explained to me that he had been very drunk one night, that he had been accused of raping a fifteen-year-old girl, and that he had been convicted. He was, they said, in prison near Safford, Arizona.

Two weeks later, I lay sleeping in the small cabin bedroom at the Mount Trumbull fire station. Something woke me—wind rushing through the yellow pines, yipping coyotes, distant thunder. . . I don't know. In the penumbra between dream and wakefulness, I wasn't myself. In my dream, I had become Nelson Yellowfat. Instead of lying in the cabin's bedroom, I had been lying in the bunk of a prison cell. It was very dark, but I could see into the cell's dusky upper corners. The corners slowly closed in upon me, until I lay completely confined, as though in a coffin, unable to move my arms and legs, unable to cry out.

Finally shaking off the dream, I kicked the sleeping bag from my legs and stumbled onto the cabin's front porch. In the crystalline night, the basalt cliffs of Mount Trumbull's southwestern face loomed dark above me. All was silent except the far-off caw of a lone raven. My heart ached for Nelson, but my wife, kids, students, and the ward tithing report were far, far away from me—and for that, I was truly happy. I listened closely to the raven, comforted somehow. ☞



MARCH MORNING

Clouds rise from the barn roof
piebald with shadows and frost
yet to melt;
in stall eight the cream heifer,
all night grotesquely swollen
and vigilant, suckles her first
newborn, a cream Jersey also;
its unsteady legs tense
as it thrusts its muzzle
into the rich red udder.

In the uneven kerosene light
it could be anytime: antediluvian,
medieval, reconstruction—
ancient, meager, modern—
livestock and man and kingdoms
broken below the kingdom of God.

—SEAN BRENDAN-BROWN

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

Joanna Gardiner

BYU AND BERKELEY
A SURVIVOR'S TALE

WHEN I GRADUATED from high school in western New York, as optimistic and bright-eyed as any incoming college freshman, I packed up my books and stereo and headed straight to Brigham Young University. Ah, Utah, where well-dressed, eternal families live together in perfect harmony! Unfortunately, Provo's Stepford-Wives-style conservatism gave me a nasty case of culture shock.

I left BYU after two years, choosing to finish my degree at the University of California at Berkeley. That would be much better, I thought. No conservative thought-control in that oasis of liberalism! Indeed. Friends say I couldn't have chosen two more bizarrely different schools, and, on the surface, BYU and Berkeley *do* seem like opposites. However, having marinated in each environment, I believe that both schools share essentially the same defining characteristic: a ferocious grip on ideology. Their ideologies happen to be at different ends of the cultural spectrum, but in all the ways that count, BYU and Berkeley might as well be twins.

BYU epitomizes traditional and official Mormon culture. The school's mission statement, which has been in effect since 1981, reads:

The mission of Brigham Young University—founded, supported, and guided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints—is to assist individuals in their quest for perfection and eternal life. . . . All students at BYU should be taught the truths of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Any education is inadequate which does not emphasize that His is the only name given under heaven whereby mankind can be saved.¹

Hence its nickname, "The Lord's University." However, administrators don't seem to trust students to agree with this agenda, so they have legislated righteousness in the form of the Honor Code. This document, which all students must sign and date to indicate their acceptance, mandates honesty, chastity, virtue, the use of clean language, abstinence "from possessing, serving, or consuming alcoholic beverages, tobacco, tea, coffee, or harmful drugs," avoiding any clothing that is "sleeveless, revealing, or form-fitting," and "encourage[ing] others in their commitment to comply with the BYU Honor Code." So, if your roommate has an illicit stash of English breakfast tea or possibly a tank top under her mattress, you're supposed to "challenge and council" [sic] her "in the spirit of love,"² then narc on her to the Honor Code office.

Berkeley, on the other hand, brings new meaning to the idea of wild-eyed liberalism. Here is how one booklet describes the city and school: "Berkeley has a long history as one of the most lively, culturally diverse, and politically adventurous communities in the country."³ To say the least! Political activism is a way of life at Berkeley. It often seemed to me that students were happy only when they had something terrible to protest, and if they couldn't find something horrible, any old thing would do. In 1992, a student named Andrew Martinez led one of these demonstrations: a "nude-in" protesting "social repression." Martinez began attending classes in the altogether and became known as The Naked Guy. We have him to thank for Berkeley's version of a dress code: students must now wear clothing on campus.⁴ As for coffee, tea, alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs, students at Berkeley possess, serve, and consume these with the joyful abandon of the Relief Society handing out mint brownies and sparkle punch at a BYU fireside.

SO the two schools seem completely and utterly different, right? Well, try finding clean air to breathe on either campus. BYU students are supposed to avoid the very appearance of evil, but many go the extra mile by avoiding the very odor of evil with the help of an arsenal of personal hygiene products. One day in the BYU library, I opened the door to the women's bathroom and a choking cloud of atomized perfume and hairspray boiled out over me. I should have simply stopped, dropped, and rolled to make it safely to the toilet. Instead, I slammed the door behind me and hurried off to find an empty women's room in the engineering building.

Berkeley smells just as strongly—in a different way. Washing one's hair before class shows a pitiable slavery to convention, and as for deodorant, well, how Republican can you be? One summer day in English 15, a warm breeze from the window wafted over me, carrying with it the conversation and aroma of two classmates, who seemed to have rejected the societal boundaries imposed by soap.

"But do you think you're *brilliant*?" the one who appeared to be male said through the haze of body odor (we should note here that leg hair is not a conclusive gender indicator at Berkeley).

The other, who I would almost bet was female, tossed back some short oily hair and said, "I truly believe that one cannot know one's own brilliance."

I guess one cannot know one's own bouquet, either.

BYU and Berkeley both have a distinct party line which students are well advised to toe. Teachers look for the right attitudes and opinions, and they don't want to hear dissenting viewpoints. For example, at BYU, the final project in my creative writing class was to be a personal essay, so I submitted a paper on a topic that had occupied my thoughts for several months: my growing certainty that I did not want to get married.

Keep in mind that marriage is a *huge* part of the BYU culture. A constant chorus of propaganda bombarded me.

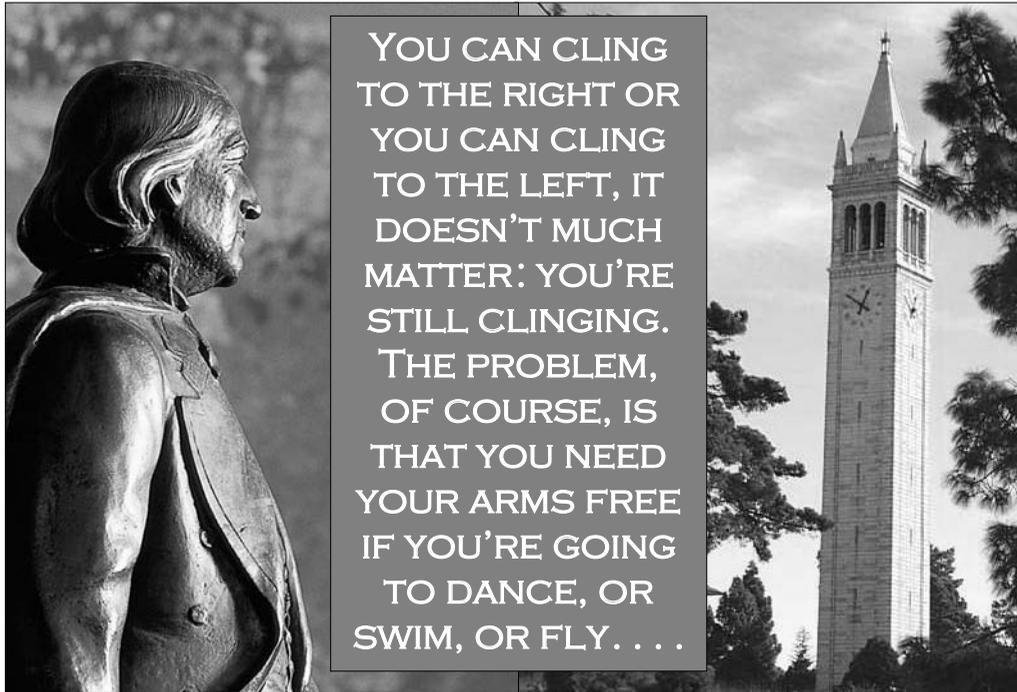
IN THE DORMS: "What kind of husband are you looking for?"

AT SCHOOL: "You don't intend to work after you get married, do you?"

AT CHURCH: "We sisters of Zion are so lucky to have the privilege of supporting our future husbands in all their endeavors!"



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YOU CAN CLING TO THE RIGHT OR YOU CAN CLING TO THE LEFT, IT DOESN'T MUCH MATTER: YOU'RE STILL CLINGING. THE PROBLEM, OF COURSE, IS THAT YOU NEED YOUR ARMS FREE IF YOU'RE GOING TO DANCE, OR SWIM, OR FLY. . . .

AT WORK: "Getting closer to that MRS. degree? Heh, heh."

However, no one would tell me what vows I was supposed to take in a temple marriage. It seemed perfectly reasonable to me—and still does—that if you intend to make and keep a promise, you should get to know in advance what that promise will be. Because of the questions I was asking, a stake high councilor invited me into his office. The ceremonies, he said, were sacred, not secret. I shouldn't question these things; I should be humble and have faith. Everything would be fine once I found a husband.

I finally began to understand: as a single woman within Mormon culture, I would never feel as though I really existed. What's more, an acquaintance of mine who had gone through the temple ceremony told me that wives not only had to promise to obey their husbands for time and all eternity, but husbands made their covenants with God and wives made their covenants with their husbands. Small wonder no one would tell me about the temple ceremony. All my uncertainty vanished, about marriage and about the Church. I knew without a shadow of a doubt that a God who likes his sons so much more than his daughters does not exist, and I knew it would be wrong, an immoral negligence, to sign my soul away to the Mormon priesthood. With my eyes on the horizon for the first time in my life, I left the project in patriarchy that is Mormonism.

So, back to creative writing class. I turned in my paper, a light-hearted cost-benefit

analysis of marriage, which concluded that gaining companionship and sex did not justify the loss of freedom and identity. Unfortunately, the instructor did not laugh. She wouldn't even give me a grade. She told me to forget writing about that subject until I turned twenty-five. On the cover sheet, she wrote, "You're trivializing the whole issue and probably at just nineteen, too young to think it through the way another older young woman might." Hmm. Too young to think through the issue, but plenty old enough to get married. The funny thing is that here I sit, thirty-two years old, resplendent in all my post-twenty-five wisdom, and my mind hasn't changed on this one.

THE same sort of thing happened at Berkeley, just not about marriage. For example, one day, my Chicano literature professor began his lecture with a five-minute sermon about a proposition before California voters in the coming election which would restrict state benefits for immigrants. He explained that the correct vote—i.e. the liberal vote—would be against this measure. He finished by saying, "OK, so everybody who is going to vote 'no,' raise your hand!" Freaky enough in its own right, to have to tell the man who issues your grades whether or not you're going to vote the way he wants you to, but what really got me is that almost everyone in the class actually raised their hands. I sat stunned. We knew what we're supposed to think, and that's damn well what we thought!

ALSO in support of their party lines, each school offers a special curriculum for female students. At BYU, it's a major called "Family Life and Home Economics," and at Berkeley, it's "Women's Studies." To be fair, BYU's schedule of classes for Fall 2002 did include English 396, "Studies in Women's Literature," but that class had been canceled for unknown reasons. No Home-Ec classes had been canceled, though, and the courses available included such gems as "Basic Food Preparation," "Clothing the Family," and that perennial favorite, "Fashion Strategies."⁵

Now, I can scarcely believe that an accredited university offers a course in chopping vegetables, but at Berkeley, I kept my mouth resolutely shut about the fact that cooking is one of my favorite hobbies. As we learn in Berkeley's Women's Studies courses, liberated women sneer at any who persist in such outmoded

gender roles, and besides, we are too busy throwing off the bonds of oppression to take pleasure in anything as transient and meaningless as the smell of homemade bread. Berkeley can teach you more about the subjugation of women than Gloria Steinem would care to know. Thanks to my Women's Studies education, Berkeley style, you can give me a movie, any movie, and I can write a paper for you about the film's misogynistic undertones and female objectification, which clearly betray the filmmaker's deep fear of feminine power. BYU trains docile poodles, and Berkeley whips angry pit bulls into a fighting frenzy. I find both of these programs completely inapplicable to normal life.

ON the bright side, BYU and Berkeley each gave me one of my two favorite classes in the world. At BYU it was English 391, "Introduction to Folklore." Professor Poulsen wore jeans and flannel shirts to class, bless him, when all my other professors seemed unthinkably uptight in their Sunday best. Better still, he read Joseph Campbell to us, the mythologist who interprets religious stories symbolically, not literally, who finds a transcendent unity in the myths and religions of all human cultures, and who suggests that a full life begins with killing the dragon named "Thou shalt."⁶ I adore Professor Poulsen for that gift.

Similarly, Berkeley's English 118, taught by Professor Turner, focused on John Milton and *Paradise Lost*. At a time when every other one of my teachers was busy training me to

ferret out the misogyny, racism, and capitalist-pig-ism in great works of literature, Professor Turner explicated the Adam and Eve story from Genesis in one of his lectures. Except he didn't mention feminism at all, or why we must break down social barriers. Instead, he spoke about how the story celebrated the power of two lovers embracing life together in all its joy and suffering, how experience and knowledge enrich existence, and how disobedience can be an excellent thing. I didn't take a single note in class that day; I sat perfectly still, drinking in those ideas like cold lemonade in the heat of summer.

But the single best thing about BYU and Berkeley is the lesson they both taught me: you can cling to the right or you can cling to the left, it doesn't much matter: you're still clinging. The problem, of course, is that you need your arms free if you're going to dance, or swim, or fly, if you're going to live actively and nurture the spark of divinity that animates your existence.

One of the Book of Mormon lessons I remember from my teenage days is that denying the Holy Ghost is an unpardonable sin (Alma 39:6) and results in being cast into outer darkness for eternity. I have since come to believe that the Holy Ghost is a metaphorical spirit, the spark of divinity within everyone on Earth. I believe that if we deny our own divine powers, we snuff out our spark and float our lives away in a figurative outer darkness. I can think of no better way to make that happen than to keep a death grip on ideology.

BYU and Berkeley showed me that letting go of the Establishment's rules and living fully can fan your spark of divinity into a flame that lights up the lives around you, the way that Professors Poulsen and Turner seemed like beacons to me, shining over dead seas of conformity. Perhaps that's a lesson I couldn't have learned better at any schools other than BYU and Berkeley, together in all their wacky glory. ☺

NOTES

1. A copy of the mission statement can be found at: <http://www.byu.edu/about/factfile/missionp.htm>.

2. The Honor Code can be viewed at: http://campuslife.byu.edu/honorcode/honor_code.htm.

3. "Introducing the University, 1993–1994," Student Academic Services, Office of the President, University of California, May 1992.

4. *Time*, 8 Feb. 1993.

5. *Schedule of Classes*, Brigham Young University, Fall 2002.

6. *Reflections on the Art of Living: A Joseph Campbell Companion*, ed. by Diane K. Osborn (New York: Perennial, 1995).



CHOIR, FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

We drive up, insured, in late-models, riding soft on low-crowned asphalt. The sopranos and altos joke about arriving again in matching "Sunday best."

The music wraps me here,
where we may swing with a spiritual
or bounce eight-part fugues with Bach,

and, middle, old and young, we kneel,
siblings in millennia of
baked meal and pressed grape,

blood kin to the sisters widowed in hymnody
pedaled from an organ
by the man with the hand-whittled leg

in that teak-plank-and-bamboo sanctuary,
the orphans with one-T-shirt wardrobes
swept with jungle-brush brooms, cleaning

for the service we shared that quiet Sunday
just two weeks before the refugee camp
shattered under 130 millimeter shells,

survivors scattering inland, hoping to outrun
the patrols roving for loot and rape,
shooting anything

that moved,
even bayoneting shadows
in every thicket of bamboo. . .

I take the cup with both hemispheres of my brain.
I am comfortable here in my world,
yet blood kin to hands I cannot pass the peace.

—R. S. CARLSON

TURNING THE TIME OVER TO . . .

*Maxine Hanks*GLADYS IN THE TABERNACLE:
IGNITING THE SPIRIT OF GOD LIKE A FIRE

I BARELY RECOGNIZED the Salt Lake Tabernacle that summer day as I squeezed in with the crowds streaming into the cavernous auditorium on 8 June 2003. All twelve of the huge double-doors around the building's sides were flung open wide, with light pouring through every one; and a panel of windows above each door, as wide and high, flooded light from above. Together, they opened the wall from ceiling to floor, twelve times around the oval dome, venting the room with bright sun and air—the effect made the Tabernacle resemble a gigantic tent, rather than a solid, staid structure.

People were pressing together on the long wooden benches in the June heat, and you could feel anticipation gathering in the pews. This meeting was unusual, a celebration almost as significant as the event it commemorated—the twenty-fifth anniversary of the revelation on priesthood, “The Long-Promised Day.” This gathering of Saints paused to remember the historic date in June 1978 when the Church gave all worthy Mormon men, regardless of race, the right to be ordained to priesthood.

In a way, it was an odd thing to celebrate—the end of a racist policy too recent to relegate to history. Yet the shift from exclusion to acceptance in the past twenty-five years has been immensely healing and Church-altering, helping Mormonism become a truly international church, from just a few hundred black members in the 1960s to a couple of hundred thousand adherents around the world today.

The assembled audience was ready to embrace this anniversary celebration as enthusiastically as the Church had received the revelation itself. Multi-cultural Mormons and a few liberals lined the pews, but mostly it was grass-roots, scripture-toting, white folk

from the suburbs. I found myself sandwiched between a middle-aged couple from Sandy in Sunday dress, and two blond teenage girls in blue denim skirts and pierced ears (one hole only). I wondered if anyone would notice that I was a feminist heretic jammed in with the orthodox, but no one did. I blended into the blur of white Euro-American faces eager to see black people in red chairs on the Tabernacle stage.

This was a Temple Square service unlike any other, with black Saints as the main speakers and convert Gladys Knight conducting her own choir. As a diva of soul, Gladys had decided that “the music in this church could use a little zip.” So she had organized a multi-ethnic chorus of LDS singers that included black, white, hispanic, and polynesian performers. “Saints Unified Voices” united black gospel music with Mormon hymns. The result is a fusion I can only call “Mormon soul.” “I Know That My Redeemer Lives” and “I Need Thee Every Hour” had never sounded like this before.

As black spirituals infused Mormon tradition, a hybrid faith seemed to germinate in the crowd. It was a convergence of cultures, two kinds of gospel—one, a reserved, white conservatism, the other a bursting of radically ethnic verve. The union is a whole new form of Mormon worship. Gladys prefers the mixing of black and white Mormons into one congregation, blending different cultures and colors together. She calls the combination “fudge ripple.”

GLADYS Knight's daughter Kenya Jackson (who had introduced her mother to Mormonism) fervently shared her own conversion, followed by Gladys and her husband William McDowell, who each bore a vibrant testimony of the Church. “My family and I have been too

blessed by the priesthood to miss this wonderful occasion,” Gladys said. The more she spoke and sang, the more her positive vibration became contagious.

Saints Unified Voices rejoiced in song with so much heart and soul that every white shirt and tie and flowered dress on the benches began swaying with the music, hands clapping in rhythm, heads bobbing with the beat, bringing people to their feet. Many were standing and crowding in the doorways from outside on Temple Square, just to get a glimpse of the spectacle and feel the energy. Gladys and her choir managed to turn the Tabernacle meeting into a Mormon revival.

When Elder Merrill Bateman rose to speak, he was so infused with the Spirit he sounded like an exhorter, praising God and Gladys, half-seriously asking her to help revise the hymns. It left me wondering how much heterodoxy the Church can handle. Yet Elder Bateman was responding to a spiritual high that was undeniable; it crossed cultures, transcended differences, lifted us above boundaries. When the choir and congregation launched into singing “The Spirit of God Like a Fire Is Burning,” the bliss in the room nearly rocked the pews, completely possessing us all.

We were celebrating the priesthood given to men, yet the focal point was a woman who seems fully alive to divine power. There was more at work here than authority; the spirit of Elohim and Melchizedek seemed to pour out of Gladys upon the whole congregation, igniting the light inside every human being. It felt biblical in proportion.

ARTLY enough, this event was sponsored by Genesis, established in 1971 as a new beginning for blacks in the Mormon faith—a place for validation and inclusion that diffused the racial bias tied to the Bible. Genesis created support for LDS blacks in the lonely years before they received priesthood and temple admittance. Many blacks had endured criticism from families, friends, and the public for choosing a church that banned them from priesthood, yet they stayed steadfast, waiting for God to make things right. By remaining loyal to the Church, Genesis members lived down the discrimination.

In fact, black priesthood was never hopeless. Like white women, during the Church's formative years, black men had received limited access to priesthood. It was just a matter of time. Then wisdom finally broke through after the passage of a hundred years, in June 1978. The complete privileges and blessings



MAXINE HANKS writes about women's issues in Mormon and religious culture. A member of the “September Six,” she now serves as clergy and cantor for Gnostic mass.



PHOTO BY JASON OLSON/DESERET MORNING NEWS

Genesis president Darius Gray at the Tabernacle podium as members of Saints Unified Voices look on.

of priesthood were finally available to black men and their families. It was a brave new world for blacks and the Church.

I was curious to see how Elder Bateman would address the long-standing racism that had banned blacks for nearly 150 years. He wisely acknowledged the long wait for racial equality; yet he fell back on “the Lord’s timetable,” with no reference to the timetable of man. “We do not know why it took so long,” Elder Bateman admitted. There was no mention of human subjectivity, fallibility, or responsibility in the revelation process. I couldn’t help thinking that if only Mormonism could admit its human limitations, it would free the faith from past mistakes and solve current problems. Better to remedy our own failings than try to change God; surely God knows all things and loves everyone. Society generally reflects human progress more than it reflects divine consciousness.

Theological justifications aside, in the present and on the surface alone, the revelation and its effects are well worth celebrating. Joseph Freeman, the first black man ordained after the revelation in 1978, was on the stage. Now, twenty-five years later, he serves as “Bishop Freeman.”

I wondered if anyone would notice that I was a feminist heretic jammed in with the orthodox, but no one did. I blended into the blur of white Euro-American faces eager to see black people in red chairs on the Tabernacle stage.

“There are no strangers, foreigners or second-class citizens in the kingdom of God,” Elder Bateman affirmed. Today black Church members officiate and white members celebrate as if the ban never existed; however, the equality in God’s kingdom is not yet fully reflected in the Church.

AS much as I enjoyed the celebration, one discrimination still lingered, troubling my mind: LDS women are still prohibited from exercising priesthood and still asking why. This continuing bias against women was another reason I went to the Tabernacle that day. I see some parallels between black and

female priesthood. Like black saints, I had waited and waited and waited for a promised day—but mine never came.

I felt a personal connection to the revelation in 1978 because it happened to coincide with my call to serve as an LDS missionary. Even then, I sensed an ineffable link between a mission and priesthood—perhaps because a mission was the closest thing to priesthood that I could receive. (Years later, I learned that my intuition was right—a mission is a form of ministry and priesthood.)¹

I served in the South, tracting in black neighborhoods. The first event I attended in the mission field, October 1978, was the baptism of a black woman. It seemed that day as if a veil between heaven and earth had just been lifted; we were living a new revelation from God, and anything seemed possible. Yet my status as a woman in the Church still haunted me with its limitations. My missionary experience eventually led me to write about women and priesthood, which led to my excommunication in 1993, which ultimately led me to pursue ordination in another tradition.

All these feelings and memories came home full circle as I sat in the Tabernacle observing the anniversary of black priesthood.

One might wonder why I would care about Mormon priesthood anymore. Yet surely the inclusion of a discriminated group into the priesthood is worth celebrating. I care about spiritual power, and I’ve spent my life exploring it. This year marked my anniversary too—twenty-five years since my mission call, and ten years since my excommunication for asserting that women too have the power of God.

SUCH were the thoughts that ran through my head as I sat in the Tabernacle. I reflected on the convergence of all these appeals to God’s power and the healing occurring within the Church.

A tabernacle is a dwelling place of God’s spirit and power, a container for the divine presence. It’s also a symbol of the sepulcher and resurrection, the rising Christ; it holds the sacred host until communion brings it forth. And, it is a human temple wherein our own divine spirit dwells.

On this anniversary, I witnessed the power of God emanating from a woman until it filled the historic Tabernacle with its living presence. Gladys has the spirit of God, like a fire. She could ignite the entire Church with the energy of her brightly burning soul. Talk about priesthood—she’s got it. She radiated the divine, like a black Madonna, showing more soul than most dark-suited apostles. Perhaps music alone can convey the power of God—suits and ties aside.

This manifestation of God’s spirit and power in the Tabernacle poured itself out upon all present, like a pentecost. That it came through women and men together mattered little to the presiding authorities and the audience present. We all received and partook of the light, from black and white, male and female alike.

A long-promised day. The power of God alive in us all, ignited on Temple Square. ☪

NOTE

1. See “Sister Missionaries and Authority,” *Women and Authority: Re-emerging Mormon Feminism* (Salt Lake City: Signature Books, 1992), 315–34.

THE LONG-PROMISED DAY?

AT LAST, I FELT LIKE PART OF SOMETHING

By Annette Daley

WHEN I CONVERTED to Mormonism in 1982, I had minimal knowledge of the Church's past policy of withholding the priesthood from men of color. I was a naïve eighteen-year-old and did not make the connection that this policy would have affected my ability to receive temple blessings had I come to the Church a mere five years earlier. Indeed, in 1984 when my former husband (who is Caucasian) and I were going to be sealed in the Swiss Temple, I prayed to Heavenly Father that my first experience in the temple would be uplifting and memorable. I knew it would not be without challenges, for I would almost certainly be the only person of color among a sea of white members wearing white temple clothing. I was sure to stand out noticeably! I was pleasantly surprised to find that one other person of color attended the Swiss temple that day, a woman from Denmark, of all places! I attended that temple monthly for several more years, and I was never again privileged to see another person of color there. I knew that Heavenly Father had interceded on my behalf to assist me in what could have been a separatist experience.

I had lived in Germany for some six years previously, living and working among neoz nazism. I had even dated and seriously considered marriage to a blond-haired, blue-eyed German, but his desire to remain in Germany did not mesh with my need to escape the suffocation I felt living among such narrow-mindedness.

I chose instead to marry a brown-eyed, long-haired G.I. whom I had met at an LDS singles dance in Germany. Two years later, my husband received orders to serve at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. This was to be our first home in this new land. Having no family

nearby, my husband and I decided it would be best for me and our newborn son, Ryan, to stay with some military friends in Maryland while he found a home for us. (Although I had come across the bridge at Niagara Falls some eight years earlier with my high school band, this was my first official trip to America.) While finding our new home, my husband had received a dinner invitation from members of the ward which was to be kept when his family joined him. However, the offer was quickly rescinded when I showed up at church—a black woman with a beautiful brown baby in her arms. They were just not ready for it.

Following our stay in Oklahoma, we spent five years in a great and partially integrated ward in Kentucky, where I still have strong ties. While living there, we took a trip to the Atlanta Temple. I recall most vividly seeing all the people of color in the temple parking lot and grounds, and my mouth fell open when I realized their destination was indeed the House of the Lord. Upon entering, my mouth and eyes opened wider to see that many of these precious brethren and sisters were not only temple-goers but also temple workers! Tears glistened in my eyes. After years in the Church, I no longer felt like a minority. My husband gently whispered to me to close my mouth, for to look at me, I appeared dismayed, when in reality, I was really just shocked and overjoyed to see so many of my people in this sacred, holy place, performing work for our kindred dead.

During our time in Germany, I had attended a stake conference and there met my first black LDS family. They had joined the church in the early 70s, withholding of the priesthood notwithstanding. Their strength of conviction amazed me, and I had a lengthy conversation in the parking lot with the

mother as she detailed how both she and her husband had known they were doing the right thing and that God would some day hear their prayers. Would that my faith were that strong! A couple of years later, fate brought this family to our stake in Kentucky, where the wife sorrowfully told me that while her children were accepted by the youth of the ward, due to the color of their skin, these same youth shunned them at school.

Wherever we moved during our fifteen-year marriage, my husband and I caused a ripple among ward members, as we were generally the only interracial couple. The exception was in Kentucky, where there were two other mixed marriages. My husband often joked about starting a club called “the mixers.” While people could not, or would not, understand what drew the two of us together (the Gospel), they unanimously agreed that our biracial children were indeed beautiful to behold.

IN 1999, after my husband began pursuing an active homosexual lifestyle, we divorced. I then decided to move to Utah. I had been offered a job at which I would make enough money to support myself and my children, and I knew the Church was strong there and I would have a network to assist me in rearing my teenage sons in this troubled world. But Zion was not all what I expected. My children felt alienated, not just because of the color of their skin and because there were no other members of color in the ward for them to follow as role-models, but because Utah Mormons seemed to be so foreign. I even mentioned in passing to a brother I met at the Genesis group that I was considering taking my children to participate in Calvary Baptist Church's youth programs. He confided that he had done the same thing for his children so they might have experiences with youth leaders who look like them and so they might be in a youth group with several people of color.

Because the narrow-mindedness, provinciality, and intolerance among many Utahns was simply too much for him to overcome, my oldest son chose to move in with his father. The discrepancies he saw among members had caused him to begin to identify himself as *not* being “one of them.” I am now raising two teenage boys, and my former husband is raising the other two boys in Michigan.

Ever since my conversion, I had heard of the miraculous Salt Lake Temple, and I was overjoyed when after years of struggling due to the collapse of my temple marriage, I was



ANNETTE DALEY is a forty-year-old single mother of four boys. She is presently employed by Salt Lake City Corporation in the office of community affairs. She teaches the sixteen-year-old Sunday School class in her Taylorsville, Utah, ward.

I even mentioned in passing to a brother I met at the Genesis group that I was considering taking my children to participate in Calvary Baptist Church's youth programs. He confided that he had done the same thing for his children so they might have experiences with youth leaders who look like them and so they might be in a youth group with several people of color.

able to obtain a temple recommend and attend that sacred, historic temple. Yet, once again, I stuck out like a sore thumb. It reminded me of years before when I would attend temple sessions with my former husband and people would be shocked to see us unite in the celestial room after performing an endowment. Still, I very much enjoyed attending the temple and was impressed with the beauty and majesty of the surroundings. And I finally did find the peace I had so desperately sought since the heart-wrenching breakup of my marriage!

I now live in a diverse neighborhood in Taylorsville and attend the Genesis branch whenever I am able. It is ironic to me to see the numbers of white Mormon families in the Salt Lake area who choose to adopt children of color and rear them in the most homogeneous of places, where they will likely never see another member of color in their whole lives, except on television or at a Genesis



Annette Daley with her four sons: (back row) Tye; (front row, L to R): Kyle, Bryce, and Ryan.

meeting. I see how hard my children struggle to be accepted, and they are fortunate to have a black mother who looks like them, who is available to answer their many questions regarding race and acceptance. I cannot imagine how difficult it would be for an adopted child of color growing up and not interacting with other people of color in daily life.

Last year, I joined a progressive Mormon group called MESJ—Mormons for Equality and Social Justice. As such, I participated in a “brown bag” discussion at the University of Utah where we discussed race in the Church. It was there I met Darron Smith, who encouraged me to write about my experiences for this SUNSTONE column.

I procrastinated writing for a few months, until now, shortly after my experience during the celebratory weekend commemorating the priesthood revelation. The culmination of my experience as a black LDS woman came during the Tabernacle celebration of the June 1978 priesthood revelation when dear Sister Gladys Knight and her lovely choir, Saints Unified Voices, filled the Salt Lake Tabernacle with songs of praise and worship.

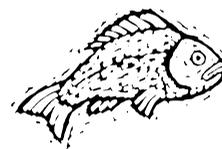
I had been raised in England in an Anglican church; hence loud church services had never been a part of my life. Yet something stirred deep within my soul when I heard Gladys and her choir sing their arrangements of many black spirituals and sacred hymns of Mormonism. The Tabernacle was bursting at the seams, and members clapped as she and the choir sang beautiful praises to the Lord. For the first

time since I had joined the Church twenty-one years earlier, at last, I felt like part of something. I was not the only person of color in a crowd—there were many. With God's blessings, I will continue to feel like a part of the crowd. Though I seriously doubt it will happen soon, I still hope that an increasing number of people of color will be brought into the fold in Utah.

Do I have a dream? Absolutely! It is that I can continue to live in Utah among the stares, feelings of isolation, occasional overt and blatant bigotry where I have to try harder than ever to give people grace for their mistaken beliefs that all people of color are either bas-

ketball players like Karl Malone, or rap singers, or, worst of all, gangsters.

While my dream is far from a reality, that does not mean that it will not be so one day. The next time I attend a regional conference in the new Conference Center and see that among the approximately 25,000 members, I am one of only a handful of people of color, I will think back to that glorious June 2003 Sabbath day in the Salt Lake Tabernacle when I felt like part of something. ☺



GRAND

The Grand Teton
punctures the dawn,
snow summit bleeding
like nature opening her shirt,
announces Spring

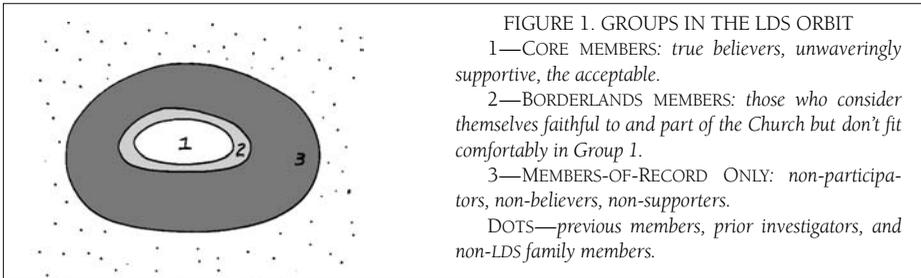
to the lone moose,
belly-deep in an emerald pond,
trapped in the rings of her driblets, and
to the elk moseying
like land hippos
across the willow flats.

—GERALD R. WHEELER

BRAVING THE BORDERLANDS . . .

CAN A “FAITH-BASED” PERSONAL RELIGION FIND A HOME IN A “TESTIMONY-BASED” CHURCH?

By D. Jeff Burton



A PROBLEM FOR some Borderlanders (and for many people who leave the Church) is the inability to gain (or keep) a “testimony” and to achieve the unruffled state of perfect knowledge that many Latter-day Saints assume to be the ultimate goal as it pertains to faith.¹ As Church members more and more perceive that “gaining a testimony” is a top priority, the definition of a Group 1 member has narrowed, and many (like me) who are willing to participate strictly on the basis of faith have found themselves outside the “acceptable” group.

I once asked my bishop if I could simply be a faithful Latter-day Saint and still receive all the blessings of activity (e.g., a responsible calling, a temple recommend, and so forth). I explained that being a faithful Latter-day Saint meant to me: that I would be honest with other members of my ward; that I didn't have a burning testimony of the Joseph Smith story (not that I disbelieved—I simply didn't know); that I recognized the validity of Christ's teachings and their eternal impact in people's lives; and that I just wanted to participate and worship with my ward family. His facial expression grew serious, and he said, “It doesn't take much to disrupt a ward.” I took his remark to mean that he believes some members' testimonies are fragile and could easily be lost if people like me were to speak our minds.

In this column, I begin an exploration of the following questions:

- Can someone develop and live a “faith-based” personal religion (in contrast to a testimony-based religion) within the Church without damaging another's faith?

- Can someone receive all the blessings of Church membership and activity by relying solely on faith and faithful behavior?

These are topics of considerable interest to me, both personally (as a Borderlander who has developed a faith-based, LDS-compatible personal religion) and in my Church service.²

Before we launch this inquiry, however, we must define some of the key terms that will come into play. Terms such as testimony, belief, knowledge, faith, and doubt are loaded with different meanings for different individuals in the Church. For instance, some might say, “When I say I have a testimony, it means I have faith, not necessarily that I know.” Hence, we need to explore the overlapping meanings assigned to the same words. In this column, I use the following definitions.

“To Believe”

HERE I mean personal belief. I don't mean belief as a creed or a list of doctrines. In its modern, science-influenced sense, “to believe” is to accept or conclude something from a solid data base. For example, if we flip a coin fifty times and tabulate the results of tails versus heads, we are likely to believe, or “have

a belief,” that each comes up about equally.

Personal belief, then, implies a conscious mental acceptance of something as true based on reason, experience, information, evidence, prejudice, or the perceived authority of that proposition's or fact's source. Unfortunately, each person's interpretation of the input information will vary:

- A mother looks at a newborn baby and sees evidence of the existence of God. A biochemist looks at the same baby and marvels at the power of evolution.

- A poet looks at a law-abiding universe as sufficient evidence to prove the existence of a creator. An astronomer looks at the universe and believes it to be only a great ordered randomness.

- One university student says her education caused her to lose her religious beliefs. Another says an identical education has strengthened hers.

- One person believes in Joseph Smith because of the authority of those who proclaim his prophethood. Another rejects the claims about Joseph Smith being a prophet on the authority of those who have problematized his calling.

“To Know”

ALTHOUGH related to belief, in its modern, personal, and intellectual sense, “to know” is to have a clear understanding, to be relatively sure, to gain intellectual understanding as a result of study, experience, reasoning, or evidence. Knowledge is associated with strong facts and evidence—a greatly enhanced belief.

But in modern life, nothing can be known perfectly, only with degrees of confidence. Neither science nor official Mormonism claims perfect knowledge. Thus, knowledge is not without reservation. For example, at three o'clock, I “know” the mail has arrived because it always comes by then. I am very sure when I look out the window and see an envelope in the mailbox. Then I “know” it is there when I go to the box and grasp the envelope. But I am then dismayed when I see that the envelope is a flyer put there by someone working for the corner gas station. Now I believe the mail is late, but I am again surprised to learn that my daughter retrieved the mail at two o'clock and put it on my desk.³

“To Have a Testimony”

AT some point, personal belief can become strong enough to be thought of as knowledge, or, in LDS usage, to be expressed as a “testimony.” Indeed, Mormon “testimonies”

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often contain statements of knowing (e.g., “I know Joseph Smith was a prophet.”)

For many members, testimony originates in feelings, emotions, and metaphysical experiences—sources of evidence not generally amenable to measurement and verification and not usually acceptable in scientific inquiry.

Voices of authority also serve as sources of testimony. For example, Church leaders, parents, or missionaries may have told us that God would answer our prayers. Their authority in our eyes was strong enough for us to believe that such a thing could happen. When we prayed, most of us received additional evidence, however subjective, of the “power of prayer.” We thus “gain” a testimony of prayer. Other authoritative sources may include scripture, and even God can be the “authority” on those occasions when he grants a gift of knowledge or provides inspiration.

Other important sources are personal experience and empirical evidence. For example, we don’t need much personal experience to come to “know” that honesty is the best policy or sharing is useful. Indeed, obeying any commandment usually results in a personal knowledge or testimony of the wisdom of that commandment. But it is impossible to “live” or “test” the historicity of the golden plates, or whether Joseph Smith correctly identified the location of the Garden of Eden. Testimonies of these claims rely on some form of authority. (Living the teachings of the Book of Mormon will lead to a testimony of the benefits of Christ’s teachings, but do not prove or disprove the book’s origins.)

Ultimately, “having a testimony” should be considered a process. The value of our testimonies varies with time, attitudes, experiences, evidences available to us, prayer, study, and our emotions at any given time.

“To Have Faith”

FAITH has many meanings, and again, I use a narrow definition related to personal faith. I do not use faith in reference to a religion or to a religious community, as in “the Catholic faith,” or “the faithful.”

“Having faith” in something—for example, having a personal faith in the Book of Mormon as literally a record of the peoples of ancient America—implies making a bridge between what we know, or believe, about the book and what the book itself claims to be. Faith implies assent, acceptance, and a willingness to try to follow the book’s teachings.

Righteousness and the ability to have faith seem to be related. Job, a righteous man and perhaps the most faithful of all Biblical figures, says, “Though He slay me, yet will I

trust in him” (Job 13:15). Peter says, quoting Habakkuk, “The *just* shall live by faith” (Rom. 1:17; *italics mine*).

I personally believe that the ability to have faith is a gift from God. I reason that it comes as the result of prayer and fasting. I think we have to consciously choose to exercise it—an act of personal will. It may wax and wane as a function of righteousness. I may be wrong, but I believe God’s answer to a request for knowledge may often be given as the strength to have faith.

“Faith” vs “Belief”

FAITH and belief are often regarded in LDS circles as synonymous. Indeed, many would define one by the other. The scriptures often use them interchangeably. However, let’s make a distinction between the two that can help answer the two questions posed at the beginning of the column.

“Belief” implies intellectual assent while “faith” implies confidence, trust, and conviction. Belief is passive—an agreement with, or acceptance of—a suggestion or claim. Faith is active—a reliance and trust which impels one to action. Belief is a product of the mind; faith, a product of the heart.

In Matthew 17:18–21, Christ tells the apostles why they were unable to cast out a devil. The seventeenth-century King James version reads: “And Jesus said unto them, Because of your unbelief: for verily I say unto you, If ye have faith as a grain of mustard seed, ye shall say unto this mountain, Remove hence to yonder place. . . .” However, the twentieth-century Revised Standard Version reads: “He said to them, ‘Because of your little faith. For truly, I say to you, if you have faith as a grain of mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, Move from here to there. . . .’” Notice that in the modern translation “unbelief” becomes “little faith.”

An interesting problem related to the word faith is that it has no verb form. There are verbs for belief, trust, doubt, knowledge, and reason. To express faith as action, as a verb, we must use other words: “I believe,” “I accept,” or “I trust.” No wonder there is overlap in word usage.

Doctrine and Covenants 49:12 commands us: “Believe in the name of the Lord Jesus.” Ordering someone to believe is like commanding someone to understand. Can it be done simply as an act of will? Usually not. The commandment seems irrational unless we see the verb “to believe” as synonymous with active faith. God can, in fact, command us to “be faithful” or “act faithfully.”⁴

“To Doubt”

DOUBT, again in contemporary usage, means to be unsettled in belief or opinion, to be uncertain or undecided. It means not having sufficient information or evidence upon which to build belief, or having negative evidence. Suppose a scientist administers a particular dose of promising medicine to six diseased rats, and they all die. The scientist must conclude that there is not enough evidence to justify belief that the medicine can be effective at that dosage.

In older religious meanings, the term “doubt” meant “to distrust,” and “to reject.” Employing this sense, the scriptures often commanded us to “doubt not.” In its broad, historical sense, doubt is associated with the most negative of human traits—the absence of trust in God and the rejection of his existence and goodness. Little wonder that the term doubt still suffers from such a strong negative connotation, even today when skepticism and questioning are considered useful consumer and employee skills.⁵

Questioning is the delightful offspring of doubting. Having questions implies a desire to expand the data base upon which beliefs are built. Questions represent the opportunity to exercise faith. Unfortunately, in our LDS culture, religious questioning is often considered to be negative, damaging to testimony.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A TESTIMONY-BASED LDS PERSONAL RELIGION

I BELIEVE that the church has established as a prime measure of worthiness a member’s ability to affirm a testimony of Joseph Smith, the Book of Mormon, and the Restoration. Such questions as, “Do you have a testimony of the Restoration?” have become common in temple recommend interviews and personal priesthood interviews.

Based on the definitions used in this column, a Group 1 member is likely to have a testimony-based personal religion. We commonly hear: “I testify that I know the Book of Mormon is true. I know Joseph Smith was a prophet of God. I know the Church is true.”⁶

For testimony-based members, study and learning are often restricted to perusing information which supports the facts and types of experiences underlying the testimony; information which contradicts such foundations is, therefore, wrong. Curiosity is usually circumscribed and limited. Obedience is mostly automatic and unanalyzed. This may sound restrictive and incomplete to SUNSTONE readers, but statistics reveal that about 20 per-

The aim is to allow oneself to move comfortably from, “I must have a testimony,” to “I must follow Christ’s and the Church’s teachings— and, incidentally, that will build my knowledge of important truths.”

cent of all Latter-day Saints find this a successful and rewarding approach. For these people, their personal religions are based on it.

CHARACTERISTICS OF A FAITH-BASED LDS PERSONAL RELIGION

WHAT might a faith-based personal LDS religion look like? Common statements a person with a faith-based religion might say or think can be instructive.

- *I don’t know for sure whether or not [insert any religious claim, such as: “Jesus was the Savior of mankind,” “the Book of Mormon is a true history of ancient inhabitants of America,” “the restoration of polygamy was in accord with God’s will,” and so forth], but I am willing to accept the possibility of it being true and will live as if it is through my faith.*

- *Authority-based testimonies aren’t as important to me as other factors of my religious understanding. My life’s experience has taught me the value of _____ [insert any or all of the following: “it is important to be honest,” “it is useful to live according to Christ’s teachings,” “I am blessed when I follow the counsel of Church leaders,” “it is important to pay tithing and make other sacrifices to help people,” and so forth].*

- *I don’t place a lot of emphasis on “gaining a testimony” of those things I can’t learn through my behavior or experience.*

- *God has not seen fit to grant me a “knowledge” of certain matters, and that is okay—I still have a good relationship with him and know that he loves me.*

- *I don’t need a testimony of Joseph Smith to be a good Latter-day Saint and Christian. I sometimes don’t even want a testimony—I’m willing to live by faith.*

For the faith-based member, behavior is freely chosen, and obedience is seen as a faithful response based on reason and lived experience. Learning is not restricted, and new knowledge is evaluated to determine its new impact on faith. Curiosity is free to operate but is tempered by its impact on oneself and others.

SUGGESTIONS FOR THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN ACCEPTABLE FAITH-BASED LDS RELIGION.

AT the beginning of this column, I asked: “Is it possible to live a faith-based personal LDS religious life without destroying another’s faith?” And

“Can one receive membership blessings by relying solely on faith and behavior?” I believe the answer to both questions is “yes.”

If someone is interested in exploring and living a faith-based personal LDS religion, he or she will need to find ways of de-emphasizing the perception of “testimony” as the premier (or only) measure of worthiness and acceptability. “Living by faith,” “correct behavior,” and “good works” will also become equally acceptable measures. Then he or she will need to let those traits be justification for receiving all the blessings of the gospel.

The aim is to allow oneself to move comfortably from, “I must have a testimony,” to “I must follow Christ’s and the Church’s teachings—and, incidentally, that will build my knowledge of important truths.”

To help achieve that change, consider the following suggestions:

1. Internalize the sentiments of the following scripture and quotes from modern prophets.

To some it is given to know that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. . . .
To others it is given to believe on their words, that they also might have eternal life if they continue faithful.

—D&C 46:13–14 (*italics mine*)

Members of the Mormon church are not all united on every principle. Every man is entitled to his own opinion and his own views and his own conceptions of right and wrong so long as they do not come in conflict with the standard principles of the Church. If a man assumes to deny God and to become an infidel we withdraw fellowship from him. But so long as a man believes in God and has a little faith in the Church organization, we nurture and aid that person to continue faithfully as a member of the Church though he may not believe all that is revealed.

—Joseph F. Smith during the Reed Smoot Hearings.⁷

I want the liberty of believing as I please, it feels good not be to trammelled. It do[es]n’t prove that a man is not a good man, because he errs in doctrine.

—Joseph Smith, correcting the Nauvoo high council for calling up a man for erring in doctrine. He also wrote that he did “not like the concept of a creed [in] which a man must believe or be asked out of the Church.”⁸

2. *Live a life faithful to Christ’s teachings.* In addition to the standards of honesty, love, caring, and patience, this would include the modern requirements to follow our latter-day prophets, participate in Church meetings and activities, and make your life as compatible with the LDS culture as possible.

3. *Make changes in your religious life clear to family, friends, and ward members.* You should do so, of course, appropriately and at the right time. Speak your mind, and don’t be afraid to (tactfully) include statements such as:

- *I don’t have a perfect knowledge of everything. I work daily to build my knowledge of the truthfulness of Christ’s teachings. I do that by study, prayer, and by practicing what Jesus taught us to do. I expect to live by faith until I die.*

- *Testimony is asymptotic in that it may approach perfection but can never reach it. I am constantly building my understanding of truth, and I believe I am moving ever closer to that perfect knowledge. Meanwhile, I am happy and willing to follow Christ’s and the Church’s teachings through faith.*

- *I don’t have a testimony of every facet of our religion. I may never have it. But I live the gospel as if I did. I know that in doing so, I build my knowledge of the truthfulness of Christ’s teachings.*

- *I have struggled with the concept of ‘testimony’ all of my life. I have some questions yet to be answered and wonder about other things. But I live by faith, and I accept that what we are doing is essentially right.*

I believe if Latter-day Saints felt more free to make such honest statements about their faith vs. testimony status, we would find eager and willing takers.

4. *Deal maturely with temple recommend interviews and at other times when “testimony” is called for.* Modify mentally the implications of

the need for a “testimony,” e.g., in the temple recommend interview and testimony meetings, and substitute appropriate statements. For such questions as, “Do you have a testimony of the Restoration?” you might say something like, “I am building a testimony of it,” or, “I accept and follow the principles of the Restoration,” or, “I will live faithfully and as if the Restoration has occurred.” I have found that these types of answers are almost always acceptable.

5. *Accept others as they are (but don't expect them to do the same for you right away).* Recognize that each of us is developing a personal religion and a unique relationship with God. No member's personal religion will be exactly like another's. Let every member live his or her personal religious life without criticism or undue interference. Remember that “treating others as we would like to be treated” has divine foundations.

Remember, we have been rightfully warned against destroying the faith of another member. It is important to again note the difference between a member's “faith” and his or her “testimony.” Based on the terms defined above, a member's “testimony” is constantly in flux, depending upon the evidence accumulated to the moment. “Faith,” however, is a conscious choice and is reasonably independent of the evidences upon which testimony is built.⁹ Recognize also that others will not use the same definitions we have used. Discussion of terms and meanings is usually productive.

6. *Set reasonable boundaries for yourself.* If missionary work is not for you, for example, advise those in authority at the right time. Upon being offered any calling, it is acceptable for you to privately respond, “I don't feel comfortable with that calling at the moment, but do you have anything else you feel I could do?” Bishops and stake presidents appreciate candor, and no one wants someone to have a bad or failing Church-service experience.

IN future columns, I will further explore the development of an acceptable personal religion within the LDS framework and share some recent experiences sent to me by Borderlanders who are working through the issues and problems in their quests to remain LDS. ☺

NOTES

1. In my first column, I introduced the Borderlander 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. (See D. Jeff Burton, “Changing Our Expectations,” *SUNSTONE* [April 2002], 56–57.)

2. I have spent much of my LDS religious service as a lay counselor helping those struggling with “testimony” issues and have extensively written about it: [in an essay that appeared in the *Association of Mormon Counselors and Psychotherapists Journal* (1985); in a chapter of *Counseling—A Guide to Helping Others*, vol. 2, edited by R. Lanier Britsch and Terrance D. Olson (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book, 1985–2000); in articles in *This People* magazine (Summer 1991); and in my book, *For Those Who Wonder* (Bountiful, Utah: IVE Press, 1984–2002) which is in its fourth edition, has seen seven printings, and was for many years carried on Deseret Book's shelves].

3. We approach perfect knowledge asymptotically. Science and statistics have developed elaborate methods for testing, verifying, and strengthening the evidence upon which beliefs and knowledge are based. But no test produces perfect knowledge. For example, to determine the toxicity of a chemical, we may conduct studies with mice. Varying amounts of the chemical may be injected to determine the LD-50 (the lethal dose for 50 percent of the mouse sample.) The results suggest the toxicity of the chemical, but few would claim perfect knowledge. In this modern sense, knowledge can be thought of as near-perfect or almost infinite belief.

For some, a little evidence is sufficient to graduate a “belief” to “knowledge.” For others, a great deal of evidence is required. Suppose a person is phoning a friend. After three rings, one person may hang up, “knowing” that the friend is out. Another person may wait ten rings before hanging up. Still another may wait twenty rings “to be sure.” Still, we can never have absolute knowledge that the friend was not home. Perhaps he or she was in the shower. Perhaps the friend would have picked up the phone on the twenty-first ring.

4. Generally, one can build a “testimony” of any religious claim that is testable or related to behavior, e.g., honesty, prayer. Honoring one's parents will generally provide evidence over time of the worth of that commandment, for example. Faith is generally required for any religious claim that isn't related to behavior or that can't be tested. That would include: Jesus as the Savior of mankind, baptism as a vehicle of forgiveness, God having a body of flesh and blood, etc. Although it may be okay to interpret “belief” as “faith,” we should not confuse the opposite of belief (doubt) with the opposite of faith (distrust, nihilism). When an emotionally distraught person says, “I doubt (and I feel guilty about doubting),” we talk about living by faith. Doubt and faith go together like hunger and food. Hunger drives the search for food, and doubt can drive the search for new understanding.

5. As Francis Lee Menlove has so eloquently written [*Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 1 (spring 1996), 44–53], almost every LDS person experiences religious uncertainties, questions, and doubts of varying intensities—admitted or not. Our agency requires us to make continual choices. The “veil” suggests that we will rarely have complete information to be certain that any given religious issue is correct. A person who fails to tune into his or her awareness, and who represses the natural urge to question in order to maintain an image of absolute

certainty, may settle for the appearance of being a true believer rather than for its actuality. In those unable to acknowledge and manage doubts, individual conscience and the weight of authority may come into conflict. One or the other might be denied for the sake of emotional stability. Unfortunately, the denial of either is not desirable. Denial of conscience can create unthinking robots. Denial of authority inevitably results in inactivity and the loss of church blessings.

6. If we should ask, “How do you know these things are true?” the Group 1 member will likely respond, “Because I've prayed about it and the Holy Ghost has manifested the truth of these things to me.” (Source: The voice of authority.) This manifestation is sometimes described as a “burning” and a “feeling that it is right,” something suggested in Doctrine & Covenants 9:8: “But, behold, I say unto you, that you must study it out in your mind; then you must ask me if it be right, and if it is right I will cause that your bosom shall burn within you; therefore, you shall feel that it is right.” According to Moroni 10:4, a testimony of the truthfulness of the Book of Mormon can be obtained, as follows: “And when ye shall receive these things, I would 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.” This scripture contains a powerful (but conditional) divine promise and makes the LDS Church unique among Christian churches. However, one of the caveats listed in Moroni 10:4 is “having faith in Christ.” This makes a lot of sense if we use the definition of faith as noted above.

7. *U.S. Senate Document 486 (59th Congress, 1st Session) Proceedings Before the Committee on Privileges and Elections of the United States Senate in the Matter of the Protests Against the Right of Hon. Reed Smoot, a Senator from the State of Utah, to hold his Seat*, 4 vols. (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906): 97–98.)

8. Andrew F. Ehat and Lyndon W. Cook, *The Words of Joseph Smith* (Salt Lake City: Deseret Book Co., 1980): 183–84.

9. Open and ongoing discussions of religious issues and evidences will likely change a person's levels of belief, knowledge, and testimony. As these vary, commitment to faith can remain constant, but a person's exercise of faith will likely vary inversely with levels of belief and testimony. So we should avoid such faith-damaging activities or statements as: “The Church is not true.” “There is no God.” “The Book of Mormon is not of God.” “Joseph Smith was not a prophet.”

Please send me any of your thoughts, experiences, or tales from life in the Borderlands.

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Photography by Steve Mayfield

SCENES FROM A SYMPOSIUM



FAITH SEEKING UNDERSTANDING

*2003 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium
13–16 August, Salt Lake Sheraton City Centre Hotel*

This year's Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium was a great success. Attendance was strong once more, with many speakers and sessions attracting considerable media coverage.

But surely the symposium's most gratifying feature was the respect, good will, and intelligence exhibited by the speakers and audience members. Many of those who attended commented afterward about the optimism they felt, how the spirit of the symposium had helped them feel renewed and hopeful as they continue to strive to create a more affirming and comfortable spiritual home within Mormonism.

Next year's symposium will be held at the Sheraton again, 11–14 August 2004.
Plan now to attend!

- 1—Van Hale contends critics have unrealistic expectations for Book of Mormon historicity.
- 2—Bill Russell compares doctrines and practices of the Community of Christ and the LDS Church.
- 3—Paul Toscano makes a point during the question and answer period following the "What Exactly Is an Anti-Mormon?" panel.
- 4—Keith Hamilton, Bill Bradshaw, and Rob Foster chat during a reception for Martin Luther King III.
- 5—Nadine Hansen critiques Jon Krakauer's new book, *Under the Banner of Heaven*.
- 6—The panel for the session, "The Love Affair of Body and Soul."
- 7—Martin Luther King III following his meeting with reporters.
- 8—Salt Lake City Mayor Rocky Anderson greets an animated constituent following the panel discussion about the Main Street Plaza.
- 9—Robert Kirby during his closing banquet remarks which frequently led to bursts of hysterical laughter as well as a great deal of thoughtful reflection.
- 10—A capacity crowd listens to members of the "September Six" share highlights of their faith journeys of the past ten years.
- 11—Holly Welker, during the panel, "Invited but Not Welcome," shares reflections on her experiences as a sister missionary

Sunstone was pleased to welcome Mr. Martin Luther King III to the 2003 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium as the inaugural Smith-Pettit lecturer. While in town, Mr. King met with television and print reporters, including *SUNSTONE*. The following is taken from that interview session.

WHAT I DO know about the Mormon tradition, overall, is that there has not been what I would call a "spirit of inclusion." It's better than it was, but the Church still has a long way to go. Part of my objective on this visit is to share this perspective, which is really the essence of the dream my father talked about—inclusion of all people of this nation and world. While we've made strides, today when we look at where poor people are in America, there seems to be a large and growing number of persons living in poverty. . . . Now we are all obviously very concerned about terrorism. But the best homeland security we could have would be to ensure that all the people of America have security by being able to work so they can provide for themselves and their families. Currently, that has not been an objective at the national level, and it obviously has not trickled down to the

state and local level. . . .

The [Church's] granting African-Americans the priesthood was a milestone; that was progress. It's very sad, however, that in the doctrine today—at least as it would be perceived by those of us who are people of color—there is still divisiveness. Any time you go back and start justifying a tradition according to whether people were born under this lineage or that lineage, it creates divisiveness, and it creates a spirit of exclusion. While today perhaps there has been some relief, I don't think it's anywhere near where it needs to be in 2003.

Those of us who claim to be men and women of God have a special responsibility that I don't think we're adhering to. Certainly this institution is doing good work, perhaps saving souls. But you can't save souls if you're doing things that are hostile to a segment of the community. And . . . although in 1978, there was great progress made, there still is a doctrine [having an effect on] the overall grassroots community. This philosophy is still being talked about, and books are out there that foster what is essentially "racism." That's not productive, and that does not help the cause.



SYMPOSIUM EXCERPTS

MY STAKE PRESIDENT said, “You need to come and see me.” So I went down to his office, and he was very formal and official. I sat on one side of the desk and he on another. He said, “You wrote a column several months ago in which you said you could beat up President Gordon B. Hinckley.” And I said, “Yeah, I know—I can.”

... He said, “Be that as it may, don’t you think that’s a little irreverent?” And I said, “Well, maybe a little.” He explained to me why he thought it was a little over the edge and told me he had a letter from one of the General Authorities asking him to talk with me to see if they could get me to tone it down a little bit. I said, “Well, it’s entirely possible that I went over the edge, and I’ll try to be a little more careful in the future.”

So I went home, and I wrote President Hinckley a letter of apology. I said,

Dear President Hinckley, I’m sorry I said I could beat you up. In my defense, I did not say that I *wanted* to; I was simply trying to be funny, and I hope you understand it’s the nature of my job to do this sort of thing. However, if you were upset or offended, I do apologize, and I’ll try and do a little better in the future.

P.S.: I still think I can beat up the Pope.

I sent that letter off and figured that

would be the end of it, because the magic involved in making fun of religious leaders is that when you apologize, they have to forgive you.

But a couple of weeks later, I went out to my mailbox, and there was a letter from the Office of the First Presidency. I didn’t even have to open it to believe that I was in serious trouble. I just stood there by the mailbox, and I looked at it for an hour, and I couldn’t shake the thought that, “Crap, I’m going to Africa.” It had happened just like that before.

I finally opened the letter, and it was actually a note from one of President Hinckley’s secretaries. He said, “I’ve discussed the matter with the President. He wishes me to assure you that he is not offended. Good luck, have fun.” So now when I get called in, I take this letter with me.

—ROBERT KIRBY

The Crazy Wisdom of a Holy Fool—#391

CONTRARY TO ALL the media reporting, conflict is not the favorite pastime at the First Unitarian Church. But we may play into Lenny Bruce’s indictment of liberals, when he said that, “Liberals can understand everything, except those who don’t understand liberals.” It’s my hope that we can further the understanding of one another.

I’ll tell you one thing I find fascinating about Unitarianism in Utah. There are barely enough Unitarians in the whole state to fill but two Mormon wards. And yet, somehow we have become a household name synonymous with either divisiveness or courage—depending not so much on your religion or

politics, but on how you view how the Bill of Rights pertains to life in a city dominated by one religious culture. . . .

It’s time for Utah to move on from its romanticized pioneer past to the fresh reality of Utah in the twenty-first century. We are blessed with a rich diversity here—a diversity of people and cultures and ideas. It’s time to move on [to a time] when we can conduct secular business in this town with or without the blessing of the dominant church. It’s time to move on to where bringing Utah into mainstream American life is not confused with Mormon persecution. Nobody is being persecuted—we’re just trying to follow the dictates of the constitution and obey the courts of the land.

One thing I want to make absolutely crystal clear today: Unitarians and the street preachers, the street preachers who infiltrate the Main Street Plaza, are light years apart in religion, politics, and civility. We have absolutely nothing to do with those who spew ugly hatred in the name of Jesus. Furthermore, the Unitarians, who have been in this valley since 1891, have never once, and still today, had any desire to protest the Mormon faith.

—REVEREND TOM GOLDSMITH

The Main Street Plaza—#231

HOW DID MY loved ones see my choice to join the LDS Church? I was disowned, totally and fully. It was a complete cut-off for a long period of time. It wasn’t until after my mission that the heart of the person who raised me was softened. I had been raised by my great-aunt and my great-uncle from the time I was young until I was about fourteen. My great uncle was a Baptist deacon, and he did not like the LDS Church. When I left on my mission, he said, “That’s it. I just can’t deal with you at all.”

He got sick, and so he went to the hospital to get treated. It’s funny how God works, because my uncle’s in a rural town in North Carolina which is probably about .01 percent LDS—the rest are Baptists. But his nurse happened to be an LDS lady who began to talk with him about the mission and how a mission works and what changes were happening in my life. Therefore, he became not converted to the LDS Church, but his heart softened, and he was able to accept me after I came home from my mission.

Concerning the lack of representation in the LDS Church for blacks—that will change. I hope you know that and understand that and see that. It will not be long. There are many blacks who are capable of leading. It

F. Ross Peterson and John Sillito connect following a session





NEW TRADITIONS

THIS YEAR'S SYMPOSIUM featured several new and relatively new opportunities for attendees. Besides the customary Thursday through Friday paper and panel sessions, for the second consecutive year Sunstone hosted workshops on Wednesday, before the opening plenary session that night. This year, teachers Phyllis Barber, Richard Dutcher, Michael J. Stevens, and Sunstone's publisher, William Stanford, gave instruction on topics as diverse as writing one's own life story, Mormon filmmaking and storytelling, exercising leadership through people skills, and turning one's creative hobby into a home-based business to use as a tax shelter. Sunstone was also grateful to have Gil Bailie, a renowned expert on the interplay between violence and religion, teach a full-day workshop. Mr. Bailie's visit was sponsored by Mack Stirling, a long-time Sunstone friend and Bailie supporter. Thank you, Mack! (If anyone would like to sponsor a speaker or workshop instructor for next year's symposium, please contact us!)

THIS YEAR ALSO marked the inaugural Smith-Pettit lecture—a lecture series underwritten by the Smith-Pettit Foundation and other wonderful donors. Thanks to this sponsorship, Sunstone will each year be able to bring in a nationally known non-LDS speaker to open

the symposium. This year's Smith-Pettit lecturer was Martin Luther King III.

SUNSTONE IS ALSO pleased with the first-year results of a new effort to attract more young people to the symposium. Fifty people took advantage of this year's offer of free registration to students, scholarships which were generously underwritten by several supporters. Please consider making a directed donation to Sunstone student scholarship. We'd love to make free registration a tradition!

Phyllis Barber



Gil Bailie



Richard Dutcher



will be a very short time period before you will see more blacks in the Seventy—it has already happened, and it will happen in the future. Because the Lord does not call people by race, he calls them by the intents of their heart, and there are many African-Americans in the Church whose hearts are right, and they will be seventies and, someday, apostles and prophets here upon the earth before the Savior comes.

—ROB FOSTER

*LDS Black Experience Panel II: The Leap of Faith:
Personal, Cultural, Social—#272*

THE QUESTION I set out to answer [in *Red Water*] was: "How do you get good men to commit such terrible evil?" I think there are three things you have to do. The first thing you do—and think of this carefully in the world we live in now, because I'm really talking about fear and revenge and what people do in the name of God—is to elicit from people perfect obedience. *Perfect* obedience. The second thing you need to do is make them feel that they are threatened and that their way of life is threatened. In other words, you crank up the fear and you make them think, "It's them or us." The third thing you need to do is make them believe they are doing God's will. That what they are doing has a higher purpose

than what anyone else is doing. If you can do those three things, if you can extract from people perfect obedience, whether that's to a notion of whatever country, God, family, or clan; if you can instill fear; and if you can make people believe that God is on their side, you can get them to do anything. I'm convinced of that.

—JUDITH FREEMAN

Claimed by a Rush of Red Water—#351

ISEE THE Church now as being in an awkward teenage phase. It's survived its infancy and childhood when it thought it was the most important kid on the block and could do anything. It's almost out of the junior high, "All the other kids are picking on me all the time" phase. Now it's getting to the growing pains of adolescence. It's grappling with [emotions] such as:

- "I have to fit into the right crowd so nobody thinks I'm too weird."
- "Every six months, I outgrow all my clothes and I need something new."
- "I want to be my own person but can only define myself by what my parents are not."
- "There's so much going on inside of me that I haven't had time to

process it all and think about it, so I'm ruled by my emotions and I'm trying to control those emotions by manipulating my environment, even if that means I have to exclude everyone else from my thought process."

Eventually though, the Church will outgrow its teenage angst—we all have. The Church will be able to get off of its emotional teenage rollercoaster and look at life from the adult side. I think we will know when that happens because the messages coming from headquarters will sound different than they do now. . . . When we stop hearing defensive public relations stances, that will be a sign of our church's maturity. When Church history doesn't need to be faith-promoting to be valuable, that will be a sign of acceptance of ourselves. When our focus changes from easily measured statistics and numbers to the more nebulous and difficult task of addressing the real needs of investigators, members, and neighbors, we'll know that we're truly being Christians. And when we don't have to worry about whether the rest of the world thinks we're Christians, then we'll know that we are saints and worthy to be called such.

—LAURA HANSEN

Where Have All The Children Gone?—#173



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UPDATE

CONFERENCE SPEAKERS DENOUNCE IMMORALITY IN THE MEDIA

THE DANGERS OF television, movies, and the Internet were a recurrent theme in the October 2003 General Conference. "What comes out of Hollywood, off the Internet, and in much of today's music creates a web of decadence that can trap our children and endanger all of us," said Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve during the Saturday morning session. Ballard counseled Latter-day Saints to "speak out and join with many other concerned people in opposition to the offensive, destructive, and mean-spirited media influence that is sweeping over the earth."

Ballard's message was echoed by Elder Quentin L. Cook of the First Quorum of Seventy. "We are bombarded with visual images of violence and immorality," decried Cook. "There has been a coarsening of dialogue and increased exposure to that which is base and vulgar."

President Boyd K. Packer denounced the dangers of the Internet. "To [Satan], the Internet is . . . a net to ensnare you into a wicked addiction with pornography," he said. "Unhappiness will follow."

Referring to immorality in TV, President Gordon B. Hinckley praised the Church-owned TV station KSL for refusing to air a program "of salacious nature." This was apparently a reference to the NBC sitcom, *Coupling*, which focuses on the sex lives of six friends.



NBC's "salacious" new sitcom, *Coupling*

AT CONFERENCE TIME, TEMPLE SQUARE BECOMES BATTLE GROUND

EVEN THOUGH HECKLERS and protesters did not tread on the Church-owned LDS Plaza, Temple Square clashes resulted



NEWS ITEM: STREET PREACHERS TO BE ON MAIN ST. PLAZA DURING LDS CONFERENCE.

in two arrests during General Conference—and those arrested were on the Mormon side.

In one incident, a man was arrested after allegedly assaulting street preacher Devin Allen. Allen was apparently sneezing into an LDS temple garment, carrying it around his neck, and placing it on his buttocks in front of the conference-going crowd. About half an hour later, a second man grabbed a garment from street preacher Lonnie Pursifull, who was waving the sacred clothing in the air. The man was cited and released.

Some local residents, including some who are not LDS, went to Temple Square specifically to protest the protesters. Some took a low-key approach, such as the Church member who stood with a sign reading, "Joseph Smith was a prophet and a martyr," or the group who sought to muffle the preachers' yelling by standing nearby and signing LDS hymns. Others, such as Josh Peters, took a more light-hearted tactic, standing between two of the street preachers with a sign with arrows pointing at the zealots that read, "I'm with stupid." Another protester against the preachers shouted and carried a sign that read, "I'm loud, so I must be right!"



Preacher protester Josh Peters stands next to Lonnie Pursifull with an "I'm with stupid" sign.

CHURCH TO REDEVELOP DOWNTOWN SALT LAKE

IN A PROJECT that will cost "hundreds of millions of dollars," LDS officials have unveiled a plan to redevelop entire blocks of downtown Salt Lake. The Church, which recently purchased the Crossroads Plaza mall, will redevelop it, adding two upscale residential towers to the two blocks where it and the ZCMI mall now are. LDS Business College and the Salt Lake extension of Brigham Young University will be relocated to a spot on South Temple Street which is now a parking lot but which was the site of the medals plaza for the 2002 Olympic Winter Games.

Few details were revealed regarding the new downtown colleges, but Presiding Bishop H. David Burton said in a press conference that the project is intended to revitalize not only downtown Salt Lake, but also the whole corridor between Temple Square and the Gateway Plaza, which is located to the west.

Bishop Burton declined to say whether the Crossroads mall will join the ZCMI Center mall in closing on Sundays, or whether prospective commercial tenants, such as restaurants, will be permitted to sell alcoholic beverages. Burton emphasized that no tithing funds will be used for any of the redevelopment projects.

LDS LEADERS RESPOND TO LEGISLATION CONCERNING SAME-SEX UNIONS

IS THE CONSTITUTION HANGING BY A THREAD?



Elder M. Russell Ballard

ONLY DAYS AFTER the U.S. Supreme Court decriminalized sodomy and Canada legalized same-sex marriage, LDS leaders, members, and lawmakers vigorously reaffirmed their opposition to same-sex unions.

“The family continues to be assaulted relentlessly through the world,” said Apostle M. Russell Ballard at a BYU Education Week devotional address. “Gender is being confused, and gender roles are being repudiated. Same-gender marriage is being promoted in direct opposition to God’s primary purpose for His children to experience mortality.” He added, “When Satan wants to disrupt the work of the Lord, he doesn’t send a plague of laryngitis to afflict the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. He doesn’t legislate against green Jell-O or casseroles. When Satan truly wants to disrupt the work of the Lord, he attempts to confuse gender and attack God’s plan for His spirit children.”

Also speaking at Education Week, BYU professor Brett Latimer compared the battle over gay marriage to the fight over slavery, which in the nineteenth century divided families and splintered churches. “We’ve survived these things before,” said Latimer, “but we’ve never had one this dramatic. This is bigger than the Civil War issue. This is about whether or not there is truth at all.”

Shortly after the U.S. Supreme Court’s decision concerning sodomy, LDS Senator Orrin Hatch stated that a constitutional amendment might be necessary to ensure that homosexual marriage remains illegal. “I favor a constitutional amendment that basically establishes marriage as a family institution between a male and a female,” Hatch told the *Deseret News*, “so that we can continue to preserve our families and not get families mixed up with politics.” Richard G. Wilkins, managing director of BYU’s World Family Policy Center, has also argued the need for such an amendment.

Elder LaMar Sleight, director of the Church’s office of governmental affairs in Washington, D.C., has given several mem-

bers of Congress a document reaffirming the Church’s position against same-sex marriage which quotes a 1999 statement by President Gordon B. Hinckley: “God-sanctioned marriage between a man and a woman has been the basis of civilization for thousands of years. There is no justification to redefine what marriage is. Such is not our right, and those who try will find themselves answerable to God” (*Ensign* [Nov. 1999], 54).

GAY MORMONS RESPOND

TWO WEEKS AFTER Elder Ballard’s BYU speech, the executive committee of Affirmation: Gay and Lesbian Mormons, declared that gay Mormons are “embarrassed and saddened” by Ballard’s remarks.



Scott MacKay, Darran Holman, and Olin Thomas, executive committee, Affirmation

“It is difficult to understand how LDS leaders, who in the past have been so persecuted and excluded for practicing an alternative family model, could be now so invested in condemning and making illegal another alternative family model,” reads a statement published in the *Salt Lake Tribune* and on the organization’s website.

“Elder Ballard and other LDS leaders view the prospect of same-sex unions as nothing short of apocalyptic. But many of us are already living with same-sex partners, raising children, and providing for our families—and we have been doing it for many years. The sky has not yet fallen!”

Mormon historian D. Michael Quinn, who has studied the LDS involvement in the fight against same-sex marriage, finds similarities between the kind of discrimination Church leaders once practiced against blacks and the current campaign to deny gays the right to marriage. “It takes a peculiar kind of blindness to currently affirm that [discrimination against blacks] was ethically and morally wrong, yet argue that it is now ethically and civilly right to discriminate against [homosexuals]” (*Dialogue* 33, no. 3 [Fall 2000], 48).

The photo at right is taken from the Church’s official website, <lds.org>, and shows the new development highlighted in white. The photo is taken from the north, looking south (note Church Office Building in center foreground and Temple Square in right foreground)



People

DIED. LDS actor **Gordon Jump**, of pulmonary fibrosis, in Los Angeles. Jump is best known for his TV role as the station manager Arthur Carlson on the sitcom “WKRP in Cincinnati” (1978–82) and for his role as the repairman, “Ol’ Lonely,” in Maytag appliance commercials (1989–2003).



CONGRATULATED. **Elder David B. Haight** of the Quorum of the Twelve, for turning 97 and becoming the oldest apostle ever. Elder Haight has outlived President David O. McKay and Elder LeGrand Richards, both of whom died at age 96, and Presidents Joseph Fielding Smith and Ezra Taft Benson, who died at age 95 and 94, respectively. Elder Haight became an apostle at age 69.

IMPRISONED AND TORTURED. **Ghollam Nikbin**, an Iranian-born Mormon, for his conversion to Mormonism. As Nikbin was trying to leave Iran in 1995, officials found his LDS baptismal certificate and imprisoned him. During his three-and-a-half years incarceration, he was beaten, tortured, and forcibly drugged. Nikbin has now filed a complaint in the U.S. District Court in Washington, D.C. Under Iranian law, leaving the Islamic faith is a crime.

SENTENCED. BYU student and MTC employee **Paul William Turner**, for up to fifteen years in prison, after making three unsuccessful attempts to kill his pregnant wife. Turner baked rat poison into cookies, used supposedly deadly mushrooms in his wife’s spaghetti, and replaced her blood-clotting medicine with fish-tank cleaner. Turner, who turned himself in after confessing to his bishop, told the police he was addicted to pornography and that marriage was preventing him from living the lifestyle he wanted.



NOMINATED. LDS Utah Governor **Michael O. Leavitt**, to head the Environmental Protection Agency. Leavitt must first be confirmed by the Senate Committee on Environment and Public Works, where he could be hurt by his own record on environmental issues. Mormons for

Equality and Social Justice (MESJ) is one group opposing the confirmation. “We are deeply concerned about [Leavitt’s]

commitment to protecting natural resources,” states the group in a letter to the Committee, “and we therefore believe he is not the right person to head the EPA.”

SURPRISED. Long-time White House correspondent, **Helen Thomas** during a recent speech on the BYU campus. After audience applause unexpectedly greeted her statement that President George W. Bush is “more conservative than any president I’ve ever covered,” a flustered Thomas asked, “Am I in enemy territory?”



FEATURED. The art of President Boyd K. Packer. Packer is known as a World War II pilot, an educator, and acting President of the Quorum of the Twelve. Now the Museum of Church History and Art is highlighting a lesser-known facet of the Church leader: he is also an amateur artist. According to a *Church News* story, a new exhibit, entitled “Boyd K. Packer: The Lifework of

an Amateur Artist,” celebrates seventy years of paintings, drawings, and wood carvings by the apostle, who has been creating art since age nine. In his 1942 Box Elder High School yearbook, President Packer wrote that his ambition was “to be an artist.”

The exhibit, which will run through 6 September 2004, can be previewed at the Museum’s website, <www.lds.org/museum>. The site includes a lavish, high-tech presentation which allow some of President Packer’s carvings to be rotated and displayed as three-dimensional objects.



DISAPPOINTED. The **Primary children** of the Pasadena California Stake, after stake leaders decided to cancel their annual Halloween Trick or Treat activity. According to local sources, the stake president finds the activity inappropriate because of its connection to a pagan holiday. The latest edition of the Church Handbook of Instructions says nothing either favoring or against Halloween activities.

SAMOA TEMPLE GOES UP IN FLAMES



AS A PROJECT to renovate and expand the Apia Samoa Temple was underway, the shingle-roofed edifice caught fire and burned. Three firefighting crews and a hundred volun-

teers worked for three hours to quench the flames, which destroyed everything except the exterior walls and the Angel Moroni statue. One week after the fire, the First Presidency announced plans to rebuild the temple utilizing a more up-to-date design which includes more than 16,000 square feet of space and a fire-sprinkling system. The new building will take six months to plan and two years to build.

Other temples damaged in the past include the Nauvoo Temple, destroyed by an arsonist in 1848; the St. George

Temple, damaged by lightning in 1878; and the Logan Temple, damaged by fire in 1917.

CHURCH LEADERS: FIRING SQUAD CAN GO

AS THE STATE of Utah explores the possibility of eliminating the firing squad as an optional method of execution, Church spokesperson Dale Bills says LDS officials have prepared and delivered a statement to the Utah Sentencing Commission clarifying that the Church “has no objection to the elimination of the firing squad.” The commission had requested the statement in order to clear up some potential questions among legislators. According to the early LDS doctrine of blood atonement, murderers must shed their own blood in order to atone for their grievous sin.

Utah is the only state where death-row inmates can choose to die by firing squad. If the firing squad choice is eliminated, death by lethal injection will be the only execution option.

Solar Flares

BYU cracks down on bare bottoms. BYU’s *Daily Universe* regularly carries a weekly insert called *Sports Illustrated on Campus*, but the 30 September issue of the insert never made it to the campus stands. The culprit: an article entitled “Yesterday’s Nudes,” which includes a picture of some Princeton students that shows their bare bottoms as they are running *au naturel* during the university’s traditional Nude Olympics. “We couldn’t run the article unless I tore out 18,500 copies of that picture,” said Casey Stauffer, advertising manager at *The Daily Universe*.

The Utah Chronicle, which serves the University of Utah, carried the insert without objection. “While [the BYU] action may seem extreme, . . . it really isn’t surprising,” observes the 26 September *Utah Chronicle* editorial.



Above: *The 30 September issue of Sports Illustrated on Campus;*
Above right: *The offending photograph*

In 1998, authors Bryan Waterman and Brian Kagel referred to censorship scandals as “a perennial feature of BYU life” (*The Lord’s University: Freedom and Authority at BYU*, Signature Books, 1998).

Simon says leave his F-bombs alone. The Grove Theater of Pleasant Grove, Utah, was forced to cancel the performance of Neil Simon’s play *Rumors* after the copyright holders were notified that the producers had removed some instances of the f-word and other profanity from the script.

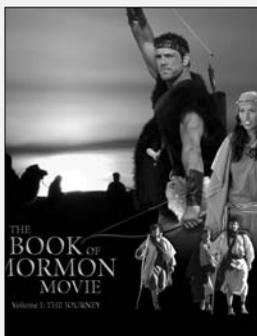
“[Simon] does not allow changes to his scripts under any circumstances,” said attorney Melody Fernandez. “He understands that many communities may not be accepting of certain language situations that may take place in his scripts, therefore he asks that, instead of making unauthorized changes, groups do not produce his play.”

“I know my audience,” explained theater owner Gayliene Omary. “Can you imagine, the f-word flying around Pleasant Grove? It would be havoc. Nobody would come.”

Nephi, Harry Potter, Shania go up in flames. Shouting “Hallelujah” and “Burn, devil, burn,” some fifty members of the Jesus Non-denominational Church in Greenville, Michigan, gathered outside their church to burn copies of the Book of Mormon, non-King James versions of the Bible, and Harry Potter novels. Other incinerated items included Shania Twain’s album *The Woman in Me* and the Dan Aykroyd movie *Coneheads*.

According to an AP story, the church’s bishop, the Rev. T. D. Turner Sr., said that the congregation “will burn Harry Potter books and other witchcraft items to let the world know that there are true followers of Christ who will not call evil good.”

Celluloid Watch



Of Good Report . . . or Box Office Bomb? The much-anticipated *Book of Mormon Movie: Volume 1, The Journey* has finally hit the silver screen, and no critic seems to find much in it that is of good report or praiseworthy. “It’s so slowly paced, so flat-footed, that it fails to engage on any level,” wrote Jeff Vice for the *Deseret Morning News*. “The movie . . . is a poor one,” agrees Sean P. Means

at the *Salt Lake Tribune*. “A plodding, repetitive, ham-fisted attempt to create a *Ten Commandments*-style epic without the resources or bravado required to pull it off.” “Some people in the theater seemed genuinely moved,” wrote Jerry Johnson more forgivingly for the *Deseret Morning News*, “while others spent the evening shaking their heads or yawning.”

The filmmakers had higher hopes for the project. “We hope that many people not of our faith will see the movie and leave with a desire to read the book,” explains the movie website at <www.bookofmormonmovie.com>. “To help with this missionary effort, we are prepared to give 125 FREE tickets for every 1,000 pre-purchased in your area. These tickets are to be used for non-members or less-active members. Think of the impact this could create!”

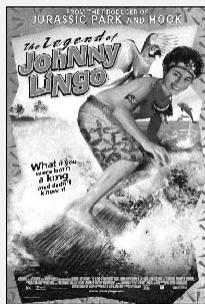
Even though the project was not funded by the Church, the best publicity for the film may have come from the *Church News*, which, in a rare move, published a story on the making of the movie. The two-column article describes the “miracle” of technology which allowed the producers to complete this project with a budget of merely \$1.5 million.

The 120-minute movie is one of two multi-volume Book of Mormon projects currently in production. The competing project, Peter Johnson’s *A Voice from the Dust*, began shooting last summer.

Johnny Lingo—How Many Cows Would You Pay for This Flick?

Film director Steven Ramirez might not be a Tarantino or a Fellini, but who cares? The campiest of all BYU movies is back—and this time, as a full-length feature intended for LDS and non-LDS audiences alike. Rated G, *The Legend of Johnny Lingo* is an family-oriented film focusing on the adventures of young Tama, whose misfortunes as a young boy turn out to have something of a Dickensian twist.

Producer John Garbett is the son-in-law of Claire Whitaker Peterson, who under the name of Orma W. Wallengren, wrote the script for the original BYU film. The script is based on a story by Patricia McGerr that first appeared in *Woman’s Day*. Over the years, the story has become a worldwide Christian classic. McGerr, who is better known as a writer of mystery novels, died in 1985.



The film has met mixed responses from critics. Sean P. Means, of the *Salt Lake Tribune*, writes: “Gorgeously shot and unapologetically wholesome, *The Legend of Johnny Lingo* manages to overcome its weaknesses—and its ancestry as a famous cornball BYU-produced short—with gentle humor and sweetness.” Jeff Vice of the *Deseret Morning News* was not as kind: [The film] is so poorly constructed that at times it feels like a series of barely connected skits, only some of which work. At other times, it feels like a 90-minute infomercial for a certain Tahitian juice product.”

David DiCerto of the *Catholic News Service* focused his review of the film’s themes: “In our spiritually malnourished world, when young viewers are fed a steady diet of debasement, *Johnny Lingo*’s message, that something very special resides in each of us, is a welcome change of fare, one consistent with our Christian belief in the singular sacredness of every person.”



Mormon Pamphlet Made into Indefensible Movie.

“What would it be like to defend your religion in court?” So begins the press description for the just-released feature film the *Day of Defense*. Loosely based on the best-selling LDS pamphlet by A. Melvin McDonald, the film tells the story of two Mormon missionaries who come into a small, midwestern town “that is a God fearing, family oriented,

Christian believing utopia” and who are arrested and then must defend Mormonism as Christian.

Leaving theology aside, *Day of Defense* has left Sean P. Means—who in his role as chief film reviewer for the *Salt Lake Tribune* has had the opportunity to review nearly every new Mormon feature film—wondering if the decision to film this story can even be defended. His final take: “This windy entry in the Mormon cinema genre delivers its message with all the heavy-handedness of a Jack Webb anti-communist propaganda film, handicapped by stilted dialogue, wooden acting, shoddy cinematography, and an oppressive power-ballad soundtrack. Even the faithful may find it a long row to hoe.”

Elizabeth Smart Movie to Air in November.

The story of Elizabeth Smart, the Salt Lake City teenager who was abducted in 2002 and recovered nine months later, has been made into a movie. *The Elizabeth Smart Story* will air in November on CBS. According to executive producer Patricia Clifford, “[The Smarts] were interested in telling a story of hope and inspiration and faith.”

The Smart family is LDS. According to some sources, alleged abductor Brian Mitchell kidnapped Elizabeth in order to fulfill a revelation commanding him to take plural wives. (See related story, this issue, page 34.)



LDS LAWYERS PULL THE PLUG ON ANTI-MORMON SITE

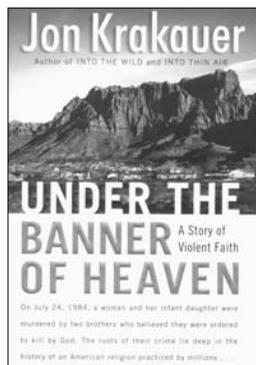
DOES THE CHURCH of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints have exclusive rights to the word, “Mormons”? According to a German judge, it does. A Frankfurt court of appeals has sided with lawyers for the Church who had filed a 174-page complaint against Gunar Werner. Werner owned the Internet domain <www.mormonen.de> which he used to discredit the Church. *Mormonen* is the German word for “Mormons.”

Werner finds it ironic that the Church could be so protective of what it itself has declared to be no more than a nickname. In court, he also pointed out that several denominations believe in the Book of Mormon and therefore the name “Mormon” collectively refers to all of them.

Werner, who spent \$10,000 in attorney fees, has since transferred his webpages to another site, <www.mormonmentum.de> (*Mormonmentum* means “Mormondom”). Rather than using the <www.mormonen.de> domain to shed a positive light on Mormonism, or redirecting to an official site, LDS officials have opted to keep the domain closed.

In the past several years, Church lawyers have sued an Internet filtering company over ownership of the domain <lds.net> and have questioned the same firm for using the domain <mormonvillage.com>. A recent SUNSTONE article argues that lawsuits of this nature highlight official anxieties for control of what is ultimately an open space (SUNSTONE, Dec. 2002, 36–46).

BOOK ON MORMON VIOLENCE CREATES CONTROVERSY, PROMPTS RESPONSES



IS MORMON FUNDAMENTALISM violent? The answer seems to be a resounding “yes” for best-selling author Jon Krakauer, whose controversial new book, *Under the Banner of Heaven: A Story of Violent Faith* was released by Doubleday in late July. The book quickly rose to number 1 on the *New York Times* bestsellers list and received wide attention from both national and Utah media.

Juxtaposing violent episodes from Mormon history, such as the Mountain Meadows Massacre, with more recent crimes involving Mormon fundamentalists, Krakauer tells the story of polygamists Dan and Ron Lafferty, who in 1984 received a revelation that prompted them to murder their sister-in-law, Brenda Lafferty, and her baby daughter, Erica. Dan Lafferty is currently serving a life sentence, and his brother Ron is on death row.

In an unusual move, LDS officials issued a statement criticizing Krakauer’s book two weeks before it hit the bookstores. The Church’s director of media relations, Mike Otterson, declared that Krakauer had been heavily influenced by “historians who are unsympathetic to the Church.” “This book is an attempt to tell the story of the so-called fundamentalists or

polygamous groups in Utah,” wrote Otterson, “and to tie their beliefs to the doctrines and the history of the Church. The result is a full frontal assault on the veracity of the modern Church.”

Krakauer, who visited Utah during a book-signing tour, confessed he was surprised by the strong negative reaction his book had received from LDS officials. “My book is really an inquiry into the nature of belief,” said Krakauer in a downtown Salt Lake theater packed to capacity. “It’s not an attack on belief. It certainly is not an attack on Mormons.”

The 2003 Salt Lake Sunstone Symposium featured a four-person panel who reviewed the Krakauer book (tape SL03–316). Despite the book’s “inaccuracies, biased language, and over-reliance on Fawn Brodie’s biography of Joseph Smith,” lawyer Nadine Hansen opined that “it is not anti-Mormon to explain the Mormon roots of Lafferty’s violence.” According to Hansen, “The simple, if uncomfortable, fact is that there was violence in early Mormonism, and a church that set the stage for the wholesale murder of the 120 men, women, and children [as in the Mountain Meadows Massacre], with teachings about blood atonement and an oath of vengeance, can hardly claim to be a bastion of pacifism.”

Panelist Jana Bouck Remy, book review editor for *Irreantum*, took issue with Krakauer’s telling of the Mormon story in which he invariably “chooses the events that show Mormonism as absurd, as dark, as violent. . . . Readers will see Krakauer’s selective history as just that, as a means of supporting his thesis rather than as a true measure of the Church.” Yet despite these dubious characteristics, Remy finds many of the questions Krakauer raises to be salient and worthy of reflection for all Latter-day Saints, for instance, “Where would we draw the line at following the promptings of the Spirit?”

Fundamentalist Mormon Anne Wilde declared that Krakauer’s book has done “a real disservice to both the LDS Church and the fundamentalist Mormons.” “There are going to be a lot of people [for whom] this is the only book they read on Mormons or fundamentalist Mormons,” said Wilde, “and they are going to come to an easy conclusion that there’s more than a fair share of violence and eccentric people in those communities. I think that’s a shame, because there’s so much good in both [Mormon fundamentalism and the LDS Church].”

Forensic psychiatrist C. Jess Groesbeck, who examined Ron Lafferty after the murders, opined that Ron Lafferty’s violence stems mainly from family dynamics and not religious affiliation, with Ron acting out the domestic violence he had seen his father perpetrate. “We do have all the covering of the religious issues, of course,” said Groesbeck. “But the origin of the violence of the Laffertys was in the family system.”

A separate panel on the book was held at the 2003 Sunstone Northwest Symposium (tape NW03–316).



Jon Krakauer at a Salt Lake City book signing

AN OLIVE LEAF

VESSELS OF HONOR

By Dean L. May

DEAN L. MAY passed away unexpectedly on 6 May 2003. Dean will always be remembered for his commitment to excellence as a historian and his steadfast faithfulness as a Latter-day Saint. The following is excerpted from a longer essay, "Thoughts on Faith and History," first published in *SUNSTONE* Vol. 3, No. 6 (Sept.–Oct. 1978): 35–36. See page 6 of this issue for a tribute to Dean.

AN ACQUAINTANCE OF MINE, completing her first reading of Leonard J. Arrington's *Great Basin Kingdom*, commented to me that the book had been a trial to her faith. "Almost every enterprise they began," she said, "failed."

It was not immediately obvious to me how her question could best be answered, for in reviewing the series of attempts by Church leaders to force industrialization in the 1850s, one had to conclude that ambitious plans in many instances went awry. It was not until several months after I began working at the Historical Department of the Church that a fully satisfying answer to her question began to dawn upon me. A direct response to her concern had been written by Erastus Snow, in a letter he sent to the *Deseret News*, published 25 December 1852 (and used by Dr. Arrington in *Great Basin Kingdom*).

Elder Snow had been sent in 1851 with another Apostle, Franklin D. Richards, to the then-remote frontier settlement of Cedar City, Utah, to check on the progress of missionaries who for a year had been attempting with little success to develop an iron industry in response to a call from Brigham Young. The apostles' report to the *Deseret News* on the progress of the mission was optimistic, but indicated that their hopes for the project went well beyond success in the smelting of iron. "We found a Scotch party, a Welch party, an English party and an American party," they wrote, "and we turned Iron Masters and undertook to put all these parties through the furnace, and run out a party of Saints for building up the Kingdom of God."

It now seems obvious to me, in the light of many similar statements by Church leaders of the past that the successful smelting of iron was, in fact, of secondary importance—that it was perfecting the character of the people which most concerned them, and all Church enterprise was aimed ultimately at success in this paramount task. The Great Basin, as President Young put it on many occasions, was "a good place to make Saints." It did not matter that California offered the



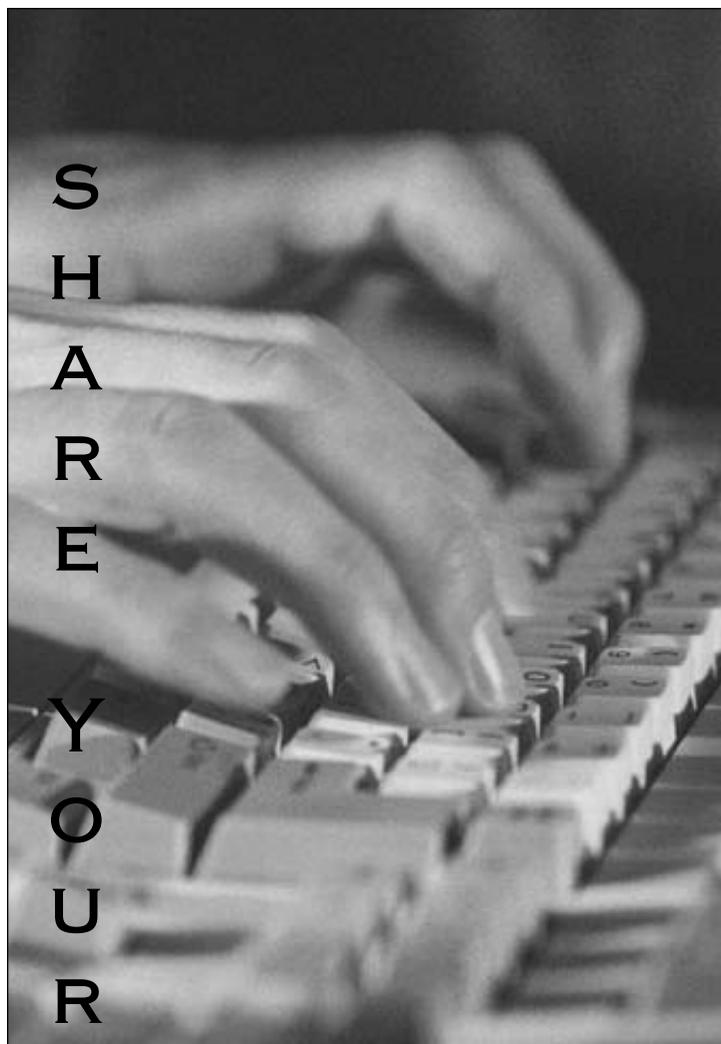
promise of immediate wealth, or a more salubrious climate.

Much more important was the need to keep the body of the Saints together so they might be subject to Church influence, learn to live in unity together, and develop a consciousness of their distinctiveness as a people apart from the rest of the world. The incoming population, Brigham Young said on one occasion, was like clay on a potter's wheel, men who "have got to be ground over and worked on the table, until they are made perfectly pliable and in readiness to be put on the wheel, to be turned into vessels of honor."

My friend had somehow thought that a prophet, if he were truly a prophet, could not fail, no matter what he undertook—that Midas-like, he could turn mud or hen's eggs to gold by merely touching them. Latter-day prophets would be among the first, I suspect, to deny that their prophetic calling gave them such sweeping powers. As a people we would like to believe that our leaders, past and present, will point the way to success in everything, and that all Latter-day Saints consequently can and should, by virtue of the Spirit, excel at everything they undertake.

The study of Church history has taught me two important points in this regard: First, failure in one goal can at times be a condition of success in another. Second, our own immediate goal may not be the same as God's ultimate goal for us. It may be necessary at times for the Saints to be "ground over and worked on the table," an experience which has a distinctly unpleasant ring to it, that we might be more readily "turned into vessels of honor." . . .

THE MORE I [study], the clearer it [becomes] that our goals have not always been God's goals, that the successes we would have may not be always the successes he would wish for us. And though we may not see clearly at a given moment, if we stand back and look at the broad sweep of events, as the historian must do, there is an inexorable will guiding the Saints, sustaining them through trials and errors, shaping them ineluctably into men "perfectly pliable and in readiness to be put on the wheel, to be turned into vessels of honor." The significance of our other successes or failures as a people seem, in comparison to this vast ongoing process, trivial. 



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EUGENE ENGLAND MEMORIAL PERSONAL ESSAY CONTEST

THE SUNSTONE FOUNDATION invites writers to enter the 2004 Eugene England Memorial Personal Essay Contest, made possible by the Eugene and Charlotte England Education Fund. In the spirit of Gene's writings, entries should relate to Latter-day Saint experience, theology, or worldview. Essays, without author identification, will be judged by noted Mormon authors and professors of writing. The winner(s) will be announced in *SUNSTONE* and read at the 2004 Association for Mormon Letters conference. Only the winners will be notified of the results. After the judging is complete, all non-winning entrants will be free to submit their essays elsewhere.

PRIZES: A total of \$400 will be shared among the winning entries.

RULES: 1. Up to *three entries* may be submitted by a single author. *Four copies of each entry* must be delivered (or post-marked) to Sunstone by 16 JANUARY 2004. Entries will not be returned. A \$5 fee must accompany *each* entry.

2. Each essay must be typed, double-spaced, on one side of white paper and be stapled in the upper left corner. All essays must be 3500 words or fewer. The author's name should not appear on any page of the essay.

3. Each entry must be accompanied by a cover letter that states the essay's title and the author's name, address, and telephone number. Each cover letter must be signed and attest that the entry is the author's work, that it has not been previously published, that it is not currently being considered for publication elsewhere and will not be submitted to other forums until after the contest, and that, if the entry wins, *SUNSTONE* magazine has one-time, first-publication rights.

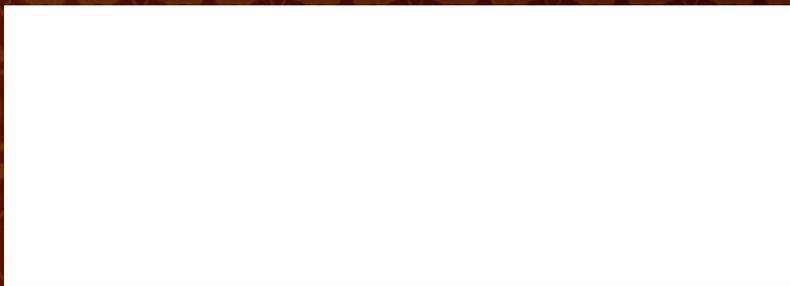
For examples of past contest winners, see the July 2002, October 2002, December 2002, May 2003, July 2003, and October 2003 issues of SUNSTONE.

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Five lifelong Latter-day Saints share why the Church is important to them and why they choose to remain active and faithful despite difficult issues and sometimes troubling experiences.